

VI. BELIEF WITHIN BABIES FROM WESTMINSTER TILL TODAY

It was not just the Westminster divines John Jackson, Dr. Thomas Goodwin and Dr. Henry Wilkinson who wrote the well-known *Foreword* to the Westminster Standards -- the *Forward* known as *To the Christian Reader (Especially Heads of Families)*. In addition, also many other contemporary and notable Puritans participated in the writing of that *Foreword*. Therein, they heartily recommend the study of the *Westminster Standards*.

In alphabetical order, those other notable Puritans included: Samuel Annesley, William Bates, William Blackmore, Has. Bridges, Jeremiah Burwell, Joseph Church, Samuel Clark, Leo. Cooke, William Cooper, John Cross, Roger Drake, John Fuller, John Glascock, Thomas Gouge, George Griffiths, Matthew Haviland, Arthur Jackson, Thomas Jacomb, William Jenkin, James Jollife, Richard Kentish, and Obadiah Lee.

They also included: John Loder, Thomas Manton, James Nalton, Charles Offspring, John Peachie, Edward Perkins, Matthew Pool, Alexander Pringle, Francis Raworth, Samuel Rowles, John Seabrooke, John Sheffield, Samuel Slater, Samuel Smith, William Taylor, Ralph Venning, Thomas Watson, William Whittaker, and William Wickins.¹

484. The 'infant faith' doctrine of the Puritan Thomas Manton

Of the above, the famous Thomas Manton (1620-77) -- at the request of the Westminster Assembly -- himself composed the *Epistle to the Reader* of those *Westminster Standards*. Manton had been Oliver Cromwell's Chaplain in the English Civil War. He later welcomed back King Charles II, at the time of the Restoration. Indeed, he yet subsequently also participated in the 1661 Savoy Conference of English Anglicans and (mostly Presbyterian) Puritans. Picturesquely, Manton spoke of the infants of believers as being Christ's kingdom in the egg -- a prolific nursery of young flowers for Christ's Church.

"Religion was first 'hatched' in families," Manton explained² in his *Epistle to the Reader* (of the *Westminster Standards*). "A family is the seminary of church and state.... By family discipline, officers are trained up for the church. First Timothy 3:4, 'one that ruleth well his own house'.... It is comfortable, certainly, to see thriving nurseries of young plants.... Psalm 102:28, 'the children of Thy servants shall continue'....

"How careful should Ministers and parents be to train up young ones while they are yet pliable!... Families are societies that must be sanctified to God, as well as churches.... I know not what work should be fitter for their use, than that compiled by the Assembly at Westminster -- a Synod of as godly judicious divines...as England ever saw."

Scripture insists about God: "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him." Hebrews 11:6. This, declared Manton,³ "concerneth the children of believing parents.... Children must have

some kind of faith, else they can never be accepted to life.... Infants come under the rule; therefore some kind of faith they must have.

"It were uncharitable and contrary to the rich grace of the covenant to deny salvation and eternal glory to infants. The Scripture showeth that 'they are holy' and dedicated to God. First Corinthians 7:14.... Christ says, 'of such is the Kingdom of God.' Matthew 19:14....

"It is true the faith of the parents makes way for the interest of the children in the covenant. But every one is saved by his own faith. 'The just[ified] shall live by his own faith.' Romans 1:17.... Though Adam be a means to transfuse and bring sin, yet the faith of the parents could not involve and put [their child] into a state of salvation and acceptance with God....

"The question is concerning the infants of believing parents.... The question at present, is of the children of the covenant and those that are born within the pale of grace....

"Of those children, dying in infancy, I assert that they have...the seed of faith...in the covenant.... It must be so.... Socinians [alias Unitarians]...count the faith of infants a thing so impossible, that they say it is a greater dotage than the dream of a man in a fever....

"If infants had been born of Adam in innocency, they had been capable of original purity and of the principle and root of all faith.... Assent to the Word of God would naturally have been in them.... Infants, in their measure, should have been as Christ was. As soon as He was born [or even conceived], He was filled with the Holy Ghost.... This, according to their measure, would have been the condition of infants born of Adam -- if he had stood in innocency....

"Take nature as it is now corrupted. If they [infants] are capable of sin by nature -- why not of grace, by a work of the Spirit of God above nature?... The vital and vegetative force in any plant lies hid in the seed and root.... So infants...may have some impressions of the divine image upon their souls.... That it is not impossible, appears by those expressions in Scripture where some are said to be sanctified from the womb....

"So those expressions of trusting God from the mother's womb. David speaks it of his own person, as a type of Christ. Psalm 22:9, 'Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts'.... Job saith, chapter 31:18, 'from my youth, he [the poor and needy] was brought up with me as with a father; and I have guided her [the needy widow, verse 16], from my mother's womb' -- meaning, he [Job] had a...disposition of pity put into him at his nativity. So also -- why may not a principle of faith be put into us in the womb, if God will work it?"

485. Manton on covenant children being the 'bud' which later 'flowers'

Manton continued: "God promiseth grace and glory to infants. Grace, Isaiah 44:3, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring.' In the original, upon thy 'buds' -- where the Spirit is promised to be poured out upon infants.... On their 'buds' -- ere they come to grow up to stalk and flower.... Matthew 18:6, 'whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me' &c., there is the very word [*pisteuontōn*]: 'which **believe** in Me.' [Of] These 'little ones' [who 'believe'], Christ speaks not metaphorically, but literally.... In Luke

[18:15], it is called *brephos*, an 'infant' [and in Second Timothy 3:14-15 *cf.* 1:5, *apo brephous* apparently means: 'from fetushood]....

"What is the faith which children have?... They have the seed of faith or some principle of grace conveyed into their souls by the hidden operation of the Spirit of God, which gives them an interest in Christ and so a right to His merit for their salvation....

"Among the orthodox...all agree in the thing.... It is some work of the Holy Ghost which gives them [believing babies] a relation to Christ.... By virtue of this relation, they have an interest in His merit for the remission of sins and acceptance with God....

"It may be called the principle or the seed of faith. For so the work of the Holy Ghost is expressed. First John 3:9. 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin. For His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God'.... By the sanctifying Spirit, all outward means are supplied and infants are enabled unto that which Dr. Ames calls 'a passive reception' -- by which they are in Christ, and united to Him.... We see many infants of believers, whom in charity we judge to be elect -- because the promise is made to them and their seed....

"We judge of the graft by the stock from whence it is taken, until it bring forth other fruit by which it may be discerned [Romans 11:16f]. So for children, we judge of them by their parents -- until they come to years of discretion and choose their own way....

"Here is comfort to believing parents concerning their children dying in infancy. We should not doubt of their salvation.... Nay, though they die without the seal of the covenant. The Hebrew children were murdered as soon as born, Exodus 1:22. Matthew 2:16, the children of Bethlehem shed their blood by martyrdom before they [could] shed their blood by circumcision.... Leave them in Christ's arms!

"To teach us confidence in the power of divine grace, God can shine into the dark hearts of children.... The Lord can shine into the hearts of infants. Therefore, do no doubt of it! You see what He can do in those that have not the use of reason. God can give the principle of grace. Isaiah 65:20, 'the child shall die'..., speaking of the grace of the Gospel....

"Oh, water the seed of grace! For aught you know, they may be sanctified from the womb. It is said of John the Baptist, Luke 1:15, 'he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.' Oh, this will make them exert and put forth those hidden operations of grace which God worketh upon their souls! Therefore, water the seed of grace with the dew of education.... Consider, they are God's children; and you are only entrusted with them -- that you may bring them up!"

Further: "Consider the mercy of the covenant -- how it overflows! It is not only stinted [or allowed] to their persons, but runs over to their children. They [the latter] are beloved, for our [their parents'] sakes."

486. Manton's Sermons: the solidarity between believing parents and their babies

In his sermons, Manton added⁴ that where there is "piety of parents..., the children of such...are to be accounted children of the covenant and belonging to the church -- till they do declare the contrary. Romans 11:16.... First Corinthians 7:14.... In their infancy, they are seasoned with good education.... There, God usually chooseth and bestoweth His special grace.... The grace of the covenant runneth most kindly in the channel of the covenant....

"Children are but the parents multiplied, and the parents continued.... God hath a great care of and blessing for the posterity of His servants.... They bring a blessing into their families.... Where the parent is in visible covenant, the children also are in visible covenant with Him -- as soon as born [meaning: conceived]. I say they are without scruple to be accounted children of the covenant and belonging to the church -- till they do declare the contrary.... Romans 11:16.... First Corinthians 7:14.... Acts 10:15.... Ezekiel 16:10 [cf. vv. 9 & 20f]; Romans 9:4....

"If they die in infancy, we need not trouble ourselves about their salvation. God is their God. Genesis 17:1.... Christ died for the Church, and they are part of the Church. Ephesians 5:26f.... God reckoneth upon it. Genesis 18:19....

"He presumeth that in these families, God is known and honoured.... They are not cast off, till they do even wrest themselves out of the arms of mercy.... Genesis 49:26, 'the blessings of thy father have prevailed'.... Genesis 18:19, 'I know that he [Abraham] will command his children and his household after him -- and they shall keep the way of the Lord.'"

In Ezekiel 16:20, that prophet reminded the backslidden people of Israel of "your sons and your daughters whom you have borne unto Me." Here Manton observed:⁵ "Those that are born during our being in covenant with God, are born to God -- as the children born in marriage are reckoned to the husband. This is the high privilege which God puts upon His servants.... We judge of the graft, according to the tree from whence it was taken -- till it liveth to bring forth fruit of its own. So of children, according to their father's covenant."

487. David Dickson: covenant babies regenerated in prebaptismal infancy

Rev. Professor Dr. David Dickson, an orthodox Presbyterian elected by the Church of Scotland to her Chair of Divinity at Glasgow University, seems to have had a large share in drawing up the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. In collaboration with James Durham, he also helped produce the famous *Sum of Saving Knowledge (or a Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures and holden forth in the foresaid Confession of Faith and Catechisms)*.

In 1647, Dickson published his *Exposition of the Evangel of Jesus Christ According to Matthew*. About 1650, he wrote his *Truth's Victory Over Error* (being the first commentary ever written about the *Westminster Confession*) -- and also his *Therapeutica Sacra* (on the method of healing the diseases of conscience concerning regeneration).⁶

In his *Truth's Victory Over Error*, Dickson asked: "Are elect infants, dying in infancy, regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth?" Echoing the *Westminster Confession* (10:3) itself, he answered, "Yes. Luke 18:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; John 3:3-5; First John 5:12."

Dickson himself then went even further. For he asked: "Do not the Anabaptists err, who maintain that no infants are regenerated?" Dickson then answered: "Yes."

Again, Dickson asked: "By what reasons are they [the Anabaptists] confuted?" He answered: "(1) Because John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; Luke 1:15. (2) Because the Prophet Jeremiah was sanctified from his mother's womb; Jeremiah 1:5. (3) Because the promise is made to believing parents and to their children conjunctly; Genesis 17:7 and Acts 2:39. (4) Because of such, says Christ, is the kingdom of heaven; Matthew 19:14. (5) Because the Apostle calls children which are descended of but one parent in covenant with God, holy; First Corinthians 7:14. (6) Because God hath promised in the second command[ment] that He will shew mercy unto thousands that are descended of believing parents; Exodus 20:6...."

"To some infants of believers...the Spirit of Christ hath been given. Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15; Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-14. And to them do the promises belong. Acts 2:39.... Some children before their baptism have been beloved of God Whose love is unchangeable. Romans 9:11-13. Others have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost; Luke 1:15. And some have also been comprehended within the covenant of grace; Acts 2:39."

In his *Therapeutica Sacra...Concerning Regeneration*, Dickson insisted that "the precise time of begun regeneration is not always observed nor known either by the regenerate man himself or by beholders of his way" [cf. John 3:5-8]. This "experience makes evident -- in many who from their infancy are brought up in the exercises of true religion, in whose conversion no notable change can be observed."

Finally, in his *Exposition of...Matthew* (19:13), Dickson observed that "little children of believers are neither excluded...from being Members of the Visible Church -- nor are they secluded from the Kingdom of Heaven which is above. Therefore they are not excluded from receiving the sign and seal of the right and entry to such grace -- namely the seal of the covenant, baptism. For it is said, 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

488. John Trapp: Christian children belong to Jesus

Similarly, Dickson's contemporary, the famous English Bible Commentator and Puritan John Trapp -- commented⁷ on Matthew 19:13-15 that Christ's adult "Disciples...held it a business below their Lord to look upon little ones. But...Christian children are the Church's nursery!

"The devil seeks to destroy them, as he did the babes of Bethlehem. But Christ hath a gracious respect unto them, and sets them [alias Christ's Own infants] on a Rock that is higher than they...

"For of such is the kingdom.' That is, all the blessings of heaven and earth comprised in the covenant -- belong both to these and such as these. Matthew 18:3.... 'He laid His hands on them'.... By this symbol, He adopted [them] for His Own."

489. Richard Baxter: covenant infants inwardly renewed before their baptism

Around 1649, Rev. Dr. Richard Baxter, the great British Puritan Presbyterian, held that many infants are to be regarded as Christ's followers. Acts 7:38; 15:10; Luke 9:47-49; Romans 1:17; Matthew 23:37-39 and Revelation 11:15.

The children of the Israelites, Baxter explained, were admitted to the Old Covenant. Similarly, the children of Christians -- including infants adopted by them (*cf.* Genesis 17:10) -- are admitted to the New Covenant which replaced the Old. Thus, infant baptism is a sign to enter covenant children as Members of the Visible Church -- and to solemnize their dedication to Christ.⁸

It is significant that Baxter understood Matthew 23:37 (above) exactly as did Calvin -- namely, that Christ loved His Own tiny children in Jerusalem just as a mother hen loves her own little chickens. Indeed, Baxter declared:⁹ "I know no man since the Apostles' days whom I value and honour more than Calvin -- whose judgment in all things one with another I more esteem and come nearer to."

Indeed, Baxter's own 1651 *Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Church Membership and Baptism* gave many arguments supporting this Calvinistic teaching. There, Baxter affirmed¹⁰ that "in nineteen cases out of twenty our children -- consecrated to God in their infancy -- would grow up dutiful...and, before they reached mature age, recognize their membership by a personal act" of confessing Christ as Saviour.

Baxter also maintained that "grace is given to our children, as well as to us.... That it is so with the infants of believers, I have fully proved in my *Book of Baptism*...."

"The grace of the remission of original sin, the children of all believers have at least a high probability of... The grace of inward renewing of their nature and disposition...is a secret for us." That is, the renewal of the human nature of tiny covenant infants -- though indeed factual -- "is hidden even to their own parents."

Speaking of the Baptist Tombes, the Presbyterian Baxter further held: "We have a stronger probability than he mentioneth, of the salvation of all the infants of the faithful so dying.... Arguments will prove more than a probability -- even a full certainty -- of the salvation of all believers' infants so dying."

Because he presupposed prebaptismal faith within the covenant children themselves, Baxter also insisted on their infant baptism. This, of course, was not to initiate but rather to confirm infant faith already deemed to be present within them.

As Baxter himself explained in his *Review of the State of Christians' Infants*:¹¹ "God has kept me from the snare of Anabaptistry.... I lay not so much as some do on the mere outward act or water of baptism."

For Baxter was "believing that our heart-consent and dedication qualifieth infants for a covenant-right before actual baptism (which yet is Christ's regular solemnization and investiture).... Yet I make a great matter of the main controversy. Notwithstanding that I hereticate not the Anabaptists for the bare opinions' sake. Nor would I have them persecuted."

Indeed, we must say -- continued Baxter -- as did "the Synod of Dort [I:17]..., that 'believing parents have no cause to doubt the salvation of their children that die in infancy'.... It is very probable that this ascertaining promise belongeth not only to the natural seed of believers, but also to all whom they have the true power and right to dedicate in covenant to God" -- such as all children they might adopt, even from unbelieving strangers. See Genesis 17:12-27.

As even the Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall admits: "I do not dislike that sentence of Mr. Baxter where...speaking of a child dying before actual baptism. He says...'that our heart-consent and dedication qualifies infants for a covenant-right **before** actual baptism.'"

490. Christopher Love: the 'seed of grace' within elect covenant infants

Similarly, also the Puritan Christopher Love made an important statement. In 1653, we find him declaring¹² that covenant infants have "habitual faith" -- alias incipient trust and "seminary grace" (alias the seminal 'seed of mercy') -- if they belong to the elect.

Such elect covenant infants, explained Love, can and do have sin -- also before they themselves are actually noticed to behave sinfully. So too, they also have saving grace -- **before** they themselves actually exhibit repentance.

491. Thomas Brooks: baby baptism for the infants of the godly alone

The Puritan Thomas Brooks was a graduate of Cambridge's Emmanuel College and a chaplain in the English Civil War. In 1653, we find him writing¹³ that "baptism is to be administered to the children of believing parents who walk in the order of the Gospel."

Yet Brooks correctly continued: "I have refused -- and shall refuse -- to baptize the children of profane, ignorant, malignant and scandalous persons.... Such persons that are profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous, &c., if they were now to be baptized themselves, ought not to be baptized -- they having no right to baptism. As these Scriptures...do evidence: Matthew 3:5-12; Mark 1:4f; Acts 2:38-41; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 8:12; 8:31-40; 10:45-48; 18:8; 22:16f; &c. So [too] Psalm 50:16f [and]...Hosea 2:2f....

"The child" of the covenant, however, is to "grow up to manifest his own faith. As these Scriptures, among many others that might be produced, prove: Genesis 17:7f; Acts 2:39-41; First Corinthians 7:14; &c.....

Brooks concludes: "By administering that holy ordinance [of infant baptism] to the children of profane, ignorant, scandalous persons -- I shall make myself guilty of nourishing and cherishing in such wicked persons such vain opinions and conceits that cannot but be very prejudicial to their souls. As: that they have a right to that precious ordinance, when they have none; that God hath taken their children into covenant as well as the children of the best believers in the world, when He had not."

492. William Guthrie: many are called from their earliest days

Rev. William Guthrie lived from 1620 until 1665. At the time of his death, he was one of the most famous theologians in the Church of Scotland.

Discussing the regeneration of covenant infants, Guthrie declared¹⁴ that "there are some called from the womb -- as John the Baptist was (Luke 1)." Again, others are called "in very early years, before they can be actively engaged in Satan's ways -- as Timothy (II Timothy 3:15)."

Guthrie concluded that there are **many** "who can apply these things to themselves." Such persons, then, "have much to say -- for their effectual calling from their youth" alias from their earliest days.

493. The Antirebaptism of the Paedobaptist John Owen

The famous Calvinistic Congregationalist Puritan Rev. Dr. John Owen -- perhaps the greatest British Theologian of all time -- certainly did not disagree with the above. He explained:¹⁵ "There are two ways by which God saveth infants. First, by interesting them in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers.... Secondly, by His grace of election."

In his work *The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of Rome Laid Open*, Owen rightly condemned Rome's *ex opere operato* view of the sacraments. Wrote Owen: "They turned the outward signs into the things signified. So in this [sign] of baptism, they make it to stand in the stead of the thing itself. Which is to make it, if not[!] an idol -- [then] yet an image of it."

Owen really opened up -- in his work against *A Display of Arminianism: being a Discovery [or Disclosure] of the Old Pelagian Idol 'Free-Will' etc.* There, he observed¹⁶ that "original sin...hath in itself, even after baptism, the nature of sin."

Original sin, wrote Owen, is frequently and evidently taught in the Word of God -- "and...denied by the Arminians." The latter erroneously allege that "infants are simply in that estate in which Adam was before his fall." Saith [the Arminian] Venator: "Neither is it at all

considerable, whether they be the children of believers or of heathens and infidels. For infants, as infants, have all the same innocency."

Responded Owen: "In this last expression, these bold innovators...have quite overthrown a sacred verity; an apostolic, catholic, fundamental article of Christian religion. But truly, to me there are no stronger arguments of the sinful corruption of our nature than to see such nefarious issues of unsanctified hearts....

"Even those infants of whose innocency the Arminians boast, are unclean in the verdict of St. Paul, First Corinthians 7:14 -- if not **sanctified by an interest in the promise of the covenant**.... We are truly, **intrinsically** and inherently sanctified by the Spirit and grace of Christ.... That wretched opposition to the power of godliness wherewith **from the womb** we are replenished, confirms the same truth.

In his famous tract *Of Schism*, Owen discussed his own Congregationalistic recognition of the validity of baptisms administered especially in the ritualistic Church of England. What should those seceding from that body, then think of their baptisms earlier received there?

There, he referred¹⁷ to "our receiving our regeneration and new birth through the grace of God -- by the preaching of the Word and the saving truths thereof, here professed with the seal of it in our baptism.... We own [or acknowledge] ourselves to have been, and to be, children of the Church of England -- because we have received all this by the administration of the Gospel here in England."

Owen then distanced himself from the British Baptists. For he continued: "Here indeed we are left by them who renounce the baptism they have received in their infancy and repeat it again amongst themselves."

494. Owen on the commanded baptism of infants specifically by sprinkling

Coming next specifically to his writing on *Infant Baptism and Dipping*, Owen first dealt -- with the doctrine of Paedobaptism. He declared¹⁸ that "the children of believers are all of them capable of the grace signified in baptism. And some of them are certainly partakers of it -- namely such as die in their infancy....

"Therefore, they [the children of believers] and indeed before they might 'die in their infancy'] may and ought to be baptized. For...unless they are regenerated or born again, they must all perish inevitably. John 3:3 [*cf.* 3:23-26 & 1:25-33].

"Their regeneration is the grace whereof baptism is a sign and token. Wherever this is -- there, baptism ought to be administered....

"God having appointed baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration" -- who is man to deny it? "Unto whom he denies it -- he denies the grace signified by it.... But this is contrary --

to...the nature and promises of the covenant; the testimony of Christ reckoning them to the Kingdom of God; the faith of godly parents; and the belief of the Church in all ages.

"It follows hence, unavoidably, that infants who die in their infancy -- have the grace of regeneration, and consequently...a right unto baptism.... Christ doth sanctify infants...of believing parents... Christ, passing through all ages, evidenced His design to exclude no age -- to communicate His grace unto all sorts and ages."

Owen next dealt with the question of the right mode of baptism. While repudiating all unscriptural and also various post-biblical forms of baptism -- both the vertical submersionism of mediaeval Romanism (as well as the more recent backward-leaning immersionism of the British Baptists) -- he did not deny their baptismal validity.

"*Baptō*," held Owen, is "used in...Scriptures" like "Luke 16:24" and "John 13:26" and "Revelation 19:13.... Revelation 19:13 is better rendered, 'stained by sprinkling'.... The Hebrew word *tābal* is rendered by the Septuagint...[in] Genesis 27:31 'to stain by sprinkling' -- or otherwise, mostly by *baptō*.... It doth not signify properly 'to dip'....

"Aquinas [the Romanist] is for dipping of children.... But he maintains pouring or sprinkling to be lawful also.... He meddles not with the sense of the word -- as being too wise to speak of that which he understood not. For he knew no Greek....

"There is not one word nor one expression that mentions any resemblance between dipping under water and the death and burial of Christ.... Our being 'planted together in the likeness of His death' [Romans 6:4-6], is not our being dipped under water -- but 'the crucifying of the old man' [compare Hebrews 6:2-6]."

Hebrews (5:12 to 6:2) clearly associates baptism with babies. Later (10:22), it encourages adults to remember their earlier sealing. That was long after their little hearts[when yet babies] had been sprinkled from an evil conscience -- so that their bodies could thereafter be washed with pure water.

In his famous *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (6:1f), Owen rightly commented:¹⁹ "The **baptism** of Christ was the doctrine of Christianity, wherewith He was to '**sprinkle** many nations.' Isaiah 52:15 [*cf.* too 53:1-2's "**tender plant**" and 53:3-12's "**poured**"]. This is the first baptism of the Gospel....

"This repentance in the nature and kind of it, is a duty to be continued in the whole course of our lives.... Peter tells us that 'saving baptism' doth not consist in the washing away of the filth of the body, First Peter 3:21. Therefore, the expression must be figurative."

495. The 'infant faith' doctrine of Cornelius Poudroyen the Voetian

The famous Dutch Calvinist Cornelius Poudroyen popularized the views of Voetius -- who himself so greatly appreciated the 'infant faith' views of the famous Westminster divine Rev. Dr.

Cornelius Burgess. Indeed, in 1653, Voetius himself wrote the *Foreword* for Poudroyen's own work: *Catechizing from the Heidelberg Catechism*.

There, Poudroyen insisted²⁰ that believers' children themselves "**have the Holy Spirit** and the redemption from sin -- **just as the adults do.**" The question was asked: "Prove that the children have the Spirit of God?" Poudroyen replied: "First Corinthians 7:14 -- 'Otherwise your children would be unclean; but **now, they are holy.**'"

The next question asked: "Can one prove from this text, that the little children have the Holy Spirit?" Poudroyen answered: "Yes."

But "How?" -- asked the next question. "Because," answered Poudroyen, "one cannot be holy, without the Holy Spirit.... **Children** [therefore] **have faith.**"

Poudroyen elaborated yet further. Covenant infants, he affirmed, have "the root and seed of faith, from which the Holy Spirit ignites and inflames their spiritual zeal when they increase in years.... They have the Spirit of Christ.... Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, there too is **faith** -- whether an active faith, as in adults; or whether **the root** and origin **of faith**, as in **small children.**"

In passing, we mention that the greatest Calvinist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries -- Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper (Sr.) -- thought very highly of Poudroyen. So much so, that Kuyper republished Poudroyen's *Catechism* -- in 1891. Indeed, Kuyper himself even wrote a fresh *Foreword* to it -- as the great Voetius had done previously.

496. The Anti-Anabaptist German Reformed theologian Cocceius

The great German Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. John Koch alias Johannes Cocceius is often called 'the father of federal theology.' He was trained by Bremen's Synod of Dordt delegates, Rev. Professor Dr. Ludwig Crocius and Rev. Professor Dr. Matthias Martinus.

Cocceius was, later still, further instructed in Friesland -- by two very famous covenant theologians. These were the great British Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. William Ames, and the renowned Polish Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. John Maccovi(us).²¹

Cocceius's first polemic was against the Romanists and the Socinians. Thereby he showed himself to be indisputably a scholar of the very first rank (thus Rev. Dr. H. Kaajan).²²

Cocceius has given us a very lucid statement against all rebaptism. He does so, apparently referring to the well-known baptismal passages in Hebrews (6:1-6 and 10:22-27). They read as follows:

Leaving behind the first things of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection -- not again laying down the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, the doctrine of **baptism**.... For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened..., if they shall

fall away, to renew them again unto repentance -- seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh....

'We have had our hearts **sprinkled** from an evil conscience. Consequently, we have had our **bodies washed with pure water**.... If we keep on sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins -- but a certain fearful looking out for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'

On the above passages, around 1648 we find Cocceius writing:²³ "The reason why baptism is not repeated, is to be sought not in the impression -- but in the thing signified.... If it were repeated, either it would not be teaching the ingrafting into Christ...or it would be teaching the imperfection and weakness of the first ingrafting -- as if communion with Christ might be rescinded and begun afresh!

"But...Christ cannot die a second time. So if, once a man has been united to Christ, he could not be separated from Him -- there could be no reparation! Hebrews 10:26."

Speaking of covenant infants, Cocceius therefore "confidently trusted...that these have **already been sanctified**." For John (the baptizer), explained Cocceius,²⁴ "being not yet born, saluted the Lord conceived -- with a leap!"

497. The Anti-Anabaptist German Reformed theologian Wendelin

In 1656, the famous German Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Mark Frederick Wendelin of Heidelberg -- after helping gain the victory for Calvinism over Lutheranism in the German Palatine -- wrote his great work *Christian System of Theology*. This was soon translated into both Dutch and Hungarian. Four years later, he further wrote his noted *Collation of Christian Doctrine from the Calvinists and the Lutherans*.

In the former work, Wendelin stated²⁵ that "the '**possessed faith**' which we attribute to **infants**, we truly call -- either 'the root' or '**the seed**' of faith." In the latter work, Wendelin stated that "baptism is not absolutely necessary to salvation. Many are saved even without baptism, both children and grown-ups."

498. Lodensteyn: only children of holy covenanters to be baptized

Around 1660, the famous Dutch Reformed Theologian, Rev. Dr. Jodocus van Lodensteyn began his career of serious writing. Lodensteyn had studied under both Voetius and Cocceius. Predictably therefore he himself thenceforth insisted²⁶ that, "in the event of the covenantal unholiness of both parents..., the child should not be baptized."

Lodensteyn explained:²⁷ "Our doctrine about this, is that one may **not baptize all children**, but **only the holy ones**. Such are children made holy or sanctified by faith..., as the Holy Spirit says. First Corinthians 7:14 . In consequence of this, we say they must be children of Christian parents. They must be children of believers..., in man's fallible judgment."

499. The paedobaptistic Savoy Declaration of English Congregationalists

In 1558, some two hundred Independent Puritans gathered together in London and drew up the *Savoy Declaration*. It was attended by leading British Congregationalists -- including William Bridge, Joseph Caryl, Thomas Goodwin, William Greenhill, Philip Nye and John Owen. The gathering quickly reached agreement, and then issued its *Declaration*.

This consists of three documents -- a Preface, a Church Polity, and the *Savoy Confession of Faith*. The latter, except for the chapters on ecclesiastical government, is essentially the same as the paedobaptistic *Westminster Confession* -- except that its postmillennialism is even more strongly expressed.

The latter is really remarkable -- considering that these Congregationalists' ailing political leader Oliver Cromwell died in that same year. Indeed, even then, the restoration of the British monarchy seemed likely soon to succeed.

What was therefore needed, was a Pan-Calvinist Alliance in Britain -- one grounded especially in a fresh coalition between paedobaptistic Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The commitment of both of those groups to the presumed regeneratedness of covenant children before their baptism in infancy, might greatly facilitate such a coalition.

500. Flavel: holy covenant infants are holy twigs on holy branches

The English Puritan Rev. Dr. John Flavel had been educated at Oxford University. He then became a Lecturer in Dartmouth. From about 1665 onward, he promoted the 'Happy Union' of Congregationalists and Presbyterians -- on the basis of the *Westminster Confession* and the *Savoy Confession* (as its 'Independent' counterpart).

In addition, he also wrote on infant salvation. He did so, especially in connection with Paul's picture of the cultivated olive-tree and its Israelitic branches. There, claimed Flavel, its fruitless "branches were broken off; then you [Gentile converts], having been a wild olive-tree, were grafted in amongst them.' Romans 11:17.

Wrote Flavel:²⁸ "It is clear to me beyond all contradiction from Romans 11:17..., that...God brake off the unbelieving Jews from the Church. Both parents and children together [of] the believing Gentiles...are as truly Abraham's seed as they [the Old Testament Israelites] were. Galatians 3:29.

For the believing Gentiles "were implanted or ingrafted in their room" -- alias in the place of the unbelieving Israelites. Such believing Gentiles thenceforth "as amply enjoy the privileges of that covenant, both internal and external, for themselves and for their infant-seed -- as ever any members of the 'Jewish' Church did or could do....

"The **children** of such believing parents, are **declared** to be federally **holy**. First Corinthians 7:14.... The unbelieving Jews...are by the Apostle persuaded to submit themselves to it. Acts 2:38f.

The Apostle Peter kept on "assuring them [the Hebrew people] that the same promise -- viz. 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee' -- is now as effectually sealed to them and their children by baptism, as it was in the former age by circumcision.... [Thus too] the Gentiles..., whenever God shall call them, shall enjoy the same privilege both for themselves and for their children also."

501. Flavel: same sap in Christian as was in Israelitic branches and twigs

Flavel continued:²⁹ "Such a condition of salvation, we assert faith to be in the New covenant grant. That is to say, the grant of salvation by God in gospel-covenant, is suspended from all men -- till they believe.... Matthew 18:3..., 'Except ye be **converted** and become **as little children** -- ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven'....

"If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' Romans 11:13-15. *I.e.*, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- being in covenant with God -- a federal holiness is from them derived to [alias transmitted into] the branches....

"Job 14:7-9, 'there is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that it will sprout again -- and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof dry on the ground -- yet through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant'....

"The Gentile believers and their children do now enjoy -- by virtue of their interest in the same root.... [They] 'partake with them [the believing Israelites] of the root and fatness of the olive[-tree].'

"Certainly the sap is the **same** which the root sends into all the branches..., and is as plentifully communicated to the ingrafted as to the natural branches. For the watering of this olive[-tree] with the more rich and plentiful grace of the Gospel, must make the olive-tree as fat and flourishing as ever it was -- to supply all its branches, and more than ever before....

"Both their infants [the Old Testament Israelites' babies] and ours [Christians' covenant children] are comprehended in the parents -- as **twigs** are comprehended in the branch.... Also in First Corinthians 7:14...and...Acts 2:38f....

"Abraham may say to all his children, as Christ does [in] John 15:4f -- 'I am the vine, ye are the branches' &c. I am He That sanctifies you....

"The federal holiness of children results from the immediate parent's faith or covenant interest, as well as from the remoter progenitors. Else we cannot understand how the Corinthians' children should be holy, or how the promise should belong to the children of them that are afar off -- viz. the Gentiles who...became ingrafted branches by **faith**, and so suck the

fatness of the olive[-tree] to themselves and **to their buds or children** as the natural branches did."

502. Witsius: covenant children to be regarded as regenerate (prebaptismally)

From about 1670 onward, the great Rev. Dr. Herman Witsius -- Professor of Theology first at Franeker, then at Utrecht, and next at Leyden -- propounded his views of the covenant. In his *Economy of the Covenants*, he declared:³⁰ "By the same Word whereby the elect are called to communion with God and His Christ, they are also regenerated.... James...1:18....

"Here, all things are deep -- and wrapt up in mystery. Who can unfold to us the secrets of his own corporal birth? Who can distinctly declare in what manner he was poured out like milk, and curdled like cheese within the bowels of his mother [Job 10:10]?"

"The prophet [David] himself cried out: 'I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.... My substance was not hidden from Thee when I was [being] made in secret..., my substance yet being unperfect[ed].' Psalm 139:14-16....

"These things which regard the origin of our body...are involved in such darkness, as to frustrate the enquiries of the most sagacious. How much more involved, are the things that constitute our spiritual regeneration?... None can doubt [them] to be mystery all over."

Regeneration, continued Witsius, "is so necessary -- that without it there is no entering into the Kingdom of heaven. John 3:3-5.... We give this definition of it: 'Regeneration is that supernatural act of God whereby a new and divine life is infused into the elect person spiritually dead -- and that, from the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, made fruitful by the infinite power of the Spirit....

"There is not the least doubt but [that] regeneration is accomplished in a moment.... Heaven is open only to the actually regenerate, John 3:3....

"After a principle [alias a beginning] of spiritual life is infused into the elect soul by regeneration, divine grace does not always proceed therein in the same method and order.... The spirit of the **life** of Christ may lie as it were dormant...almost in the same manner as vegetative life in the seed of a plant...

"No vital operations can yet proceed therefrom -- though savingly united to Christ.... This is the case with respect to elect and regenerate infants, whose is the kingdom of God. They therefore are reckoned among believers and saints....

"Moreover, this spirit of a new life will even sometimes exert itself in vital actions in those who have received it in their infancy -- as they gradually advance in years.... God is pleased 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings to ordain strength.' Psalm 8:2 [cf. Matthew 21:15f]. This has been especially observed in some dying children [see *Decrees of Dordt* I:17 and *Westminster Confession* 10:3]....

"It often happens that this principle of spiritual life which had discovered [or uncovered] its activity in the most tender childhood, grows up by degrees with the person. This is "after the example of our Lord, Who 'increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man' (Luke 2:52) -- and of John the baptizer, who grew and waxed strong in spirit (Luke 1:80).

"Such persons make continual progress in the way of sanctification -- and grow insensibly [both unawares and inconspicuously] 'unto a perfect[ed] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Ephesians 4:13. We have an illustrious example of this in Timothy, 'who from a child [actually "from fetushood"] had know the Holy Scriptures' (Second Timothy 3:15) -- and who in his tender youth, to Paul's exceeding joy, had given evident signs of an unfeigned faith....

"It would be wrong to require those who, being regenerated in their infancy, have grown up all along with the quickening spirit -- to declare the time and manner of their passage from death to life. It is sufficient if they can comfort themselves and edify others with the fruits of regeneration and the constant tenor of a pious life. It is, however, the duty of all -- to recollect, not in a careless manner, the operations of the Spirit of grace on their hearts....

503. Witsius on the infant baptizing of regenerated covenant babies

Witsius went on:³¹ "Peter supplies us with another argument. Acts 2:38-39. 'Be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost! For the promise is unto you and to your children'.... The promise of grace was made not only to parents, but also to their children. It therefore follows, that not only parents but also their children are to be baptized....

"Mention simply is made of children, without distinction of age. But also because God expressly promised to Abraham to be the God of his seed -- which He applies to an infant eight days old. Genesis 17:7-12. We add that Christ permitted little children to come to Him, laid His hands upon them, and declared that of such was the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:13-15. But whom Matthew calls *paidia*, 'little children,' Luke chapter 18:15 calls *brephē*, 'infants' [alias unweaned babies].... It is therefore evident that to infants are also made the promises of grace and salvation....

"Infants make [up or constitute] a part of the Church, which [symbolically] is purified by the washing of water.... They who belong to the Church of God, have a right to baptism.... Baptism is the sign of association with and seal of initiation into the Church. Acts 2:41....

"That infants belong to the Church, appears from this -- that when God commanded His Church to be gathered together, He did not suffer their 'little ones and those that sucked the breasts' to be absent. Deuteronomy 29:10-11 & Joel 2:16." Indeed, He even "protests that 'they were born unto Him.' Ezekiel 16:20."

Witsius concluded: "Here certainly appears the extraordinary love of our God -- in that as soon as we are born [or conceived], and just as we come from our mother [at later birth], He hath

commanded us to be solemnly brought from her bosom as it were into His own arms, [so] that He should bestow upon us in the very cradle the [baptismal] tokens of our dignity....

"He should put that song in our mouth: 'Thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon Thee, from the womb. Thou are my God, from my mother's belly. Psalm 22:9-10.... In a word, He should join us to Himself in the most solemn covenant -- from our most tender years. The remembrance of which, as it is glorious and full of consolation to us -- so in like manner it tends to promote Christian virtues and the strictest holiness through the whole course of our lives."

504. Witsius on *The Efficacy of Baptism in Infants*

Witsius also wrote an important essay on *The Efficacy of Baptism in Infants*.³² There, he taught that the baptism of covenant children -- seals communion with Christ and forgiveness of sin and regeneration.

Witsius explained: "There can hardly be any doubt that the statement regarding the regeneration of the children before baptism, according to the judgment of love, is the accepted view of the Dutch Church. In her *Baptismal Formula*, this question is put to parents who offer their children in baptism: 'Do you acknowledge that they are sanctified in Christ, and should be baptized as members of His congregation?' To this question, a confirmatory answer is required.

"Now this strengthens the views of those who place the initial regeneration of elect covenant children before baptism. So, I acknowledge I submit to this."

Witsius rejected³³ "the 'Romish' view that regeneration takes place during baptism.... It is irreconcilable with the baptizing of believing adults, in whom regeneration obviously already exists" -- or rather: already seems to exist.

Witsius also absolutely rejected the notion that regeneration can only come after infant baptism -- 'because children are incapable of being born again.' That is absurd, explained Witsius. For "if the children of believers were not to be regarded as such as [already] have communion with Christ and the Church -- they would have to be regarded as those who are under the wrath of God; in the power of the devil; and in the state of damnation.

"They would then, at least as regards their present state, not differ from the children of all others -- who stand very far outside the covenant of God. For no middle ground has been given. Those who are not of Christ, must still belong to Satan."³⁴

However, "whenever God has adopted the elect children from their birth [or even their conception] into the fellowship of His covenant -- when He has united them with Christ and reconciled them with Himself in the forgiving of their original sin -- no reason can be given why He does not at the same time regenerate them." We "understand by 'regeneration' the grace of God through which the very first beginning of Spirit-ual life (*primo primum vitae spiritualis principium*) is poured into a human (*homini...infunditur*) who was spiritually dead."³⁵

Witsius concluded:³⁶ "The children [of believers] are regenerated [in infancy], but the seed remains hidden for many years under the earth-clod. It is not choked by the thorns and thistles of youthful desires. Later, by addition of more grace, it finally surmounts the hindrances -- and germinates and breaks forth more strongly and fortuitously.... God is not only free to impart the grace of regeneration to the elect children before they receive baptism. It should be believed that He, as a rule, also does this."

505. Appreciations of Witsius's covenant theology by later theologians

Witsius was much appreciated by the Scottish Presbyterians. They rightly regarded him as faithfully setting forth the correct and confessional view of the covenant. Even the famous Baptist, Rev. Dr. John Gill, commended Witsius. Indeed, Gill himself wrote the *Preface*³⁷ to the 1804 Edinburgh edition of Witsius's great work *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*.³⁸

Also Rev. Professor Dr. William Cunningham, the later Professor of Church History of the Free Church College at Edinburgh, greatly appreciated Witsius. Wrote Cunningham:³⁹ "Witsius thought that no man could honestly and intelligently contend for the [alleged] truth of the doctrine that 'Christ had died for all men' -- until he had first enervated or explained away what was implied in the phrase.... There is much in the history of theological discussion to confirm this opinion" -- even as regards the salvation of those dying in infancy.

Witsius was also much appreciated by Princeton Seminary's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater -- the colleague of the great Charles Hodge. In his own 1857 work *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, Atwater approvingly affirmed:⁴⁰ "Witsius, having shown that many children of the pious prove [later] not to be children of God...[nevertheless rightly] says: 'Charity requires us to count them as beloved children of God, and as of His family -- till they evince the contrary by their depraved disposition and conduct.'"

Rev. Professor Dr. John Macleod, Principal-Emeritus of Edinburgh's Free Church College, expressed similar appreciation in his 1939 lectures delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.⁴¹ Explained Macleod in his book *Scottish Theology*:⁴² "Over and above Scottish works expository of the covenant (such as those of Rutherford, Patrick, Gillespie, Boston and other 'Marrow' divines), there were few books dealing with the subject that had more value put upon them -- than Herman Witsius on the *Economy of the Covenants*."

506. Thomas Watson: God's kingdom belongs to covenant children

Also around 1670, Thomas Watson, the celebrated seventeenth century British Puritan, maintained the same doctrine. In his *Body of Divinity*,⁴³ he observed that "baptism...is a matriculation or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ's flock....

"To such as belong to the election, baptism is a 'seal of the righteousness of faith'...and a badge of adoption. Romans 4:11.... The **infant** seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the

covenant of grace as their parents.... They cannot justly be denied baptism, which is its seal... Does not **their** faith need strengthening, as well as [that of] others?"

Watson continued: "The practice of baptizing infants, may be drawn from Scripture by undeniable consequence.... Children during their infancy are capable of grace. Therefore they are capable of baptism.... The kingdom of heaven may belong to them.... Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?... Children in their infancy, being God's servants -- why should they not have baptism...?"

Watson then concluded by assailing the Anabaptists by name. For he insisted that "how far God has given up many persons who are for deferring baptism to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident if we consult history -- especially if we read the doings of the Anabaptists in Germany....

"Those parents are to be blamed -- who forbid little children to be brought to Christ, and withhold from them this ordinance. By denying their infants baptism, they exclude them from membership in the Visible Church -- so that [to them] their infants are sucking pagans."

507. John Edwards: unborn infants attached to the navels of their godly mothers

We now come to the great British Puritan theologian Rev. Dr. John Edwards (1637-1716) -- not to be confused with the even greater and somewhat later American Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. Jonathan Edwards. A Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, Dr. John Edwards taught there from about 1670 onward. Edwards wrote more than forty books. An admirer once called him: "The Paul, the Augustine, the Bradwardine, the Calvin of his age."

In his *Exercitation of Canticles*, John Edwards connected the "navel passage" Song of Songs 7:2 with First Corinthians 7:14. Those who are "against baptizing infants," he explained, "are ignorant and understand not what they do." Nor do they understand that although unborn covenant infants "are not able to take in spiritual nourishment after the ordinary way" -- there is another way, viz. 'navelly' alias **fetally**. (Cited by Gale, in Wall's *op. cit.* III p. 216.)

Referring to Song of Songs 7:2, Edwards then continued: "It may be done (as is said here) by the navel -- by that federal knot or link which ties them fast to their Christian and believing parents. Which, according to the best divines, is an unanswerable argument to prove the validity of infant baptism.

"For they [infants] belong to the covenant as they are the offspring of the faithful, and thence are pronounced 'holy' by the Apostle. First Corinthians 7:14.....

"The use of the navel is not only to convey nutriment to the *foetus*, but to fasten the *foetus* to the mother. Which denotes that intimate union and conjunction with the Church of Christ, our common mother, that is made by the baptismal performance."

508. John Henry Heidegger: the prebaptismal faith of covenant infants

The Swiss Reformed Dr. John Henry Heidegger was Professor of Theology first in Steinfurt and later in Zurich. He wrote⁴⁴ that "the subject of baptism is God's faithful people...apart from any distinctions of race, sex and **age**.... [Therefore, both] adults and children are baptized."

By the word 'children' in our last paragraph here above, Heidegger meant only "those children who -- born in the Church's lap to believing parents -- rejoice in the covenant of grace, and likewise rightly rejoice in the seals of it.... The Holy Spirit applies to them the immediate merit of faith in Christ...."

"**Regenerated and sanctified even in their mother's womb**..., baptism is presently the sign of a regeneration already made and persevering right up to death" - explained Heidegger. "However, that operation of the Holy Spirit is hidden.... For those who die in infancy, baptism is as surely the sign of regeneration and of ingrafting into Christ -- as their body is surely sprinkled with water."

509. Turretine: covenant children of unholy parents have radical faith

The great theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Francois Turretine was the French-Swiss son of the noted Reformed theologian Benedict Turretine. The latter had himself studied under that famous 1618f Synod of Dordt delegate, the Italian-Swiss Rev. Professor Dr. John Diodati.⁴⁵

Consequently, even the younger Turretin -- through his father -- had close links even with the Synod of Dordt itself. (That latter, of course, had categorically stated the regeneratedness of all early-dying infants of godly parents.)

Francois Turretine said that covenant "children are just as much to be baptized as adults."⁴⁶ For "**the faith of covenant infants...consists of an initial action in them**." That infant faith is "in root, not in fruit." It is characterized "by an internal action of the Spirit, not by an external demonstration in works."⁴⁷

After Turretine's death in 1687, his *Theological Institutes* were published. This work was to have tremendous influence -- especially among North American Presbyterians.

Turretine added:⁴⁸ "Concerning the subject of faith, a question is mooted as to infants.... There are two extremes. 1, in defect, by the Anabaptists, who deny all faith to infants -- and under this pretext exclude them from baptism. 2, in excess, by the Lutherans, who to oppose themselves to the Anabaptists have fallen into the other extreme -- maintaining that infants are regenerated in baptism, and [thereby] actually furnished with faith...."

"The orthodox [viz. the Calvinists], occupy the middle ground between these two extremes. They deny 'actual faith' to infants, against the Lutherans; and maintain that a seminal or radical

and 'habitual faith' is to be ascribed to them, against the Anabaptists.... We do not speak of the infants of any parents whomsoever..., but only of believers (or Christians and the covenanted)....

"**Seminal faith is granted in infants**.... Although infants have not 'actual faith' -- the seed or 'root of faith' cannot be denied to them -- which is **ingenerated in them from early age**, and in its own time goes forth in 'act'....

" By 'seed of faith' we mean the Holy Spirit, the Effector of faith and regeneration, as He is called, First John 3:9, as to the principles of regeneration and holy inclinations -- which He already works in infants, according to their measure, in a wonderful and to us unspeakable way....

"The promise of the covenant pertains no less to infants than to adults, since God promises that He will be the God of Abraham and of His seed. Genesis 17:7 & Acts 2:39.... They are also considered to be begotten in 'holiness' -- that is, in Christianity and not in Heathenism (which was a state of uncleanness and impurity)....

"Because the kingdom of heaven pertains to infants, Matthew 19:14, therefore also [does] regeneration -- without which there is no admittance to it. John 3:3-5.... There are examples of various infants who were sanctified from the womb, as was the case with Jeremiah and John the Baptist. Jeremiah 1:5 & Luke 1:15....

"We may fairly conclude hence, that infants can be made partakers of the Holy Spirit Who (since He cannot be inactive) works in them motions and inclinations suited to their age. Those are called 'the seeds of faith' or principles [alias 'begin-nings'] of sanctification."

510. Formula Consensus Helvetica re-affirms covenant children's holiness

The above-mentioned Heidegger of Zurich and Turretine of Geneva, together with Luke Gernler of Basel, in 1675 composed the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* alias the 'Swiss Form of Agreement' against the hypothetical universalism of Amyraut and others in the French School of Saumur. Obliquely, the *Formula* rightly seems to assume that also the infant children of Christians should themselves be regarded as possessing the same Christian faith -- and accordingly be baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity.

For the *Formula* explicitly re-asserts "our *Helvetic Confession*"⁴⁹ (which professes the presumed election of covenant children).⁵⁰ The *Formula* also itself states⁵¹ that even before man's fall, "that promise annexed to the covenant of works was not a continuation only of earthly life and happiness but the possession especially of life eternal...of both body and soul in heaven -- if indeed man ran the course of perfect obedience with unspeakable joy in communion with God....

"However, God entered into the covenant of works not only with Adam for himself, but also in him as the head and root with the whole human race -- who would, by virtue of the blessing of the nature derived from him, inherit also the same perfection, provided he continued therein. So Adam by his mournful fall, not only for himself but also for the whole human race that would be born of bloods and the will of the flesh, sinned and lost the benefits promised in the

covenant. We hold, therefore, that the sin of Adam is imputed by the mysterious and just judgment of God to all his posterity."

Yet fortunately there was also a Second Adam. For "Christ merited for those in whose stead He died, the means of salvation, especially the regenerating Spirit.... We are chosen in Christ to be holy and without blame, and moreover children by Him. Ephesians 1:4-5. But our being holy and children of God, proceeds only from faith and the Spirit of regeneration....

"Man by nature...from his birth, is the child of disobedience...and has that inability so innate that it can be shaken off in no way -- except by the omnipotent heart-turning grace of the Holy Spirit...through this saving knowledge of Christ and the Holy Trinity...in the whole sacred Trinity." Precisely for this reason, also covenant children are baptized in the Name of the Trinity. For, by grace, they already -- as infants -- share "this saving knowledge."

511. Ridderus: covenant infants have benefits "already inside of them"

In Holland, the Voetian Francis Ridderus clearly signalled his own views on infant regeneration -- in the title of his treatise: *Baptism and Salvation for the Children of Christians*.⁵² Ridderus was so convinced about this, that he even overstated his conviction!

"He who does not have a benefit from Christ when young," alleged Ridderus, "will never have a benefit from Him. If Christ were not to have died also for children -- His death would not avail for them when they grow up."⁵³

Matthew 19:14 anent the little covenant children, Ridderus insisted, "refers to regeneration and to the covenant of grace. Not that they receive these through baptism, but as what was **already inside of them**.... In the little children, we recognize the Spirit and the seed of regeneration."⁵⁴

512. Jacob Koelman: covenant children partake of regeneration

With the above convictions, Francis Ridderus was by no means exceptional for his times. Another famous Voetian, Rev. Dr. Jacob Koelman, was just as vehement.

For Koelman insisted⁵⁵ "that the little children do partake of the spiritual benefits and blessings signified and sealed by baptism -- such as regeneration, sanctification, *etc.*" Indeed, he added, precisely "Christ says of these little children that **of such is the Kingdom of heaven**."

513. Campegius Vitringa Sr: God the Holy Spirit sanctifies covenant infants

The great Rev. Dr. Campegius Vitringa Sr. was Professor of Oriental Languages and later of Theology at Franeker. He stated⁵⁶ that "**children of believers are called holy**."

Why? Because "they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit in their parents. Because God brings them His grace in their parents." First Corinthians 7:14.

For "when God hath begun to manifest His grace to the parents, or either of them, we may not presume otherwise than that He will confer the like grace upon their infants -- so long as the contrary does not appear."

Vitringa elsewhere drew his conclusions anent covenant children. "Justly do we presume, from the law of charity, that they have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷

514. Bernard Smytegelt: God inserts grace into babies from the womb

Also the famous catechism-writer Bernard Smytegelt observed:⁵⁸ "There are children in the Old and New Testament into whom God has inserted grace from the womb onward." Thus: "Timothy; John the baptizer; *etc.*)....

"Why should one refuse baptism to such?... God inserts His seed [into them] from their youngness onward." For it is precisely "as children" -- that these children have the promise. "They do not grow up wildly.... There are some, in whom God inserts grace while they are still young."

515. William Brakel: regeneration during infancy

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the famous Voetian William Brakel became the most popular Systematic Theologian in Holland. Author of the famous work *Our Reasonable Religion*, he declared that "some are regenerated during childhood."

Brakel explained that "a little child, elected and reconciled in Christ before using the intellect, can be...changed...by the almighty power of God...and be sanctified in character.... The salvation of the child...is envisaged by the parents.... Even the child is acknowledged to have been sanctified in Christ."⁵⁹

Brakel continued:⁶⁰ "Whether dying before or after receiving baptism, all children of covenanters are[rebuttably] to be regarded as saved -- by virtue of God's covenant in which they were born.... Even the children are acknowledged to have been sanctified in Christ....

"So too, they are to be regarded as true covenanters and children [of God] also when grown up." For they should continue to be so regarded -- "until they might indeed indicate that they are faithless in the covenant, and have no part of the promise."

516. Matthew Henry: slaves of God because children of His handmaid

We next look at the famous Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry. For he was perhaps the most influential Calvinistic English-language Bible commentator of all time.

Around 1704, Henry remarked⁶¹ on Second Samuel 12:15-25 regarding infant salvation: "Nathan had told David that the child should certainly die.... The child died when it was seven days old -- and therefore not circumcised.... Yet he [David] doth not therefore doubt of its being happy. For the benefits of the covenant do not depend upon the seals.

"Godly parents have **great** reason to hope concerning their children that die in infancy, that it is well with their souls in the other world. For the promise is 'to us and our seed' [*cf.* Genesis 17:7f] -- which shall be performed to those who do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not."

Henry also made an interesting comment about the Christ-ian testimony made by Christ's half-cousin John (three months before the latter's birth) . Indeed, Henry also reflected on the witness given by the Israelitic children of the covenant alias the 'innocents' -- who were murdered by wicked King Herod (when they and Jesus were both but two years of age).

Wrote Henry: "A passive testimony was given...to the Lord Jesus...when He was in the womb. He was witnessed to -- by a little child leaping in the womb for joy, at His approach....

"At two years old, He had contemporary witness to Him -- [by those] of the same age. They shed their blood -- for Him Who afterwards shed His blood for them.... These infants were thus 'baptized with blood'...into the Church Triumphant."

Commenting on Christ's blessing of the tiny children in Mark 10:13-16, Henry wrote:⁶² "He put His hands upon them -- denoting the bestowing of His Spirit upon them (for that is the 'hand' of the Lord), and His setting them apart for Himself. He blessed them with the spiritual blessings He came to give."

Elsewhere, in his *Treatise on Baptism*, Henry further insisted:⁶³ "Surely infants may be *foeder-ati* [alias those already 'covenant-**ed**'].... It is past dispute that they may have a benefit....

"Infants are **capable** of covenant relations, and of receiving and **enjoying** covenant privileges and benefits -- not only the external, but the internal. Hence, we not only read of those who were sanctified from the womb -- but are assured that John the Baptist 'was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.' Luke 1:15.

"And indeed, if children are capable of corruption, it would be very hard upon them to say that they are incapable of sanctification. That would be to give the first Adam a larger power to kill, than the second Adam hath to quicken....

"Who dares say that infants are not capable of **inherent** holiness or sanctification of the Spirit? He that saith infants cannot be sanctified -- doth in effect say that they cannot be saved.

For without holiness, no man [alias no person] can see the Lord.... He that can say this, must be a hard-hearted father!"

In dealing with his own children, Henry very much approached them in terms of their own prebaptismal sanctification and in terms of their own subsequent infant baptism. Thereafter, he often reminded them that they: had been born in the covenant; had been dedicated to God; and were obligated to serve Him. They should each say to themselves, so he told them:⁶⁴ 'I am Thy servant, because the son of Thy handmaid!' Psalm 116:16.'

Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry died in 1696, while expostulating in his famous *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. In his notes for that project, his comment on Hebrews 6:1-2 is very relevant.

"The doctrine of baptisms," wrote Henry, "is that of being baptized -- by a Minister of Christ with water, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, as the initiating sign or seal of the covenant of grace." That should then have the effect of "strongly engaging the person so baptized to get acquainted with the New Covenant [and] to adhere to it.... This ordinance of baptism is a foundation to be rightly laid and daily remembered; but not repeated."⁶⁵

517. Watts & Steuart: covenant children apparently within the Invisible Church

Isaac Watts was not only a very famous hymnwriter. Theologically too, he further declared:⁶⁶ "In my opinion, so far as they [infants of believing parents] are in any way members of the Visible Church -- it is upon supposition of their being members of the Invisible Church of God."

Already the 1645 Westminster *Directory for Worship* had suggested that the Minister, right before baptizing covenant infants, should declare that baptism "is a seal of the covenant of grace" and "of our...regeneration...and life eternal" also for "the seed and posterity of the faithful born within the Church." For they "have, by their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it... Of such is the Kingdom of God.... They are Christians, and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized."

Referring to this very passage, Walter Steuart of Pardovan made some very valuable remarks. He did so in his 1709 work: *Collections and Observations Methodiz'd -- Concerning the Worship, Disciple and Government of the Church of Scotland*.

Steuart there observed⁶⁷ that the infants of believing parents are here regarded as Christians. "Their baptism supposeth them to be Church Members, and doth not make or constitute them such. If we consider that the sacraments are Ordinances to be administered in the Church, and to the Church -- they necessarily suppose the pre-existence of a Church, and the child's previous right to that seal."

518. Venema and Mastricht: all covenant children apparently born under grace

In Friesland, Rev. Dr. Herman Venema became Professor of Theology at Franeker. He insisted⁶⁸ that "**all children of believers, as long as they are yet children, are in a relative state of grace** together with their parents, through a special arrangement of God."

Rev. Dr. Peter á Mastricht was Professor of Theology at Utrecht. He wrote⁶⁹ that **little children of the covenant** should be baptized "because they partake of the benefits of the covenant of grace, of **regeneration**, and of the forgiveness of sin.... We are ordered in Holy Scripture to baptize as many as have received the Holy Spirit.... According to that Holy Scripture -- Luke 1:15 & Jeremiah 1:5 -- **tiny children receive the Holy Spirit.**"

Mastricht further observed that "one truly regenerate...can for a time...be unconverted.... This is as clear as the sun, as regards those who are regenerated in the womb of their mothers -- like Jeremiah, John the Baptizer and Timothy."

According to Mastricht, the Protestant Reformers rightly believed that infants are indeed liable to reprobation because of the imputation to them of Adam's original sin. Unbelievers' early-dying "infants, because the Scriptures determine nothing clearly on the subject..., should be left to the Divine discretion."

This, of course, hardly implies that any dying in infancy are reprobate. Nevertheless, "concerning **believers'** infants...they judge **better things.**"⁷⁰

Mastricht added: "Baptism requires a certain acting faith in adults. In **infants**, however, it is content with the **seed of faith** -- requiring not more of an acting faith than does circumcision."⁷¹ Furthermore, he concluded that even '**deedless' faith** is possible -- as **in small children**, and as also in adult believers **while asleep.**"⁷²

519. John á Marck(ius): the infant seed of believers have salvation

Dr. John á Marck -- Professor of Theology first at Franeker, later at Groningen, and then at Leiden -- gave an interesting comment⁷³ on Matthew 28:19 as regards the early-dying children of believers. "Even in the sanctifying of their infant seed," stated Marckius, "we are nevertheless rightly assured that God has mercy upon them in Christ unto salvation."

Marckius further declared:⁷⁴ "We readily acknowledge and defend against Socinians and Anabaptists that the grace of the Spirit, according to the merits of Christ, has a place also in the elect and **early-sanctified little children of believers.** This grace some are accustomed to call...a '**seed of faith**' [or] a 'root of faith'..... Sanctification applies also...to these little children....

"As to the infants of...believers, we have good hope -- because of God's promises (Genesis 17:7 *etc.*).... Concerning the individual persons of Gentiles [alias Pagans], and of infants born of unbelievers, we neither can nor wish to determine anything particularly."

Indeed, Marckius again reflected on this in a 1729 letter on *The Sanctification of the Children of Believers in Christ*. There,⁷⁵ he insisted that this holiness "of the Children of Believers" must be acknowledged by parents -- "as a firm part of their faith.

"For their children have partaken of true grace even from their very first moment... They have been sanctified in Christ...by His grace which has already taken place so many centuries ago, in His time."

520. John Willison: God's kingdom belongs to covenant children

Back in Britain, around 1720 the Scottish Theologian John Willison of Dundee was seen to declare⁷⁶ that "baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament annexed as a sign and seal of God's covenant with believers in Christ.... Baptism is not to be administered...to heathens and infidels, or persons openly scandalous.... The infants of believers...are to be baptized....

"Though infants do not actually profess their faith, as being incapable of it [professing their faith], yet they are to be ranked among believers -- as being the children of believing parents. For infants are but parts of the parents wrapt up in another skin, and to be accounted with them. As the root and branches are but one tree -- according to Romans 11:16.

"We are to judge of children by their parents -- till they [those infants] come to the use of reason and be capable to choose their own way.... Then indeed they can disinherit themselves by their degeneracy. But till then, we are to judge of them by the parents, as we do of a graft taken from a tree and implanted in a new stock....

"It is upon this account that God calls the children of His people 'His children' and children 'born unto Him' -- Ezekiel 16:20. Now if children have a covenant relation to God or be within the covenant (as children of believing parents certainly are), they have a right to the signs and seals of it also. Genesis 17:7; Deuteronomy 29:10-15; Acts 2:39....

"The Scriptures declare infants to be capable of the divine blessings of pardon, of the Spirit, of faith, of grace, and of glory; upon which account Christ kindly invites and takes them into His arms. See: Isaiah 44:3; 65:23; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 18:6; Mark 10:14-16; Luke 1:15. And therefore the sign and seal of these blessings must also pertain to them....

"Infants who are not capable to being taught, or of professing their faith, are to be deemed as parts of their parents -- and to be judge of by them, till they come to the use of reason. So that if parents be holy and among the blessed of the Lord, their infant offspring are to be deemed so with them -- according to Romans 11:16 and Isaiah 65:23."

521. Johan van der Honert: covenant children holy by the Spirit

Rev. Dr. Johan van der Honert was Professor of Theology at Utrecht. He was also the author of a famous book about Ursinus on the *Heidelberg Catechism*.⁷⁷ According to him:⁷⁸ "In a way unknown and untraceable by us, God can and wishes to...work faith -- without which no

salvation for man will exist -- in the children whom He has chosen." This, however, occurs "not without the Holy Spirit -- but through His powerful operation."

Apparently, this noted theologian was to some extent impressed even by the Cartesian representation of the essence of the soul as existing in cogitation -- *cogito ergo sum*. For also on philosophical grounds, Van der Honert spoke of an infant faith --with consciousness.⁷⁹

522. Benedict de Moor: covenant infants holy before baptism

Even more powerful is the testimony of Rev. Dr. Bernard de Moor, Professor of Theology at Franeker. Commenting on the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*, he discussed its statement⁸⁰ that covenant children, though born in sin and subject to misery and condemnation, are nevertheless sanctified in Christ and therefore to be baptized as Members of His Church -- "sanctificatos esse ideoque tanquam Membra Ecclesiae Ejus debere baptizari."

According to De Moor,⁸¹ a promise of saving grace is given indefinitely to the children of believers. It is bestowed upon some of them in earliest infancy. Hence it is permitted, specially to entertain a good hope concerning children now offered in baptism by believing parents.

""The baptism of children is here founded on the charitable presumption that they will be proved to be partakers of the blessings it seals. Indeed, precisely in the covenant infant, "this disposition or tendency of the soul toward belief has proceeded from the regenerating grace of the Spirit. Even this regenerating grace itself can be called the seed or root of faith."⁸²

523. The brothers Leydekker: covenant infants belong to Christ

There were also other lesser Dutch Reformed theologians around 1750. Such included: M. & J. Leydekker, Groenewegen, Van Toll, Tuinman and Aemilius.

Melchior Leydekker held⁸³ that covenant children "must first be regarded as children of wrath in Adam, under sin -- and thereafter as children of grace in Christ, according to the covenant of grace.... They are also born again."

His brother Jacob Leydekker added⁸⁴ that First Corinthians 7:14 certainly implies "that God thus acts with covenanters by giving internal sanctifications to those He wishes." Further: "Godly persons' infants are sanctified in Christ.... That faith is true.... The [adult parental] believer is bound...to acquiesce in the promise given...and to trust in it...; to hope well concerning this infant which is to be baptized -- nay, to believe that this infant belongs to Christ."⁸⁵

524. Groenewegen & Van Toll: covenant children regenerate

Henry Groenewegen added⁸⁶ that First Corinthians 7:14 indicates "a covenantal holiness whereby they [covenant infants] are distinguished from the children of Pagans. That also

involves sanctification by the Spirit, whereby they are prepared and kneaded by Him even from their mothers' wombs."

Abraham van Toll is convinced that the children of believers are themselves truly regenerate. For "God is truth. That which He promises, He faithfully fulfils. So nobody should doubt that He has therefore vivified, renewed, regenerated etc. -- the children for whom He is, according to His promise, a God."⁸⁷

525. Tuinman & Aemilius: covenant infants already holy before their baptism

Similarly, Rev. Carolus Tuinman declared that covenant children must be baptized -- because "they too possess what baptism signifies, namely the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ." They also possess "the Holy Spirit, Who is able as He pleases to work the seed of God and the root of the matter in children during their earliest age."⁸⁸

Also Rev. Professor Dr. Robert Aemilius, the Regent of the State College at Leyden, insisted⁸⁹ that **covenant infants** "are called '**holy**' even when **not yet born.**" This is so, he explained, "because [they are] **already** regarded as partakers of the salvational benefits of the covenant -- such as the forgiveness of sins and regeneration."

526. 'Infant faith' Calvinism: America's primordial Christianity

It was in the shape of the Anti-Anabaptist views of the French Reformed Church and the Dutch Reformed Church, that Christianity first took root in the New World. This was long before the arrival of other brands of Christianity -- such as the Baptists and the Romanists *etc.*

America's Calvinist pioneers, the French Reformed colonists, had settled near Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 1555^f and at St. Augustine in Florida in 1562 -- even before the death of their mentor John Calvin. From 1598 onward, they had started to colonize both Port Royal (in the later Nova Scotia) and Quebec. They fully upheld both infant faith within covenant children, as well as the infant baptism of those babies. So too did the Puritan Episcopalian planters, whose 1606 *Charter of Virginia* was distinctly Calvinistic.

Isolated Scots-Presbyterian congregations (practising the same kind of discipline together with its infant baptism) were found in Colonial America as early as 1614. The 1620 'Pilgrim Father' Calvinists -- though Congregationists -- were strongly committed to infant baptism. So too were the 1624 Dutch Reformed in New Amsterdam (later renamed New York) -- and the Calvinistic Puritans who settled in northern New England from 1629 onward.⁹⁰

Only ten years later, in 1639, did the first rebaptisms take place in the New World. That occurred when the adults Roger Williams and Ezekiel Hollyman submersed one another -- and then constituted the first American Baptist Church (in Rhode Island).⁹¹

The 'New England Company' was formed in 1626 by the Puritan Minister Rev. John White. In 1629, the 'Massachusetts Bay Company' -- in England -- drew up *The Cambridge Agreement*.

That was an undertaking to migrate to America, "having weighed the greatness of the work in regard to the consequence -- God's glory and the Church's good.... By God's assistance, we will be ready with such of our several families as are to go with us."⁹²

In that same year, 1629, the Puritan John Winthrop -- who later became the first Governor of Massachusetts -- drew up his *Reasons for Leaving England*. Explained Winthrop:⁹³ "The whole earth is the Lord's garden, and He hath given it to the sons of men with a general commission. Genesis 1:28 -- 'Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it!'

"This was again renewed to Noah [Genesis 9:1-7]. The end is double and natural: that man might enjoy the fruits of the earth; and God might have His due glory from the creature. Why then should we stand striving here [in England] for places of habitation..., and in the meantime suffer a whole Continent [North America], as fruitful and convenient for the use of man, to lie waste without any improvement?"

527. Paedobaptistic North American Calvinism from 1620 till 1643

As the famous modern American Theologian and Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. John Gerstner has remarked:⁹⁴ "New England, from the founding of [New] Plymouth in 1620 to the end of the eighteenth century, was predominantly Calvinistic. It possessed a Calvinistic homogeneity....

"The theological pattern ranges from the homogeneous Dutch and Scottish Calvinism in parts of New York and Pennsylvania.... Pastor John Robinson, the spiritual father of the Pilgrims, was an ardent Calvinist." Indeed, the great Puritan Pastor Rev. John Cotton, who arrived in North America in 1633, exulted: "I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep."⁹⁵

Especially the New England Calvinistic Puritans soon inundated the New World with Reformed Catechisms. In 1641, it was declared that the General Ecclesiastical Court of the American Puritans "desires that the Elders would make a Catechism for the instruction of youth in the grounds of religion."⁹⁵

As Patricia Brooks observes⁹⁶ in her book *The Return of the Puritans*: "There was an overwhelming response to the request. John Davenport, John Cotton, John Eliot, Thomas Shepard, Richard Mather, John Fiske, John Norton, Seaborn Cotton, James Fitch, James Noyes and Samuel Stone each wrote one or more [catechisms].... John Cotton's *Spiritual Milk for American Babes*...later became part of the famous *New England Primer* -- along with the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*."

We have already seen that Shepard apparently assumed infant faith in covenant children. Indeed, we have also seen that in 1643 Cotton and Hooker and Davenport were invited to attend the Westminster Assembly⁹⁷ (which apparently also did the same).

528. The 1648 Cambridge Platform adopts the Westminster Standards

In 1645, the New England Calvinist Rev. Dr. Richard Mather wrote about "those that were baptized in infancy by the covenant of their parents."⁹⁸ Indeed, in 1648, the Synod of Congregationalists in Cambridge (Massachusetts) ratified the *Westminster Standards* when enacting its own *Cambridge Platform*.

Declared the latter:⁹⁹ "This Synod, having perused and considered (with much gladness of heart and thankfulness to God) the *Confession of Faith* published by the late Reverend [Westminster] Assembly in England -- do judge it to be very holy, orthodox and judicious in all matters of faith, and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto for the substance thereof."

The *Platform* also well referred¹⁰⁰ to "such Members of the Church as were born in the same...[and] baptized in their infancy or minority by virtue of the covenant of their parents." Behold, then, early Colonial America's strict subscription to the *Westminster Standards*!

Then, in 1657, the Massachusetts General Court (of Congregationalist Ministers) adopted Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's *Disputation Concerning Church Members and Their Children*. That latter resolved "to call on parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:1-4.

Indeed, continued Mather, wherever parents acknowledge or "solemnly own the covenant in their own persons -- wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them -- we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children."¹⁰¹

In 1662, the Massachusetts 'Cambridge Synod' again endorsed the *Westminster Standards*.¹⁰² Then, in 1680, Rev. Dr. Increase Mather -- one of Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's many Calvinist 'clergymen sons' -- declared:¹⁰³ "We promise [by the help of Christ] that we will endeavour to walk before God in our houses, with a perfect heart....

"We will uphold the worship of God therein [in our homes] continually.... We will do what in us lieth, to bring up our children for Christ -- [so] that they may become such as they that have the Lord's Name put upon them [at their infant baptism] by a solemn dedication to God in Christ, ought to be."

In 1702, Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's grandson, the even more famous American Theologian Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, looked back and wrote¹⁰⁴ that the first American-born "children of the faithful were [themselves] Church members, with their parents.... Their [infant] baptism was a seal of their being so....

"When our churches were come to between twenty and thirty years of age [since their establishment in America around 1620], a numerous posterity was advanced.... There was a numerous appearance of sober persons who professed themselves desirous to renew their baptismal covenant and submit unto the *Church Discipline* -- and so have their houses also marked for the Lord's," by receiving infant baptism for their descendants.

529. Anti-Anabaptism of Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterians

All of the above excellent practices were further strengthened by the formal establishment of Scots-Irish Presbyterianism in America. This was achieved by the sending there, in 1683, of the Rev. Francis Makemie. Later, in 1706, he erected the Presbytery of Philadelphia (as the first American 'Regional Presbytery').¹⁰⁵

In his doctoral dissertation, distinguished American Presbyterian Theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Morton H. Smith rightly observed¹⁰⁶ that as far as Scots-Irish Presbyterianism in America is concerned, the date of the first Presbytery meeting is believed to have been around 1705. In 1717, it was decided to form the first American Synod. In 1729, that Synod officially adopted the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This expedited the admission to fellowship in sacred ordinances (such as baptism)."

The Synod or General Assembly of 1736 made an even more important declaration. For it declared that its Commissioners there and then had (re-)adopted and still do adhere to the *Westminster Confession, Catechism and Directory* -- without the least variation or alteration."

Soon thereafter, however, things rapidly started changing. For the arminianizing 'Great Awakening' -- about which later -- then began to sweep through many of the American denominations.

This soon split the American Presbyterian Church into an Old Side which opposed the 'Awakening' -- and a New Side which embraced it. The latter then went into schism from the former, and formed its own Synod in 1741.

However, in 1760 the two groups re-united -- on the basis of the *Westminster Standards*. Consequently, even after America's successful War of Independence against England from 1776 onward -- the 1789 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America still seems to have been quite strictly Calvinistic.

530. Colonial American Presbyterianism before the 1740f 'Great Awakening'

Charles Hodge is quite the best historian of Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterianism. In 1839, he wrote his two-volume classic chronicle, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*.¹⁰⁷ The work traces the history of American Presbyterianism during colonial times.

As Hodge observed,¹⁰⁸ prior to the Adopting Act of 1729 (whereby the American Presbyterian Church officially adopted the *Westminster Confession*), "there is not a single Minister whose sentiments are known at all, who was admitted to the Church or allowed to remain in it...who is not known to have been not only a Calvinist but a rigid one...."

"There can be no stronger evidence of the Calvinistic character of the Church than that this new test of orthodoxy [the Adopting Act] was universally admitted -- and that there was not a single member of the Synod who objected to any one article in the *Confession of Faith*."

Least of all was there the slightest objection to the statement in the *Confession* (at 10:3) that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." Nor was there any objection to the confessional statement (at 25:2) that "the visible church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." Still less did any baulk at the confessional statement (in 28:4) that "the infants of one or both believing parents *are to be baptized*."

Declares Professor Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson:¹⁰⁹ "By the end of the colonial period, the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians were the two largest American denominations. The Baptists and the Anglicans were roughly equal in size" -- yet still trailing behind Calvinistic Puritanism. "So pervasive was its influence that, as Schaff reports, even many of the Lutheran churches were remade in the Puritan image."

A confederated Republic was established in the new world in 1776. At that time -- as later acknowledged¹¹⁰ by the renowned nineteenth-century Swiss-American church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff -- the Christian Church in that nation thenceforth to be known as the United States of America, "owes her general characteristic" and "her distinctive image" to the Puritans of New England.

"To this New England influence, must be added indeed the no less important weight of Presbyterianism -- as derived [priorly from the French Huguenots and from the Dutch Reformed] subsequently from Scotland and Ireland.

"But this may be regarded as in all essential respects the same life. The reigning theology of the country...is the theology of -- the *Westminster Confession*."

Yet, within a few brief decades of the establishment of the American Republic -- that infant-baptizing Calvinist nation had slidden into the razzamatazz of revivalism and the anarchy of Anabaptism! What then, we must ask ourselves, went wrong?

531. The 'Great Awakening' an anti-covenantal catastrophe

According to Charles Hodge, it was the arminianizing 'Great Awakening' from 1740 onward -- which first started weakening American Presbyterianism.¹¹¹ This led to a whole chain of such 'revivals' (*sic*). As George P. Hays declares¹¹² in his book *Presbyterians*: "It is certain that the great 'revival' of 1800 entirely changed the moral aspect of the country."

What was the root of that so-called 'Great Awakening' in North America? Anticovenantal hyperindividualism! The New England 'Halfway Covenant' had been administering infant baptism to the babies of baptized yet non-communicant parents. The Congregationalist Rev. Solomon Stoddard had opened up the Lord's Supper also to those who did not even profess to be converted. These events heralded the advent of that desperate corrective known as the 'Great

Awakening.' The latter came in the shape of arminianizing and atomizing decisionism -- and its resultant 'sawdust trail.'

On the above-mentioned 'Great Awakening,' the noted American Presbyterian Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck has made some very valid comments. We find them in his brilliant book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*.

Observes Schenck:¹¹³ "It was unfortunate that the 'Great Awakening' made an emotional experience involving terror, misery and depression the only approach to God.... Since these were not the experiences of infancy and early childhood, it was taken for granted children must -- or in all ordinary cases would -- grow up unconverted....

"The only channel of the new birth which was recognized, was a conscious experience of conviction and conversion. Anything else, according to Gilbert Tennent¹¹⁴ (the inadequately educated and notorious Irish-American revivalist), was a fiction of the brain -- a delusion of the devil. In fact, he ridiculed the idea that one could be a Christian without knowing the time when [one like] he was otherwise."

Schenck himself then further comments¹¹⁵ concerning this 'Great Awakening': "The presumption of regeneration in the case of children of the covenant, based upon the covenant promise, was largely displaced by the church's practice of recognizing as Christian only those who gave 'credible evidence' satisfactory to themselves of regeneration.

"Doubtless in the low state of Christian life, there had been previously a tendency to dwell too little on a spiritual experience of religion. The reaction from this, swung to the contrary extreme.... This was virtually a denial of the Calvinistic doctrine -- that presumably the child of believing parents was God's child from the beginning."

Rev. Jedediah Andrews was an eye-witness of these arminianizing events. In 1741 Andrews -- Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia -- wrote to a friend: "A prevailing rule to try converts is that if you don't know when you were without Christ and unconverted *etc.*, you have no interest in Christ -- let your love and your practice be what they may....

"This is unscriptural.... I am of the mind [it] will cut off nine in ten, if not ninety-nine in a hundred of the good people in the world that have had a pious education"¹¹⁶ -- and who truly know the Lord.

532. The Anti-Anabaptism of the great Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards

The historic Calvinistic and original-American view -- that of 'family evangelism' through daily family worship -- was certainly still seen even at that time, in the greatest American scholar of all time himself. We refer, of course, to the erudite Congregationalist theologian -- Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards.

Edwards, who was appointed President of Princeton in 1757, still preferred the older doctrine. He explained¹¹⁷ that "every family ought to be...a little church, consecrated to Christ and wholly influenced and governed by His rules.... Family education and order are some of the chief means of grace." Indeed, the godliness of many generations of Edward's descendants -- bears out the blessed consequences of that pious practice.

No doubt thinking of his own case, in Edwards's controversy with Williams he stated¹¹⁸ anent godly parents' covenant children who were baptized as babies: "Infants have the habit of saving grace.... They have a new nature given them....

"But we know they cannot come by moral habits in infancy, any other way than by immediate infusion.... I hope I do truly find a heart to give up myself wholly to God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace which was sealed in my baptism --and to walk in a way of obedience to all the Commandments of God...as long as I live!"

Elsewhere, Edwards asked: "What is the nature of a Christian Church? Who are fit for communion therein? What is the nature and import of baptism? How do you prove infant baptism?"¹¹⁹

He seemed to answer this question in his famous work *The History of Redemption*. There, he discussed Matthew 28:19. He showed¹²⁰ that it represents "Christ's appointment of the Gospel Ministry...to teach and baptize all nations" -- and therefore also all families within those nations. Indeed, it is "an ordinance to be upheld in the Christian Church -- to the end of the world."

Edwards implied¹²¹ that baptism is just as unrepeatable as was circumcision. "God did expressly command all the nation of Israel to be circumcised." Similarly, covenant children are "admitted into the Church [Visible] and made Members after they are born, viz. by their baptism....

"Baptism is the only rite [or way] of admission into the Visible Church, applying it to the baptism of children.... It was ordained for the admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church." This, however, is to be distinguished from membership in the Church Invisible. For "a branch receives being in the tree and grows in it and from it..., being born in the covenant, born in the House of God."

Edwards went yet further¹²² in his *Inquiry into the...Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*. Here, careful note should be taken of Edwards's above word 'Visible' -- in his expression 'Visible Church.' Indeed, in that *Inquiry*, Edwards maintained: "All that acknowledge infant baptism, allow infants -- who are the proper subjects of baptism, and are baptized -- to be in some sort Members of the Christian Church.... I have no doubts about the doctrine of infant baptism."

533. Philip Doddridge and Thomas Boston: 'infant faith' within covenant children

Back in Britain, the famous hymn-writer Philip Doddridge referred to the covenant infants blessed by Jesus. Doddridge stated:¹²³ "Let parents...bring their children to Christ by faith and...commit them to Him in baptism and by prayer! And if He Who 'has the keys of death and

of the unseen world' see fit to remove those dear creatures from us in their early days -- let the remembrance of this story comfort us and teach us to hope that He Who so graciously received these children, has not forgotten ours....

"They are sweetly fallen asleep in Him, and will be the everlasting objects of His care and love. 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven!'"

Around 1753, also the famous Scot and 'Marrowman' Thomas Boston of Ettrick rightly insisted that those baptized as church members be regarded as the "body of the elect."¹²⁴ Boston stated:¹²⁵ "None have a right to baptism before the Lord, but **real** saints.... None have a right to it before the Church, but visible saints.... The Word debar[s] all from the sacraments that are not real saints....

"This doth no way prejudice the right of infants to baptism *coram ecclesiae*. For the infants of visible believers are no less visible believers than they [the parents] themselves are. Seeing the Lord declares Himself to be not only the [adult] believer's God, but the God of his seed" too.

To this effect, Boston then cited from Calvin, Zanchius and Ursinus. Indeed, he here also quoted from the *Synopsis of Purer Theology* -- and further from Wendelin, Baxter, Witsius and Bowle.¹²⁶

534. John Brown of Haddington an even John Wesley on 'infant faith'

John Brown of Haddington was the famous trainer of the Burgher divinity students -- and the renowned writer of the multi-volume and world-famous *Self-Interpreting Bible*. In his 1755 *Explication of the Shorter Catechism*, Brown -- who had himself studied under the great Ebenezer Erskine -- gave a similar explanation to Thomas Boston, as regards the presumed prebaptismal faith of covenant children.

Even the modified Arminian John Wesley seems to have presupposed the saved condition of covenant children before their infant baptism. Methodism had by then already been afoot, and indeed expanding, for some fifteen years. Decades later, it would help save Britain from the volcanic destruction which would then erupt in the form of the French Revolution.

The written *Discipline* of Wesley's Methodists, has a very interesting heading on the "Ministration of Baptism to Infants." There, it initially directs the Minister to pray to God that the infant to be baptized "may ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children."¹²⁷ Very clearly, this assumes his or her elect condition even while yet a baby.

Over the following years, however, there was a progressive collapse of Calvinism -- almost all over the world. This was no doubt a result, first, of pietism and latitudinarianism. Then anti-supranaturalism and deism (including New England transcendentalism and unitarianism) plagued the Church. Next came humanism and modernism (with even Methodism itself being tainted by the alleged supremacy of human 'free-will'). This was later followed by the rise of the American Baptists, with their hyperindividualism so terribly destructive of the covenantal solidarity of the theology of the Protestant Reformation

535. Revolutionary Neo-Paganism and Neo-Semipelagian Dispensationalism

Far worse indeed was the French Revolution of 1789. Repaganizing our Western Civilization, it 'dethroned' God and His grace -- and enthroned the 'reason' of 'mature' man. Infants were regarded as but immature men -- totally devoid of hereditary sin, and completely without need of religious regeneration. Salvation was by re-education from ecclesiastical superstitions -- and society was thus to be rescued, world-wide, from the corrupting caress of Christianity. Indeed, Marxist Communism is but a radicalization of the French Revolution.

Finally, there is the rise of dispensationalism -- from the eighteen-twenties onward. It started among some heretical Scots who had imbibed several of the Anabaptist doctrines, and it soon centred itself among the various offshoots from Britain's Plymouth Brethrenism. Then, following in the wake of arminianizing revivalism -- and popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible -- it devastated the United States.

Dispensationalism was, and is, utterly hostile to covenant theology and infant baptism. Indeed, it is also hostile to God's gracious justification of guilty infants through their own Spirit-given personal faith in Christ.

Truly, the Christian Church was in a miserable condition at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It then gave little evidence of an awareness of infant regeneration preceding infant baptism.

All of the above-mentioned factors also increasingly impeded man's perception of the guilt of newly conceived babies, stained with the imputed sin of the first Adam. These factors also impeded man's perception of God's justification of elect babies cleansed by the imputed sinlessness of Christ the Second Adam.

The Protestant Reformation's old awareness of sinful covenant infants receiving saving grace and thereafter Christian baptism in infancy, became eclipsed. So too did the Biblical doctrine obliging all baptizees to live a life of constant and continuing conversion precisely after their baptism.

The above were replaced -- by new revolutionary presuppositions. These included the notions that infants are either sinless or neutral. They also included the idea that even after personally sinning, children are not accountable for their own sins -- until reaching a (revolutionary) 'age of accountability.'

Indeed, the new notions further included the misapprehension that it was only then that persons need a once-and-for-all conversion. This was then in many cases -- and under ever-increasing Arminian and Baptist influences -- followed by the novel idea of getting 'baptized' by a total submersion after the so-called convert's personal and public profession of faith in Christ (just once and for all).

536. The fateful 1801 Union of U.S. Congregationalists and Presbyterians

In the new republic across the Atlantic, the 1801 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) perilously adopted an ill-conceived 'Plan of Union.' This brought hoards of New England Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church. Neither these folk nor their ancestors (for very many generations) had priorly subscribed to the *Westminster Standards*. Thereafter, their sudden new profession of 'adherence' to them was -- at best -- rather loose.¹²⁸

Two parties thereupon arose in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) -- the 'Old School' (which strictly upheld the *Westminster Standards*), and the 'New School' (which subscribed to them only very loosely). The 1801 'Plan of Union' had proven to be a disaster.

Rev. Dr. S.J. Baird discussed this in his 1868 book *A History of the New School and of the Questions Involved in the Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1838*. Stated Baird: "Instead of the 'Plan' converting Congregationalists into Presbyterians, the opposite result was imminent -- the congregationalizing of the entire Presbyterian Church."¹²⁹

Worse yet. In practice, this meant the *de facto* deconfessionalizing of American Presbyterianism.

By 1810, some doctrinally deviationistic dissenters within the denomination drew up the 'Cumberland Confession' -- and then organized the so-called Cumberland Presbyterian Church. That body, says the great Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Schaff, was "half-Calvinistic and half-Arminian."¹³⁰ The shift away from undiluted Anti-Anabaptist and Pro-Paedobaptist Calvinism -- and toward revivalism and rebaptism -- continued apace.¹³¹

Worse yet. The tension in the PCUSA between the remaining majority of the New School 'Congre-terians' or 'Presby-gationalists' on the one hand, and the Old School Presbyterians on the other -- foreshadowed a great schism in 1837.

Explained Baird: "With the prevalence of lax and unsound theology, there occurred a reaction from the strictness of the Presbyterian disciple...[and] a purely Calvinistic theology. In 1837, it came to a head. In that year, the Old School group gained control of the Assembly for the first time in several years."¹³²

In the previous year, 1836, Rev. Dr. George A. Baxter, Professor at Union Seminary in Virginia, moderated an 'Old School' Presbyterian meeting. That drew up a *Testimony and Memorial*, condemning sixteen errors then epidemic in the denomination. After presentation to the 1837 General Assembly, the latter body resolved "that the Act of the Assembly of 1801, entitled a 'Plan of Union'..., is hereby abrogated."¹³³

537. The slow recovery of Calvinism in Scotland and elsewhere

Only from about 1825 onward, did Calvinism start making its slow come-back both nationally and internationally. This recovery started first in Scotland and Holland and America. Later, it spread also to various other parts of the world.

Alexander Smith Paterson, the genial young Scottish Presbyterian Minister of Dundee, at his death in 1828 when but twenty-five, left behind him his posthumously published *History of the Church from the Creation of the World to the Nineteenth Century*. He also authored his *Concise System of Theology on the Basis of the Shorter Catechism*.¹³⁴

In the latter work, Paterson insisted¹³⁵ that "baptism is designed to signify and seal the ingrafting of believers into Christ, their having a right to the benefits of the covenant of grace.... Ingrafting into Christ expresses union with Him....

"Had not His power been exerted in cutting us off from the old stock, the first Adam of whom we are branches by nature -- this spiritual union could never have been effected. John 15:5. And in consequence of this union, which is signified and sealed by baptism, the imputation of Christ's righteousness is also sealed. Galatians 3:27....

"Baptism is designed as a mark or badge between Christians and the enemies of Christ.... Baptism does not constitute anyone a Member of the Church. For it is **[pre-]supposed** that all who are baptized, are Church Members. And if they are children of professing parents, they are born Members of the Visible Church. First Corinthians 7:14.

"But by it [baptism], they who *were* Members before --have their membership **sealed** to them. For 'by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.' First Corinthians 12:13. And this shows how inaccurately they speak upon this subject who talk of 'christening' their children -- as if by baptism they were made Christians."

Rev. Professor Dr. John Dick (1764-1833) of the Scottish Secession Church secured a doctorate from Princeton in the U.S.A., and made a sound contribution to ongoing Calvinism especially in his *Lectures in Theology*. There he reminded¹³⁶ Christians that "our Lord said on a certain occasion, 'Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me -- for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' The kingdom of heaven frequently signifies the new dispensation, or the Church upon earth.... Children are pronounced to **belong** to it....

"As an Israelitish male child was recognized by circumcision to be one of the chosen people -- so we are declared by baptism to be disciples of Christ, and Members of the household of God.... Baptism is therefore a recognition of our right to the privileges of adoption, which ['right'] unquestionably belongs to the members of His family....

"They [their children]...should be regarded by the members -- as brethren.... **Their children** are a sacred deposit, and are not so much theirs as **the Lord's** -- for Whose service it is their chief business to prepare them."

538. Buchanan and the covenantal consequences of the Scottish 'Great Disruption'

The Scottish situation immediately before the great 'Disruption' in the Church of Scotland -- at the secession of the Free Church from it -- is well reflected in the thought of Rev. Professor Dr. James Buchanan. In 1843 he wrote¹³⁷ "that children, however young, even infants in their mother's arms, are fit and capable subjects of divine grace.... Every human being comes into the world closely connected with others."

For the Bible "reveals God not merely as the God of individuals, but as the 'God of families'.... God has constituted two distinct heads, the first and the second Adam. And as, in fact, children are found to be included along with their parents in the one and share in consequence in the ruinous effects of the fall -- a strong presumption arises hence that children may be included also along with their parents in the other....

"With the faith of the parent..., during the period of nonage the infant is federally included....

In the language of the *Westminster Confession* [10:3], "elect infants dying in infancy "are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth'.... In the preacher's words [Ecclesiastes 11:5], 'As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all'....

"The *Confession*...proceeds on the supposition that children are fit and capable subjects of divine grace and that they have an interest in the covenant prior to their baptism.... It utterly subverts the doctrine that none are regenerated who have not been baptized -- and thus serves to comfort the heart of many a bereaved parent whose child may have died before that sacred rite could be administered."

539. Buchanan's linkage of circumcision and baptism with infants

Continued Buchanan: "Abraham had first an interest in the covenant, and then circumcision was added as a sign and seal of his interest in it.... So, in like manner, the children of believing parents have an interest in the covenant -- and they receive baptism as the sign and seal of that interest which they had, being yet unbaptized....

"For if either father or mother be a believer, the children are recognized as having a title to baptism...by virtue of their having an interest in the covenant, according to the expressive words of the apostle (First Corinthians 7:14).... For 'if the root be holy, so are the branches' (Romans 11:16).... The children are included with or rather in their parents, in the provisions and promises of the covenant -- and had an interest in it, being yet unbaptized....

"In baptism there is, as it were, a visible application made to that child individually of the sign and seal of all the grace which the covenant contains.... The parent...[should be] knowing that...his children are declared to be 'holy' -- and as such have been admitted to the privilege of baptism....

"The children, as they grow up, should frequently be reminded that they were dedicated to God, that they were baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.... When, at any time, in after-life [alias their later years], they have any doubt as to their interest in the covenant -- they may look back to the personal application of the seal of the covenant to themselves individually, while as yet they were unconscious infants, and draw from it a precious assurance of the perfect freeness of the Gospel. To believing parents again, who have lost their children in infancy, the truths which have been illustrated are fitted to impart a consolation such as the world can neither give nor take away."

Buchanan later concluded:¹³⁸ "It was by the Spirit that the Lord Christ was sanctified in His human nature.... Jesus said, 'Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Nay, on another occasion 'Jesus called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of the Disciples and said: 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven!' That little children are capable subjects of God's grace, is implied in the provision that was made for their admission to the privileges of the covenant first by circumcision under the Old Testament and secondly by baptism under the New....

"The case of Timothy...shows that little children are capable subjects of divine grace.... 'Hearken unto 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' [Isaiah 46:3].... We learn from the case of Timothy that true religion is sometimes implanted in the soul of a child at a very early period, and continues to grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength." Second Timothy 1:5f and 3:14-17.

540. Russell & Bethune: covenant infants rebuttably presumed regenerate

The next year, 1844, we find also Rev. Dr. David Russell of Dundee searchingly writing¹³⁹ that "He Who imparted His moral likeness to Adam immediately at his creation, and gave His Holy Spirit to John while in his mother's womb, ought not to be limited. If the first Adam had continued obedient -- would not his children have been born in a state of holiness, or with a principle predisposing to holy exercises, as soon as the faculties of the mind were so developed as to fit for moral agency?

"And if so -- why may not the Spirit of God so influence the heart of a child, as to produce **a similar predisposition there? If, as we have seen, the germ of sin be in infants from the beginning**, though not developed in actual transgressions -- why may not the germ of holiness be implanted by the Divine Spirit on earth, though its developments in the case of infants can be witnessed only in heaven?"

Two years later, we find a similar thought expressed by the American Dutch Reformed scholar Rev. George W. Bethune. He reflected about the justification of early-dying children. We refer to his book: *Early Lost, Early Saved -- An Argument for the Salvation of Infants (with Consolations for Bereaved Parents)*.

There, Bethune wrote¹⁴⁰ that "the child, if he [had] 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 [when an adult]. But the babe, as a babe, was from his birth an object of the divine favour and compassion."

Indeed, when still young, Cain was a child of the covenant of grace -- rebuttably presumed regenerate. Genesis 3:15f & 4:1f. Later, that presumption was indeed rebutted -- and then resulted in excommunication. Genesis 4:11-16 & First John 3:9-12.

Until then, however, that rebuttable presumption was constantly maintained. And rightly so. Genesis 4:1-3f & 4:7.

541. The recovery of 'infant faith' in Holland after the French Revolution

Western Civilization's slow recovery from the catastrophe of the French Revolution was also promoted even in Europe. There, the doctrines of radical humanism damaged even the Reformed Churches far more badly than they did in overseas Britain and America.

In Holland, the issue was put tersely in the famous words of the great Christian-Historical and Anti-Revolutionary Dutch statesman Guillaumé Groen van Prinsterer, There was, he said, a great need to see the link between "*Ongeloof en Revolutie*" [alias 'Faithlessness and Revolution'].

The recovery of Christianity required the opposing of the Revolution -- with the Gospel. What was needed, then, was -- the Protestant Reformation against the French Revolution.

Depressed and even oppressed by the terrible condition of the State Church in Holland, a group seceded in 1834 -- the '*Afscheiding*.' Although opposing the deadness of the State Church, and rightly stressing experimental religion and the need for adult conversions, its leaders also opposed the theology of baptistic sects. Indeed, its chief leader, Hendrik de Cock, certainly maintained the Old-Reformed view of the covenant¹⁴¹ and of infant baptism.

The Dutch Baptist Jan de Liefde had published his 'revolutionary' book *Baptism of Adults*. So H.P. Scholte, a leader of the *Afscheiding*, then replied with his writing *Holy Baptism --or the Sign in the Flesh*.

There, Scholte rightly asserted the Biblical doctrine of infant baptism -- against the subjectivistic antipaedobaptist De Liefde. Yet Scholte also reactionarily and objectivistically grounded infant baptism solely in the objective covenant of grace -- and wrongly denied the need of a prebaptismal subjective faith in the baptismal candidate himself or herself.

542. The baptistic De Liefde opposed by the Paedobaptist Scholte

Wrote Scholte against De Liefde:¹⁴² "I am not...able to baptize tiny children on the basis of a presumed regeneration.... [Yet] I must tell you that it is just as uncertain whether the adult you

stand ready to baptize, has truly been regenerated or not. You so presume; you so allege -- but you are not certain about this. I want to assure you that if I could administer Holy Baptism only on the basis of the certainty of regeneratedness -- probably nobody would be baptized by me....

"I baptize like the Apostles, after profession of faith in God-in-Christ, on the basis of God's promise that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. Yet I therefore also baptize all whom the believer indicates to me have been taken up into God's covenant" -- namely also all of the infants of that adult alleging his own Christian faith.

Here, Scholte rightly assumed the validity of baptism -- irrespective of the presence of faith or not in the infant baptized (or even in his or her faith-professing parent). Scholte is also right that both Historic Calvinists and Historic Baptists rebuttably assume the existence of subjective faith in the candidate -- before baptizing him or her. For the Historic Baptist assumes that a truth faith exists within adults, before he will baptize them. And the Historic Calvinist assumes the existence of saving faith not only in the adult parent but also in that Christ-professing parent's infant, before baptizing that infant.

Scholte is also right that the Baptist De Liefde can never know for sure that the adult he assumes has been justified, really is a child of God before he then baptizes him. And Scholte would also be right in assuming that the Calvinian Calvin and his Calvinistic followers could never know for sure that the covenant infants they assume had been justified, really were children of God before they then baptized them.

Yet Scholte did not sufficiently realize that he himself too could never really know for sure -- that the adult who professed the Christian faith also truly possessed it, before having his infant baptized. And not only Scholte always, but even the Christ-professing adult himself sometimes -- did not irrebuttably know for sure that this Christ-professing adult was indeed also a Christ-possessing adult. Neither did the Baptist De Liefde.

For H.P. Scholte, just as Baptists like Jan De Liefde and also just as Historic Calvinists like Calvin and the Westminster divines, baptized **not** on the basis of possession but only on the basis of profession of faith by an adult. Jan De Liefde baptized not Christ-possessing but only Christ-professing adults. So too did H.P. Scholte -- together with the infants of those Christ-professing adults.

543. The overreacting error of Scholte together with his fine Paedobaptism

Neither De Liefde nor Scholte baptized only believers. De Liefde baptized all adults who to themselves and to De Liefde seemed to be believers. Scholte baptized all infants of such adults as to themselves and to Scholte seemed to be believers -- and rightly refused baptism to all other infants.

De Liefde erred in refusing to baptize also the infants of those who seemed to him to be believers and not unbelievers. And Scholte erred in deliberately baptizing infants even when it had not seemed to him that they themselves were believers. Yet greater was Scholte's error -- if he

ever further presumed that those infants themselves were still unbelievers, and merely the unbelieving children of parents who either professed or possessed Christ.

Scholte seemed to have forgotten that it is a grave sin to throw Christ's baptismal pearls before pigs -- and even before piglets. Scholte had no right to baptize those being suckled by adults he deemed to be sheep -- without also assuming that the sucklings themselves were probably indeed little lambs, and not piglets.

""Yet, in his more thoughtful moments, Scholte did gravitate back toward the Historic Calvinistic baptismal position. For he himself declared:¹⁴³ "From the Covenant, it follows that the Covenanters are regenerate; endowed with faith unto salvation; sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Regeneration, faith, sealing with the Holy Spirit -- are benefits or consequences [and] no way preconditions of the Covenant."

Speaking of Covenant Infants, Scholte too rightly stated: "The Lord treats them as His Covenanters, even when they themselves are not able to give an account of the Covenant and of their participation therein." Indeed, Scholte even said that children have faith -- and that God "did something in them" when "He laid His holy hand on them."

Scholte later left Holland and settled in the United States. There, he was very instrumental in propagating his baptismal views and in calling for the cleansing of the oldest denomination in the Northern Continent of the New World -- the backslidden Reformed Church in America. It is remarkable that he did so -- even while looking askance at the establishment of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857.

544. Wormser: teach the *nation* to understand baptism!

John Adam Wormser Sr. was born and baptized in the Dutch Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was confirmed in the National (Dutch Reformed) Church. However, he separated therefrom -- together with the brethren of the 1834 *Afscheiding*.

Yet Wormser later returned to the National Church -- also because of his views on 'baptizing the nation(s). Matthew 24:14 & 28:19 and Revelation 15:4 & 21:24f. Then he set out his Historic Calvinistic position on the sacrament of initiation -- in his work *Infant Baptism*. There, his great motto was: "Teach the nation to understand and to appreciate her baptism -- then both Church and State are saved!"

This prepared the way for the subsequent writings of Rev. Proessor. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. (see later below). Most of the latter were published by Wormser's son -- John Adam Wormser Jr. -- especially from the 1886 time of the *Doleantie* onward.

545. The schism of 1838 and the American Baptists

Returning now to the United States, it will be remembered that the 'Great Awakening' and the rise of arminianizing revivalism had badly perverted the Presbyterian Church. So too,

indirectly, did the meteoric rise of the American Methodists (and later the Baptists) from about that time onward.

The 1801 influx of unconfessional Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America -- severely dented the initially pure Calvinism of American Presbyterians. By 1810, the half-arminian Cumberland Presbyterian Church had seceded. By 1815, even within the PCUSA, the 'New School' religion was seriously challenging that of the 'Old School.'

This precipitated *de facto* schism. In 1838, the 'Old School' Assembly refused to recognize commissioners from disowned presbyteries. It resulted in completely polarizing American Presbyterians against one another for doctrinal reasons. In addition, however, also a further polarization -- for overwhelmingly regional reasons -- was fast developing too.

Till then, the Presbyterians in the South had been largely neutral as regards the above-mentioned doctrinal dispute. However, there now developed an ever-increasing exasperation in the South with the North -- not only over the latter's claims alleging the indefensibility of slavery, but particularly as regards the right of each State to secede from the American Union. Worsening human relations between those on one side of the Mason-Dixon line and those on the other, now beclouded the baptismal issues. All this later erupted in the catabaptist catastrophe at the 'Old School' Presbyterian General Assembly of 1845.

Another catastrophic factor in the downfall of American Calvinism, was the meteoric rise of the Baptists. Only in 1639 did they establish their very first church in the New World. But their growth was dramatic, after the Great Awakening -- especially with the increasing popularity of its Arminian offsprings: the sawdust trail and the altar call.¹⁴⁴

As the nation moved westward during the nineteenth century, the atomistic Baptists became almost the new 'Established Church' --on those rugged and highly individualistic frontiers. By then, even Presbyterianism was beginning to be overwhelmed by what Rev. James B. Jordan has cryptically called "the American Baptist Culture."¹⁴⁵ Indeed, we ourselves would even call it: the increasingly Anabaptist American culture.

For today, 85% of all the world's Baptists reside in the United States alone. There -- yet in no other country on earth -- they constitute fully the largest group of 'Protestant' (or rather Non-Romish) Christian denominations. 95% of all American Blacks are Baptists. Indeed, throughout the southeast -- among both Blacks and Whites -- there are "almost" more Baptists than people. Sadly, that has tended to baptize also the Presbyterian minority in that culture.

546. 'Old School' versus 'New School' American Presbyterians

During the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond, the downward decalvinization and especially the ongoing anabaptization of the United States and even of American 'Calvinists' -- was bewailed by 'Old School' Presbyterians in the PCUSA. Such included: Rev. Professors Drs. Archibald Alexander, Joseph Addison Alexander, James Waddell Alexander, Lyman H. Atwater, James Carnahan, Ashbel Green, Charles Hodge, E.P. Humphrey, and Samuel Miller. Indeed, their

concern was shared even by the famous 'New School' theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Henry B. Smith.¹⁴⁶

Thus, in 1832, Rev. Professor Dr. Ashbel Green declared in his *Lectures on the Shorter Catechism*¹⁴⁷ "that in most of the churches of our denomination, there is a mournful disregard of the duty which ought to be performed toward baptized children. They are not viewed and treated as Members of the Church at all. Nor [is] more regard shown to them than to those who are unbaptized. This is a grievous and very criminal neglect."

Princeton Professor of Church History Rev. Dr. James Waddell Alexander asked about infant baptism in 1840: "Do we not, in our squabbles about the amount of water *etc.*, lose sight of the one great intent of this ordinance?" Indeed, in 1845 he wrote: "O, how we neglect that ordinance -- treating children in the Church just as if they were out of it.... I am distressed.... What a dead letter" in the PCUSA is the Calvinistic doctrine in the *Westminster Standards* concerning covenant children!¹⁴⁸

Looking back from 1863-64, Princeton's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater observed¹⁴⁹ of infant baptism that "it is enough to bring any rite into disuse...if it be regarded as meaningless and profitless..., or if its practical significance and consequent duties...are substantially ignored and forgotten." Discussing the *Westminster Standards*, he feared that even "Old School Presbyterians...may have -- owing to various causes in the present century -- lost sight of their precious significance."¹⁵⁰

Looking back as far as 1807, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge made a very wistful remark. He observed, half a century later, that "fifty years ago there was one child baptized for every five Members; now, one for every twenty Members."¹⁵¹

Two years later, Dr. E.P. Humphrey told¹⁵² the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church that this current had been running in the same direction all the time. For the trend had been running away from Classic Presbyterianism and toward the increasing abandonment of the practice of infant baptism. Indeed, this had been happening not just in America as a whole, but also in the American Presbyterian Church itself -- and even in its Old School. Nor were matters very much better in this regard from 1861 onward, even in the Southern Presbyterian Church.¹⁵³

Even the 'New School' Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. Henry Boynton Smith bemoaned: "In many of the churches in this country, this ordinance [of infant baptism] has fallen into a deplorable disuse."¹⁵⁴ The plain fact is, as he pointed out, the older doctrine and practice of the Presbyterian Church had nearly perished -- under revivalism.¹⁵⁵

So much was the latter the case, that Professor Smith needed to correct even one of his own former theological students who had subsequently fallen into this 'revivalistic' error. Explained Smith:¹⁵⁶ "Those baptized in infancy...do not...join' the church" only when they later 'profess' their faith. No! They are rebuttably deemed to be members of the Invisible Church at their conception -- and they therefore irrebutably 'join' the Visible Church at their infant baptism. "This is...Presbyterian theory.... In your proposed 'formula of baptism' of infants, I miss the recognition of their Church Membership. Your 'formula' makes it chiefly a parental act, and does not imply any relation of the child to the Church."

547. The undiluted paidobaptist Calvinism of Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Miller

Yet there were exceptions. Solidly Calvinist -- also on baptism -- was Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton. In 1835, he published his *Infant Baptism Scriptural and Reasonable*. And in 1840 -- together with his colleagues -- he submitted to the General Assembly a Report on *The Christian Education of the Children and Youth in the Presbyterian Church*. Those colleagues included: the Southerner Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander; his son, Rev. Professor Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander; Rev. Professor Dr. James Carnahan; and Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge.¹⁵⁷

"The Primitive Church," maintained this *Miller Report*,¹⁵⁸ "considered herself as the common mother of all baptized children, and exercised a corresponding care of them." These children are baptized in infancy precisely as Members of the Church. "They must be the subjects of her discipline...[and] from the first dawnings of reason ought to be taught to consider themselves as the Lord's children, solemnly dedicated to Him in soul and body."

Clearly referring to Romans 11:16, Miller and his associates then drew attention to "the close and endearing connection between parents and children...in favor of the church-membership of the infant seed of believers.... Can it be, my friends, that when the stem is **in** the church, the branch is **out** of it?"

Miller then answered his own question: "The infant seed of the professing people of God were Members of the Church under the Old Testament economy.... The Church under that dispensation and the present, is the same.... The Church remains the same.... They [covenantal infants] undoubtedly are still Members.... I Consider the Jewish baptism of proselytes as a historical fact well established.... We find the principle of family baptism again and again adopted in the apostolic age..... Isaiah 45:17-23."

Discussing First Corinthians 7:14, Miller further explained that even in a 'mixed marriage' -- also "the infidel party is so far...consecrated by the believing party, that their children shall be reckoned to belong to the sacred family with which the latter is connected and shall be regarded and treated as Members of the Church of God.... This interpretation of the passage is...decisely maintained by Augustine (*On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (ch. 27)).

"Even where a believer's spouse is an infidel," insisted Miller, "the passage [First Corinthians 7:14]...establishes the Church Membership of infants." As regards such covenant children, Miller assured believing parents, "the infidelity of your partner shall never frustrate their interest in the covenant of your God. They are holy, because you are so.... The infants of believing parents are born Members of His Church."

548. The twin evils of Anabaptism and Romanism

The above was the universal belief of the Old Testament Church throughout its history, and also of the New Testament Church right down till some five years after the beginning of the

Protestant Reformation in 1517. Explained Miller: "It is an undoubted fact, that the people known in ecclesiastical history under the name of the Anabaptists, who arose in Germany in the year 1522, were the very first body of people in the whole Christian world who rejected the baptism of infants on the principles now adopted by the antipaedobaptist body...."

It is objected" nevertheless -- by the Baptists -- "that the Paedobaptists are not consistent with themselves, in that they do not treat their [own] children as if they were Members of the Church." Miller then sadly admitted "it cannot be denied that the great mass of the paedobaptist churches" -- especially under the influence of the 'great Awakening' -- "do act inconsistently in regard to this matter." However, the cure is obvious: "Let all baptized children -- from the hour of their receiving the seal of God's covenant -- be recorded and recognized as infant disciples!"

For "the children of professing Christians are **born** Members of the Church -- and are baptized as a sign and seal of this *Membership*. Nothing can be plainer, than that they ought to be treated in every respect as Church Members.... [Yet still,] it is evident that the great body of paedobaptist churches have much to reform in regard to their treatment of baptized children, and are bound to address themselves to that reform with all speed and fidelity."

Going on to discuss "baptismal regeneration," Miller next bewailed the fact that "this unscriptural and pernicious doctrine is not confined to the Roman Catholics in whose system it may, without impropriety, be said to be indigenous. But [it] is also frequently found in the pulpits and manuals of some Protestants in the midst of whose general principles it ought to be regarded as a poisonous exotic...."

"The truth is, the doctrine now under consideration is the very same in substance with the doctrine of the *opus operatum* of the Papists -- which all evangelical Protestants have been opposing for more than three hundred years as a mischievous delusion. Accordingly, the Popish character and fatal tendency of this error have been unreservedly acknowledged by many bishops and other pious divines of the Church of England, as well as by many of the same denomination in this country."

Throughout, even while berating Rome's understanding of baptism -- together with every other consistent American Presbyterian of stature (until 1845), Miller was far more concerned with the constant erosion of American Presbyterianism by militant Anabaptism. Indeed, his writings indicate that Miller was more concerned about the baptismal errors of (Ana)Baptists than he was about those of the Romanists. For, as the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge* rightly observes:¹⁵⁹ "Dr. Miller was a stanch Calvinist and Presbyterian."

549. The catastrophic 'Old School' General Assembly of 1845

After the 'schism' between 'Old School' and 'New School' Presbyterians within the PCUSA in 1838, the 'Old School' General Assembly of 1845 quite sectarianly purported to "invalidate" Romish baptisms. The great Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge rightly opposed that decision.

He did so not because, as an inveterate advocate of the presumed regeneratedness of infantly-baptized Presbyterians, he presupposed the prebaptismal regeneratedness of Romish babies

too. Indeed, he did not presuppose the latter. But he opposed the General Assembly decision because it had anticalvinistically and indeed sinfully advocated the rebaptism of some of those already validly baptized -- instead of simply urging baptized Romanists strenuously to improve their baptism by becoming Presbyterians.

The majority of that General Assembly had wrongly departed from Calvinism and from their own *Westminster Standards* -- in demanding the rebaptism of presbyterianized Ex-Romanists. However, that majority does seem to have grasped (quite rightly) that regular infant baptisms indeed presuppose the regenerated prebaptismal status of the infants concerned -- though, of course, only rebuttably so.

For apparently that is one of the factors which made it hard for that misinformed majority to understand how Romish baptism could be valid -- if neither the Romish infant nor his or her parents could be presumed regenerate. (Of course, had they been consistent, they would also have had to draw the same conclusion regarding the validity of suchlike Presbyterian baptisms too -- namely whenever it might later appear that neither the baby nor the baby's parents had then been regenerated indeed. Yet precisely that conclusion the misinformed majority does not appear to have drawn.)

The error here, of course, is not that of needing to presuppose the regeneratedness of the candidate before then baptizing him or her. That procedure is quite correct. But the error here is that of wrongly assuming that any baptism as such -- if a then-assumed regeneratedness later gets disproved -- can ever be invalidated.

There is little doubt that many of the influential delegates at that 1845 General Assembly had, several decades earlier, already fallen under the mesmerizing spell of baptistic revivalism. The latter virtually denied the membership status of all baptized children in Christ's Visible Church. Similar views, such as those of treating tiny covenant children as "baptized unbelievers" and as "the enemies of God" -- thus Thornwell⁶⁰ -- obviously influenced the 'Presbyterian' General Assembly of 1845.

Deteriorating North/South relations also soured the debate. Just a few vastly-outnumbered and knowledgeably Anti-Anabaptist Calvinists like Charles Hodge -- almost all of them from the North -- had to take on a powerful (though nondescript) 'catabaptist coalition' from all over the country. That 'catabaptist coalition' (*sic*) consisted of Thornwell-loving and fervently patriotic Southerners -- as well as Revivalists and Catabaptists from both the North and the South.

550. The 1845 General Assembly catabaptized by Thornwell's Semi-Anabaptism

The motley coalition was by led by the golden-tongued Southerner James Henley Thornwell. He spoke before an Assembly with a massive and fiercely-loyal Southern component.

Indeed, even and especially the Northern component had by and large -- for several decades -- been eroded by 'Great Awakening' revivalism. And that was seriously hostile to the Anti-Anabaptistic 'Consistent Calvinism' of stalwarts like Charles Hodge.

Given those unfortunate circumstances, the result of the vote on this issue was almost predictable. The Catabaptists -- who favoured the rebaptizing of Romanists converted to Protestantism in general and to Presbyterianism in particular -- were led by Drs. Thornwell, McGill, Junkin, and Rice.¹⁶¹ They won by a landslide.

Only eight had voted against Thornwell -- in addition to the further six abstentions. Yet what an 'eight' they were! For those who voted against Thornwell's Catabaptism and for Calvin's Calvinism included not only Dr. Lord and Aitken,¹⁶² but also Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton and Dr. Henry B. Smith of New York. The latter were "the two leading Presbyterian divines of that day." Thus that greatest of all Calvinist church historians -- Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff.¹⁶³

It must be remembered that Thornwell was perhaps unconsciously, but nevertheless clearly, tainted with revivalism. At that point, he utterly rejected the Westminster doctrine of the status of the covenant child. The Westminster Calvinists had declared that children of the covenant "are Christians and federally holy before baptism and therefore are to be baptized."¹⁶⁴

Thornwell, however, would soon retort -- against the doctrine of the Westminster Assembly -- that those in "the Church" were only "baptized unbelievers" and therefore outside of Christ. For, thundered the theatrical Thornwell, "until they come to Him...they are to be dealt with as the Church deals with all the enemies of God.... She turns the key upon them and leaves them without!"¹⁶⁵

The North Carolinian Presbyterian Southerner Rev. Professor Dr. Schenck has offered an excellent explanation of this maverick misunderstanding. Stated Schenck:¹⁶⁶ "Dr. Thornwell...was not in agreement with Calvin's belief concerning children in the covenant -- which deserved the right to be called the Historic Christian Faith."

551. Some Neo-Semimanichaeian tendencies in the Thornwellians

The death of his young son in 1856 helped bring Thornwell toward a more Calvinistic position. For then and soon thereafter he said: "I believe the covenant which God has made with His people, and which is sealed to their faith in the baptism of their offspring, to be a real and a precious thing.... Where Christian parents have in faith laid hold upon this covenant and have pleaded its promises on behalf of their seed, they may, when dying in these early years of childish immaturity, be laid, without a particle of apprehension or distrust, upon the bosom of that promise, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed!'"¹⁶⁷

Sadly, however -- through Thornwell's previous deviationist decision at the General Assembly of 1845 -- great baptismal damage was done to the denomination as a whole. It gave a long-term impetus to a semi-baptistic denial of prebaptismal infant regeneratedness -- especially in the later Southern Presbyterian Church. Even after the death of his son, Thornwell still never arrived at a solidly Calvinistic (nor confessional) view of tiny covenant children.

Now earlier, the 1857 General Assembly of the PCUSA had appointed Thornwell Chairman of the Committee to revise the *Book of Discipline* -- to report back to the next Assembly in 1859.

He then (unsuccessfully) tried to push through the Majority Report -- which he himself had drafted.

He was opposed¹⁶⁸ -- according to the not wholly supportive Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney -- even by his fellow Committee Members Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge, Rev. Dr. James Hoge and Rev. Professor Dr. A.T. McGill. The latter, who had previously supported Thornwell at the General Assembly of 1845, now opposed him.

Rev. Dr. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer, editor of *The Presbyterian Magazine*, quickly responded to the changes proposed in the Majority Report anent the revision of the *Book of Discipline*. "A great and fundamental principle of Presbyterianism is undermined in this change," observed Van Rensselaer.¹⁶⁹ For the Majority Report "takes the lowest possible view of the relation of baptized children to the Church consistent with the idea that they are Members in any sense at all." To the contrary, however, we Presbyterians should "rather let our practice ascend to the dignity and elevation of the truth of our present [*Westminster*] Standards -- than our principles descend to the level of the new *Revision*."

In Dabney's articles on *The Revised Book of Discipline* (printed in the *Presbyterian* from December 1859 through January 1860), he himself admitted¹⁷⁰ that Dr. Van Rensselaer's description of these views of Thornwell as "dangerous, invidious and inquisitorial" -- is "very valid." Indeed, Dabney himself took issue with "Dr. Thornwell" and described his "illustration" as "not just." For, insisted Dabney: "Let Dr. Thornwell read any of the arguments of Immersionists -- and he will change his assertion!"¹⁷¹

Thornwell died in 1862 -- within a year after the Southern Presbyterians had seceded from the Old School PCUSA, because of the War between the States. Thornwell is tops on theocracy -- but not at his best on baptism (about which matter his grasp leaves very much to be desired).

Even Thornwell's modern admirer Rev. Professor Dr. Morton H. Smith makes a telling admission. "In connection with the Sacraments," explains Smith,¹⁷² "Thornwell has very little in his extant writings -- other than the general remark about the validity of the Sacraments." Smith's latter remark seems to be a reference to Thornwell's opposition to Calvin and the Historic Calvinists as regards the validity of baptisms administered by the Church of Rome.

As Rev. Dr. Morris McDonald rightly points out in his insightful 1988 article *The Present-Day Reformed Church*:¹⁷³ "Presbyterianism once made up 20 percent or more of the American population, but now it is only two percent. "The Southern Presbyterian and the Southern Baptist Church emerged at about the same time. But after a century and a half, the Southern Baptists have nearly fourteen million members.... In 1982, the year before the merger of the Southern and Northern Churches, the Southern Presbyterian Church numbered 814,931 -- less than a million!"

For this, we ourselves blame the 'Great Awakening.' We also blame Thornwell and his cohorts -- for their patent departure from the 'infant faith' viewpoint anent tiny covenanters. Very frankly, on this one point, they not only repudiated Calvinism and the *Westminster Standards*. On this point, they veered far to the left of the Baptists -- and almost into Semi-Manichaeism.

552. Horace Bushnell: the educational (re)conversion of covenant children

Far more influential than Thornwell in the United States -- and to some extent even in certain Calvinistic circles both inside and outside America -- was the Congregationalist theologian Horace Bushnell. Although not adequately orthodox, in his 1847 book *Christian Nurture* Bushnell nevertheless rightly argued that the conversion of the child of the covenant should be educative and progressive rather than revolutionary and sudden.

Explained the Congregationalist Bushnell:¹⁷⁴ "Our New England fathers...fell off for a time...into a denial of the great underlying principles and facts on which the membership of baptized children in the Church must ever be rested." Indeed, it was precisely the semi-arminianizing 'Great Awakening' -- from about 1740 onward -- which had promoted this great 'falling away' from Calvinism and covenant theology in New England.

As the Confessional Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck explains:¹⁷⁵ "The blessings of membership in the Christian family, of the covenant relation with God, and of a real vital membership of children in the church -- was minimized. The 'revival' with its emphasis upon conscious conversion after intense struggle, was exalted as the surest road to Christian discipleship, as the normal method of entrance into the kingdom of God.

"Bushnell tried to correct this distorted idea, and to call the Church back to a position consonant with its historic doctrine." This was the position which conceived the child of the covenant to be already a Christian. Thus, said Bushnell,¹⁷⁶ he should "grow up a Christian -- and not know himself as being otherwise."

Bushnell himself elaborated:¹⁷⁷ "The aim...and expectation should be not...that the child is to grow up in sin [and only] to be converted after he comes to a mature age, but that he is to open onto the world as one that is spiritually renewed -- not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but....loved what is good from his earliest years....

"It is the duty of every Christian parent that his children shall come forth into action as a regenerate stock.... It is the family spirit; the organic life of the house [or home]; the silent power of a domestic godliness -- working as it does unconsciously and with sovereign effect -- this is it which forms your children to God."

In an 1861 book review¹⁷⁸ of his *Christian Nurture*, even the famous 'New School' Presbyterian leader Rev. Professor Dr. H.B. Smith approves of Bushnell's "opposition to mere individualism in philosophy and theology. The author seizes the profounder truth contained in the organic unity of the family."

Earlier in 1847, 'Old School' Presbyterian leader Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge had already said¹⁷⁹ in his own review of Bushnell's book -- that early and faithful Christian nurture of the children of believers was the great means of their salvation. Such is taught in the Scriptures, is reasonable in itself, and is confirmed by the experience of the Church.

Still discussing Bushnell's work, Hodge said further¹⁸⁰ that a covenant child should be taught "he stands in a peculiar relation to God." For he is "included in His covenant and baptized in His Name.... He has in virtue of that relation a right to claim God as his Father, Christ as his Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as his sanctifier." Indeed, "God will recognize that claim and receive him as His child -- if he is faithful to his baptism."

Hodge heartily agreed with Bushnell that the Christian character and life of the parent laid a scriptural foundation for expecting the children to be truly Christian. Yet Hodge also rightly objected¹⁸¹ to the explanation Bushnell gave of those facts, where the latter confined the operations of God's Spirit to natural laws. Similar objections were raised also by other Presbyterian theologians -- such as the presumed prebaptismal regenerationists Dr. Lyman Atwater¹⁸² and Dr. H.B. Smith.¹⁸³

553. Delitzsch: covenant children conscious of God before their birth

Back in Germany, the famous Lutheran Professor Dr. Franz Delitzsch first published his *Biblical Psychology* in 1855. There, he insisted¹⁸⁴ "that in the first germinating beginning of man, spirit and soul also are placed together in the way of germ.... The life of the soul does not unfold itself without at the same time the self-consciousness of the spirit glimmering near it in the background -- and so glimmering on, throughout the development.

"The Scripture at least knows absolutely nothing of a *nephesh* developing itself into a *ruach*, of a *psuchē* becoming a *pneuma*. Rather it supposes that with the embryonic beginning of bodily life, is produced at the same time the beginning of the spirit's and soul's life.... According to Luke 1:15, John even in his mother's womb was said to be full of the Holy Ghost.... It is precisely the human spirit which is the organ for the reception of the Divine [Spirit]....

"Scripture relegates secret events which primarily concern the spirit, back into the life of the embryo -- especially the separating and sanctifying to a lofty call. Isaiah 49:1-5; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15.... As well 'believing love of God' (Psalms 22:10f & 71:6) as 'self-turning departure from God' (Psalm 58:3f & Isaiah 48:8) are dated back at least without any limits into the period of infancy -- to say nothing of Genesis 25:22 & Hosea 12:3f & Luke 1:41."

In his 1859 *Commentary on the Psalms*, Delitzsch was even more specific (about especially Psalm 22:10 mentioned above). There,¹⁸⁵ he insisted: "According to biblical conception, there is even in the new-born child, yea in the child yet unborn and only living in the womb, a glimmering consciousness springing up out of the remotest depths of unconsciousness....

"Therefore, when the praying one says [Psalm 22:10] that from the womb he has been cast upon Jahve, *i.e.* directed to go to Him and to Him alone with all his wants and cares (55:22f *cf.* 71:5f); that from the womb onwards Jahve was his God -- there is also more in it than the purely objective idea that he grew up into such a relationship to God. Twice he mentions his mother...or her who bare him." Psalm 22:9 & 22:10. Indeed, the Lutheran Delitzsch here sounds almost like a Crypto-Calvinist.

554. Atwater on the U.S. Presbyterian lapse from Calvin's presumptive regenerationism

In 1857, Princeton's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater published his monograph *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*.¹⁸⁶ There, he insisted¹⁸⁷ that our "[*Westminster Standards*] surely set forth nothing less than this. They direct that baptized children be taught and trained to believe, feel, act and live -- as becomes [or behooves] those who are the Lord's.... The Church of God is made up of those whom He hath purchased with His own blood....

"Those who apparently or to the eye of judicious charity are of this number, are visibly or for all purposes of human judgment and action of this Church -- *i.e.* are the Church Visible.... Membership in the Visible Church is founded on a presumptive Membership in the Invisible -- until its subjects by acts incompatible therewith prove the contrary and thus to the eye of man forfeit their standing among God's visible people....

"The most holy and orthodox men whom we have ever known -- are those who assured us that they remembered not the time when they did not fear God, or when they experienced any marked conscious revolution in their feelings toward Him.... Surely God sanctifies some from the womb. He makes others [like Timothy], 'from a child' [actually 'from a fetus'] know the Holy Scriptures in a saving sense. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, He ordains praise....

"He has promised to be their God.... We are to look for that inworking Spirit and outworking holiness commensurate with their years which shall seal them as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This is what we believe to be the blessed significance and intent of infant baptism...with the seal of God's covenant on their foreheads." Revelation 7:2f; 14:1f; 22:4f.

"All this imports nothing less than a presumption that the children of the Church are and will prove to be the chosen of God -- [unless and] until they dispel that presumption by their own misconduct.... The very nature of baptism...is a sign of those graces and a seal.... The administration of the seal is founded upon a presumption that the things sealed will also be bestowed and accepted -- till the contrary appears.

"On no other ground can infant baptism have significance or propriety.... The large number of children of God's people...die in infancy.... Of those that grow up, a large proportion....give such evidence of piety that they are admitted to the Lord's Supper.... Even Baptist churches are replenished from their children more than from any other source....

"When Christ bids little children to come to Him, it is on the express ground that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 19:14]. But of whom is this predicated, if not of the seed of the pious -- whose God He has specially covenanted to be, assuring His people that His Spirit and His Word shall not depart out of their mouth nor out of the mouth of their seed nor out of the mouth of their seed's seed from henceforth and for ever? Isaiah 59:21."

Seven years later, in 1864, Atwater felt encouraged enough to write:¹⁸⁸ "Old School Presbyterians are coming more and more into sympathy with their [*Westminster Standards*]." Yet previously, even Old School Presbyterians had drifted away from the *Westminster Standards*. For, according to Atwater, even those Presbyterians had "in the present century lost sight of

the...precious significance [of those *Standards*] in placing children on the same footing in the Visible Church with their parents."

555. David Brown: covenant infants within God's Kingdom

Back in Scotland the famous Rev. Dr. David Brown, Free Church Professor at Aberdeen, had not only been sounding forth an optimistic eschatology in his book *Christ's Coming: Will It Be Premillennial?* He had also been suggesting that -- here and now -- many find regenerative blessings already in their infancy.

Brown dealt with this¹⁸⁹ from 1863 onward, in his work *The Four Gospels* -- in the passage where Christ rebukes His own erring disciples. Those adults had quite wrongly "thought the...infants not capable of receiving anything from Him.... [So] He took them up in His gracious arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." This showed "that they were...capable, as infants, of the kingdom of God....

"Sweet view this -- of the standing of children that from their very birth have been brought to Christ and **blessed** by Him.... Believers may not doubt that their children are...[savingly] loved, as dearly as if He took them up in His very arms and made the blessing to descend upon them -- even life for evermore!"

556. The presumed prebaptismal regenerationism of Charles Hodge

We have already mentioned¹⁹⁰ something of the covenantal views of the great Princeton Professor of Theology Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge. In 1852, he expressed regret that far too many believing parents -- quite unfaithfully -- expect their children to grow up unconverted. Complained Hodge: "We cannot doubt that this is the case, and that it is the source of incalculable evil."¹⁹¹

In 1858, Hodge appealed to Calvin and the various Calvinistic *Confessions* to prove that tiny covenant children had always been presumed -- rebuttably -- to be children of God. In his article *The Church Membership of Infants*, Hodge declared:¹⁹² "The presumption of election is **not** founded on their baptism, but their baptism is founded on this **presumption**. Just as the presumption that Jewish children would take Jehovah to be their God was not founded on their circumcision, but their circumcision was founded on that presumption....

"The status therefore of baptized children is not a vague or uncertain one, according to the doctrine of the Reformed Churches. They are members of the Church. They are professing Christians. They belong **presumptively** to the number of the elect. These propositions are true of them in the **same** sense in which they are true of **adult professing Christians**....

"Membership in the Visible Church is founded on presumptive membership in the Invisible.... Since the promise is not only to parents but to their seed, children are by the command of God to be regarded and treated as of the number of the elect -- [unless and] until they give undeniable evidence to the contrary, or refuse to be so considered.... This presumption of election is not

founded on their baptism, but their baptism is founded on this presumption."

Hodge contended this is the doctrine of all the Reformed Churches. He cited Calvin's *Institutes* IV:16:5f in support of his claim as to the presumably elect status of covenant children before their infant baptism.¹⁹³ For the latter passage claims *inter alia*: "Baptism is properly administered to infants as a thing due to them. The Lord did not anciently bestow circumcision upon them, without [first] making them partakers of all the things signified by circumcision....

"He," declared Calvin of the Lord, "distinctly declares that the circumcision of the infant will be...a seal of the promise of the covenant. But if the covenant remains first and fixed, it is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day than to the children of the Jews under the Old Testament. Now if are partakers of the thing signified -- how can they be denied the sign?" Thus Calvin. Hodge agreed.

Also in his 1861 article *A Practical View of Infant Baptism*, Hodge rightly wrote: "Having given our children to God..., the presumption should be that they are the Lord's, and that as they come to maturity -- they will develop a life of piety.... Adult conversions among her own children are not so much what the Church ought to look for, as sanctification from early life.

"This corresponds both with the nature of the covenant as with the nature of spiritual life, which is a gradual development. As a matter of fact, we are persuaded that many of those who make a profession of religion at a particular time, have been born again and growing under Divine influences long before. The life is only more clearly manifested to themselves and others, about the time of their professed conversion. It has existed perhaps from childhood -- the unseen fruit of this covenant [from conception onward], of which [infant] baptism is the seal."

557. Hodge's Systematic Theology on the grounds of Paedobaptism

In his 1871 *Systematic Theology*, Hodge further insisted¹⁹⁴ that "sinners...need regeneration. Infants need regeneration.... Infants are in a state of sin.... All men must be born of the Spirit, in order to enter the kingdom of God.... No exception of class, tribe, character or age is made....

"All who are born of the flesh, and because they are thus born, our Lord says must be born again.... Infants always have been included with their parents in every revelation or enactment of the covenant of grace.

"The promise to our first parents of a Redeemer, concerned their children as well as themselves.... The sign and seal of the covenant of grace, circumcision under the Old dispensation and baptism under the New, was applied to new-born infants....

"Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Christ to signify and seal the purification of the soul by the sprinkling of His blood, and its regeneration by the Holy Ghost.... Pelagius and his followers...could not deny the import[ance] of the rite. They could not deny that it was properly administered to infants, and yet they refused to admit the unavoidable conclusion that infants are

born in sin. They were therefore driven to the unnatural ground of their present state, but on the assumption of their probable future condition....

"Regeneration itself, or the imparting spiritual life, is by the immediate agency of the Spirit.... The soul is passive in regeneration. It is the subject, and not the agent, of the change.... According to the faith of the Church Universal, infants may be renewed by the Holy Ghost -- and must thus be born of the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God.... Infants may be subjects of regeneration.... Then the influence by which regeneration is effected is not a moral suasion, but the simple volition of Him Whose will is omnipotent....

"The sacraments belong to the Members of the Church.... The Church is the company of believers.... By the Church is meant what is called the Visible Church.... If any Israelite renounced the religion of his fathers, he was cut off from among the people. All this is true in reference to the Church that now is....

"Children, therefore, were included in the covenant of grace as revealed under the old dispensation -- and consequently were Members of the Church as it was then constituted. In the sight of God, parents and children are one.... Where parents enter into covenant with God, they bring their children with them. The covenant made with Adam included all his posterity; the promise made to Abraham was to him and to his seed after him."

558. Hodge: infant baptism intended only for Christian children

Continued Hodge: "When a believer adopts the covenant of grace, he brings his children within that covenant.... God promises to give them...all the benefits of redemption -- provided they do not willingly renounce their baptismal engagements....

"The language of the Reformed Churches as to the proper subjects of infant baptism, is perfectly uniform.... The *Westminster Confession* says...: 'The infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.'

"The *Larger Catechism* says: 'Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant and are to be baptized'.... The *Directory for Worship* says: 'The seed of the faithful have no less right to this ordinance under the Gospel than the seed of Abraham to circumcision.'

"It is therefore plain that according to the standards of the Reformed Church, it is the children of the Members of the Visible Church who are to be baptized. Agreeably to Scriptural usage such members are called *foederati*, saints, believers, faithful, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.... The Reformed as well as the Lutheran theologians therefore speak of the Members of the Visible Church as believers, and of their children as born of believing parents....

"Baptism and the Lord's supper are not converting ordinances. They are to be administered only to those who profess [or who are professed] to be Christians. It is plain, from the nature of the case, that those who partake of the Christian sacraments profess [or are professed] to be Christians.... In baptism the recipient of that ordinance publicly declares that he [both for himself

and for his infant] takes God the Father to be his Father; God the Son to be his Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost to be his Sanctifier....

"The sacraments, as all admit, are to be confined to Members of the Church.... Those therefore who, having been themselves baptized and still professing their faith in the true religion, having competent knowledge and being free from scandal, should not only be permitted but urged and enjoined to present their children for baptism -- that they may belong to the Church and be brought up under its watch and care. To be unbaptized, is a grievous injury and reproach -- one which no parent can innocently entail upon his children. The neglect of baptism, which implies a want of appreciation of the ordinance, is one of the crying sins of this generation....

"Infants are the objects of Christ's redemption. They are capable of receiving all its benefits. Those benefits are promised to them on the same conditions on which they are promised to their parents.... The infant, when arrived at maturity, receives the full benefit of baptism -- if he believes in the promises signified and sealed to him in that ordinance. Baptism therefore benefits infants just as it does adults, and on the same condition.

"It does not follow from this that the benefits of redemption may not be conferred on infants [before or] at the time of their baptism. That is in the hands of God. What is to hinder the imputation to them of the righteousness of Christ, or their receiving the renewing of the Holy Ghost -- so that their whole nature may be developed in a state of reconciliation with God? Doubtless this often occurs. But whether it does or not, their baptism stands good. It assures them of salvation -- if they do not renounce their baptismal covenant."

559. Hodge's writing *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism*

In Charles Hodge's further work *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism (with a Practical View of Infant Baptism)*, Hodge gave us further very enlightening details of the above. There, discussing the correct way to view covenant children, he explained¹⁹⁵ "the presumption should be that they are the Lord's and that as they come to maturity they will develop a life of piety. Instead of waiting, therefore, for a period of definite conviction and conversion, we should rather look for and endeavour to call out from the commencement of moral action the emotions and experiences of the [already!] renewed heart."

For Christ's Church "takes under her oversight the lambs of His flock [John 21:15f]. Her faith takes hold of the divine covenant -- 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee' [Genesis 17:7f]. Here her hope lies. She lives and is strengthened in this faith, as she brings her sons and daughters to the God of Abraham.... How can she hope to live and flourish, if not in and through her offspring? This has always been the line of her perpetuation -- the main channel of her progress....

"It [infant baptism] is to us a formal and public consecration of our children to God -- an expression of our faith in His covenant promise.... Yet, after it is done, instead of rising to the proper conception and comfort of the dead -- we [or rather some Non-Hodgean and inconsistent Paedobaptists!] practically regard our children as the children of the devil....

"We [Hodge himself and all consistent Calvinists] are persuaded that the faith which ought to exist, would enable us to say: 'These children belong to God; have been given to Him in reliance on His covenant promise on my part; and are accepted by Him, in accordance with His own engagement. The seal of His covenant has been applied to them. We are training them not for the world, but for His glory. And such is our confidence in Him, that...we firmly believe in the reality of His covenant -- and that after using them for His glory here, He will bring them into His heavenly kingdom at last'....

"Having given our children to God, in accordance with His appointment, we ought not to feel or to act as though it were a nullity. To our faith, the presumption should be that they are the Lord's -- and that as they come to maturity, they will develop a life of piety.... Let them be taught to say, 'We love the Lord; we love and trust in Jesus; we love His people; we love the Church with all her doctrines and ordinances; we hate sin in all its forms'....

"It may be [that] a strong faith is required for such a course. But it is a legitimate faith; well-pleasing to God; comforting to ourselves; and most blessed in its bearing upon our children. If we can but exercise it, by His help vast numbers of our children will be sanctified from the womb [Luke 1:5-15 & First Corinthians 7:14] -- and will indeed grow up 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' [Ephesians 6:4], and will stand like olive plants around our table and our dwelling [Psalms 127 & 128]....

"Such a faith as this [that affirms the covenantal standing of Christian infants] is valuable beyond expression. It is fostered by the ordinance of [infant] baptism -- without which it is not commonly formed."

560. American events of baptismal significance from 1857-59

We must now go back to 1857. By that time, tensions had become unbearable for the Southern minority among the New School Presbyterians. This was chiefly because of the Northern (Majority) Party's ever-increasing interest in making pronouncements on delicate social issues.

So, after the New School General Assembly 'legislated' against slavery, twenty-one Southern presbyteries seceded in 1858 -- to form the Presbyterian Church United Synod of the South (PCUSS). Yet it was not until 1864 that -- after an estrangement since 1837 -- they became reunited with their fellow Presbyterian Southerners from the Old School (such as Robert L. Dabney). Until then, further baptismal developments in the South were put on hold.

In the North, however, there were baptismal developments at that time. Thus the Evangelical Reformed Church of America's Rev. Dr. J.H.A. Bomberger published his important 1859 book *Infant Salvation in its Relation to Infant Depravity, Infant Regeneration and Infant Baptism*. There, Bomberger states:¹⁹⁶ "I affirm and shall prove the necessity of Infant Regeneration, in order to infant salvation.... It is of their regeneration, not of their conversion, that this necessity is affirmed.... Regeneration is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit on the soul of man. In it, man is passive....

"Those very arguments which prove that infants are by nature depraved and need a Saviour...all demonstrate their right to be baptized.... Suppose their Lord's command had then been, 'Go and circumcise all nations!' Would the Apostles have taken it for granted that children were included? Most unquestionably they would. Assuredly then, when the command was to baptize, they would understand it in an equally general sense and baptize children as well as their parents."

561. The Proposed Revision of the PCUSA Book of Discipline

When the proposed revision of the *Book of Discipline* was presented to the General Assembly of the undivided PCUSA in 1859 by Thornwell, on this particular point he made a grave mistake. For he then anticalvinistically argued that the final form of the *Proposed Revision* should not imply that the tiny covenant children were Christians.

This viewpoint was opposed -- and indeed quite diametrically -- to certain statements in the 1645 *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. For the latter (though rebuttably so)¹⁹⁷ clearly insists that the infant "seed and posterity of the faithful...are Christians and federally holy before baptism -- and therefore are to be baptized."

These words of the *Westminster Directory* cited in our main text above, clearly establish a very firm presumption -- as to the prebaptismal regeneratedness of the infants of believers. Nevertheless, the firm presumption is certainly rebuttable (in the light of the later behaviour of those infants). For the very next clause itself insists "that the inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered."

Indeed, also the *Westminster Confession* (28:5f) itself insists that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated." For "the efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."

Thornwell did not now maintain the above -- as do Calvin, consistent Calvinists, and the *Westminster Standards*. Nevertheless, albeit perhaps inconsistently, Thornwell did maintain¹⁹⁸ -- and rightly so -- that "baptized persons have...advantage over the rest of the world." For, speaking of (infant) baptizees, Thornwell declared: "To them pertain the adoption...and the service of God.... The covenant is the birthright[!] of the seed[!] of believers....

"The whole history of the Church is a glorious illustration that baptism is not an idle ceremony -- that the privileges to which it entitles are, in innumerable cases, sealed to its subjects.... The children of the faithful are the heirs apparent [presumably!] of the promises. God has graciously promised to show mercy[!] to thousands [of generations] of them that love Him.... The decree of election runs largely in their loins." Thus Thornwell.

The Old School PCUSA's *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline*, which gave rise to so much discussion on the status of baptized children in the denomination, was presented to the

1859 General Assembly. This *Proposed Revision* was concerned chiefly with the disciplinability of church members.

However, the revision was also concerned with the difficulty, if not the undesirability, of attempting to discipline baptized covenant children -- who had grown up without themselves personally ever making a profession of Christian faith. Inevitably, this further led to a consideration of the important question as to whether such children should -- or should not -- rebuttably be regarded as Christians before and after their infant baptisms.

562. Friction on the Revision Committee: Hodge versus Thornwell

Thornwell was Chairman of the Committee, and he had drafted the report. He knew how much even his own Old School Presbyterians -- on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line -- had been affected by 'Great Awakening' thinking. He knew large numbers did not regard even their own covenant children as Christians -- until the latter actually made a public profession of faith in Christ. Neither did Thornwell himself. Not surprisingly, his Committee's *Report* accordingly reflected this.

Charles Hodge did not oppose the *Proposed Revision* as regards its central concern of discipline. He fully accepted "a personal and voluntary confession of faith" as "perfectly intelligible and inevitable." Yet he also believed with Historic Calvinism that children of Christian parents were themselves to be regarded as Christians from their very conception onward -- unless and until those children repudiated Christianity, and unless and until the Church had so noted this in an official way.

Hodge immediately countered some of Thornwell's proposals in the process of revising the PCUSA's *Book of Discipline*. Hodge's own emphasis was that the children of Christian parents are themselves Members of the Church -- on precisely the same basis of presumptive membership in the Invisible Church, as are their parents.

Covenant infants, stated Hodge, were (rebuttably) to be presumed Members of the Church Invisible from their conception onward (First Corinthians 7:14). Moreover, they were (amputatably) to be received into Membership of the Visible Church -- and publically to be declared Members -- at the time of their infant baptism. Indeed, Hodge further quite rightly insisted, "we see not how this principle can be denied in its application to the Church -- without giving up our whole doctrine, and abandoning the ground to the Independents and Anabaptists."¹⁹⁹

Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck highlights this, by discussing it in perhaps deliberately understated terms. "On at least one important occasion," he records,²⁰⁰ "Charles Hodge and other leaders found themselves compelled to defend the established doctrine of children in the covenant -- when this doctrine was at least implicitly attacked in the *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline*."

Hodge was by no means alone. The Editor of the *Presbyterian Magazine*, Rev. Dr. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer, rightly remarked²⁰¹ in 1859 that the point in question involves "more true Presbyterian doctrine" than any other in the whole *Book of Discipline*. Declared Van

Rensselaer: "A great and fundamental principle of Presbyterianism is undermined in this change" proposed by the Revision Committee!

The Committee, Dr. Van Rensselaer continued, "takes the lowest possible view of the relation of baptized children to the Church consistent with the idea that they are Members in any sense at all." The whole principle of infant church membership was being lost in the *Proposed Revision*. Pleaded Van Rensselaer: "Rather let our practice ascend to the dignity and elevation of the truth of our present [*Westminster*] Standards -- than our principles descend to the level of the new [*Proposed*] Revision!"

Because of the solidly Calvinistic resistance of Hodge and his associates, Thornwell was here not able to inflict upon the PCUSA his own revivalistic views. Such, on this particular point, would have decalvinized that denomination yet further. Even so, the wrangling between the parties continued throughout 1860.

Consequently, the revision was recommitted to the Committee for further improvement. Most tragically, the War between the States then erupted -- thus encouraging the secession of the Southerners into the PCUS.

563. The new Southern Presbyterian PCUS and her *Revised Book of Discipline*

In December 1860, South Carolina seceded from the United States . By February 1861, all states bordering the Gulf of Mexico had gone into secession from the Union. In March, the seceded states confederated together and ratified the proposed Constitution of the Confederate States of America.

In April 1861, war erupted -- the War Between the States. Also sadly, that is often inaccurately termed the American Civil War (1861-65).

Remarkably, even after the commencement of fighting between the armies of the truncated American Union and the armies of the Confederate States of America, the Northern and Southern presbyteries within the Old School PCUSA still co-operated ecclesiastically. This continued until its May 1861 General Assembly.

Then, however -- meeting in Philadelphia -- the General Assembly most unwisely passed resolutions pledging the denomination's support for the Federal Union. The General Assembly did so just one month after that Federal Union had commenced official hostilities against the Confederate States in America. Thereupon, forty-seven Southern presbyteries -- more than a third of the entire Old School PCUSA -- seceded therefrom.

Those ecclesiastical secessionists then constituted themselves as the Old School Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America (PCCSA). Its first General Assembly met in December 1861. It immediately appointed a Committee, with Thornwell as Chairman, to complete (for the PCCSA) the *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline* already drawn up in the old

PCUSA. Meantime, Thornwell continued to make propaganda against the Calvinistic view of covenant infants.

In his 1861 essay *A Few More Words on the Revised Book of Discipline*, Thornwell declared²⁰² that the Church was to treat her own covenant infants "precisely as she treats all other impenitent and unbelieving men." Indeed, "she deals with them...as the Lord directed her to deal with the world." They are thus "baptized unbelievers," and are "to be dealt with as the Church deals with all the *enemies of God* [Thornwell's own italics]. She turns the key upon them, and leaves them without" -- alias **outside** the Kingdom of God.

We ourselves, with all of our respect for Thornwell and with all of our love of Southern Presbyterianism in general and the Old South in particular -- cannot but express our own total revulsion against especially this baptismal view of the great PCCSA theologian. Frankly, in this regard, he is worse than the Romanists.

For Rome, wrongly, denies covenant children are Christians only before their infant baptisms -- but not thereafter. But Thornwell, more wrongly yet, denies the Christian status of the children of believers not only before and during their infant baptism but also for ever thereafter -- unless and until they happen to 'honk twice' and publically 'profess' they love Jesus. Anabaptizing Arminianism rides again!

564. Resistance to Thornwell even in the new Southern Presbyterian Church

Thornwell died in 1862. In 1863, under his friend Adger as the new Chairman, Thornwell's anticalvinistic baptismal views --almost *in toto* -- were unanimously adopted by the Committee. The *Committee Report* was then submitted to the 1867 General Assembly of the denomination.

Its adoption was then easily accomplished. For also the New School Southern Presbyterians had by then joined the Old School Southern Presbyterians -- namely three years earlier, in 1864. Their presence thenceforth greatly promoted the later adoptability of the Thornwellian *Report*.

For, toward the end of the great war -- with the unitarian North's forcible subjugation and integration of the trinitarian South into the unitarianizing **new** 'United States' then fast approaching -- in 1864 the PCCSA amalgamated (on its own terms) with the Southern New School PCUSS. This led to the formation of the great Old School Southern Presbyterian Church which -- after the secession of the war and the forcible integration of the South into the new 'Union' -- soon became known as the 'Presbyterian Church in the United States' (PCUS).

However, the above-mentioned 1864 amalgamation of the PCCSA and the PCUSS also meant that the revivalist elements in the Southern Church were now stronger than ever before. This continued apace, especially after the demoralizing political defeat of the South and its forcible absorption into a more centralized 'Union' --after the Confederate General Robert E. Lee laid down his sword to the Union's General Ulysses S. Grant in April 1865.

Not surprisingly, then -- in spite of strong opposition from anticatabaptist Calvinian stalwarts like the Southerner Rev. Dr. A.W. Miller of Virginia -- the 1867 General Assembly of the PCUS

(meeting in Memphis) approved the Thornwellian version of the proposed *Book of Discipline*, after comparatively little debate. It was finally enacted in 1879 until, a century later, it was reversed -- in the 1974 *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

565. The old PCUSA and its updated *Book of Discipline*

Meantime, back in the North, the old PCUSA Old School had continued in a truncated way after the April 1861 secession of her Southern presbyteries to form the PCCSA. The continuing Old School PCUSA (Northern) then adopted without dissent the *Proposed Revision* of the old *Book of Discipline* at its 1863 General Assembly.

However, this was done only after the disputed section had been restored in every word -- just as it was in the old book (except with a slight addition in reference to the general sense of discipline).²⁰³ This preserved the grand old Calvinistic doctrine of covenant children being regarded (rebuttably) as Christians -- from even before the time of their infant baptism.

The new Southern Presbyterian denomination in 1879 finally enacted its own *Revision* of the *Book of Church Order* (incorporating the twofold distinction in discipline).²⁰⁴ However, it unfortunately did so in a Thornwellian form. That was rather irreconcilable with the Historic Calvinistic view of the presumed regeneration of tiny covenant infants (until the contrary might be established).

Most regrettably, this soon led to the decalvinization of the Southern Presbyterian Church as regarded the doctrine of covenant infants. It also contributed toward the almost total anabaptization of the American South. Indeed, it ultimately helped lead to what James B. Jordan has so rightly called *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture*.²⁰⁵

Nevertheless, even the Southern Presbyterian Church had veered back toward the Calvinistic doctrine of infant baptism -- by the end of the nineteenth century. Before that time, however -- as Schenck claims²⁰⁶ -- "Thornwell, Dabney, Robinson and their associates exerted so much influence in the strategic positions which they commanded -- that their views were largely accepted throughout the Southern Church.

"Yet these views were an aberration from the Reformed doctrine of children of the covenant, and of the significance of infant baptism. They were, on the other hand, in accord with the conception of the child principally if not exclusively emphasized in 'the revival movement.'"

But precisely the constant attempts to re-revise the new *Directory for Worship* authorized in 1879, unintentionally yet very effectively helped promote the return toward consistent Calvinism. This was done in the strongly 'Thornwellian' *Proposed Revisions* of 1880, 1881, 1885, 1889, and 1891.

However, all these various *Proposed Revisions* were never incorporated in the *Directory for Worship*. Consequently, the *Directory* which was finally adopted in 1894 -- adhered more closely to the wording of the old *Directory*²⁰⁷ which had been used for so long by the old PCUSA prior to the 1861-65 War Between the States.

566. The Southern Presbyterian A.W. Miller's opposition to the Thornwellians

Even among the Southerners in the PCUSA before 1861, and in the Southern Presbyterian denomination(s) thereafter, by no means all theologians agreed with Thornwell in his views on baptism. Thus, Rev. Dr. A.W. Miller of Virginia opposed Thornwell's views on infant baptism -- precisely because they were not those of the Protestant Reformation and the Presbyterian Church.

Miller did this in his sermon *The Status of the Baptized Child* before the Synod of Virginia in 1859. Calvin, Miller there declared,²⁰⁸ taught that covenant children were baptized just because they already belonged to Christ.

Later, before the 1866 Southern Presbyterian General Assembly, Miller spoke on the implications of the revised *Book of Discipline*. There he further argued²⁰⁹ that "baptism is not conferred on children in order that they may become sons and heirs of God, but because they are already considered by God as occupying that place and rank....

"The parent was to regard the child first and chiefly as the child of the covenant, and in this sense the child of God.... Adoption is sealed in their flesh by the rite of baptism.... Children are just as much in covenant with God, as their parents are."

567. The Anti-Anabaptist views of Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney

Thornwell's younger contemporary, Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney (1820-98), was himself not altogether free from certain anti-confessional views about the babies of believers. He apparently denied the existence of faith within those little ones. For he not only (possibly correctly) refers to covenant infants as "unconverted children" -- but also (quite wrongly referred to them) as "unregenerate Members" and as "unregenerate baptized children."²¹⁰

Dabney himself, then, was not totally Calvinistic as regards covenant infants. For he too sometimes suggests²¹¹ that "these unconverted children are excluded from certain privileges of the church to which faith is essential first by their lack of understanding and next by their own voluntary impenitency." Indeed, Dabney too rather carelessly calls²¹² them "unconverted baptized persons" and "baptized unbelievers."

On the other hand, Dabney rightly stood against Thornwell as far as the desired disciplinability of baptized noncommunicant Church Members was concerned.

Wrote Dabney²¹³ regarding the changes to the *Book of Discipline* then being proposed by Thornwell: "We are happy to learn that the Committee of Revision are not unanimous in this change, but that two influential members, Drs. Hoge and McGill, hold the old and Scriptural view of the Reformers." At this point, Dabney and Hoge stood with Calvin and against Thornwell.

Continued Dabney: "**Every man is born** a member of civil society, and subject to its beneficent jurisdiction.... He is **born a citizen**; and, as such, born subject to the general

jurisdiction which protects the whole community against crime.... It is just as much God's ordinance for mankind that His people shall live under ecclesiastical government, and that their children shall be subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction by birth. They have no option allowed them by God. The children of His people (and all parents ought to be His professed people if they did their duty), are **born subjects to this spiritual commonwealth** which God has ordained for securing man's spiritual well-being....

"A just excommunication of a church-member, proceeds on the supposition that he has now done something so thoroughly inconsistent and obdurate, that it shows he is not a true child of God.... How strange is the assertion made by Dr. Thornwell that there is no evidence that church discipline was ever intended to produce conversion!"

Indeed, in his *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, Dabney further stated:²¹⁴ "The Holy Ghost in regeneration operates not only mediately through the Word, but also immediately.... We infer the same view of sin and new birth from the regeneration of infants.... Their intellect is undeveloped. Yet they are renewed.... Yet are they delivered from a state of original sin generically the same with ours, and delivered by the same Redeemer and Sanctifier. Must not the method of the renewing power be the same intrinsically? Luke 18:17....

"The sacraments cannot confer redeeming grace *ex opere operato*. Because in every adult, proper participation presupposes saving grace in exercise."

Precisely! Yet to be consistent, the same must hold in respect of the baptism of their covenant infants too. However, continued Dabney: "According to the *Shorter Catechism* (Qu. 94), baptism 'doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace'....

"Immersionists object infants cannot believe.... The Immersionist interpretation would...prove that infants can neither be baptized nor be saved, because they are incapable of faith.... [However,] infants are addressed as Church Members.... The words *hagioi* ['saints'], *pistos* or *pisteuōn* ['believer'] and *adelphos* ['brother'] -- are the current words employed to denote professed Christians....

"We find children addressed in the epistles. Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20; First John 2:12-13. *Teknia* [and] *paidia* ['little children'].... These were not adult children. Further, in Titus 1:6, they are expressly called *tekna pista* ['believing children']....

"Our *Standards* say, 'all baptized persons are Members of the Church'.... They are minor citizens in the ecclesiastical commonwealth -- under tutelage, training and instruction.... The Visible Church is an organized human society, constituted of Christian families....

The Immersionist says that our [Presbyterian] communion is only saved from utter corruption by our own inconsistency.... Whereas the Immersionist charges us with a wicked inconsistency -- I will retort upon him the charge of a pious one. Those of them who are truly good people, while they say their children are not church members -- fortunately treat them as

though they were. They diligently bring them under the instructions, restraints and prayers of the church and the pastor.

"Happily, the instincts and influences of the Christian family are so deeply founded and so powerful, that a perverse and unscriptural [baptistic] theory cannot arrest them.... The light and love of a sanctified parent's heart are too strong to be wholly perverted by this theory. They still bring the family as a whole virtually within the Church. And this is the reason that true religion is perpetuated -- among them" too.

568. Ongoing Anti-Anabaptism of America's Northern Presbyterians

Across the board in general, perhaps the Northern Presbyterian Church was indeed somewhat less conservative theologically than the Southern Presbyterian Church. Yet the (Northern) PCUSA nevertheless remained considerably more loyal to the Calvinist view of baptism than did the early PCUS.

The above holds for Northern Presbyterian General Assemblies. Yet the same is true also of the Northern Presbyterian theologians. To a man, they carried on the Anti-Anabaptist and 'infant faith' tradition of their hero, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge.

Thus, for example, Union Seminary's great Northern Presbyterian theologian Rev. Professor Dr. William G.T. Shedd of New York. In 1863, Shedd declared:²¹⁵ "The sacrament of baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration.... It does not confer the Holy Spirit as a regenerating Spirit [as Rome teaches], but as the authentic token -- that the Holy Spirit **has been** or will be conferred; that regeneration **has been** or will be effected [and indeed should be effected more and more].

"This is taught in Romans 4:11. Abraham 'received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised.' Baptism is Christian circumcision ('the circumcision of Christ,' Colossians 2:11) -- and takes the place of the Jewish circumcision.... What is true of the latter, is [true also] of the former.

"Paul, Cornelius and the eunuch were regenerated before they were baptized.... Baptism, being the initiatory sacrament, is administered only once. While symbolical only of regeneration, it yet has a connection with sanctification. Being a divinely appointed sign, seal and pledge of the new birth -- it promotes the believer's growth in holiness by encouragement and stimulus. It is like the official seal on a legal document. The presence of the seal inspires confidence in the genuineness of the title-deed. The absence of the seal awakens doubts and fears. Nevertheless, it is the title-deed, not the seal, that conveys the title."

569. Europe's ongoing late-nineteenth-century Anti-Anabaptism

In Germany, the Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Heinrich Heppe set out the Classic Calvinistic view of infant baptism in 1861. He explained: "Baptism is the ordinance, instituted by Christ, whereby God seals to the elect their connection with the covenant of grace.... The candidates of baptism are all those who belong to the covenant of grace.... The promises extend

to the children of believers.... These should be baptized, precisely as the Israelitish children were circumcised.... On the other hand, the children of those who do not belong to the Church may not be baptized before they are instructed in the faith and have been converted."²¹⁶

In his textbook *Reformed Dogmatics*, Heppé insisted²¹⁷ that "the nature of baptism...is thus the divine sealing of the adoption of the person baptized into the covenant of grace.... The receipt of grace, the imparting of which is attested and sealed by baptism, is not tied to the outward act and to the moment of the act of baptism....

"Baptism rather presupposes the faith...of a man.... Baptism in no way exercises a magical efficacy.... All are entitled to receive baptism who belong to God's covenant of grace."

570. The 'infant faith' views set out in Rev. Professor Dr. A.A. Hodge's *Outlines*

The position of Charles Hodge's son, the almost equally famous Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge, is uncompromisingly Anti-Anabaptist. From the eighteen-sixties onward, A.A. Hodge came to the fore on these issues. See especially his book *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism* and his tract *Whose Children Should Be Baptized?*²¹⁸

In his famous 1860 *Outlines of Theology*, A.A. Hodge declared:²¹⁹ "God's covenants with Noah, Abraham and David embrace the children with the parents -- and rest upon the natural relations of generator and generated. The constitutions alike of the Jewish and Christian Churches provide that the rights of infants are predetermined by the status of their parents.... That covenant presupposes the more fundamental and general natural relation of generation [or conception] and education [or development]...as 'branches in a tree.'" Compare Romans 11:16.

"In creation, God made the disposition of Adam's heart holy.... In the new creation, God recreates the governing disposition of the regenerated man's heart holy.... In regeneration, the Holy Ghost is the Agent [or the Worker] and man the subject [or the one upon whom the work is done]. The act of the Holy Spirit...does not interfere with the essential activity of the soul itself, but simply gives to that activity a new direction.... Although the soul is necessarily active at the very time it is regenerated, yet it is rightly said to be passive with respect to that act of the Holy Spirit whereby it is regenerated....

"The term 'conversion' is often used in a wide sense.... 'Conversion' signifies the first exercise of the new disposition implanted in regeneration -- *i.e.* in freely turning unto God. Regeneration is God's act; conversion is ours. Regeneration is the implantation of a gracious principle; conversion is the exercise of that principle. Regeneration is never a matter of direct consciousness to the subject of it; conversion always is such to the agent of it. Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself, and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of holy living, is the commencement of a series -- constant, endless and progressive....

"In the case of the regeneration of infants...the Spirit acts immediately upon the soul.... Infants, as well as adults, are rational and moral agents.... The difference is, that the faculties of infants are in the germ, while those of adults are developed. As regeneration is a change wrought by creative power in the inherent moral condition of the soul, infants may plainly be the subjects

of it in precisely the same sense as adults.... The fact is established by what the Scriptures teach of innate depravity, of infant salvation, of infant circumcision and baptism. Luke 1:15; 18:15f; Acts 2:39....

"All those, and those only, who are members of the Visible Church -- are to be baptized.... The family and not the individual is the unit embraced in all covenants and dispensations.... Baptism represents regeneration in union with Christ. Infants are born children of wrath, even as others. They cannot be saved therefore unless they are born again, and have part in the benefits of Christ's death. They are evidently, from the nature of the case, in the same sense capable of being subjects of regeneration as adults are....

"The Baptists argue...that infants ought not to be baptized because they cannot believe.... We answer...that the infant is not a thing, but a person born with an unholy moral nature and fully capable of present regeneration and of receiving from the Holy Ghost the 'habit' or state of soul of which faith is the expression. Hence, Calvin says (*Institutes* IV:16:20) "The seed of both repentance and faith lies hid in them by the secret operation of the Spirit."

571. Baptism in Hodge's Confession of Faith and his Evangelical Theology

In his 1869 *Confession of Faith*, A.A. Hodge further stated:²²⁰ "If infants and others not capable of being called by the Gospel are to be saved, they must be regenerated and sanctified immediately by God.... He can certainly make infants and others regenerate....

"Infants were members of the Church under the Old Testament from the beginning, being circumcised upon the faith of their parents.... Christ, speaking to Jewish apostles who had all their lives never heard of any other than the old 'Paedobaptist' Church..., commissioned Peter to feed the lambs as well as the sheep of the flock. John 21:15-17.... If only one of the parents is a Christian, the children are said to be 'holy' or 'saints'.... First Corinthians 7:14."

In his 1890 *Evangelical Theology*, Hodge insisted²²¹ that "the children of all such [believing] persons are...presumptively heirs of the blessings of the covenant of grace. The divinely appointed and guaranteed presumption is -- **if** the parents, **then** the children" too. "This **presumption** is rendered exceedingly probable, by the fundamental constitution of humanity as a self-propagative race....

The apostasy of Adam gave an entirely new direction to the history of his entire race.... The law of heredity is the fundamental law of animal [alias 'animated'] nature, including man.... The free will of the parent should become the destiny of the child.....

"The parents by an inevitable law bore their children away from God in their apostasy. It is surely to be expected that they **shall bring back their children, with them, Godward**, in their regeneration.... The child is taught and trained under the regimen of his baptism -- **taught from the first** to recognize himself as a **child of God.**"

572. The Lutheran Krauth's prebaptismal 'infant faith' views of church children

In 1864 even the highly confessionalistic American Lutheran, Rev. Professor Dr. C.P. Krauth, was showing²²² from the writings of Luther himself that baptism is not essential to salvation in the way Christ's atonement is. Consequently, it is not the lack but the contemning of baptism which condemns sinners. Indeed, all early-dying unbaptized church infants are regenerated and saved without baptism.

In his treatise *Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System*, the Lutheran Professor Krauth further rightly stated²²³ that "the salvation of infants is included in the promise which God declares to believers -- that He will be a God to them and to their seed.... In virtue of this promise, they are admitted to baptism -- because they are considered Members of Christ.... Infants are baptized, because they are of the household of the church."

573. Bannerman: infant regeneration of covenant children before their baptism

In 1869, the Free Church of Scotland's Rev. Professor Dr. James Bannerman published his classic work *The Church of Christ*. There,²²⁴ he condemned the Romish doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and also that of "the High Church party in the English Establishment." He viewed both as "substantially the same" -- inasmuch as assuming an "inherent power of Sacraments to impart grace....

"The Church of Rome considers baptism, like the other sacraments, to be a means of imparting grace *ex opere operato*, and to carry with it the virtue of so applying to the person baptized, whether infant or adult, the merits of Christ -- as that both original and actual transgression are completely removed by the administration of it in every case, apart altogether from the faith of the recipient....

"Now what[ever] the Word of God addressed to the intelligent and responsible **adult** is -- that, baptism is [also] when administered to the...[covenantal] **infant**.... The infant, sprinkled with the water of that baptism which is a sign of the covenant, has even as the adult...a right of property in the blessings which the covenant contains."

Bannerman is, of course, very far from baptismal regeneration. He is also very far from 'Zwinglianistically' *dis*-sociating a usually *prevenient* regeneration -- from the infant baptism which subsequently seals it.

"There seems to be reason," he explained,²²⁵ "for inferring that, in the case of infants regenerated in infancy, baptism is ordinarily connected with that regeneration.... That many an infant is sanctified and called by God even from its mother's womb, and undergoes...that blessed change of nature which is wrought by the Spirit of God -- there can be no reason to doubt."

Rightly did Bannerman then declare "that many an infant is sanctified and called by God even from its mother's womb, and undergoes...that blessed change of nature which is wrought by the

Spirit of God.... With regard to such infants dying in infancy, there is a blessed hope which the Scriptures give us to entertain -- that they are not lost, but saved....

"Within the brief hour of an infant's life...and among the rudiments of its intellectual and moral life sleeping in the germ, there must be planted the seed of that higher life which in heaven is destined to expand and endure through all eternity.... It is an unspeakable consolation...to know" this, of "the little one whom she [the mother] took from off her breast to lay in the tomb."

574. Cunningham: infant regeneration of covenant children before their baptism

Bannerman's colleague at the Free Church's New College was Rev. Professor Dr. William Cunningham. He strenuously opposed the rebaptism even of (prebaptismally and baptismally unregenerate) Romanists.²²⁶ Thus, to him -- quite rightly -- prebaptismal *faith* (in either the infant or the parent) is not the *ground* of the *validity* of the baptism. Yet he candidly admitted²²⁷ that precisely the Calvinistic Reformers had a high view of baptism as a seal of a priorly presumed regeneration.

Said he:²²⁸ "The Reformers and the great body of Protestant divines, in putting forth the definition of the sacraments..., intended to embody the substance of what they believe Scripture to teach.... They commonly **assume** that the persons partaking in them, are rightly qualified for receiving and improving them.... Justification and regeneration by faith are not conveyed through the instrumentality of the sacraments.... On the contrary, they must **already exist** -- **before even baptism** can be received lawfully or safely" -- alias properly or regularly.

"In the whole history of our race, God's covenanted dealings with His people with respect to spiritual blessings have had regard to their children as well as to themselves. So that the children as well as the parents have been admitted to the spiritual blessings of God's covenants, and to the outward signs and seals of these covenants.... The children of believers are capable of receiving, and often do in fact receive, the blessings of the covenant -- justification and regeneration."

Observed Cunningham,²²⁹ "to adults...a profession of **faith** is ordinarily associated with the Scripture notices of the administration of baptism.... We are to regard baptism upon a profession of faith as exhibiting the...full development of the ordinance.... In the absence of anything which, directly or by implication, teaches that this previous profession of faith is of the essence of the ordinance..., an inference of this sort is not sufficient to neutralize the direct and positive evidence we have in Scripture in favour of the baptism of infants.

"The only thing really of the essence of the ordinance in this respect, is that the parties receiving it are capable of possessing and have a federal interest in the promise of the spiritual blessings which it was intended to signify and to seal . Now the blessings which baptism was intended to signify and seal, are justification and regeneration.... These and these alone are the spiritual blessings which the washing with water in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost directly signifies and represents....

"It is universally admitted that infants...are capable of salvation and are actually saved.... They cannot be saved -- unless they be justified and regenerated.... It is thus certain that infants actually receive the very blessings which baptism signifies and represents.... They **possess** simply as the children of believing parents -- the federal holiness which can be proved to attach to them.... It affords an antecedent ground or warrant for the admission of the children of believing parents to the ordinance of baptism -- analogous to that which exists in believing adults."

575. Candlish: infants filled with the Spirit prenatally

After Cunningham's death in 1861, Rev. Professor Dr. Robert S. Candlish succeeded him as Principal of the New College of the Free Church in Scotland. In that denomination, he then long became the leading light.

In his book *The Sacraments*, Candlish asked:²³⁰ "Does not the Bible teach that a child may be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15); that little children are in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14 and parallels); and that Jesus has lambs as well as sheep in His flock (John 21:15)? This is also borne out by experience....

"Scripture plainly teaches that without regeneration, there can be no salvation . The practice of baptizing children of Christian parents only when they [the children] can profess their faith -- implies that infants cannot be saved! Undoubtedly Baptists do not believe this. But our argument is that the meaning of their practice in regard to believers' children, contracted their own belief....

"It is said that infants cannot give evidence of being born again. But it is certain that they may be regenerate.... The fact of their being brought up by Christian parents, affords some presumption that they are....

"The administration of baptism to them, teaches that they...may be born again even from their earliest days.... This is of the free grace of God.... He may be expected graciously to hear the prayers and bless the Christian training of their parents -- by regenerating the children in infancy. These are all Scriptural truths."

576. Rev. Dr. H.E. Gravemeijer on infant faith and infant baptism

From 1887 onward, the famous theologian Dr. H.E. Gravemeijer published his *Doctrine of the Reformed Faith* in Holland. There, he pointed out²³¹ that "saving faith is not so much a deed but much rather something which is done to one.... Deeds of faith do not create faith, but they also express and confirm it. Faith is a divine disposition of the whole person.... As such, it can also be present even when it does not manifest itself in deeds -- thus, even in tiny children and also in [adult] believers while asleep....

"Faith does not make the sacrament, but the received sacrament will serve to confirm faith.... Covenant children are generated for God. They belong to Him by virtue of the covenant. Even when the nation of Israel was so deeply sunken that she sacrificed children to Moloch, the Lord calls these His children -- because He had not yet removed the covenant from the people.

Ezekiel 16:20-21 -- 'your sons and your daughters, whom you bore for Me, you have taken and sacrificed to the idols; you have slaughtered My children'....

"It is not just from the time of their baptism that the tiny Christian children are holy. But it because they are holy, that they are entitled to baptism. In First Corinthians 7:14, Paul does not mention baptism at all. Yet, without further ado, he says to Christian parents: 'your children are holy.' If they had not yet been baptized, they ought to be baptized -- for they were holy. Here too, what Paul says in another respect in Romans 11:16 applies. 'If the root is holy, then so too the branches'....

"With Calvin (*Institutes* IV:16:17), we say it is obvious that the little children who are to be saved...at that time of life, are first regenerated by the Lord.... There is no regeneration, without faith.... Not that the little children were endowed with such a knowledge and faith as adults are. Not that they [the infants] were led rapidly, with such a consciousness and experience and conversion [as are adults].... But rather, that the essence and the root of the matter is found to be in them.

"There is no formal conversion, no acting faith. Yet, in this respect, the seed of both nevertheless shelters within them -- through a secret operation of the Spirit. So they do have the Spirit of faith.

"The elect little child who dies early, is a tiny flower in the Lord's garden. His or her little heart has been turned toward the sun [or Son]. Attracted by the latter, he or she absorbs the sunrays. This is not so by nature; but it is so disposed by grace. And then, he or she is transported to the court of heaven -- to the full sunlight....

"Our old Reformed theologians...largely follow the representation of Calvin.... According to them, in the elect little children there is a seed or root or tendency (*inclinatio*) or ability (*potentia*) or possessability (*habitus*) or beginning (*principium*) of faith or the Spirit of faith."

In a brilliant chapter under the heading *No Rebaptisms*, Gravemeijer declared:²³² "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration -- and the sign of incorporation into the Christian Church. *Heidelberg Catechism* 74. According to its very nature, this can occur but once. So too baptism. For the sign must agree with the thing signified....

"Incorporation by the visible sign of baptism is indeed primarily an ingrafting into the particular congregation in which the baptizee is baptized.... It is thus an incorporation into the Christian Church. Thereby, the baptizee is distinguished from all Non-Christians. *Heidelberg Catechism* 74....

"Baptism refers not only to the past.... Still less is baptism only of use for those moments when it is administered..., 'but for the whole course of our lives.' *Belgic Confession* 34.

"We should constantly be thinking about our baptism! Once received, baptism is a continual reminder of the Divine Covenant. It warns us to lay sin aside, and to live for God.... Romans 6:3-4.... Galatians 2:20.... Romans 6:11-12.... Baptism is also a consecration unto the battle against sin -- and a guarantee of victory."

577. Kuyper: covenant infants presumed reborn even before their birth

Perhaps the greatest of all Calvinist theologians since Calvin himself -- was the Prime Minister of Holland, Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. We content ourselves with just a few excerpts (from many relevant passages), on Kuyper's doctrine of infant faith before baptism.

For almost fifty years, Kuyper certainly dominated the Reformed theological landscape in Holland -- and later indeed of the entire world -- until his death in 1920. He addressed our subject already in his 1879 work on *Regeneration and Conversion*. For there, he clearly taught²³³ that "according to Scripture -- regeneration is engineered by the Word....

"The same is true of the sacrament of baptism. Also that sacrament -- just like the sacrament of the Lord's supper -- functions to strengthen the faith-power of the congregation." It also functions "to make this heightened faith-power of the congregation the means in God's hand of being serviceable to the spiritual birth of the children of the Kingdom" -- by strengthening (infant) faith already present before baptism.

"One cannot think too seriously about those children of believers who die before reaching the years of discretion.... Our fathers carefully stated...at the Synod of Dordt [in its *Decrees* I:17] against the Remonstrants [alias the Dutch Arminians] -- that believing parents, relying upon the grace of the covenant, should not be anxious about the everlasting lot of their early-dying children.... Here it is definite that the deed of regeneration is completed by God already during the first...months of life" -- also before those children are born.

"That such an function of the Holy Spirit is possible, is irrefutably taught by Scripture. What it tells us about John the Baptist, is in this respect conclusive. For the angel announced to Zachariah that, even in his mother's womb, he [John] would be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when Elizabeth met Mary, the little child she carried under her heart would be gripped by the holy approach and leap up in her womb. The pronouncement in Isaiah [44:2 & 44:24 & 49:1 & 48:5 cf. Jeremiah 1:5] that 'the Lord has called me from the womb' -- is an equally strong proof."

578. Kuyper's book *The Work of the Holy Spirit on baby baptism*

In 1888, Kuyper published his important volume *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. There, he maintained:²³⁴ "Standing by the graves of our baptized young children, confident of their salvation through the one Name given under heaven, we reject the teaching that salvation depends upon conversion.... Preparatory grace always precedes the new life. Hence it [preparatory grace] finishes operating even before holy baptism, in infants quickened before being baptized."

By "finishes operating," Kuyper here obviously does not mean that grace as such is exterminated in covenant babies before their infant baptism. He apparently means that preparatory grace in the covenant child is transformed into a grace-produced 'infant faith' -- even before the baptism of that baby.

Kuyper continued describing this prebaptismal preparatory grace in covenant infants: "The first grace, was naturally called regeneration.... Some Scottish theologians put it in this way. 'God began the work of grace with the implanting of the "faith-faculty" (*fides potentialis*), followed by the new grace of the "faith-exercise" (*fides actualis*), and of the "faith-power" (*fides habitualis*)'....

"Let us notice...the implanting of the new life-principle commonly called regeneration (in the limited sense) or the implanting of the 'faith-faculty.' This divine act is wrought in man at different ages....

"We know from the instance of John the Baptist, that it can be wrought even in the mother's womb. And the salvation of deceased infants constrains us, with Voetius and all profound theologians, to believe that this original act may occur very early in life....

"Distinction must be made between the many regenerated in the first days of life, and the few born again at a more advanced age.... The former are born, with few exceptions, in the Church.... They belong to it from the first moment of their existence. They spring from the seed of the Church, and in turn contain in themselves the seed of the future Church. And for this reason, the first germ of the new life is imparted to the seed of the Church (which is alas always mixed with much chaff) oftenest either before or soon after birth.

"The Reformed Church was so firmly settled in this doctrine, that she dared establish it as the prevailing rule -- believing that the seed of the Church (not the chaff of course) received the germ of life already; and receives in baptism the seal not upon something that is yet to come, but upon that which is already present. Hence the liturgical question to the parents: 'Do you acknowledge that...your children...have been sanctified in Christ and therefore, as Members of His Church, ought to be baptized?'"

Kuyper continued: "This glorious confession gave the right direction to the education of children in our Reformed families.... Our people did not see in their children offshoots of the wild vine, to be grafted, perhaps later on -- with whom little could be done until converted after the manner of Methodism. But they lived in the quiet expectation and holy confidence that the child to be trained was already grafted, and therefore worthy to be nursed with tenderest care....

"God gave us the sacrament of holy baptism.... Our children must not be ignored in this respect. At Dordt [in its *Decrees* I:17] in 1618 our children were taken into account, and we may not deny ourselves this pleasant obligation.... To speak of little ones without considering the first stage of regeneration -- *i.e.* the quickening -- causes confusion and perplexity....

"**Salvation depends upon faith**.... As soon as we distinguished quickening as a stage of regeneration from conversion and sanctification [as fruits thereof], the light enters.... As soon as I regard my still unconverted children as not yet regenerate, their training must run in the direction of a questionable Methodism."

However, in actual fact, as regards covenant children, "the faculty of faith is implanted in the first stage of regeneration -- *i.e.*, in quickening. The power of faith is imparted in the second stage of regeneration -- *i.e.*, in conversion. And the working of faith is wrought in the third stage -- *i.e.*, in sanctification."

579. Kuyper's book *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (commencement)

In *E Voto Dordraceno* -- Kuyper's commentary on the *Heidelberg Catechism* -- he explained²³⁵ that scores of young children die without having come to **a functioning faith** [as distinct from the **seed of faith**]. On the other hand [even] many adult children of God die without that operation of their faith having developed to such a **completeness**....

"If a small child could come [to glory] without faith -- then why not also an adult? And once that is granted -- what would remain of the whole thrust of Holy Scripture? Our most excellent theologians, like Voetius and Rutherford, have therefore tried to stop this evil immediately -- by professing that the work of regeneration for the most part is already at work before holy baptism in the little ones who are elect, and that baptism is administered to them as those already regenerated....

"Furthermore, the 'second life' which also these little ones receive through this second birth -- within itself, by its very nature, contains the tendency toward faith.... The Lord God, Who sees the stalk and the ripened ear already in the germ, saves even the little ones not without faith....

"It is the excellent achievement of Comrie and Holtius that they..., following in the footsteps of many British theologians, again drew the subjective deed of God into the foreground -- by their preaching about the implanted ability to believe. This was practically a return to the preaching of Voetius. Only, as regards the matter of faith, it was somewhat more developed....

"It is completely untrue that the difficulty resides exclusively in the 'very tiny little children' who die young.... Of every hundred adults who joyfully die in their Lord, at the most a tenth part have progressed so far in the knowledge of the truth that they perceive the structure of this beautiful building. Most, on the contrary, know such a little about it.... Yet the Lord still teaches that it is precisely these 'babes in understanding' who are saved....

"Maccovius and Voetius, and Comrie and Holtius after them, called souls back from an objective operation of faith to the creation of new life and the implanting of the ability to believe -- through the Lord.... As regards the 'tiny little children' -- we profess that faith is an ability in our whole being. Thus, through regeneration, it is [**acknowledged** or] owned even by our consciousness.... In the germ, even though the operation is still lacking, the whole of that same nature which will presently come forth -- nevertheless [already] resides therein....

"In this way, indeed every objection falls away. It then remains the same demand of faith for every one who is saved. This faith is the same, in its germ and in its full blossoming.... Herewith the fable falls away -- about children who were baptized [supposedly] on the basis of their parents' faith....

"For faith is like a sponge. Even when the sponge is still barren and dry -- it is still a sponge, also when it has not yet come into contact with water. But as soon as you plunge it into water, it must suck in the moisture. And if it does not do so -- then it is shown to be no sponge!"

580. Kuyper's *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (continued)

Kuyper further insisted²³⁶ that infant baptism does not initiate prevenient faith, but that "Christ through His Holy Spirit **strengthens our faith at and under the sacrament.**" In addition, (infant) baptism engrafts those already deemed members of the Church Invisible -- into the Visible Church. Ephesians 4:5; First Corinthians 12:13; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:2f.

Continued Kuyper: "It is as 'members of Christ' that our children, says the *Baptismal Formula*, are baptized -- that is to say, because they are regarded and presumed to be Members of Christ **already**. That is why they are baptized." This reasoning is quite identical to that of the 1645 Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, in its section on infant baptism.²³⁷

Continued Kuyper:²³⁸ "An image or symbol, such at the baptismal water undoubtedly is, can be made an image of something in the past, in the present, or in the future.... It is not sufficient that you, by grace, personally believe. But, also by grace, the possessability is implanted whereby you enter into the communal faith....

"If you have now been regenerated, so that you have therefore received the germ or seed of faith in that regeneration, the resultant living faith in you is still not yet what it should be. It still needs to receive a strengthening. This strengthening occurs when your faith joins itself to the communal faith of the body of Christ. Precisely hereunto does Christ operate through His Holy Spirit...by giving you Holy Baptism....

"From the *Catechism* it has been seen that baptism, being a sacrament, extends to strengthen faith. It was seen that faith needs to be present in the one to be baptized, in order to be susceptible of being strengthened."

Kuyper next pointed out (in 1894) that of the death statistics "in our land during 1886 -- almost 8% died before they were born; 28% during the first year of their life; 13.5% during their first five years.... Fully 56% of all deaths took place before age twenty, and fully 45% before their seventh year"²³⁹ -- in 'first-world' Holland alone.

Continued Kuyper: "Holy baptism presupposes a **prior** work of God's grace. Thus it is a seal upon what He has **already** performed in the soul.... The representation that apart from a few exceptions the gracious work of God only begins in later life...has not come into our Church from the Reformed Confession but from [Arminian] Methodists.... [Yet,] even in respect of infant baptism, [also] the latter admit [that] faith must be presupposed.

"But, rather than look for that 'faith' in the 'ability to believe' or the 'seed of faith' -- which it has pleased God already to implant in the tiny little children -- they [the Methodists] are wrongly of the opinion that there can never be any question of 'faith' in a suckling. Consequently, they thereby understand this -- of the 'faith' of the parents....

"Yet this opinion hardly reveals anything of depth. From the faith of the parents, nothing could be derived about the sacrament -- other than that they themselves have the right to the

sacrament of the Lord's supper, or to the sacrament of holy baptism if they themselves are still unbaptized. But it could never be concluded from the faith of anyone, that another had a right to the sacrament....

"One can to some extent indeed say that the **faith of the parents** is an indication for the Church to **presuppose** the presence of the '**ability to believe**' even in their little children. But this does not take away from the fact that the administration of holy baptism itself can never rest otherwise -- than upon the presumption that the implanted 'ability to believe' is, in a way hidden to us, **already present** in the child to be baptized.

"That is the cardinal point about infant baptism. If our little children are to be regarded as conceived and born in sin, yet also as those in whom a gracious work of God may already be presupposed -- then they are to be baptized. Otherwise, the baptism of our little children should be abandoned.

"One also sees from the ecclesiastical development in America that, in practice, not presupposing a work of grace in the little children of believers -- has indeed led to the abolition and destruction of infant baptism. While the Reformed denominations together do not number more than two million there, the number of Members of the Baptist denominations, which oppose infant baptism, already exceeds four million; while that of the Methodists, who indeed preserve but yet undermine it, has similarly already climbed to a membership of four million" (in 1886).

581. Kuyper's *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (concluded)

"Our *Baptismal Formula* clearly states....that the little children of the believers in the Church, although conceived and born in sins just like their parents..., have nevertheless 'been sanctified in Christ' -- and 'being Members of His Church' should therefore be baptized.... The words 'been sanctified in Christ' may not be weakened. In conjunction with the following words 'being Members of His Church' -- they cannot be understood otherwise than that the implantation of the hidden germ of new life has **already** occurred among them....

"The final prayer [after the administration of infant baptism]...is wholly in agreement with the foregoing. 'Baptism now seals and sacramentally certifies that God has received us and our children as His children'....

"These children, according to God's command, have been baptized in the presupposition that they belong to His elect. Upon this presupposition rests the concluding petition in this thanksgiving -- that the Lord God will 'always rule these baptized children with His Holy Spirit, so that they may increase and grow up in the Lord Christ.' Naturally, this can never be said of an **unregenerate**."

Kuyper concluded that "he who says he cannot pray the petition of thanksgiving in our *Baptismal Formula*, must: reject this whole *Formula*; abandon infant baptism; and finally break with the Reformed Churches, which are altogether based upon this view of baptism.... Naturally, this is not said to encourage it. Far rather is our advice intended -- to get everybody thoroughly

to test the *Baptismal Formula* and the doctrine of baptism and the basis of the Reformed Confession against God's Word.

"However if, notwithstanding that, anybody perseveres in the opinion that a child should be baptized without therewith having presupposed his election, and as if the gracious work of God can begin only first in an adult -- then we say he cannot remain in the Reformed churches with a clear conscience. For our Reformed churches have consistently confessed and taught the opposite, from of old.

"This immediately appears from our *Belgic Confession*.... In Article 24, it is confessed firstly that Christ has given commands to baptize 'those who are His' -- so that even the young children who are presented here, appear as the 'property of Christ' and thus as elect. Secondly, Christ indeed shed His blood 'no less to wash the young children of the believers, than He did for the adults'....

"Also at the Synod of Dordt in 1619, our Reformed churches expressed themselves wholly in similar vein. After all, in Article 17 of the first chapter, coming to the question of the young little children, this Synod, with the approval of all the national and the foreign Churches, confessed as follows: 'The Word of God...testifies that the children of the believers are holy. Consequently, godly parents must not doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God removes from this life in their infancy.'

"Naturally, the Synod did not here mean to say that this was an exceptional privilege [especially] of early-dying children. But rather that godly parents should thus view **all** of their children -- as long as the opposite does not appear to be evident....

"Also our *Catechism* judges likewise.... Question 73 says God assures us through baptism not that we **shall** be washed through the blood of Christ, but that we and so too our **children** **have** been washed spiritually just as truly from our sins as we are externally washed with water.'

"Again, in answer to Question 74, the children are placed on the same level with adults as regards the work of grace. Inasmuch as 'the blood of Christ which redeems from sin' as well as 'the Holy Spirit Who works faith' is applied also to them....

"The Church, by presupposing in infant baptism that the baptizee has already been regenerated and engrafted into Christ and made partaker of the Holy Spirit -- is no more saying that this is actually so, than in respect of the adult baptizee. The Lord God alone knows whether this is so....

"The Church **presupposes** this work of God, already among the newborn [covenant children]. On this basis, she must baptize them. In the same way, if they grow up, she must insist that they come to conversion. But if they die early, she gazes after them -- in the confidence that **they saw they [already] had salvation**" even before they died.

582. Kuyper's Calvinism and Confessional Revision on baptism

In his writing *Calvinism and Confessional Revision*, Kuyper emphasized²⁴⁰ that the early-dying children of believers are saved on the basis of God's immutable promise. Claimed Kuyper: "Calvinists have **always** taught that **baptism** should be administered on the **presumption** that **regeneration** has **preceded**."

Indeed Kuyper then approvingly quoted Calvin himself: 'What will prevent God from having already granted...a little spark of His light to those same children on whom presently He will shed its full lustre?... Children are baptized in view of a [present] **faith** and **repentance** [within the infant], which are both expected to] manifest themselves later.... Through a secret operation of the Spirit, the **seed** of both **is** implanted in them.'

Kuyper himself then declared it is totally subversive of Calvinism to deny either of the following two propositions: "1.That children of believers are to be considered as recipients of efficacious grace, in whom the work of efficacious grace has already begun. 2.That only when dying before having attained to years of discretion, they can be regarded as saved." Accordingly, for Christian parents, it is "**imperative** to look upon their **infant children** as elect and **saved** and to treat them accordingly."

583. Kuyper's book *God's Angels* on baptism

In his interesting book *God's Angels*, Kuyper regarded²⁴¹ the Romish exorcism of demons at the baptism of little children of the covenant as being "in conflict...with First Corinthians 7:14." For "a child born from Christian parents is not unclean, but holy....

"Such a child never was in the midst of the pagan spirit of the world -- and therefore could not leave it. Abjuring the pagan spirit of the world, makes no sense at all -- in respect of such a child."

584. Baptism in Kuyper's book *A Myrtle Tree in the Place of a Thistle*

To Kuyper, the covenant child is presumed to be a believing Member of the elect Church Invisible -- even before his infant baptism. Precisely for that very reason, he is therefore baptized into membership of the imperfect Visible Church -- and thereafter educated toward Christian maturity.

Thus Kuyper insisted²⁴² in his book *A Myrtle Tree in the Place of a Thistle*, that "the **firm presumption** in educating every baptized child -- is that hidden grace **has** been secreted" in him from even **before** the time of his **infant baptism**.

"Your educating only extends to irrigating that hidden seed of grace in the field of your little child. And to eradicating the weeds, so that they do not choke that hidden seed of grace."

585. Kuyper's work *On Salvation anent infant baptism*

In his work *On Salvation*, Kuyper insisted²⁴³ that "our faith depends upon implantation into Christ.... Does Scripture sometimes permit there to be salvation without faith? No, never!... That a small child can be saved through the faith of his parents...is a stupidity -- a tearing up of the foundations of the Reformed Church.... Then, the child is baptized not because God did something to the child -- but because of some kind of an overly holiness of the parents....

"This was the big argument advanced by the Arminians -- that the Reformed, who demanded faith for salvation, therefore condemned tiny children. The Synod of Dordt then states, that believing parents were to be consoled about their early-dying infants. Infant baptism is administered upon the **presumption of faith being present** -- not in the hope of future faith."

586. Kuyper's work *On Sin anent infant baptism*

In his work *On Sin*, Kuyper rightly stated²⁴⁴ that "it is also the opinion of our best Reformers that the children [of the covenant] have been regenerated already, before baptism.... Who are the Members of the Church? The believers and their seed.... All children born of believing parents are members of the Church by their birth.

"The only question at the administration of baptism, is therefore: Can the seed of God be presupposed in that child? It can -- from the father, or from the mother. 'For the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband, and the unbelieving husband by the wife. Otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy' [First Corinthians 7:14]....

"The expression in the [*Dutch Reformed*] *Baptismal Formula* --'that the children have already been sanctified' -- agrees with what Scripture teaches. Romans 8:29-30 even states that all the elect have already been glorified.

"The same is taught in the [*Heidelberg*] *Catechism* Q. 74, in the [*Belgic*] *Confession* art. 34, and in the *Canons of Dordt* [I:17].... The very word 'sanctified' in First Corinthians 7:14, expresses the fact that there was indeed guilt. If there had been no sin, then no sanctification would have been needed either."

587. Kuyper's work *On the Church anent infant baptism*

In his work *On the Church*, Kuyper emphasized²⁴⁵ that "regeneration must have a development.... The entire process, not excluding death, is all in the one regeneration -- wherein one must distinguish between: the implantation of the vital germ; justification; sanctification; and death....

"[Covenant] children must be regarded as regenerates.... This judgment concerning young children is grounded on Holy Scripture. This appears from the facts mentioned about John the baptizer (Luke 1:44). Holy Scripture further tells us that God prepares His praise from the

mouths of sucklings [Psalm 8].... Above all, our viewpoint is founded upon the act of the Holy Spirit at the conception of the Saviour.

"In this connection we point to First Corinthians 7:14, and to our *Baptismal Formula*. In this place, the child too is taken up into the holy circle. That is diametrically opposed to Methodism, which views the children of Christians as being the same as the children of Pagans. Actually, in the latter lies the solidarity of guilt -- as we are taught in Exodus twenty, where God is said to visit the misdeeds of the fathers upon the children.

"There is thus a solid connection between the ethical life of parents and children. In Romans five, that solidarity is taught in respect of the entire human race.... If Adam had been created as a child, it would immediately have been clear that righteousness could be present even in a child." Indeed, if the mature Adam had generated children before falling, all of his thus-born descendants would themselves have been righteous from their conceptions onward.

Concluded Kuyper: "Whether we think of Adam as a child, or of a child generated by Adam in the state of righteousness -- that child could never have been conceived and born in sin. From this, it is sufficiently clear that the representation as if the life of Christ only applies to adults -- is totally erroneous....

"The *ecclesia latens* [alias the 'hidden church'] means all persons not yet born but still resting in election. The *ecclesia latens* thus exists in God's foreknowledge. Yet for us here on earth, it is still completely hidden -- and indeed 'in the loins' of the present generation....

"Of every instituted church..., Jesus is the Founder.... No church is possible without regeneration.... No administration of the sacraments is possible, than through Him.... The Church is first manifested -- through baptism."

588. Kuyper's work *On the Sacraments anent infant baptism*

In his work *On the Sacraments*, Kuyper declared²⁴⁶ that "although it is indeed the local church which administers baptism, it does so as representing the Church catholic, and not *jure suo* [by its own right]. The local church is bound by its *Confession*."

Kuyper also shows that "in First Corinthians 7:14..., for the sake of the man or woman who is a believer..., even the children born from that marriage also belong to Christ's holy heritage. They are saints, standing in the covenant of grace.... It is by birth [or generation] that they belong to that heritage -- not first by baptism....

"In this respect, also the crib of Bethlehem has great significance. All sects which only count a person subsequently to his conversion, push this history to one side.

'Marcion [just like his later stepchildren the Anabaptists] has the Lord appearing from heaven -- as an adult.... But wherever one professes that Christ was born as a little child from the womb

of Mary, Christ Himself overthrows this whole false theory. Even when He lay unconsciously [?!] in Mary's lap -- He already possessed the Holy Spirit, without measure. John 3:34....

"Baptism presupposes that the baptizee is elect and regenerated, and thus that the power of faith had commenced at regeneration. No other object of baptism is thinkable -- than the one within whom the seed of faith has already been worked by the Holy Spirit....

"The seal of the living God as the sign of incorporation into the covenant of grace, is the product of baptism.... This incorporation into the covenant of grace or of atonement, is one and the same with the baptism of adults and with that of the young children of believers.... Such is God's seal. Revelation 7:2.... No other subjects of baptism may be recognized, than those in which faith is present. That is the one and only quality which must be demanded....

"The Arminians, who wish to derive everything from free will, naturally say that faith first begins where the person utters it. We, on the other hand, accept that the work of God can already begin in the womb.... The feeling that potential faith may and must be presupposed also in the young children of believers, is advocated (among others) also by: Calvin, P. Martyr, Ursinus, Trelcatius, Bucan, Polan, Walaeus, Voetius, Maastricht, Alting, Wendelin, Turretin, Heydegger, De Moor *etc....*

"We come to the conclusion that the Reformed Church...stood in the faith that the Lord regularly implants the seed of regeneration in the elect, either in the womb or immediately after birth.... The *Canons [of Dordt] (I:17)* finally bring the matter into immediate connection with election, and give no uncertain sound. The second baptismal question [in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*] brings us to the same conclusion. On the basis of their sanctified state, they are baptized as Members of Christ. They are therefore not baptized, in order to become a Member of Christ."

589. Kuyper's *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology* on baptism

While discussing catechetics in his *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, Kuyper further insisted²⁴⁷ that "baptism and the Lord's supper are paedagogically interdependent.... Catechetics, proceeding from baptism, finds its conclusion and its purpose in admittance to the holy supper....

"As catechism within the Christian Church -- this instruction must always presuppose holy baptism, and regard the persons thus to be catechized as standing inside the covenant of grace.... Catechism [within the covenant] always presupposes baptism; and baptism, ideally, [always presupposes] regeneration..

"Catechetics thus always has to function as if the individual to be catechized -- has already been regenerated. The children of believers may not be regarded like the children of Jews, Pagans or Moslems.... For precisely baptism thereby separates them.... It is the task of Catechetics to guide these baptized and hence separated 'children of believers' -- along the road which leads to holy communion."

590. Kuyper's Doctrine of the Covenants anent infant baptism

Also in his book *The Doctrine of the Covenants*, Kuyper posited²⁴⁸ the presumed though rebuttable and prebaptismal regeneration of the young children of the covenant. For "'the children of the promise are regarded as the seed.' Romans 9:8....

"It irrefutably follows that one can earmark the circumcision and the baptism of children as a seal of an immutable promise.... The baptism of adults and of children is also a seal, ordained for believers alone -- to seal the promise made to them unto the strengthening of their saving faith....

"To those truly graced, in infant baptism the promise is already fulfilled in them -- and sealed. Very definitely, it will also keep on being fulfilled" -- in them, and to them.

591. Kuyper's book *Our Liturgy* anent infant baptism

Lastly, in his *Our Liturgy*, Kuyper declared²⁴⁹ "that the administration of holy baptism had a pictorial and not an actual significance. This is not to deny that there is also a real deed on God's part.... But this is only to say that the human act as such is not a vehicle of grace....

"Are our children born to us unholy, like heathen children, or are they holy? To this question Paul, as an apostle of the Lord, gives the decisive answer that our children themselves have been made holy -- even where only one of the parents has entered into the kingdom of heaven. He clearly states: 'the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the [believing] husband. For otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.' First Corinthians 7:14....

"Our confession was and still is that baptism itself does not produce grace, and that regeneration thus does not come into being by means of baptism. Outside of Reformed circles, however, many are indeed of such an opinion. In various ways, [others] then teach that baptism is not a sign and seal of grace already received -- but the instrument of a grace which only comes into existence through and under the sacrament....

But for us Reformed Christians, the matter is quite different. If one confesses that this grace, namely the grace of regeneration, does not arrive through baptism as an instrument but is rather so presupposed by baptism that baptism is only its sign and seal -- then one needs a rule, in order to know which child one will indeed baptize and which not....

"Our children do not first *become* Members of Christ's Church by baptism.... That they are.... In that capacity, they have a right to baptism....

"The prayer of thanksgiving [right after baptism in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*]...does not pray that the little children be brought to faith -- but gives praises and thanks 'that we together with our children have **been** received as members of Christ and unto children of God' -- and that this sanctified condition of the little children has been sealed and impressed in

and through baptism.... In that prayer, the congregation does not ask that these baptized children might be brought to Christ -- but that they, as those already brought [and so brought even long before their baptism], may be led further by the grace of God, and that they may always be ruled by the Holy Spirit....

"Among the Reformed...there could be no emergency baptisms. For, according to the fixed and unanimous profession of our churches, baptism does not produce grace but **presupposes** it as **present**.... From this it follows that baptism cannot produce grace instrumentally. Hence too, in explaining baptism, our *Baptismal Formula* carefully avoids every word which might suggest the production of grace through baptism.

"All that baptism does, is to testify about [Christ] -- and to **seal** and to **assure** and to **warn**.... 'Holy baptism testifies and seals for us the washing away of sin, through Jesus Christ'....

"Inasmuch as baptism teaches that the little child, as one already taken up into the covenant, only receives a seal -- 'emergency baptism' lapses. But then -- even the unthinking will attach less importance to the significance of baptism."

592. Rev. Professor Dr. W.G.T. Shedd on infant faith and baptism

In 1888, Rev. Professor Dr. W.G.T. Shedd of Union Theological Seminary in New York City first published his volumes on *Dogmatic Theology*. "Regeneration is a work of God in the human soul," declared Shedd.²⁵⁰ "This fact places the infant and the adult upon the same footing, and makes infant regeneration as possible as that of adults.

"Infant regeneration is taught in Scripture. Luke 1:15, 'he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.' Luke 18:15-16, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of God.' Acts 2:39, 'the promise is unto your children.' First Corinthians 7:14, 'now are your children holy.' Infant regeneration is also taught symbolically: (a) by infant circumcision in the Old Testament; (b) by infant baptism in the New Testament."

Furthermore, Shedd also argued that covenantal infants are already Christian disciples -- even prebaptismally (and precircumcisionally during Old Testament times). For, in "First Corinthians 7:14," explained Shedd, the children of at least one believing parent are themselves "holy" -- even from their very conception onward.

Moreover, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 clearly implies not just infant baptism but also infant discipleship. Explained Shedd: "If the command had been, 'Go teach all nations, circumcising them' -- no one would have denied that infants were included in the command." Infants are called disciples in Acts 15:10. 'Why tempt ye God to put a yoke [namely circumcision] upon the neck of the disciples?'"

According to Shedd, "the infant of the believer receives the Holy Spirit as a regenerating Spirit.... The **infant** of the believer...obtains the **regenerating** grace by virtue of his **birth** and

descent from a believer in covenant with God -- and **not** by virtue of his **baptism**.... The infant of a believer is born into the church, as the infant of a citizen is born into the State.....

"A citizen of the State must be presumed to be such, until the contrary appears by his renunciation of citizenship.... Until he takes this course, he must be regarded as a citizen. So a baptized child in adult years may renounce his baptism, become an infidel, and join the synagogue of Satan. But until he does this, he must be regarded as a Member of the Church of Christ."

593. The books on infant baptism by Drs. Henry van Dyke Sr. & Jun.

In 1890, Brooklyn's Rev. Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke -- sometime Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church -- wrote an important book. It was published under the title: *The Church -- Her Ministry and Sacraments*.

There, the American Van Dyke declared:²⁵¹ "We hold with Paul that there is 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Ephesians 4:5) -- one in the correspondence between the outward sign and the inward meaning.... If the baptism of infants does not signify and seal 'regeneration and engrafting into Christ' in the same sense and to the same extent as in the case of adults -- we have no right to administer it to infants.

"The practice of the Church is indefensible, upon any other grounds.... Christian nurture, beginning in infancy -- inheriting traditional influences, and surrounded at the first dawn of consciousness by a religious atmosphere -- is the normal and divine method for propagating the Church."

Certainly much of this rubbed off on his son, Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke Jun., a Director of Princeton Theological Seminary. Compare especially his book *God and Little Children*. See too his other book: *The Blessed State of All who Die in Childhood Proved and Taught as a Part of the Gospel of Christ*.²⁵²

594. Rev. Professor Dr. Norman L. Walker's work: *The Church Standing of Children*

This heralded a whole spate of similar such writings. That spate started with the important Scottish church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Norman L. Walker's 1891 work on *The Church Standing of Children*.²⁵³

Walker stressed the continuity of the Old Testament Church into New Testament times. He argued that the denial of infant baptism involves "the withdrawal of a privilege which had been enjoyed previously for about two thousand years...[and which on the part of the Lord Himself] presents a specially benignant attitude towards the children."²⁵⁴

The above work of Walker was later reviewed by the great Princetonian theologian Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield.²⁵⁵ Wrote the latter: "We had just risen from reading a series of very

admirable popular papers on baptism by Dr. Kuyper...during the summer of 1890, when Dr. Walker's tract came to our hand....

"We were impressed by the unity in spirit as well as in doctrines presented by the two writers.... Dr. Walker bases the argument for infant baptism on the capacity of infants for the reception of grace.... So does Dr. Kuyper, who even says: 'Infant baptism stands or falls with the question whether fully grown people only or also infants dying as such are saved.'

"Both [Kuyper and Walker] lay stress on the fact that baptism is administered on the presumption that grace is already present. Both insist that, the Church having no power to read the heart, this is as truly a presumption in the case of adults as of infants. And both point to the covenant as including 'you and your children' as the divinely given rule for procedure in recognizing grace as present. We wish every Presbyterian would read Dr. Walker's tract."

595. The baptismal writings of Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield

Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield himself produced many baptismal writings.²⁵⁶ In his work *The Polemics of Infant Baptism*, he clearly upheld what Rev. Professor John Murray²⁵⁷ of Westminster East would later call "presumptive membership in Christ's body."

Further, in his book *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, Warfield insisted²⁵⁸ that -- as 'milk for babes' -- "the [*Shorter*] *Catechism* proceeds on the presumption that the Catechumen is a child of God." For this reason, that *Catechism* gives only what the child of God needs to know of the dealings of God with him and the duties he owes God" -- before he is for the first time admitted to commune at the Lord's supper.

In his article *Children*, Warfield insisted²⁵⁹ that "Jesus...asserted for children a recognized place in His Kingdom.... What is particularly to be borne in mind with respect to the blessing of the little children -- Matthew 19:13f; Mark 10:13f; Luke 18:15f -- is that these 'little children' (*paidia*)...were distinctively 'babies' (*brephē*).... He not only asserted for them a part in His mission, but even constituted them the type of the children of the kingdom."

Moreover, observed Warfield, covenant children actually have truth revealed to them. Consequently, in their own infantile way they then **actually** -- and therefore **consciously** -- praise their Saviour. Thus, stated Warfield: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Jesus exclaimed) on at least "one momentous occasion (Matthew 11:25 & Luke 10:21) -- 'that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them unto babes'.... 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, Thou has ordained praise.' Matthew 21:16."

In his articles *Christ's "Little Ones"* and *The Angels of Christ's "Little Ones"* -- Warfield explained²⁶⁰ that "the Apostles had been disputing as to their relative claims to greatness in the coming Kingdom.... The Lord teaches them a much needed lesson in humility, by means of the example of a little child. Setting a little child in their midst, He exhorts them to emulate its simplicity....

"Christ's 'little ones'...are just who He tells us they are --'those that believe on Him.... It is not the will of the Father that one should perish' whose angels 'in heaven do always behold the face of the Father Who is in heaven' [Matthew 18:1-6].... Children were 'little ones' to the rabbis, [but] only as undeveloped and unripe.... The *katan* and *katanna* were simply the 'boy' and 'girl' -- in opposition to the mature man and woman....

"In the passage in Matthew [18:6-10], nothing could seem more appropriate than the sense of 'disembodied spirit.'" Indeed, "especially if literal 'children' are meant" -- Warfield then asked: "What could so enhance the reverence with which 'these little ones'...should be treated here -- than the assurance that it is specifically their souls which in heaven stand closest to the Father's throne?"

596. Further writings of Warfield on infant faith and infant salvation

In his article *The Polemics of Infant Baptism*, Warfield insists:²⁶¹ "All Protestants should easily agree that only Christ's children have a right to the ordinance of infant baptism.... We say that it [the Church] should receive as the children of Christ -- all whom in the judgment of charity it may fairly recognize as such....

"All baptism is inevitably administered on the basis not of knowledge but of presumption.... If we must baptize on presumption, the whole principle is yielded.... We must baptize all whom we may fairly presume to be Members of Christ's body....

"So soon, therefore, as it is fairly apprehended that we baptize on presumption and not on knowledge -- it is inevitable that we shall baptize all those for whom we may, on any grounds, fairly cherish a good **presumption that they belong to God's people....** This surely includes the infant children of believers."

This concerns the favour of God, "to Whom there exist many precious promises on which pious parents -- Baptists as fully as others -- rest in devout faith." We must obey "Christ's command, by giving the child early baptism -- and so marking him as the Lord's!"

Also in his essay *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*, Warfield added²⁶² that "the new birth of the Spirit was the sole gateway for infants too into the kingdom. Communion with God was lost for all alike, and to infants too it was restored only in Christ."

It is certain that at least some infants are saved, after they have been regenerated previously. As regards infants dying thus, birth within the bounds of the covenant is a sure sign of salvation -- since the promise is 'unto us and our children.' Acts 2:38f. "God in His infinite love has chosen them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, by a loving foreordination of them -- unto adoption as sons in Jesus Christ....

"Men [alias human beings], accordingly, are not saved because they are baptized -- but they are **baptized, because they are saved....** Accordingly, to all those departing this life in infancy --inclusion in God's saving purpose alone is the condition of salvation.... [This] is the doctrine of the Reformed churches."

In his *Studies on Theology*, Warfield added: "Among the Reformed alone..., [regarding the Invisible Church of] the people of God, membership...is mediated not by the external act of baptism but the **internal regeneration of the Holy Spirit**... In the case of infants dying in infancy, birth within the bounds of the covenant is a sure sign, since the promise is 'unto us and our children.'"²⁶³

597. Warfield: baptism by sprinkling for those infants with faith

Warfield carefully wished to uphold the 'infant faith' and the baby baptism teaching of the *Westminster Standards*. Indeed, he wished to do so -- *in toto*.

In his article *Baptism: Discussion of Controverted Points*, Warfield explained²⁶⁴ that "baptism is a 'washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost...rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.' *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q. 94 and *Confession* 28:3.... In the hands of the Apostles...it was probably by pouring water on the head of the recipient."

In his essay *How Shall We Baptize?*, Dr. Warfield rightly repudiated the *ex opere operato* baptismal regeneration theory of Romanism. He declared:²⁶⁵ "Jesuit missionaries in Canada, urged on by their belief that by the mere act, baptism worked salvation -- reduced it to a bald magical performance.

"They had a special delight in baptizing dying infants -- thus, as they believed, rescuing them from the flames of perdition.... Their practice of baptizing infants at the point of death, led the [American] Indians to believe that baptism was a cause of death!"

The truth, however, is exactly the opposite. For only those who already have life -- and everlasting life at that -- should ever be baptized at all.

Warfield continued: "And what are we to say of the filthy habit of immersing, at the great baptismal season, multitudes of children -- sick and well alike, one after another, in the same font?... The entire subject is discussed by the Russian Bishop Hermogen in a formal treatise -- after a fashion which would be amusing, were it not so distressing.

"The infant, according to him, is to be baptized preferably in cold water.... The plea that the cold water may injure it, is not to be admitted. To add hot water -- 'makes it no longer natural but artificial'....

"How can there be any danger of the child taking cold and dying from the touch of the baptismal water -- when it is immersed into it with the very object that it may receive from it new and spiritual life?" Thus the Russian 'Orthodox' Bishop Hermogen.

"Similarly," continued Warfield, the famous American Baptist (Seminary Professor) "President A.H. Strong." In his book *Systematic Theology*, ed. 1909, Vol. III, p. 940," Strong "bids those who doubt whether immersion can have been intended by Christ to be the universal mode of baptism -- because, forsooth, it is often dangerous to health and life -- to remember that

'ardent feeling nerves even the body!'" Indeed, Strong even "adds the lines: 'Brethren, if your hearts be warm -- ice and snow can do no harm!'"

Responded Warfield: "Can they not? And is it not written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God?'" Luke 3:21f & 4:1,9-12! "We cannot let either indifference or fanaticism determine for us how we should baptize." For the proper mode of Biblical baptism, is sprinkling alone.

Nevertheless, Warfield added, "we should not like to pronounce the [submersionistic] mode...no baptism at all.... Who would have the heart to declare the poor little Russian babies to have passed through their infected bath -- in vain?"

For "if we are going to demand that our baptismal water shall be pure and clean, on pain of not being baptismal water at all -- how pure and clean must we demand that it shall be? Must we have distilled water, fresh from the retorts? Would it not be better to remember that...the place occupied by baptism in general in the New Testament -- is [today] commonly exaggerated?"

"This does not prove that it is of little importance. But it does seem to show that there are few details concerning it which are of large importance. The New Testament considers it enough, to: establish it as the initiatory rite of Christianity; outline its significance in broad touches; and let it go at that....

"Affusion on the head of a recipient standing in shallow water...is the ordinary mode of baptism depicted in the early decorations of the Roman catacombs.... It is more probable that it was this mode which was employed in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch and in the baptisms of John the Baptist -- [rather] than immersionism."

598. Warfield on the sealing character of triune baptism

In his excellent essay *Christian Baptism*, Warfield further declared²⁶⁶ that in Romans 4:11 "circumcision had no function whatever in the procuring or reception of salvation." For Abraham "received the sign of circumcision [as] a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision.... Baptism is the form that the circumcision which God gave Abraham in the Old Covenant, takes in the New....

"As with adults, it is only the infants who are the Lord's -- who are to be baptized. But equally naturally as with adults, all infants that are the Lord's -- are to be baptized.... Circumcision, which held the place in the Old Covenant that baptism holds in the New, was to be given to all [male] infants born within the Covenant." And regenerated Israelitesses, both tiny and mature, were all saved without and therefore (just like the males) **before** circumcision.

"Baptism must follow the same rule," insisted Warfield. "This, and this only, can determine its conference: Is the recipient a child of the covenant, with a right therefore to the sign and seal of the covenant? We cannot withhold the sign and seal of the covenant from those who are of the covenant....

"The baptism of infants, no doubt, presupposes that salvation is altogether of the Lord. No infant can be the Lord's -- unless it is the Lord Who makes him such.... Infants, in this, do not differ in any way from adults. Of all alike, it is true that it is only 'of God' that they are in Christ Jesus....

"Our Lord commanded His disciples to baptize those whom in their world-wide mission they should draw to Christ.... Precisely what He bade them do, was to call them by the Name of the Triune God -- that they might be marked out as His, and sealed to Him as an eternal possession....

"It was God Himself Who declared, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.' Ezekiel 36:25.... Baptism therefore symbolizes not merely the cleansing of our sins, but our consequent walk in new obedience. This, let us never forget, is not only symbolized for us -- but sealed to us. For baptism is given to us by God as an engagement on His part to bring us safely through to the end....

"It is not only our duty, then, but our high privilege -- to receive baptism. We not only obey God's command in receiving it, but lay hold of His covenant promise. Having His mark upon us, and resting upon His pledge, we may go forward in joy and sure expectation of His gracious keeping in this life -- and His acceptance of us into His glory hereafter.

"Under this encouragement, we are daily and hourly and momently to work out the salvation thus sealed to us, in the blessed knowledge that it is God Who, in fulfilment of His pledge, is working in us both the willing and the doing. Thus we shall, as our fathers expressed it, 'improve our baptism.'" *Westminster Larger Catechism* 167.

599. Rev. Drs. Kramer on *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*

In 1897, Rev. 'Doctorandus' G. Kramer wrote his doctoral dissertation on *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*.²⁶⁷ After proofreading almost the entire text, he suddenly died -- just before being awarded the degree. Posthumously, at the request of his widow it was published by his promotor (Rev. Professor Dr. A. Kuyper Sr). Kuyper accordingly wrote the *Introduction* thereto, where he admitted he had hoped Kramer would one day have been appointed to the Faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam.²⁶⁸

Kramer's priceless work is a study in the history of dogma. It would deepen the Church's understanding of the doctrine of the 'prebaptismally presumed regeneration' of covenantal infants in Reformed Theology.

Kramer firstly explained the mediaeval *ex opere operato* perception of Romanism. Second, he deals with "the imperfect application of the principle of the Reformation" in Lutheranism, and with the reactionary views of the Anabaptists.

Next, Kramer dealt with the baptismal views of the early Swiss Reformers -- such as Zwingli and Oecolampadius. Then, he thoroughly explained the 'presumptionist' views of John Calvin -- with specific reference to infant faith before the baptism of covenant children.

Thereafter, Kramer presented the similar views of Calvin's contemporary associates -- such as Bullinger, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Aretius, Ursinus, Olevianus, Laski and Micron. Unfortunately, however, he does not also deal with the views of Classic Scottish Reformers (such as Wishart, Knox and Craig) -- nor of Classic English Reformers (like Cranmer and Bradford). Nor does he deal with the views of Bohemian Reformers (like Budovec and Zerotin), and of Hungarian Reformers (like Kalmancsehi, Kis, Juhasz and Bocskay).

Overlooking too the similar views in Early Colonial America and in the rest of the Reformed world in its heyday, Kramer thenceforth concentrated almost exclusively on the Netherlands. There, he showed how 'presumptionism' was championed by the Pre-Dordt Synods as well as by the 1618f Synod of Dordt stalwarts. Such included: De Brés, Datheen, Alting, Vander Heyden, Taffin, Acron, Puppius, Cloppenburgh, Udemann, Basting, Junius, Trelcatius, Hommius, Amesius, Walaeus, Trigland, Gomar, Maccovius, and Voetius.

Kramer then also pointed to similar Post-Dordt theologians (such as Rivetus, Vossius, Poudroyen, Maresius, Cocceius, Burmannus, Ridderus and Koelman). Cursorily, he traced the further devolutionary development (from Brakel to Fruytier) -- and then the resurgence of 'presumptionism' (under Van Toll, Aemilius, Tuinman, De Moor and Vander Honert).

Finally, Kramer outlined the beginnings of the nineteenth-century revival of the true view -- under H.P. Scholte and J.A. Wormser. Curiously, he omitted the similar views of the great *Afscheiding* leader Hendrik de Cock. In conclusion, Kramer merely mentioned that his "highly respected teacher, Rev. Professor Dr. A. Kuyper (Sr.) -- after a long time of decay [on the part of the Dutch Reformed Church] -- had again begun to preach with full power the doctrine of the Pre-Dordt Reformed Fathers."²⁶⁹

600. Littooy changed his mind and became a baptismal Calvinist

Also in Holland, Rev. A. Littooy of Middelburg had written (earlier in 1880) that children were only outwardly sanctified before and during infant baptism. In 1901, however, as a result of ongoing study, he changed his views -- and thenceforth followed the thought of John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper.²⁷⁰

In yet another writing, Littooy then rightly pointed out²⁷¹ that in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*, "á Lasco the compiler...asks the question: 'Do you acknowledge that they [your tiny covenant children] have been sanctified in Christ and should therefore be baptized as Members of the Congregation?'

"This is what precedes...and is asked...before the baptism is administered. Consequently, it does not refer to anything first obtained at and during the baptism....

"The expression that our children 'partake of condemnation in Adam' is not taken by any of the Reformed to mean merely externally -- but only in the internal and actual sense. Yet, according to all rules of exegesis, one must therefore also take what is contraposed thereto in this same sense. Thus, the children are also received in Christ by grace -- just as they were subject to condemnation in Adam."

601. Baptismal problems in Dutch church mergers 'around 1905'

Now there were many would-be, and temporary, and permanent mergers of Reformed denominations -- in Holland, around the beginning of our twentieth century.²⁷² Unfortunately, many squabbles and tensions were thereby produced -- especially as regards the precise significance of infant baptism. So, the 1905 Synod of Utrecht (of the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands') finally made the following unanimous declaration.

Even before infant baptism, "as regards...presumptive regeneration your Synod declares that according to the Confession of our congregations the seed of the covenant according to the promise of God **is** to be regarded as **regenerated** and sanctified in Christ -- until, when they grow up, the contrary might appear from their doctrine or life.... This is why our Church, in the prayer after [infant] baptism, 'thanks and praises God that He has forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of His dear Son Jesus Christ, and has through His Holy Spirit received us as Members of His only-begotten Son and as His children, and has sealed and impressed us with holy baptism.'"²⁷³

The 1905 Synod of Utrecht indeed admitted that some covenant infants might get regenerated only during baptism, and yet others some time after their infant baptism. But it also urged the congregations **rebuttably** to regard all covenant children as already regenerated -- before their infant baptisms.

It is important to note that even the later Rev. Professor Dr. K. Schilder (who ultimately made his exodus from the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands' largely for other reasons), defended the above 1905 declaration.²⁷⁴ Indeed, its 'presuppositionism' was further developed -- by Rev. Professors Drs. A. Kuyper Jr., H.H. Kuyper, Wielenga, Honig, Dijk, and many others.

602. The Ex-Baptist Rev. Campbell Morgan on the faith of believers' infants

A very different situation is encountered with the renowned Rev. Campbell Morgan. Born the son of a Baptist pastor on the Welsh border, he was reared in the very Christian environment of a Faith Mission -- himself 'preaching' his first sermon when but thirteen. Self-taught by a rabbi in a Jewish school; then rejected by both the Salvation Army and the Methodists -- he became a Congregationalist Minister and pastored London's famous Westminster Chapel from 1904 onward.²⁷⁵

About that time, Morgan published his book *The Crises of the Christ*. Though then an Arminian, he dedicated²⁷⁶ it "to my father and mother who over forty years ago gave me to Christ. They never doubted the acceptance by Him of their child. From infancy, and through youth, they trained me as His. From them, I received my first knowledge of Him. So, when the necessity came for my personal choosing, I so recognized the claims of His life -- that without revulsion and hardly knowing when, I yielded to Him my allegiance and my love."

603. The infant covenant theology of Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray

Yet again, a rather different situation was then occurring at about the same time in South Africa. There, the internationally-famous devotional writer and covenant theologian Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray was asserting²⁷⁷ that "the promise given to Abraham...is the promise for every believing parent....

"The eye of faith sees in each little one a divine goodness, and hides it in the shadow of the Almighty. Is it not an object of the great redemption?... Commit thy child boldly to the [baptismal] waters, in the ark of the covenant of thy God!"

And further: "God would teach us that it is especially as parents, and even from before the first hope of having children, that His saints are taken into covenant with Him.... The children, not only when grown up but even from birth, are to be partakers of the covenant. Yes, from before the birth, in the very first rising of hope, would God begin the great work of redeeming love by His Spirit....

"Let us look upon our children, let us love them and train them, as children of the covenant and children of the promise. These are the children of God.... The child has the same place in the covenant, and the same claim on the seal of the covenant, as the father....

"The son of Ebenezer Fiske (grandson of William Fiske who was himself a fourth generation Christian) was a man of inflexible religious principles. His wife was energetic and eminently pious, and would frequently set apart whole days to pray that her children might be an influence for good to the next generation. By 1857, three hundred descendants of this praying mother were Members of Christian churches. For more than three hundred and fifty years, the line of the holy seed had been preserved."²⁷⁸

As with the godly Paidobaptist Ebenezer Fiske (and also the godly Paidobaptist Jonathan Edwards), so too with the godly Paidobaptist Andrew Murray. Also his children and his children's children would long serve the Lord. See Murray's sister M. Neethling's booklet *Unto Children's Children*.²⁷⁹ Isaiah 59:21!

604. Rev. Professor Dr. R.A. Webb: *The Theology of Infant Salvation*

Many contemporary American Presbyterians held similar views. Thus Rev. Professor Dr. R.A. Webb of Southwestern Presbyterian University in Tennessee. In his famous book *The Theology of Infant Salvation*, Webb made the following statements.²⁸⁰

"Abel was a godly child.... Isaac the patriarch was a subject of saving grace in his infancy.... He is known in biblical history as 'the child of promise'.... Jacob the patriarch...was a prenatal subject of God's grace, proving that a state in grace may antedate birth itself.... Moses was a 'proper child.' Hebrews 11:23.... His parents saw the properness that was [already] in him...., those spiritual qualities which made him 'exceeding fair to God' [Acts 7:20 margin]....

David the great king...was regenerated in his babyhood.... 'Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.' Psalm 22:9. 'By Thee have I been holden up from the womb'.... Psalm 71:6. 'Thou has covered me in my mother's womb.' Psalm 139:13....

"The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name.... The Lord...formed me from the womb to be His servant'.... Isaiah 49:1-5.... 'Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee'.... Jeremiah 1:5."

Webb's treatment of the children brought to Jesus by their believing parents for His blessing -- Matthew 19:13f --is especially illuminating. "Of 'such' children as these who are 'brought' or who 'come' to Me, is the Membership of the kingdom of heaven composed. Hence His indignation at His thickheaded disciples -- they were about to send away from Him some of the true Members of the kingdom of God!

"Hence, He took them in His arms; laid His hands on them; and blessed them. He was not blessing mere types and emblems and figures of speech -- but true and literal Members of the kingdom of God. Such infants as were 'brought' to Him and such children as 'came' to Him -- were subjects of His saving grace and *bona fide*[!] Members of the kingdom of God. His disciples did not understand. [So] He caused them to know better -- to know that these little children were the objects of His redemptive solicitude, and constituent of the kingdom of God.

"Bengel adopts this view, and makes this apt comment in the form of an argument *a fortiori*: 'Granted that "such" are intended as are like infants. Then, much more, infants themselves -- who are such [and who] have the kingdom of God.... Both [such infants and those like such infants] ought to receive it -- and can, by coming to Christ!

"Stier comments...that the kingdom of heaven consists of such children, as also of childlike men -- not on account of their own original innocence but through the saving grace in which they receive it as a gift and blessing.... 'If they come, and come to Me -- then of such is the kingdom of heaven'.... In all the so-called co-operation of man, there remains always the first and ever-present initiative of God's working and giving. The more passively, in its true sense, the man comes and takes....

"We must observe the intention of those who present the children. For if there had not been a deep-rooted conviction in their minds that the power of the Spirit was at His disposal, that He might pour it out on the people of God -- it would have been unreasonable to present their children. There is no room, therefore, to doubt that they ask for them a participation of His grace....

"By embracing them, He testified that they were reckoned by Christ among His flock.... They were partakers of the spiritual gifts which are represented by baptism. It is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign. But it is presumption and sacrilege to drive from the fold of Christ those whom He cherished in His bosom, and to shut the door and to exclude as strangers those whom He does not wish to be forbidden to come to Him....

"Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age -- till that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees and becomes fully manifest at the proper time.... We are indebted to Calvin for exploding the doctrine that children are saved by baptism."²⁸¹

605. Baptist Rev. Professor A.H. Strong: elect infants receive faith before arriving in glory

Even the Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong -- while rejecting infant baptism -- nevertheless admitted that early-dying infants still needed regeneration. Indeed, he averred they would probably need to be personally enlightened about Christ -- before being able to go to heaven.

Explained Strong:²⁸² "Infants are in a state of sin; need to be regenerated; and can be saved only through Christ.... They are the objects of special divine compassion and care, and through the grace of Christ are certain of salvation...."

"Since there is no evidence that children dying in infancy are regenerated prior to death, either with or without the use of external means, it seems most probable that the work of regeneration may be performed by the Spirit, in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ in the other world."

Here, we may be grateful that Strong does indeed make provision for the salvation of [at least some] early-dying infants --even though he anticovenantally and quite gratuitously seems to assume that all dying in infancy will be justified. However, by unbiblically denying their regeneratability before death -- he lapses into the limbo of a Baptist version of postmortal purgatory. Shades of Romanism!

Indeed, Strong's very notion of this heavenly destination for allegedly faithless early-dying babies -- blunts the imperative of their needing to come to Christ here and now, before they die. Furthermore, if as he suggests faithless babies may yet get regenerated after their deaths -- then why not also faithlessly dying adult Pagans? And then -- what remains of the missionary imperative, here and now?!

606. Rev. Professor Philip Schaff on the development of infant baptism in church history

In 1910, the famous American Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff put all of this into historical perspective. In his mammoth *History of the Christian Church*, he pointed out²⁸³ that "the apostolic church was a missionary church, and had first to establish a mother community -- in the bosom of which alone the grace of baptism can be 'improved' by a Christian education. So even under the old covenant, circumcision was first performed on the adult Abraham.... So all Christian missionaries in heathen lands now begin with preaching and baptizing adults...."

"We have presumptive and positive arguments for the apostolic origin and character of infant baptism. First: in the fact that circumcision [is], as truly prefigured, baptism.... Then: in the organic relation between Christian parents and children.... [Further,] in the nature of the New

Covenant, which is even more comprehensive than the Old.... [Last,] in the universal virtue of Christ as Redeemer of all sexes, classes and ages -- and especially in the import of His own infancy which has redeemed and sanctified the infantile age....

"The patristic doctrine of baptism...was sanctioned by the Greek and Roman and with some important modifications also by the Lutheran and Anglican Churches.... During the first three centuries and even in the age of Constantine, adult baptism was the rule [though by no means the only way of administering that Sacrament].... Actual conversion of the [adult] candidate was required, as a condition before administering the sacrament (as is still the case on missionary ground)....

"When the same high view is applied without qualification to infant baptism, we are confronted at once with the difficulty that infants cannot comply with this condition. They may be regenerated (this being an act of God), but they cannot be converted....

"The leading Lutheran divines reduce the absolute necessity of baptism to a relative or ordinary necessity. And the Reformed churches, under the influence of Calvin's teaching, went further -- but making salvation depend upon divine election, not upon the sacrament.... The *Second Scotch Confession* (A.D. 1580) was the first to declare its abhorrence of 'the cruel [popish] judgment against infants departing without the sacrament' and the doctrine of 'the absolute necessity of baptism.'"

607. Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr.: covenanters regenerated from birth onward

Significantly, the presumptive regenerationist Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr.'s sons -- notably Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. and Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper -- were themselves dedicated Christians. Furthermore, they were also famous theologians in their own right.

Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. himself published many works -- some of them, such as his *Covenantal Collectivism* and his *The Firmness of the Covenant*²⁸⁴ -- being relevant to our subject. In the latter, he declared: "The elect covenanters have been sanctified in Christ. From the hour of their birth. Regenerated in the narrower sense of the word."²⁸⁵

In his work *The Bond of the Covenant*, he further appealed²⁸⁶ to Isaiah 46:3-4. That passage commands God's people: 'Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel who are borne by Me from the belly; who are carried from the womb, and even to your old age!'

Hereanent, Kuyper observed: "It is only thus that we can understand aright the answer we are to give to the first baptismal question [in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*]: 'Although our children [were conceived in sin]..., do you not acknowledge that they have been sanctified in Christ?' It is because they **have been sanctified** in Christ [prenatally], that they are to be baptized. This 'sanctified in Christ' -- is here the direct ground for baptism" during infancy.

608. The strong presumptive regenerationism of Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper

His brother, Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper, also wrote similar relevant works. Such include his book *The Authentic Text of the Liturgical Writings Maintained* (also anent the *Baptismal Formula*);²⁸⁶ his work *The Children of the Covenant*; and his important writing *Hamabdil* (subtitled *On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*).

In his work *The Children of the Covenant*, Professor H.H. Kuyper presented²⁸⁷ a wealth of historical material -- from church history, from the confessional writings, and from the liturgy of the Reformation. Then, in an elaborate organic exposition of questionable texts (such as Mark 10:16 and Acts 2:39 and First Corinthians 7:14), he gave a detailed refutation of the arguments of Baptists and Methodists against infant baptism.

To H.H. Kuyper, in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula* the reference to the covenant with Abraham recalls the work of the Father. That regarding Jesus and the little children recalls the work of the Son. And the citation from Acts 2:39 refers to the work of the Holy Spirit.

In his book *Hamabdil*, Professor H.H. Kuyper further argued²⁸⁸ that the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 clearly implies the progressive infant baptizing of the nations and their infants. In Mark 16:15f, it clearly implies: 1, the Word; 2, faith; and 3, baptism -- and in that irreversible order, even as regards infants. Claimed Kuyper: "Whenever the preaching [of God's Word] bears fruit and disciples are made, these disciples must receive baptism. Baptism is the official act whereby the sign of Christian discipleship is impressed upon them and [whereby] they are distinguished from the non-disciples...."

"Christ says about the tiny little children of the Hebrews, whose mothers brought them to Him: 'Let the little children come unto Me, and do not hinder them! For of such is the Kingdom of God.' Mark 10:14.... Christ does not say: later, if they truly believe in Me, they shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven. He declares now, at that moment: of such is the Kingdom of heaven. That Kingdom is theirs; it is their inheritance, according to the covenant of grace."

609. Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper's *Hamabdil* (continued)

Nor does Christ say those covenant infants inherit that Kingdom -- because they were baptized. Indeed, there is no mention of those covenant children then being baptized. Clearly, Jesus states those covenant infants were heirs of the Kingdom irrespective of baptism -- indeed, also before baptism. They were already heirs -- simply because of their own presumably faithful relationship to Jesus (and especially and obviously that of the adults who brought them to Him).

H.H. Kuyper continued: "If solely those who can profess their faith personally, were permitted to be regarded as believers by the Church -- then the children of the covenant of grace would be excluded. For children are not able to make a profession of faith."

However: "Because the Lord God extends the promise of the covenant even to the children of believers..., they are baptized not...in the hope that they will later become covenanters. But

they are baptized because they have been taken up into the covenant of grace, and therefore ought to receive the sign and seal of the covenant of grace....

"Belonging to the covenant of grace, the children partake of the benefits of the covenant given in Christ to the Church of God. They have been incorporated into Christ. They have a stake in the atonement, through His blood. They have been washed and sanctified through the Holy Spirit. They are heirs of the Kingdom of heaven....

"The Church...regards these little children of believers as actual children of the covenant. She regards them as elect; as regenerates; as already washed in Christ's blood; as saints..... There has never been a difference as to whether the Church is to regard her children as 'sanctified in Christ' and as 'born again' -- until, from their walk, the opposite might appear....

"The strong expression in our *Baptismal Formula* that our children 'have been sanctified in Christ' is not so much derived from First Corinthians 7:14. There, it only says that our children are 'holy.' The expression is rather derived from First Corinthians 6:11. There, that is testified as regard the entire Church -- thus also her children -- that they 'have been sanctified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and through the Spirit of our God.... In Ezekiel 16:20-21, God calls even the children of idolatrous covenanters...His children....

"That the children of believers are holy, is to say (according to Calvin) that the curse resting upon them by nature has been wiped out -- and that they have been consecrated by the grace of God.... One should here [not] confuse the 'judgment of charity' with which the Church regards the children of believers as regenerates -- with the fact itself as to whether these children truly are regenerates....

"Yet the reservation that the Church proceed from a presupposition in conflict with reality, hold no water. That would only be the case if the Church still continued to regard such children as regenerate even when they lack every sign of true godliness after growing up....

"Christ's apostles, to take our point of departure with them, never neglected to warn every Member of the Congregation unto self-examination. Paul writes to the Congregation of Corinth in his Second Epistle (13:5), 'Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith! Test yourselves! Don't you know yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless you are reprobates?'.... 'Let a man examine himself!' First Corinthians 11:28."

Further: "If anybody does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Him!' Romans 8:9.... And in First Peter 2:2, 'as newborn little children, strongly desire the reasonable unadulterated milk [of the Word], so that you may grow thereby -- if you have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious!'"

H.H. Kuyper concluded: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not further harden your neck!' Deuteronomy 10:16.... The wrath and the zeal of the Lord shall smoke over that man, and the curse written in the book shall rest upon him!' Deuteronomy 19:19f.... 'Behold, today I have held before you life and what is good -- and death and what is evil!' Deuteronomy 30:15....

"How dramatically Christ warned the Pharisees and the Scribes, that they 'were like whitewashed graves who indeed appeared to be clean on the outside -- but who on the inside were full of dead bones and all uncleanness!' Matthew 23:27. When the Jews said to themselves, 'Abraham is our father!' -- Christ answers them, 'If you were Abraham's children -- you would do the works of Abraham!' John 8:39.... 'Remember Lot's wife!' Luke 17:32.... 'Let him who thinks he stands, take care that he not fall!' First Corinthians 10:11f....

"Consider, brethren' -- writes the Apostle to the Hebrews.... Or, as it says even in the first verse of that chapter: 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' This indeed shows in the strongest way how the Apostle regards them as believers. Yet he also writes: 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief -- in departing from the living God!' Hebrews 3:12.

"Even though the Apostle calls them holy brethren -- he does not for a moment hesitate to warn them, that nobody among them should have an unconverted heart.... It is not to those still outside the covenant, but to the children of the covenant -- that the Lord God says: 'my son, give Me your heart!' Proverbs 23:26."

610. Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck on *The First Baptismal Question*

Also very important, are the views of the great Dutch Reformed dogmatician Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck. Apart from his works *Calling and Regeneration* and *Parents or Witnesses*, already in 1900 he had published his important monograph *The First Baptismal Question* (namely of the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*).

In the latter-mentioned work, Bavinck commented on the question: 'Do you acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin..., that they yet are sanctified in Christ -- and therefore as Members of His Church ought to be baptized?'²⁸⁹ Here, Bavinck affirmed that this question is referring not just to outward but indeed also to inward sanctification.

For Bavinck declared in the above-mentioned monograph:²⁹⁰ "Even if that viewpoint was not recommended by the entire environment in which the *Formula* originated, the wording thereof in itself would nevertheless already require this interpretation.... It is confessed about the children of believers that they partake in Adam's condemnation, without their knowledge. But in the same way, they are received unto grace in Christ -- without their knowledge.

"The entire spirit and letter of the *Baptismal Formula* thus precludes understanding 'sanctified in Christ' only in an external and an objective sense. Both for children as well as for adults, the genuine and true Christian baptism is always that baptism which seals the washing off of sins and the renewal of the Holy Spirit."

611. Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck's books *Magnalia Dei* and *Christian Family*

In Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei: Instruction in the Christian Religion according to the Reformed Confession* -- he stated²⁹¹ that regeneration is a "radical about-turn, both internal and external,

which receives its sign and seal in holy baptism. Acts 2:38. He who undergoes baptism...has died with Christ and has been buried together with Him through baptism into His death.... He has become a disciple, a follower, a slave, a soldier of Christ -- a Member of His body, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Romans 6:3f; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11f; *etc.*....

"The missionary period [of the first few centuries of our era] passed.... The congregation perpetuated itself down through the generations, from parents to children.... The children were taken up into the covenant, from their birth. They received holy baptism as the sign and seal thereof....

"Baptism is certainly a sign and seal of the benefit of forgiveness, Acts 2:38 & 22:16; and of regeneration, Titus 3:5.... It is, furthermore, administered even to the children of believers. For they are included together with their parents in the covenant of grace. Genesis 17:7-10; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14; 21:16; Acts 2:39. They belong to the congregation, First Corinthians 7:14. And they have been taken up into fellowship with the Lord, Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20.

In his book *The Christian Family*, Bavinck stated²⁹² that "the apostle warns believers not to enter into a yoke together with unbelievers. Second Corinthians 6:14.... Paul is speaking in general terms. Yet it is not disallowable to apply his word also to a mixed marriage.... Even where a spouse is converted to Christ, and the other remains an unbeliever..., the Christian partner nevertheless sets the pace. Her family ought to be a Christian family, in which the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife and also the children themselves are holy. First Corinthians 7:14....

"The children, according to the Commandment, are obligated to obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1-3. Yet neither of them are to oppose each other, but rather form one fellowship in the Lord. Also the children are holy; belong to the inheritance of the congregation; and are heirs of the promise of the covenant. Acts 2:39; First Corinthians 7:14; First Timothy 2:15.... Husbands, wives and children -- however different -- form one elect generation; one holy people; one royal priesthood. First Peter 2:9."

612. Infant faith according to Bavinck's *Principles of Psychology*

In his book *Principles of Psychology*, Bavinck contrasted²⁹³ "the embryo of a man with that of an animal." He showed that "there must be a reason why the one develops into a man and the other into an animal. Nothing can come forth, which is not inherent."

"It is the same in the spiritual realm. Even where circumstances are similar, the one child learns easily -- while the other has difficulty with the smallest lesson. Wherever there is life, we must reckon not only with circumstances -- but primarily with the germ, the inclination, and the ability which proceed from the home....

"Humans are not born equal, neither are humans equal to animals. They bring their manners, their abilities, their natures with them.... Whenever man observes, thinks, judges or acts -- he immediately applies the principles which themselves lay locked up in his innate abilities, and which make their appearance with the exercise thereof."

613. Infant faith according to Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics

In his famous *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck further stated²⁹⁴ that "men had this feeling that the regeneration of children took place before baptism.... God was not bound to means.... He operated thus with the children of believers who were removed by death before the years of discretion....

"They are to be regarded as elect and regenerate, until the opposite is apparent from their profession and behaviour.... All children born of believing parents are, according to the judgment of charity, to be regarded as born again -- until the opposite in life and doctrine are clearly manifested. Thus [Peter] Martyr [Vermigli], Alasco, Ursinus, Datheen, Alting, Voetius, Witsius, Maastricht....

"Calvin says...that the children of believers are already holy even before baptism through a supernatural grace (*Institutes* IV:16:31); that the seed of faith and conversion hides within them through a secret operation of the Spirit (IV:16:20); that they partake of the grace of regeneration by virtue of the promise; and that baptism follows by way of sign.... Men had this feeling that the regeneration of children took place before baptism....

"God is not bound to means.... Especially young children can be regenerated and saved.... He regularly so operates with the children of believers who are removed by death before years of discretion.... Children of believers...are meanwhile to be regarded as elect and regenerated, until the opposite might appear from their profession and behaviour....

"Reformed theologians...came to distinguish between regeneration and faith (conversion).... They arrived at the unanimous confession that the children of believers were involved in the covenant of grace just as much as the latter themselves -- not for the first time through and after baptism, but already before that....

"The Holy Spirit could also...work through the Word in the hearts of the children.... He operated thus with the children of believers who were removed by death before the years of discretion.... They are to be regarded as elect and regenerate, until the opposite is apparent from their profession and behaviour....

"In the light of Scripture, the Reformed learned to see that the children of believers are included in the covenant of grace -- not through, but already before baptism; not because of their parents, and by virtue of their natural birth; but with their parents, and by virtue of God's mercy....

"The children of believers are regenerated in their early age, before they are able [objectively] to hear the Word of the Gospel.... The sacrament of baptism would be no sacrament, if it were not connected to the Word as a sign and a seal. The internal call whereby the children are regenerated thus remains, objectively, very closely connected to the Word....

"Furthermore, as far as the external call is concerned, it must be considered that this does not at all occur only through the public preaching or even through the reading and investigation of

Holy Scripture -- but also in the simple word spoken by father or mother, and heard by the child in the family circle" -- perhaps even prenatally.²⁹⁵

614. Bavinck on Calvinism versus Anabaptism regarding infant baptism

Further in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck added:²⁹⁶ "In their struggle against the Anabaptists, the Reformed reached the insight...that the ability, the seed, the possessability of faith or...regeneration in the narrower sense -- can occur already at an early age: before the arousing of consciousness; at, or before, baptism; or even already before birth. They appealed to the examples of Jeremiah (1:5); of John the baptizer (Luke 1:15); of Paul (Galatians 1:15); and of Jesus Himself (Luke 1:35)... Christ's conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, proves that the Spirit of God can be operative already from that very moment, and can continually sanctify a human being....

"The doctrine of regeneration in the narrower sense is therefore a precious part of the Reformed profession. Therefrom, godly parents derive the consolation that they ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God removes from this life in their childhood....

"The Reformed...went back to the simplicity of the Holy Scripture. They also proceeded from the idea -- and attempted to stick to it -- that baptism was instituted for believers.

"Thus, it [**baptism**] **did not cause** but indeed **strengthened faith**.... Especially against the Anabaptists, but then further also against the Romanists and the Lutherans, they [the Calvinists] had to show that the children of believers were to be regarded as **believers** even **before baptism**, and that it is as such [*viz.* as **believers**] that they ought to be baptized....

[

Explained Bavinck:²⁹⁷ "For the rightness of infant baptism, they unanimously appealed to Holy Scripture.... The children born of believing parents were no heathen children; did not abide under the wrath of God....

"They were children of the covenant before baptism.... They were certainly able to possess the **tendency toward faith**.... There was mention of seminal faith, radical faith, inclination in faith, potential faith, habitual faith, the beginning of faith, faith by internal virtue of the Spirit, the seed of regeneration, *etc.*....

"On the basis of Scripture (Jeremiah 1:5 & Luke 1:15) and in accordance with the universality of the Christian religion, all the Reformed maintained against the Anabaptists that just as much as adults -- little children too have been received by God into grace, been regenerated by His Spirit, and were able to be endowed with the seed of faith.... To the Reformed..., baptism was -- after all -- not the cause but the sign and the seal of the regeneration which God gives before (and without) the sacrament."

615. Infant faith according to Bavinck's *Manual for Instruction*

In his *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Bavinck showed²⁹⁸ that "circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, Romans 4:11 -- and of the circumcision of the heart, Deuteronomy 30:6 & Romans 2:28f.... Baptism is a sign and seal of the benefit of forgiveness, Acts 2:38 & 22:16; and of regeneration, Titus 3:5. It is an incorporation into fellowship with Christ and His Church, Romans 6:4.

"Therefore, baptism is administered not only to adults won for Christ through missionary work, but further also to the children of the believers. For they are included in the covenant of grace, together with their parents. Genesis 17:7-10; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14; 21:16; Acts 2:39. They belong to the congregation, First Corinthians 7:14 -- and they have been taken up into communion with the Lord, Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20."

616. Wielenga's *Our Baptismal Formula* and infant faith

Around 1920, the Dutch Calvinist Rev. Dr. B. Wielenga published -- and then republished a revised edition of -- his important book *Our Baptismal Formula*. There, he issued the following challenges:²⁹⁹

"You tell me what baptism means to you, then I shall tell you what you mean for the Church.... Your doctrine of baptism decides whether you are a Methodist or not....

"Holy baptism does not give or effect the washing away of sins. It does not even posit it as a possibility in the future. But it simply states it as a fact which has happened, and which is not guaranteed with the seal of genuineness.... Baptism is the confirmation and illustration of the words [of God]: 'Before you call, I shall answer!' Isaiah 65:24....

"Baptism seals something which the child of God already has, namely the germ of life.... He who says that it is only the promise which is here sealed, places the baptized child of God outside of actual contact and real vital communion with Christ. He also conflicts with the clear word-usage of our [Dutch Reformed] *Baptismal Formula*, which says that Christ seals us -- **not** that He shall wash us, but that He washes us from all our sins" (*viz.* already at our regeneration presumably long before we were baptized as infants).

In the formulated prayer immediately before baptizing the covenantal infant, continued Wielenga,³⁰⁰ "the Minister prays 'that Thou wilt mercifully look upon this Thy child'.... It says: 'this **Thy** child.' And here we do not wish to miss that little pronoun.... It was there in the sixteenth-century editions.... The child for whom the prayer of the congregation is offered, is not equivalent to a pagan child. It has been born on the territory of the Word, in the heritage of the covenant. And therefore it has a relative right to be baptized....

"Parents and furthermore all adult Members of the Congregation who witness the administration of the sacrament, are 'reminded' anew about what the Lord God had done for and to them at their earliest age.... According to its nature, **baptism as a sacrament presupposes a**

faith-germ of regeneration as being present.... [In the *Baptismal Formula*,] it asks [the parents] 'if you acknowledge that they [the covenant children] have been sanctified in Christ and therefore ought to be baptized as members of His Church'....

"According to its nature and essence, baptism -- just like the sacrament of the Lord's supper -- presupposes a present seed of faith which must be strengthened. Yet that is something quite different from [the other idea] that baptism is supposed to be grounded upon our presumption....

"The benefits belong only to the true children of God. They, and they alone, possess the forgiveness of sins. They alone have the new life, through implantation into Christ. They, and nobody else, have been adopted unto children of God by the Holy Spirit....

"It is undeniable that the benefits mentioned here are represented as already received in the past, and not as possible or future.... 'We thank Thee...That Thou hast forgiven us our sins and adopted us as Thy children'... The Lord God has fulfilled the promises of the covenant. And therefore the children of believers in principle stand completely equal to the adults. Even in their consciousness, they are faithful children of God....

"In our *Formula*, baptism is called not only a seal of promises -- but also of internal grace already present. After all, it clearly says that this is sealed and impressed upon us by holy baptism."

617. Infant faith according to Bouwman's article on *Baptism*

In 1925, the celebrated church historian Rev. Professor Dr. H. Bouwman wrote an important article on *Baptism* for the *Christian Encyclopaedia*. There, Bouwman insisted³⁰¹ that "the children of the believers are involved in the covenant of God and His Church just as much as the adults are. It is not what we think of our children but what God says of them that decides this.

"Our children are unclean from their conception and birth, and by nature subject to condemnation. But God testifies in His Word that the children of believers are His -- because He has wished to adopt them on account of His covenant, and has wanted to give them His rich promises in Christ. And therefore also the children are entitled to the sign and seal of that covenant of grace....

"If the promise of the covenant and the grace of regeneration were not for our children -- the children would not be able to be baptized. But regeneration can occur at the earliest age. This clearly appears from the example of John the baptizer, of whom it is testified that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the mother's womb onward. Luke 1:15. Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth onward. First Kings 18:12. Jeremiah (1:5) was sanctified by God as a prophet, before he was born. So too were others. Psalm 22:10f & 71:6.

"Even the children therefore partake of the promise and of the benefits of the Spirit. Acts 2:39. They are the holy seed.... According to the rule that where 'the root is holy also the branches are holy' (Romans 11:16), also the children of believers can be called holy. First

Corinthians 7:14.... If God has now given to the children the same promises as to the adults -- how could somebody then dare maintain that the former may not be baptized?"

Bouwman continued: "Also the children of believers are included among the people of God. Therefore they are thus not pagan children who, as Rome and the Lutherans maintain, first still need to be exorcized. But they are children of the covenant, who **are** holy. Not by nature, but by virtue of the covenant of grace. *Decrees of Dordt* I:17. Therefore also the children are regarded as belonging to the Church. They receive warnings, and promises. Acts 26:22; Ephesias 6:1; Colossians 3:20. Even the tiny ones know the Lord. Hebrews 8:11.

"The Holy Scripture thus reckons the children just as much as the adults to the people of God. If anybody thinks one finds more certainty about faith with adults than with children, he is very much mistaken.... We regard also the children of believers as belonging to the congregation of the believers, for God Himself regards them as His Own. When God says: 'I am your God' -- it is so! And when God says: 'I am the God of your seed' -- not a single Christian may express any other judgment!

"Therefore, in charity, by virtue of God's covenant, we must regard the children of believers as belonging to the Lord --unless they later depart into sin, and die in their sins. This has absolutely nothing at all to do with the subjective opinion of this or that Minister -- nor whether he is convinced about the sincerity of somebody's faith. But it depends upon what God says in His Word....

"The actual ground for baptism, is thus the command of God. This, as Article 34 of the *Belgic Confession* teaches, "has commanded all who are His to be baptized.... That also the children are able to receive this strengthening of faith, we may not and cannot question.

"For just as God brings them unto regeneration and to life when yet unconscious -- so they can also...[subsequently at their infant baptism] receive a strengthening of their ability to believe, from the Holy Spirit.... Even the *Baptismal Formula* of the Dutch Reformed churches teaches that one shall 'baptize the children as heirs of the Kingdom of God and of His covenant.'"

618. But 'all of Europe' (and much of Dixie?) has been baptized....

In that same year 1930, however, the then-still-only-incipient antipaedobaptist Karl Barth was sarcastically proclaiming: *aber ganz Europa is getauft* ['but the whole of Europe is baptized']! Yes, but not just all the infants in Europe. Also, all the adults and some of the children in Dixie.

For truly, almost all the adults in Dixie have been baptized. 75% of all Southern white adults and at least 95% of all Southern black adults have not only been baptized but also immersed -- and indeed, only after a 'personal profession of faith' (*sic*) and as 'mature adults' (*sic*). 85% of all of the Baptists in the world are located in the U.S.A. -- and predominantly in the southeastern portion thereof.

Yet today, the Deep South has far more graciousness than grace. Native Mississippians have indicated to this present writer -- himself formerly a resident Minister in the great Magnolia

State -- that they consider 'Baptist' Mississippi, in spite of her Southern hospitality, to have been 'immersed' in a spiritual darkness even greater than that of Rome before the Protestant Reformation.

Of course, the plight of Protestantism in general and Presbyterianism in particular is even more dire -- north of the Mason-Dixon line! As the great Rev. Professor Dr. John Gerstner of Pittsburgh-Xenia Presbyterian Theological Seminary has opined [quite recently]: "The Roman Catholic Church...was 'millennial' --in comparison with the PCUSA today!"³⁰²

619. Rev. Professor Dr. K. Dijk: '1905' clearly presupposed prebaptismal regeneration

In 1931, Rev. Dr. Karl Dijk, Professor of Theology at Kampen, insisted that the 1905 Synod of Utrecht had given a clear and irenic decision. Regeneration, explained Dijk,³⁰³ is "the principal transformation of man so that he becomes a new creature.... The Saviour speaks of the new birth in His well-known conversation with Nicodemus.

"This rebirth stands at the beginning of the road.... Whenever one makes rebirth dependent upon preaching and listening thereto -- what does one then do with small children, who not yet consciously listen, and who would then in that way be excluded from faith? This is why the order must be: [first] rebirth; and [then] the subsequent internal call by the Word....

"Our [Reformed] churches have constantly professed, over against the Lutheran and the Roman Church, that rebirth occurs neither through the Word nor through the sacraments as such -- but through the almighty and regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit.... Our *Confession* teaches that we are not to doubt the salvation of our own early-dying children. Yet they had not heard the preaching of the Gospel.... The revealed things are for us [and our children] -- and the concealed things must be left to the Lord our God!" Deuteronomy 29:29.

Dijk also insisted³⁰⁴ that "the Reformed Confessions speak of children as *membra Christi* [alias "Christ's body-parts"]. They, as Members of Christ, should be baptized -- as Members of Christ's Church." Covenant children are themselves to be regarded as believing Christians -- **before** their infant baptism. "During baptism..., many have asserted..., the *habitus fidei* [or] the possession of faith is then confirmed and strengthened."

620. Rev. Professor Dr. A.G. Honig: covenant infants deemed prebaptismally regenerate

In 1938, Rev. Professor Dr. A.G. Honig published his *Manual of Reformed Dogmatics*. There -- after dedicating³⁰⁵ his work to "the Reformed dogmatists" Hodge, Gravemeijer, Kuyper and Bavinck -- he argued³⁰⁶ that "regeneration can occur before, during or after baptism. However, **all the Reformed agreed that children of believers are to be regarded as believers and as covenanters, until the contrary clearly appears**. We too share that viewpoint.... In children of believers dying at an early age, regeneration is immediately engineered. Otherwise they would, after all, not be able to go to heaven....

"Our *Confessions of Faith* rightly say: baptism testifies and assures us that God **has** forgiven those who are His, **all** (and thus even future) sins -- together with guilt.... I also refer to Hebrews 10:22. Here, the one right after the other, the *res interna* [or 'internal matter'] of justification in particular is mentioned -- and the *res externa* [or 'external matter']. For there we read: 'our hearts having been cleansed from an evil conscience, and our body having been washed with pure water'....

"We should not arrive at the position that a special grace is given during baptism.... The seed of faith can indeed be present in children.... Some may say: 'Yes, but one cannot obtain the certainty that children are indeed believers!' But then it has been forgotten that it is exactly the same with adults. If that were a requirement -- neither baptism nor the Lord's supper could ever be administered here on earth....

"It is remarkable that Holy Scripture nowhere speaks of the adult baptisms of those born of Christian parents.... First Corinthians 7:14 is also of great significance in this regard: 'For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband. For otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy'....

"From this statement, it is clear that, according to Paul, the children of believers must be regarded as Christian children -- as children belonging to the circle of God's covenant. But in that case, they are also entitled to baptism....

"This is talking about a subjective, internal holiness. For Paul does not say the same thing about the unbelieving party in the marriage. The unbelieving party is only 'sanctified' by the believing party; the children of such a marriage, are 'holy.'"

Indeed, the unbelieving party is thus 'sanctified' during marital intercourse -- only and precisely so that the resulting children will be not unclean, but holy. "Here the apostle is not saying that the children of believers are holy by nature. No, just like all other children, they too are conceived in sin and born in unrighteousness. It is only by the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, that they are to become holy."

621. Dr. L.B. Schenck: Christians' infants are in the Covenant before their baptism

In the United States, a similar view was expounded by the Rev. Professor Dr. Lewis B. Schenck. See his very important 1940 book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*. The book is based upon Schenck's doctoral dissertation upon the same subject for the Ph.D. at Yale University.³⁰⁷

According to Schenck,³⁰⁸ it was the rise of the Arminian-American 'Great Awakening' which had so devastated the thitherto universally-accepted Calvinistic doctrine of the (rebuttable) 'presumed regeneration' of covenant children also in American Presbyterianism before 1750. Prior to that time, Schenck has explained, from John Calvin onward right down to the Jedediah Andrews

of Philadelphia's First Presbyterian Church in 1741, presumptivist paedobaptism was paramount among Presbyterians everywhere and also in America.

Even after 1750 and against the tide of revivalism, however, Schenck clearly shows that this historic position was still stoutly maintained by many of the great giants among American Presbyterian theologians. Specifically, he here mentions: J.W. Alexander, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, Henry J. Van Dyke, and B.B. Warfield.

Lewis B. Schenck continues:³⁰⁹ "The Presbyterian Church had been drifting away from its [confessional] Standards. The actual [emaciated] faith in regard to the baptism of infants -- contradicted the [vigorous] faith which she professed.... Those who [like Thornwell] pride themselves on being the orthodox, are really the unorthodox" -- as regards infant baptism.

Schenck concluded: "The Presbyterian Church has a glorious doctrine, received through the medium of John Calvin and the *Westminster Standards*. Yet the church as a whole does not know it. The historic doctrine of the church concerning children in the covenant and the significance of infant baptism has been to a large extent secretly undermined, hidden by the intrusion of an [Arminian] aberration from this doctrine."

622. Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof and the Christian Reformed Church U.S.A.

Between the two World Wars, the Christian Reformed Church USA was still an orthodox denomination. Though not renowned for his theological depth nor originality, in 1941 her well-known dogmatician Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof nevertheless rightly called the notion that the infants of believers are not themselves Members of Christ's Church -- "a thoroughly unscriptural position."³¹⁰

Indeed, in the history of Calvinism, Berkhof wrote he had known of only two viewpoints anent the prebaptismal status of the covenant child. There is the view which irrebuttably asserts his or her possible regeneration -- and the view which rebuttably assumes his or her definite regeneration. Berkhof knew nothing of another viewpoint -- namely that of assuming their non-regeneration.³¹¹

"From the start," explained Berkhof in his book *The History of Christian Doctrines*,³¹² "there was general agreement in establishing the right of infant baptism -- by an appeal to Scripture, and particularly to the scriptural doctrine of the covenant. Children of believers are covenant children, and are therefore entitled to the sacrament. According to some, it warrants the assumption [but not the assertion] that children of believing parents are regenerated -- until the contrary appears in doctrine or life." At that latter point, the assumption would need to be revised.

"Others, deeply conscious of the fact that such children often grow up without revealing any signs of spiritual life, hesitated.... Some even regarded baptism as nothing more than a sign.... Under the influence of Socinians, Arminians and Anabaptists -- it became quite customary in some circles to deny that baptism was a seal of divine grace, and to regard it as a mere act of profession on the part of man." Such customary views, however, are neither Reformed nor Scriptural!

Berkhof refuted³¹³ "the Baptist" who concludes that "infants cannot exercise faith." To the Baptist, therefore, "infants may not be baptized. But in that way, these words might also be construed into an argument against infant salvation.... To be consistent, the Baptist would thus find himself burdened with the following syllogism: Faith is the *conditio sine qua non* of salvation; children cannot yet exercise faith; therefore, children cannot be saved. But this is a conclusion from which the Baptist himself would shrink back."

623. On baptism -- 'Has Karl Barth become Orthodox?'

During World War II -- still bemoaning the unconverted state of 'pan-baptized Europe' (see above) -- Karl Barth rejected infant baptism. He labelled it: "theological judaism."³¹⁴ Yet even then, he also stated: "I do not believe I have therewith fallen into the arms of the Anabaptists."

However, in his book *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism*, Berkouwer then declared³¹⁵ that there are nevertheless the following points of agreement between the Anabaptist critique [of the Reformation] and that of Barth. 1) No Scriptural proof can be furnished for infant baptism. 2) Profession of faith is a presupposition and a prerequisite of baptism. 3) The essential correlation between faith and sacrament, has been broken by infant baptism. 4) The relationship between parents and children given by 'nature' has no constitutive meaning for the Covenant.... In spite of all of the deep differences which can be shown between Barth and the Anabaptists, Barth's individualism and his doctrine of the covenant finally boil down to one and the same thing."

624. Schilder and the Dutch baptismal schism of 1944

This is now an appropriate place to say something of the sad schism within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (of Rev. Professor Drs. H.H. Kuyper and G.C. Berkouwer), when the Liberated Reformed Churches (of Rev. Professor Drs. K. Schilder and S. Greijdanus) seceded therefrom in 1944. Contrary to what is sometimes alleged, baptism and even prebaptismal presumed regeneration of covenant children was not at all at the centre of this controversy.

For, against less consistent Christians, Greijdanus and Schilder themselves had consistently and vehemently defended the wording of the decision made at the 1905 Synod of Utrecht. *Inter alia*, this specified that "as regards...presumptive regeneration...the **seed** of the covenant...is to be regarded as regenerat-**ed** and sanctifi-**ed** in Christ -- until, when they grow up, the contrary might appear from their doctrine or life."³¹⁶

Subsequent to that 1905 Synod of Utrecht, there had been an ongoing problem with some of Kuyper's less balanced followers. They had rightly insisted on infant baptism -- and indeed also on presumed prebaptismal regeneration. But they had then further (quite wrongly) also alleged that the absence of such prebaptismal regeneration would vitiate the baptism. For it would then change the character of the subsequently administered sacrament -- from that of a true baptism, to that of a merely 'apparent baptism' (or *schijndoop*).

Greijdanus and Schilder and their supporters quite rightly rejected that latter claim. They also quite rightly insisted (as did some of their adversaries) that postbaptismal disobedience

amounted to a fearful breach of the covenant, inciting and incurring the 'covenantal wrath' of Almighty God.

But they never questioned 'rebuttably presumed prebaptismal regeneration' as such. That, they themselves maintained. Though they did so not quite as enthusiastically as many Calvinists had done from the time of the *First Swiss Confession* up till and including Kuyper, Greijdanus and Schilder and their supporters. Too, they did agitate for the freedom of others within the denomination -- to be able to disagree with that formulation.³¹⁷

Especially during the early nineteen-forties, within Dutch Calvinism there was indeed misunderstanding about the obvious rebuttability of presumed regeneration. There was also a proper concern that ongoing [re]conversion be preached -- also to all covenanters and their seed.

Yet it was not³¹⁸ the issue of 'presumed regeneration before baptism' as such -- that had agitated the ongoing debate. Indeed, this can be seen most clearly in the later ongoing 1975-76 debate -- between the 'Reformed Baptist' David Kingdon and the 'Schilderian' Rev. Professor. Dr. J. Douma, anent the presupposition or non-presupposition of regeneratedness *versus* non-regeneratedness in covenantal infants.³¹⁹

Rather was it non-baptismal issues (such as common grace and repentance and synodocracy) that were the real problems in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands during the Second World War. These problems ultimately led to the deposition of Schilder and Greijdanus as both Professors and Ministers in 1944 -- and to their subsequently constituting the 'Liberated Reformed Churches' (*Vrijgemaakten*) in that same year.³²⁰

625. The baptismal road to Zwolle in the Netherlands

After the above-mentioned schism, Rev. Professor Dr. Karl Dijk -- still of the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands' (GKN) -- reported to the Synods of 1949 and 1950 about the 'bindingness' of the 1905 formulations of Utrecht. There, he stated³²¹ that "the sacrament has significance for all baptized children -- and is never merely an 'apparent baptism' (or *schijndoop*)."

However, the central problem was still the same. For the parent denomination (GKN) was still being accused [inaccurately] of subjectivizing baptism -- by maintaining a truncated doctrine of presumed regeneration as the basis of baptism.³²²

So the GKN 1946 Synod of Zwolle clarified the fact that although the denomination rightly presumed regeneration to occur before baptism, that presumption was certainly rebuttable. Yet the baptism itself was always valid, and was never just an 'apparent baptism.'

The Synod did this, by replacing the 1905 formula of Utrecht with the new 1946 formula of Zwolle anent covenant children. That latter reads that "whereas it is not given to the Church to make judgments about hidden matters, she should not differentiate between some members and others. Yet building upon God's promise and upon the way Scripture speaks about the children,

unless they manifest themselves to be unbelievers -- they are to be regarded and **treated** as those who share in the **regenerating** grace of the Holy Spirit."

In light of the above, it must be concluded that the criticism of the GKN by others (from before 1905 till after 1946) -- the criticism that she had ever grounded her doctrines of baptism and of the covenant upon the fact of an indeed presumed regeneration -- is highly irresponsible and inaccurate. For also in 1943, the GKN warned against despising the covenant -- by unbelief and unconvertedness.

Moreover, in the replacement formula of 1946, the GKN clearly called upon all to believe "in the promise of the Gospel which comes to them in baptism."³²³ Indeed, the 1952-53 GKN Synod of Rotterdam declared "there is no binding in the Reformed Churches in respect of the viewpoint that holy baptism administered to the children of the congregation presupposes and seals a present internal grace with every baptizee."

626. Rev. Professor Dr. K.H. Miskotte: Rev. 7:2f means baptism is the seal of the living God

Rev. Professor Dr. K.H. Miskotte made some very relevant remarks in his 1945 book *The Chief Sum of History*. Discussing the eschatological meaning of the baptismal sealings of Revelation 7:2f & 9:4 & 14:1 & 22:4, he insisted³²⁴ that "the sacrament already long ago received by the believers is also their last consolation in the last crisis. It is the seal of the living God. It is the sacrament.... In the very first place, one here thinks of baptism; plain, ordinary baptism.... The one baptized, has been sealed....

"The Lord shall wash away tears from all faces, at the feast of pure wine prepared for all nations. Isaiah 25:8.... We know this...through the holy sacrament, when we receive it in faith.... We will spend our time in blessed meditation about the Triune One. This is the meaning of baptism -- when we accept it in faith.... We are assured and sealed unto an everlasting life.... And thus we also sing in an ecclesiastical hymn, at baptism."

627. Rev. Professor Dr. G.C. Berkouwer: one can respect grace prevenient to infant baptism

The situation with covenant infants is that described by Rev. Professor Dr. G.C. Berkouwer. As he remarked in his 1954 book on *The Sacraments*: "Without making these thoughts the dogmatic foundation of infant baptism, one can respect prevenient grace....

"For this reason, one can also profess that there is no principal difference between infant baptism and adult baptism.... Infant baptism is connected with faith. The identity between infant baptism and adult baptism consists...of the promise of God toward which faith must be directed."³²⁵

It was only in the years after 1954 that both Berkouwer and his denomination -- the GKN -- progressively backslid into varying degrees of moderism. Yet even there, the modernism remained restricted to non-baptismal matters (such as evolutionism and ecumenicity and sodomy *etc.*). In the area of baptism, both Berkouwer and his denomination still remained orthodox.

628. Rev. Professor Dr. H.N. Ridderbos: (infant) baptism presupposes faith

Rev. Professor Dr. H.N. Ridderbos elaborated his views in two essays -- one on *The Covenant of Grace* and the other on *The Means of Grace*. In the former, he stated³²⁶ that "the Lord, when He erects His covenant, does not direct Himself only toward the single believer -- but also co-involves the latter's descendants in the promise of salvation.... Also in the New Testament, the covenant relation is transported upon and extended to -- the natural relationships in life."

In his second essay, Ridderbos added:³²⁷ "Baptism thus presupposes faith.... Baptism is the confirmation of the believers as the property of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It bears not a causative (creating) but a significative (sealing) character....

"There is never an appeal to baptism, without faith being presupposed there.... Baptism is never an act which prepares for preaching and faith. It is only administered where preaching has already been received by faith.... Baptism thus has a strengthening, aware-making, sealing significance. For the believers admitted to the Christian Church, it signifies the fixed point of the rightabout-turn in their life....

"In First Corinthians 7:14, it is said of the unbelieving spouse that he (she) has been sanctified in the believer. That is then more closely explained by the words -- 'for otherwise your children would be unclean; but now they are holy'.... Because of their belonging to the believing father and (or) mother, they are 'holy' and not unclean.... It is unmistakably clear that this place gives powerful proof of the co-involvement of children in the salvation in Christ of which their parents partake....

"That this holiness of the children involves more than [just the 'sanctifying' of] the unbelieving party in the marriage, appears from the fact that the children -- differently to the unbelieving spouses -- are regarded as belonging to the Church. Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20. As such, they are co-involved in all of the gracious benefits to which the Church is entitled.

"Here it is also difficult to keep on talking about [merely] an 'external' holiness. But regard must be had to the full meaning of 'holy' -- as belonging to God in Christ, and as being inwardly prepared by the Holy Spirit.... Parents and children go into judgment together (Luke 23:28f) -- and escape it together too!"

629. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: the Spirit prenatally in covenant children

Also in 1949, Rev. Dr. D.J. de Groot wrote an important essay on *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. There, he explained³²⁸ that "the idea of immediate regeneration was well-known to Reformed theology from the very beginning....

"Those who generally opined that regeneration always takes place immediately, proceeded from the truth expressed in Scripture and in the Confession that the children of believers as well as the adults have been taken up into the covenant of God and into His Church -- and therefore also partake of the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit. They also further determined that

in every case of the early-dying children of believers, regeneration must be effected by an immediate deed of the Holy Spirit.

"We indeed acknowledge that the Word of the Lord is the only seed of spiritual regeneration for suchlike. Yet we deny that one may thence conclude that the young children could not be regenerated by the power of God. For Him, that is as easy and simple -- as it is incomprehensible and wonderful for us. In addition, it would not be well-advised to 'deprive' the Lord of making Himself known to the children in some or other way.

"They further took it as unlikely that the Holy Spirit would act differently with those children who continue to live, than with adults. Reasoning in this way, they came to regard it as normal that the elect are regenerated already at an early age -- and still before they receive the sign and seal of holy baptism [in infancy].

Together with this, they regularly combined the doctrine of so-called 'slumbering' regeneration. Thereby they understood that it was possible for the new germ of life, implanted in rebirth at the earliest age, to be able to remain inoperative (dormant) for a considerable period of time -- only after many years to germinate into active faith and conversion for the first time....

"The Lord makes known to us in John three the general rule that nobody shall see the kingdom of God without rebirth. He makes no exception to the rule, in respect of children. And such an exception is equally absent from the [Dutch Reformed] *Baptismal Formula*. It commences with the profession 'that we with our children have been conceived and born in sin, and are therefore children of wrath -- so that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless we are born again'....

"It certainly does not behoove us to doubt the power of the Holy Spirit immediately to regenerate adults and even children who continue to live.... We are best advised to hold onto what was said about this by the Synod of the Reformed churches in 1905 [at Utrecht].... 'Our *Confession* teaches us that we are not to doubt the salvation of our early-dying children.'"

630. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: covenant children regenerated prenatally

In his 1952 book *The Rebirth*, De Groot elaborated on these ideas even further. There, he insisted³²⁹ that "the Christian Church has constantly and emphatically maintained, for young children, the possibility of getting regenerated -- and of being regenerate. She had to do this, if she wanted to confess that the children receive salvation. For after all, the Lord says clearly and unambiguously that nobody shall enter into the kingdom of God who has not first been born again.

"Regeneration in its first stage" includes "being gifted with faith." Indeed, there is "no exception.... Faith can in some or other way be present in children too....

"Calvin maintains against the Anabaptists without hesitation, that children can possess the spiritual gifts represented by baptism...and specifically that they are regenerated by the Spirit of God unto the hope of salvation.... They are renewed by the Holy Spirit according to the measure

of their age -- until the power which was hidden in them secretly, begins to grow and shine openly....

"Everyone who wishes to maintain, together with the Reformed Confession, the salvation of early-dying covenant children -- is obligated to teach according to the clear pronouncements of God's Word that they have not only been born again but also have true saving faith.... Jesus holds the necessity of regeneration in front of Nicodemus [John 3:3-8].... He also says: 'he who believes in Him [in Christ], is not condemned; he who does not believe, has been condemned already -- because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God.' John 3:18....

"At the end of that chapter, John the baptizer gives the assurance: 'he who believes in the Son, has everlasting life; but he who is disobedient to the Son, shall not see life -- but the wrath of God remains upon him.' John 3:36. Indeed, the Evangelist says in the well-known passage in John 1:12-13 that those who have been born of God have received authority to be [called] 'children of God' -- and that they believe in His Name.

"To the Great Commission, the Saviour attaches the statement: 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be condemned!' Mark 16:16. Indeed, in Hebrews 11 [verse 6] we read: 'without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God, must believe that He is -- and that He is a Rewarder of those who earnestly keep on seeking Him'....

"It is inscrutable why actual faith in every form should be denied to very young children. Here, we must not be blind to the difference between adults and children. Nor should we make it bigger than it actually is. There is certainly a difference. Appropriate emphasis is put upon this in Holy Scripture.

"For example, Paul does so where he says: 'When I was a child, I...felt as a child and reasoned as a child. Now I have become a man, I have put away what was childlike.' First Corinthians 13:11. However, does the apostle here say that...he did not feel and did not reason when a child? No! He proceeds from the very fact that he indeed did so. Only, he did so differently than he does when an adult."

631. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: infant faith within covenant children (prebaptismally)

Continued De Groot: "In Holy Scripture, there is more than one pronouncement in which actual faith is very clearly attributed to children. For example, one could point to the warning of the apostle Peter to the believers -- to desire the unadulterated milk of the Word, like newly-born children.... First Peter 2:2f....

"Regenerated children have indeed received the Holy Spirit. He lives and works within them. He is the Spirit of Whom Paul says He testifies together with our spirit that we are children of God.... He is the Spirit of faith.... He intercedes for us with unutterable sighs. Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15f & 8:26.

"Should these unutterable sighs then not be able to arise from the hearts of children in which the Holy Spirit dwells just as well as He does in those of adults? Should He not be able to reveal Himself there, as the Spirit of faith? And should He not be powerful enough to testify together with the spirits of children, that they are children of God?"

"Scripture gives more than one indication that we need to answer these questions in the affirmative. For example, there is the case of the early-dying child of Jerobeam -- who was taken from this life 'because something good before the Lord had been found in him.' First Kings 14:1-18. That can only mean that this son of a godless father himself stood in the right relationship of faith toward God -- that there was in him a heart to fear and to serve God...."

Then there is the well-known statement in Psalm 8: 'Out of the mouth of the little children and of the sucklings, You have established Your strength.' Especially in the form and in the context in which it is cited by the Lord Jesus, it speaks such a clear language. For the Lord says... 'Have you never read: "Out of the mouth of small children and sucklings, You have prepared praise?"' Matthew 21:16. Indeed, He accepts this praise of the children. It sounds pure in His ears -- as a testimony of faith.

"We could further refer to the testimony of David in Psalm 22:10-11: 'You are the One Who pulled me forth from my mother's belly. You caused me to trust, while upon my mother's breasts'.... Such an authoritative expositor of the Old Testament as Franz Delitzsch was of the opinion that the Hebrew verbal form used here, means that God caused the poet...to trust Him.... Indeed, he adds to this that according to the Biblical viewpoint the newly-born and even the not-yet-born child already possesses a consciousness which dawns from the depth of the soul...."

"We find another place in Psalm 71, which speaks no less strongly.... It says in verses 5-6: 'For You are my expectation, Lord God, from my youth onward. Upon You I have leaned -- from my mother's womb. From my mother's belly, You are my Helper.' Indeed, in verse 17 he even adds: 'O God, You have taught me from my youngest age onward'...."

"It is impossible to explain these pronouncements other than in this sense.... God has not only helped and saved him from the very first commencement of his life.... He himself too has faithfully entrusted himself to God even from his mother's womb onward...."

"As Kuyper decisively teaches -- those who are elect 'do not first come to the covenant of grace only at a later age, but they stand in it from the first moment of their existence onward. They come forth from the seed of the Church, and they in turn carry the seed of the future Church within themselves. So this is the reason why...for the most part the first germ of new life is implanted already in their mother's womb or immediately after the conception of this seed of the Church.'"

932. The unequivocal Anti-Anabaptism of the Rev. Dr. Carl McIntire

Very significantly -- against equivocation on the issue of rebaptism on the part of the World Council of Churches -- stands the forthright position of the famous Rev. Dr. Carl McIntire. He was repeatedly elected Moderator of the Bible Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and also

President of the International Council of Christian Churches. Though a separatist fundamentalist, McIntire has uttered wise words against the twin errors of antipaidobaptism and rebaptism.

Thus, at the end of his 1951 booklet on *Infant Baptism*, McIntire rightly stated:³³⁰ "Let me say one final word. Baptism is to be administered only once. It is a sign and a seal. If you were baptized in infancy by your parents, thank God, accept it as yours. Do not say, 'I don't like that, I'll just get baptized again.' That is wrong....

"God has promised to be your God now, and the God of your children. You have entered into that covenant with Him. Keep it on your part. He will be faithful!"

633. Rev. Professor John Murray (Westminster): covenant infants to be deemed regenerate

In 1952, Westminster (East) Theological Seminary's Rev. Professor John Murray wrote a very helpful book on *Christian Baptism*. When this present writer was about to enter seminary as a student in November 1959, he sent Murray his own tract on *Infant Baptism*. Murray graciously replied in January 1960, stating:³³¹ "You have made a careful and cogent study of the grounds for infant baptism, and your brief presentation betrays far more than the brevity might suggest. Your adduction of the evidence in the texts cited, must prove most useful and convincing for inquiring minds."

Shortly thereafter, Murray kindly sent this present writer a personally autographed copy of his own above-mentioned book. Therein,³³² Murray admitted that (rebuttable) presumptive prebaptismal regeneration of the covenantal infant is indeed the doctrine of the *First Swiss Confession*, of John Calvin, of the *Belgic Confession*, of the *Heidelberg Confession*, of the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, of Charles Hodge, of B.B. Warfield, and of L.B. Schenck.

Although John Murray's own views were somewhat softer, even he declared that "baptized infants are to be received as the children of God and treated accordingly.... Little children [of believing parents], even infants, are among Christ's people and are members of His body....

"They are members of His kingdom, and therefore have been regenerated.... They belong to the Church, in that they are to be received as belonging to Christ."

634. Rev. Professor John Murray on the prebaptismal infant faith of covenant children

In his shorter essay *Baptism*, written more than ten years later, Murray rightly insisted³³³ "it is necessary to correct an error that is widespread -- that only those who go to the Lord's table are Members of the Church; that 'merely baptized persons' are not making a profession. This is a pernicious underestimate of the meaning of baptism. It so happens that most of us have been baptized in infancy.... Unless we have repudiated our infant baptism, we are professing....

"Baptism is not to be identified with the grace signified and sealed.... The existence of the grace sealed, is presupposed in the giving of the seal. The tenet of [Romanistic] baptismal regeneration, reverses the order inherent in the definition which Scripture provides....

"Depreciation of baptism insults the wisdom and grace of God.... He confirms to us the bond of union with Himself, by adding the seal of baptism -- to the end that we may be more firmly established in the faith of His covenant of grace."

Murray's essay *Regeneration* is really required reading. It contains a vital section headed 'Regeneration in Infancy' --which speaks exactly to our present subject.

There, Murray wrote:³³⁴ "The priority of regeneration and the fact that it must not be separated from faith, must be borne in mind even in the case of regenerate infants.... Where regeneration takes place in the case of an infant, there is the immediate transition from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God....

There is that which we may and must call 'the germ' of faith. It is impossible for us to determine the extent to which regeneration affects the rudimentary consciousness of the infant, but it must affect that rudimentary consciousness just as radically as sin does. If infants are depraved, they may also be holy. The regenerate infant is in this respect radically different from the unregenerate infant. The regenerate infant is not under the dominion of sin, is not a child of wrath, but a child of God and a Member of His Kingdom....

"We must not therefore conceive of the regenerate infant as regenerated in infancy -- and then converted [only] when he reaches years of understanding and discretion. No, not at all.

"When the infant is regenerated, that infant is converted in the sense that there occurs in the infant mind something which in the rudimentary sphere corresponds to conversion. That is to say, the direction in which the heart and mind -- germinal and rudimentary though they be -- are turned, is towards God....

"If in the case of unregenerate infants we can say, as we must, that they go astray from the womb speaking lies -- so of the regenerate infants we must say that from the point of regeneration they in principle walk in the way of holiness, speaking the truth. In a word, they are holy, just as others are unholy....

"So many of the most intelligent Christians never remember a time when they can say that they were then without God and without hope in Him. They were not only regenerated in infancy, but nurtured in the bosom of Christian instruction. So that simple faith in Jesus dates back as far as memory can penetrate."

635. Rev. Professor Dr. F.J.M. Potgieter: Calvin and Kuyper ride again!

In 1953, Rev. Professor Dr. F.J.M. Potgieter -- the promoter for the first doctoral dissertation completed by this present writer -- himself published his own book *Redemption*.

There, he showed³³⁵ "that regeneration is not fixed to any particular time of life.

"Of a Jeremiah, we read: 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you came forth from the body, I sanctified you' (Jeremiah 1:5). And of a John the baptizer: 'he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb' (Luke 1:15)... Our Church therefore also professes the consoling truth that all early-dying children of believers have been regenerated and accordingly saved....

"As regards First Peter 1:23..., Kuyper shows that the expression 'living word' does not here refer to Scripture, but to the eternal creative Word of God also mentioned in Isaiah 55:11." The meaning is thus that especially 'newly-born babies' have been born again by that very living Word Himself."

At the same time, however, we ourselves would not discount the possibility or even the probability of unborn children of the covenant actually 'hearing' the Word of God from Holy Writ. For they themselves are conscious recipients, inside their faithful mothers, whenever the latter hear Scripture read or preached --at church services, as well as during daily family worship.

Potgieter concluded: "What is the situation with the early-dying little children? Great theologians, such as Calvin and Voetius and Van Mastricht, are agreed that the root and seed of faith has already been implanted into them. In this connection, we cite the words of Calvin as regards the infant baptism [also of babies that survive to maturity]: 'The little children are baptized unto conversion and the faith which they will have in their later life. The seed of these gifts is already in them, by the secret operations of the Spirit.' *Institutes* IV:16:20."

Also in his later book *Calvin for Today*, Potgieter himself included some striking little prayers of his own. Such include the following.³³⁶ "We thank You for holy baptism as a sign and seal of the forgiveness of all our sins.... Lord, we thank You for the covenant of grace at the foundation of baptism.... We praise You that the covenant of grace includes also our little children, and that we can therefore bring them to be baptized....

"How grateful we are that Your grace includes our little children too.... Everything, everything is grace; therefore we praise You that also our little children may be baptized.... Lord, we thank You for including the gift of faith in the covenant of grace.... Lord, we thank You for taking care of the everlasting salvation also of our little children!"

636. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church USA's *Form for Baptism*

Of great significance, is the *Form for Baptism* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. This is so, not only because of its use by that denomination in the U.S.A. and in Canada -- and also in its missionary outreach into other parts of the world. Because of its appearance in the OPC's 1961 *Trinity Hymnal* (and various subsequent editions) now in use also in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and its massive mission to the world -- the *Form* and its sound theology are now also having an impact worldwide far beyond the OPC.

The OPC *Form for Baptism* reflects very heavy Historic Dutch Reformed influence. It provides³³⁷ that when an infant is to be baptized, the Minister shall proceed to give instruction in the following or similar language, concerning the ground of infant baptism:

"Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. For the promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed.... God declared unto Abraham, 'And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee'....

"Moreover, our Saviour admitted little children into His presence, embracing and blessing them and saying, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' So the children of the covenant are by baptism distinguished from the world....

"Before the baptism of an infant, the Minister shall require that the parents acknowledge the duty of believers to present their children for holy baptism...." Also they must "assume publicly their responsibility for the Christian nurture of their children, proposing the following or similar questions:

"1. Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore are subject to condemnation, they are holy in Christ, and as members of His church ought to be baptized? 2. Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our holy religion as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechism* of this church...?"

637. Rev. Professor Dr. J.O. Buswell Jr.: infants believe before they die

In 1963, Rev. Professor Dr. J.O. Buswell Jr. of Covenant Theological Seminary in St Louis published his *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. There, he expressed³³⁸ his own conviction "that the Holy Spirit of God prior to the moment of death does so enlarge the intelligence of ones who die in infancy...that they are capable of accepting Jesus Christ.... The *Westminster Confession* goes as far as we have any right to go in defining church doctrine. 'Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit'....

"It is impossible for those who are in the flesh to please God.' Romans 8:8.... For Calvin to say that we have our infants baptized on the ground that we regard them as already regenerated, means practically nothing more than that we believe and trust that they are among the elect of God."

638. Rev. Professor H. Hoeksema: the Anti-Anabaptist teaching in the Word of God

In 1966, the Protestant Reformed Churches in the U.S.A. published the work of their greatest theologian. We refer to the volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, by Rev. Professor Herman Hoeksema.

There, Hoeksema clearly stated³³⁹ that "regeneration is exclusively a work of God...independent of age, and can take place in the smallest infants. We may even take for granted that in the sphere of the covenant of God, He usually regenerates His elect children from infancy....

"Those who insist that regeneration is always effected through the preaching of the Word, do not really have an explanation of the salvation of little children.... The seed of regeneration is implanted in all the children that are reborn, in infancy....

"It may well be regarded as an established rule that infants in the line of the covenant are regenerated before they are able to hear the preaching of the Word.... This is indeed the Reformed view of the matter. In the line of the covenant, the seed of regeneration is implanted into the hearts of the elect children of the covenant in very infancy.... Baptism is instituted instead [alias in the place] of circumcision."

Hoeksema pioneered the Protestant Reformed Church, after his exodus from the Christian Reformed Church of the U.S.A. in the nineteen-twenties -- chiefly because of their doctrine of common grace and what he regarded as a softening in preaching (ongoing re)conversion to God's covenant people. Later, Hoeksema also wrote his famous book *Believers and their Seed*.

There, though rejecting presumptive regeneration as the ground for infant baptism, he nevertheless still seems to have presumed -- very rebuttably -- that such were nevertheless regenerated in infancy. For Hoeksema there admitted:³⁴⁰ "Even Professors M. Noordtzijs, D.K. Wielenga, H. Bavinck and P. Biesterveld write that 'the viewpoint of all Reformed men up to about the middle of the seventeenth century' was 'that the children as well as the adults were believers.'"

Hoeksema himself rightly explained of his own Protestant Reformed denomination: "We, exactly, do not believe that the entire actually existing and visible church in the midst of the world is elect.... Neither do we believe that this may be presupposed with respect to the visible church on earth -- that is, believers and their seed."

Note that Hoeksema here put professing adults on exactly the same level as their infants -- namely, as members of "the visible church on earth." In here calling those professing adults "believers," Hoeksema must obviously assume the same in respect also of their children too -- though rebuttably so, in both cases.

639. The American Rev. Professor R.B. Kuiper on infant regeneration

In 1967, R.B. Kuiper, formerly a Professor of Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, updated and republished some articles under the title *The Glorious Body of Christ*. One such article had the title *Holy Children*.

"There, he stated³⁴¹ that "one of the consequences of the preaching of the gospel...in the heathen city of Corinth -- was that in a number of families either the husband or the wife became a Christian while his or her spouse remained a pagan.... The position of such children [of theirs]

with reference to the church, was the same as that of children both of whose parents were believers.... They were holy. First Corinthians 7:14....

"The children of believers are members of the holy catholic [alias universal] church.... Those who die in infancy, are translated into the church triumphant.... It may be assumed that covenant children by and large are or will be regenerated.... It can easily be shown from Scripture that many covenant children are regenerated in babyhood.... Without regeneration, no infant can go to heaven....

"If a covenant child dies in infancy...this child was a child of the covenant.... Forgiven and regenerated, it passed through the gate into the city of God. Even while the parents are bidding its wasted body a last heartbreaking farewell, the angels of God are welcoming its pure spirit. While the parents are convulsed with inward pain..., like David they rest in the assurance that although their child will not return to them they will go to it. Second Samuel 12:23."

640. Baptismal teaching in the Presbyterian Church of Australia

The largest Presbyterian and Reformed denomination in Australia, the writer's own *Presbyterian Church of Australia* (PCA), clearly still holds to the orthodox Calvinian position anent infant baptism. This has become apparent especially since its reformation in 1974 and the subsequent 1977 exodus from her midst of those no longer desiring to remain Presbyterians adhering to the *Westminster Confession*.³⁴²

Even before then, the 1965 edition of the *Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia* had many commendable features. Thus, its 'Order for the Burial of a Child' apparently assumes³⁴³ the dead little covenanter to have been part of "the children of Zion."

Regardless of whether he died before or after baptism, it states: "We thank Thee...for the assurance that for him all sickness and sorrow are ended, that death itself is past, and that he lives evermore in Thy presence wherein is fullness of joy. We bless and praise Thy Name that Thy dear Son Jesus Christ took the little ones into His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them, and that the promise of Thy grace is unto them and to this child."

Coming next to the *Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to Infants*, it is significant that the rubric starts³⁴⁴ with the sentence: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." It next cites Matthew 28:19, "Go ye...and teach all nations, baptizing them" *etc.* Then it exhorts: "Hear also these words of Scripture "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you...and I will put My Spirit within you...and ye shall keep My judgments and do them, and ye shall be My people." Ezekiel 36:25f.

Next, the Order explains: "This sacrament is a sign and a seal of our ingrafting into Christ, of the forgiveness of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His Spirit; also of our adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life.... Even children too young to understand these things, share in the promise."

The Minister then asks the parents: "In presenting this child for baptism, do you confess your faith in God as your heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier?"

After the parents answer "I do," the Minister further asks them: "Do you promise, in dependence on divine grace, to teach him the truths and duties of the Christian faith; and by prayer, precept and example to bring him up in [not 'into!'] the nurture and admonition of the Lord and in the ways of the Church of God?"³⁴⁵

Commendably, the *Book of Common Order* also makes provision for a 'Service for Children.' There, it declares:³⁴⁶ "O God our heavenly Father, Who lovest all Thy children and forgettest none, accept us as we come to Thee with humble and reverent hearts...."

"For the sake of Thy dear Son our Saviour, we beseech Thee to pardon our sins and to help us that we may serve Thee better.... We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord, for all who do not know the Gospel of Thy love in Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldst gather them into Thy fold.

"We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord, for all missionaries, especially those known to us, that they may cause Thy light to shine in the dark places of the earth.... We praise Thee, O God, most of all for Jesus Christ Thine only Son our Saviour Who came into this world and died for us upon the cross and Who rose again from the dead and is now our Friend in heaven."

641. The Presbyterian Church in America's baptismal position

In its 1975 *Book of Church Order*, the Presbyterian Church in America declares³⁴⁷ that "the visible Church...consists of all those who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children." Even those children who die before infant baptism, are very strongly presumed -- if not indeed quite irrebuttably asserted -- to have gone straight to glory.

Before quoting John Knox's *Liturgy*, the graveside prayer asserts:³⁴⁸ "It is not Thy will that one of these little ones should perish.... The child is dead.... I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.... The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.... O God, our heavenly Father, Who through the blood of Thy Son has provided redemption for all Thine Own, we would render Thee most hearty thanks, in this time of grief, for the sure confidence we have that the soul of this dear child whose loss we mourn, is at rest in Thee!"

In the rubric anent 'The Administration of Baptism,' *The Book of Church Order* states³⁴⁹ that "baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed.... After previous notice is given to the minister, the child to be baptized is to be presented by one or both parents...signifying the desire that the child be baptized...."

"Before baptism, the minister is to use some words of instruction touching the institution..., showing that it is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ -- that it is a seal of the covenant of grace, of our ingrafting into Christ and of our union with Him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal.... Baptizing or sprinkling and washing with water signifies the cleansing from sin by the blood and for the merit of Christ.... The children of believers have an interest in

the covenant, and right to the seal of it...no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament....

"Children, by baptism, are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible church, distinguished from the world and them that are without, and united with believers.... They are federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized.... Outward baptism is not so necessary that through the want thereof the infant is in danger of damnation. By virtue of being born of believing parents, children are because of God's covenant ordinance made members of the Church....

"For to you is the promise, and to your children'.... 'I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee'... 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved -- thou, and thy house!' Acts 2:39; Genesis 17:7; Acts 16:31."

Finally, the rubric anent the 'Discipline of Noncommuning Members'³⁵⁰ reminds us that "the spiritual nurture, instruction and training of the children of the Church are committed by God primarily to their parents.... It is a principal duty of the Church to promote true religion in the home. True discipleship involves learning the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit both at home and in the Church. Without learning, there is no growth; and without growth, there is no discipline; and without discipline, there is sin and iniquity. First Timothy 4:7.

"The home and the Church should also make special provision for instructing the children in the Bible and in the Church *Catechisms*.... The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian religion. The Church should maintain constant and sympathetic relations with the children.... If they are wayward they should be cherished by the Church, and every means used to reclaim them. Adult noncommuning members...should be warned of the sin and danger of neglecting their covenant obligations."

642. John Inchley's 1976 book *All About Children*

1976 saw the appeared of John Inchley's book *All About Children*. There, he stated³⁵¹ that "the children of Christian parents, and many of those from non-Christian homes who are properly taught, are likely to be unconsciously regenerated by the sovereign activity of the Holy Spirit during infancy or early childhood. The adult graces of repentance and faith may not yet have been formed in them, but the seeds of both, and indeed of other needful graces, will have been planted in their hearts by the same secret operation of the Holy Spirit....

"For very many Christians, their experience of true biblical repentance has been a post-conversion experience.... Christ was manifested from His earliest infancy, so that He might sanctify His elect" -- even from their earliest age onward.

643. The 'Reformed Baptist' David Kingdon's book *Children of Abraham*

The year 1975 saw David Kingdon the 'Reformed Baptist' -- those words truly being a contradiction in terms -- publish his book *Children of Abraham*. There, he intelligently conceded much ground to Presbyterians. Thus, he even admitted that baptism has now replaced infant circumcision.

Yet, as an outspoken Antipaedobaptist, he also predictably asserted³⁵² that "our [Reformed Baptist] view of children differs radically from that of Reformed Paedobaptists. We [Baptists] regard our children, I trust, as Non-Christians; while they [the Presbyterians] regard theirs as Christians --unless they take the position held by Thornwell... If they take the latter view, they are -- as Hodge realised -- half-way to becoming Baptists." Very well said, brother Kingdon!

Kingdon then went on to make the truly appalling statements that "being born of believing parents is not a ground for baptising infants. Therefore it is not a ground for presuming that children of Christian parents who die in infancy are to be adjudged regenerate.... In the matter of infant salvation, one can only adopt an attitude of reverent and hopeful agnosticism....

"**We** [Baptists] can be no more certain of the election of our children, than of the children of unbelievers.... Our children are born into the Adamic race, and we dare not presume that they have been regenerated.... We treat our children as if they were unconverted, until we are satisfied that they are [or have become converted]. Paedobaptists, **if** they are consistent, treat them as converted Christian children."

The latter statement of Kingdon is not correct. Consistent Paedobaptists, alias Historic Presbyterians, do not treat their infants either before or after their infant baptism as already-converted Christians. They presume them both before and after their infant baptism to be already-regenerated Christians -- in need of life-long continuing conversion.

644. Rev. Professor Dr. J. Douma's 1976 work *Infant Baptism and Regeneration*

Thankfully, Rev. Dr. J. Douma, Professor of Ethics at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in Kampen promptly refuted the latter remarks of Kingdon. Douma did so in his own 1976 booklet *Infant Baptism and Regeneration*.

Insisted Douma:³⁵³ "We profess that the church is one people; a people with fathers, mothers and children; a people with families. We do not baptize every child..., but we do baptize the children of believers.... We regret Kingdon's turn in the wrong direction....

"When God saves infants, this happens in the way that applies to the great and small: the way of rebirth.... To the last pages of his book, Kingdon tells us that we have to treat our children as if they are unconverted....

"It is true [according to Kingdon] that they are privileged children.... Yet they are not made Christian children by this privilege. That can only come by real conversion [maintains Kingdon].

As long as this conversion is not evident, we have to treat our³⁵⁴ children as unconverted.... As long as they are not converted, they remain under God's wrath -- so that they are not children of God but children of God's wrath!" Thus Kingdon.

"We reject these ideas of Kingdon. Instead of Kingdon's uncertainty, we hold to the certainty of the covenant which God has established with the believers and their children. Were we to accept Kingdon's idea, we would have no firm ground for us and our children to stand on."³⁵⁵

645. The 1977 Reformed Book of Common Order in the Church of Scotland

In 1977, the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland published its *Reformed Book of Common Order*. The 1931 *Ordinal and Service Book* of the Church of Scotland -- republished in 1954 and again in 1962 -- had totally omitted all Forms and Orders for the administration of baptism.³⁵⁶ Rightly reacting against Scoto-Catholicism,³⁵⁷ yet so over-reacting as to weaken³⁵⁸ the doctrine of the covenant, the 1977 *Reformed Book of Common Order* nevertheless makes the following excellent points.

The *Reformed Book of Common Order* has a good 'Order for the Ministration of Baptism to those of Maturer Years.' There, it rightly assures³⁵⁹ the baptismal candidate that "as you truly profess your faith in Him [Christ] as your Saviour and Lord and are baptised, this sacrament will be the sign of the washing away of your sins, the seal of your ingrafting into Christ by faith, and of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and your engagement to be the Lord's."

In its 'Order for the Ministration of Baptism of Infants,' the *Reformed Book of Common Order* repudiates baptismal regenerationism. For it rightly declares³⁶⁰ that "these promises are not fulfilled in infants at the moment at which baptism is ministered."

Indeed, it also rightly reminds³⁶¹ the parents that "in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, we learn that Almighty God was pleased in His sovereign grace to call out a people for Himself and, by adoption, to make them His children -- receiving them into the fellowship of His Church. He promised to be their God and the God of their children through all generations.... The sign of that covenant was the sacrament of circumcision which He first gave to Abraham....

"In the Scriptures of the New Testament..., the sign of circumcision changed to baptism. It was given to the Christian Church, so that we also might be assured that not only we but our children with us belong to God by covenant."

646. Rev. Professor Dr. J.A. Heyns: infant baptism presupposes infant faith

In 1978 South African Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. Johan Heyns of the University of Pretoria published his *Dogmatics*. There, he noted³⁶² that "Christ gave the command at the institution of baptism that it is to take place in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"In that way, the baptizee is brought into the most intimate contact with the Triune God. In particular, he is placed in full fellowship with and under the complete Lordship of the Lord.

Baptism announces that there has been an exchange of Owner, and that the baptizee has been transferred from one sphere of life into another."

"Baptism is also a sign and seal of an already-present faith, and not an anticipation of a future faith. It is indeed an anticipation of and a stimulus toward a futrely strengthened faith.... The close unity between children and their parents clearly appears from a text such as First Corinthians 7:14.... The unity of the children and the Church is illustrated in Acts 21:5 [& 21:9]; Colossians 3:20*f*; Ephesians 6:1*f*; First John 2:12-14; First Timothy 3:4."

647. Rev. Dr. J.M. Boice: baptism seals past blessings (even as regards babies)

In 1981, Rev. Dr. James Montgomery Boice published his book *God and History*. He is today perhaps the most published theologian within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

In his book, Boice stated³⁶³ "that neither baptism nor the Lord's supper make or keep one a Christian. That is, we do not become a Christian by being baptized, nor do we remain a Christian by 'taking communion' periodically. Those signs merely point to something that has already taken place internally and invisibly.

"Again, a sign frequently indicated ownership.... The sacraments do that too -- particularly baptism. Baptism indicates to the world and to ourselves that we are not our own but that we have been bought with a price and are now identified with Jesus."

648. Rev. Professor Herman Hanko's *We and Our Children*

Also in 1981, the Protestant Reformed Church's Rev. Professor Herman Hanko gave no uncertain sound. He did so, in his book *We and Our Children: The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*.

There, he insisted³⁶⁴ that "when God in so many places enjoins upon believers to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord, they have the sure Word of God that they are instructing children of God, God's own elect people.... Their instruction will be fruitful. For it falls upon hearts which are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ."

649. American Presbyterian Press: Mackay's *Immersion and Immersionists*

The American Presbyterian Press did the Reformed world a great service -- in publishing the book *Immersion and Immersionists*, by W.A. Mackay: a noted Presbyterian of the past. Mackay was rightly insistent³⁶⁵ that "children are capable of receiving the Holy Ghost; and of being regenerated and sanctified thereby -- and are therefore entitled to the sign thereof.

"Of the child Abijah, it is said: 'In him is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.' First Kings 14:13. 'Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth.' First Kings 18:12. 'Samuel was called of the Lord, while he was yet a babe.' First Samuel 1:22.

"John the baptist was 'filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.' Luke 1:15. And of Jeremiah, God says: 'Before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee!' Jeremiah 1:5. The experience of God's people furnishes many instances of children, dedicated to God, being regenerated in their infancy."

650. Rev. Dr. R.J. Rushdoony: covenant infants belong to the Lord

1991 saw the publication of an interview with Chalcedon's President, Rev. Dr. Rousas J. Rushdoony. There, he stated³⁶⁶ that "the revivalistic movement which began essentially about the 1820's -- Arminian revivalism -- was actually hostile to anything but the revival meeting as the instrument of conversion....

"The Presbyterians of the day opposed this very strongly. With their doctrine of children in the covenant and the obligation of schooling for covenant children, the Presbyterians were very strong in Christian education.... American Presbyterianism is to a large extent Scottish....

"The covenant perspective is best illustrated by Hannah when she took Samuel to Eli and she said, 'This child was given to me by the Lord and I now return this child to the Lord' [*cf.* First Samuel 1:11-27].

"Now that's what infant baptism is about. We acknowledge that the child belongs to the Lord, and we promise in returning that child to the Lord in covenant baptism -- to rear him or her in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

David Chilton, one of Rushdoony's followers, at first wrote against presumptive regeneration in covenant infants. Later, however, he told the present author he had renounced that position.

651. Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee's *Christian Education and Early-Dying Infants*

Over the past more than thirty years 1966-2001, the present writer (Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee) has written a whole series of articles, booklets and dissertations bearing on our subject in various ways. We now consider some of that material.

In his 1966 *The Biblical Theory of Christian Education*, Lee declared³⁶⁷ that "Christian children...are sanctified from birth (and indeed even from conception) on account of their being conceived and born inside the covenant.... This does not mean that the adult believer or his infant child becomes holy **in** baptism. No! To the contrary, both adult believers and their children are baptized because they already appear to be holy before their baptism, and it is for this reason alone that they are entitled to receive holy baptism."

In his article *The Salvation of Early-dying Infants*, Lee observed ³⁶⁸ the *New Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* in Holland states "Christ shed His blood" not only for adult believers but also "for the children of the believers." Lee also observed that the *Baptismal Formula* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. declares that "the children of the covenant are distinguished from the world by baptism" and "sanctified in Christ...as members of His Church." Indeed, he added that "godly parents must be assured of the definite salvation of all of their covenant infants who die early -- because God calls them 'holy.'"

652. Baby belief in Lee's work *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!*

In his booklet *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!* Lee stated³⁶⁹ "that all early-dying infants conceived from at least one faithful parent are saved.... Christ sanctifies those infants by means of the sanctified parent....

"Baptism was instituted only for the true believers and their infants.... It is true that very tiny infants cannot say whether they believe in Christ or not. But it is not true that all tiny infants for that reason cannot believe....

"Even the infants of pious parents can already receive the seed of faith which only later begins to grow visibly.... Jeremiah and John the baptizer were both sanctified already from their mothers' wombs....

"We must always remember that God Himself commanded that circumcision -- the sign of faith [Romans 4:11] -- had to be administered to the baby Isaac when he was but eight days old.... All faith is implanted only by the Holy Spirit. But God's Word declares that the Lord sanctifies the little children of truly faithful parents -- even from their conception."

653. Infant faith in Lee's work *What About Baptism?*

In his booklet *What About Baptism?*, Lee further stated³⁷⁰ that "all infants born of at least one faithful parent are holy and baptizable (and even saved, in the event of their dying in tenderest infancy).... Christ cleanses these covenantal infants by the operation of His Holy Spirit through the sanctifying parent(s), so that even the faithlessness of one of the parents cannot thwart the gracious operation of the influence of the other (faithful) parent in the lives of their infants -- and particularly in the lives of such of their infants as die in infancy.

"The infants and even the grandchildren of believers are not merely 'sanctifiable' (like the unbelieving spouse of a believing parent), but actually 'holy' (like the believing child of a believing parent).... They do **not**, like heathen children, have to be brought from outside the covenant into the Lord.... As Christian children, having been conceived and born **inside** the covenant, they are to be brought up inside the covenant 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'....

"Even covenantal infants need 'repeated conversions' from their sins, towards Christ and virtues.... Their God-given faith in Christ constantly needs challenging and deepening. But it is hardly true that they need the same quality of conversion as do unbelievers and their children.

Timothy, for example, was born of a believing mother and raised in the true faith from his mother's womb -- and even from his grandmother's womb, as it were....

"Timothy was conceived inside the covenant of grace and grew up in it from [his conception and] birth onwards.... For he did 'continue in faith' and he persevered in the covenant in which he was conceived and born -- rather than having to be 'brought **into**' that faith only in his later years....

"All this is not merely the view of Calvin and of the Reformed *Confessions* -- and of great theologians such as Beza, Ursinus, John á Lasco, G. Voetius, James Buchanan, W.G.T. Shedd, Abraham Kuyper Sr. & Jr., N.L. Walker, B.B. Warfield, Herman Bavinck, P.Ch. Marcel, G.C. Berkouwer and J. Murray -- but, much more importantly, of Scripture too. Ephesians 6:1-4 (*cf.* 1:1); Acts 2:38-39; Matthew 19:13-14; Second Timothy [1:5 &] 3:14-15 (*cf.* Ezra 9:2)."

654. Baby belief in Lee's work *Effective Evangelism*

In his 1980 book *Effective Evangelism*, Lee explained³⁷¹ that "family evangelism of itself, however, does not automatically guarantee the salvation of all covenant children. As a result of the first gospel promise, Abel (Hebrews 11:4) and Seth (Genesis 4:26) were undoubtedly saved. But Cain -- although the covenant child of believing parents -- after growing up repudiated the Lord, and sadly is now in hell. Jude 6,11,13....

"Abraham trained his children from their birth in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Genesis 18:19; 21:2-8; 22:7-8; 26:1-5.... Only when we evangelize covenantally from birth onward -- as did Abraham -- can we expect God to give us the maximum blessing. Proverbs 22:6; Joel 2:16,28f; Acts 2:16f,38f; First Corinthians 7:14; Ephesians 6:4.

655. Infant faith in Lee's work *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?*

In his 1981 booklet *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?*, Lee stated³⁷² that "Christ redeems His people...without baptism. But baptism points to and seals their redemption through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb....

"This does not mean that the baptism of an infant in any way saves the baby. For as Calvin remarked, 'since God threatens punishment only to despisers [of infant baptism and formerly of infant circumcision], we infer that the uncircumcision of children would do them no harm if they died before the eighth day....

"To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for baptism, before any neglect of parents could intervene, is a cruelty originating in [Romish] superstition.... [But] whoever neglects baptism [for his own babies] -- suggesting that the parent is content with the bare promise -- for his part tramples upon the blood of Christ, or at least does not believe that it flows for the washing of his own children....

"Such contempt shall not pass unpunished.... As God adopts the infant son in the person of his father -- so, when the father repudiates such a benefit, the infant is said to be cut off from the church."

656. Baby belief in Lee's work *Revealed to Babies!*

In his booklet *Revealed to Babies!* Lee maintained³⁷³ that "in spite of Jesus' unique sinlessness, His prenatal and postnatal growth 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. First Samuel 2:1-10 *cf.* Luke 1:46-55."

In Matthew 11:25-27, regarding the Father's revealing of "things" to infants -- explained Lee -- "the verb 'reveal' is in the past tense in verse 25.. 'You have revealed them to speechless infants'.... The Son has always been revealing the Father to covenant children, both before and after they learn to speak. Always! Even from Genesis 4:1*f* onward....

"Luke's account [18:17] makes it clear that the little children then brought to Jesus, included even 'the infants' alias the *brephē* or new-born babies of those who brought them.... The Kingdom of God consists of those infants too.... 'Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like [such] a little child, shall never enter into it'....

"Matthew 18:4 means every [believing] adult and child and baby --or 'whosoever keeps on humbling himself like this little child' who is right now humbling himself -- is 'the great one' in the Kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:5 means that 'he who receives in Christ's Name such a little child who believes in Jesus, receives the Lord Himself.' And Matthew 18:6 means that 'whosoever keeps on offending one of these little ones who keep on believing in Christ' -- is obviously not himself a true believer like such a believing child is."

657. Infant faith in Lee's work *Daily Family Worship*

In his 1987 writing *Daily Family Worship*, Lee explained³⁷⁴ that "this writer and his wife were married in 1963. Ever since their wedding, they have held family devotions together -- every day....

"Ever since the conceptions of their children and even before their births, not one day has passed when those children have not themselves participated morning and evening in this daily family worship. Psalm 22:9-10; 139:7-17; Luke 1:36-45; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; *etc.*

"Since their births, the children have had their own Bibles.... They learned to read the Bible as their first book, long before starting to go to school (*cf.* Second Timothy 3:14-16*f*)."

658. Baby belief in Lee's work *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!*

At the end of Lee's *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!* he stated³⁷⁵ that "all sons of Adam are sinners from their very conception onward.... They cannot enter into or even see the Kingdom of God, unless they are regenerated at some time before they die.... The elect necessarily get regenerated and receive 'the seed of faith' before their death -- even if they die unbaptized before their birth or during their infancy.

"Regeneration generally precedes regular baptism. Calvinists presume that at least all believers' children dying in infancy, get regenerated and receive the 'seed of faith' before they die. Because all unborn babies can die any second, Calvinists also presuppose that all 'covenant children' that die before baptism, are made holy in the sight of God at or since their conception and long before their birth.

"Calvinists further presuppose (rebuttably) that all conceived in the covenant, are to be regarded as already holy -- until and unless their behaviour ever evidences the contrary, during their later lives. Baptism itself never regenerates. Because Calvinists regard covenant children as already holy before birth, they deny that baptizing them after their birth can make them holy. Such baptism can at the most only seal already holy children" -- seal them "as [the] Members of the Visible Church" they have been already before their infant baptisms.

"Baptism is only for believers (whether infants or adults). Because baptism is intended for believers alone, Calvinists oppose baptizing anyone who does not seem to believe in Christ already.

"For this reason, they urge the baptism of only those adults who profess faith in Christ, together with the children of such adults alone. For only such children [because of the Christian testimony of their Christ-professing parent] would seem to possess 'the seed of faith' in their hearts. Thus, Calvinists refuse to administer baptism to those adults who do not rightly profess Christ. They also refuse to baptize the infant children of such adults."

659. Infant faith in Lee's work *Rebaptism Impossible!*

In Lee's 1990 *Rebaptism Impossible!* he concluded³⁷⁶ that "the Calvinist will keep on reminding all trinitarians...in season and out of season -- of 'the needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism...all our life long.' *Westminster Larger Catechism* 167....

"But more. The Church Visible, with all of her many imperfections, would prayerfully bring the entire unbaptized world into baptismal acknowledgment of the great Creator-Redeemer-Consummator.... And True Christians call upon all baptizees -- whether Romanist, Protestant, 'Orthodox' or sectarian -- to 'improve' their baptism, and to serve only the Living Triune God. Roman 6:3-13f."

660. Baby belief in (editor) Lee's work *Revive Your Work, O Lord!*

Finally, in his 1991 chapters *Revival and Daily Family Worship* and *Catechising Toward Revival* -- within the book *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* of which he was the editor -- Lee summarized all the above. He explained:³⁷⁷ "If any one aspect of revival is paramount today, perhaps it is the resurrection of family worship."

Even "prior to the fall of man, Adam and Eve together worshipped God each day. Thus we see regular household devotions -- apparently daily, both morning and evening.... They continued also after his fall and, in the case of Noah's family, even down to (and beyond) the flood."³⁷⁸

"Doubtless Adam and Eve catechised their children. So too did Adam's descendant Jared, whose son's name (*Enoch*) means 'catechised.'" Indeed, that name was given probably not just at birth -- but long before birth. Compare: Genesis 17:19; Luke 1:13,35,63 & 2:21.

Significantly, ever after that catechetical instruction, Enoch 'walked with God.' Indeed, Abraham too catechised his 'trained servants' -- and especially his own 'household.' So too did Moses -- even before the inauguration of the Passover....

"Circumcised covenant youth were officially catechised by the Elders.... The same applies to the New Testament Church. For now, circumcision has been replaced by baptism."³⁷⁹

661. Revs. George Bancroft and Chris Coleburn on children in the covenant

In 1990 and in 1991, Rev. George Bancroft produced four unusual papers on our subject. They are: *The Evangelical Presbyterian Church Standards and the Protestant Reformed Churches' Dogma -- a Comparison*; *The Westminster Standards on Covenant Children*; *The Protestant Reformed Churches' Teaching on Covenant Children*; and *How Are Children of Believing Parents 'Holy'?*

These papers were replied to by Rev. Chris Coleburn of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. He did so in his much more extensive 1991 paper: *Scriptural, Confessional and Historical References re the Regeneration of Children -- and their Status before the Lord and in the Church*.

Coleburn began his paper:³⁸⁰ "1. Infants of believers can, if it please God, be regenerated from the womb of their mother. 2. Elect children of believers can quite often be regenerated prior to their conscious ability to understand the preaching of the Word, and personally and consciously to exercise faith and repentance. 3. Children of believers are not a 'mission-field' in the sense that missionaries are sent to the heathen and those that are 'far off' from the Lord. Rather, children of believers are seen as holy members of the visible Church; distinguished from the world of unbelievers; are called 'saints.'"

Much later, Coleburn discussed³⁸¹ Professor Louis Berkhof's book *The History of Christian Doctrine* at the point where he "reviews the historical data on how Presbyterian/Reformed divines

have viewed the children of believers. He states that there were two basic views -- assumed regeneration; and possible but non-assumed regeneration." With almost studied understatement, Coleburn then rightly remarked: "The view assuming non-regeneration is not even mentioned as a Presbyterian/Reformed view."

In due course, Coleburn ended his paper. Here are his final words:³⁸² "The view of children of believers as set out above, is clearly in accord with what present-day conservative Presbyterian theologians believe and teach....."

"It is simply a matter of record that men such as Professor Dr. F.N. Lee of the Presbyterian Hall in Brisbane, and Principal Professor D. MacLeod of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, hold similar views.... See, for example, F.N. Lee's *Revealed to Babies!* (Commonwealth Pub., Rowlett, Texas); and D. MacLeod's recorded sermon *Children and the Covenant*, preached at Edinburgh in St. Columba's Free Church."

662. Summary: baby belief ere baptism from Westminster till today

The *Westminster Standards* with their doctrine of prebaptismally faithful covenant infants was implicitly endorsed in its foreword *To the Christian Reader* (prepared by Westminster commissioners like Thomas Goodwin and Henry Wilkinson, and also by their non-commissioned co-religionists like Obadiah Lee and Thomas Manton. In addition, Manton set out his own strong doctrine of infant faith -- implicitly in his *Epistle to the Reader* of those *Westminster Standards*, and explicitly in his *Sermons* and other writings.

David Dickson, who played a large role in drawing up Westminster's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, clearly taught the prebaptismal regeneration of elect covenantal infants. So too did his Puritan contemporaries John Trapp, Richard Baxter, Christopher Love, Thomas Brooks, William Guthrie -- and that greatest of all British Puritans, John Owen.

In Holland, later Voetians like Poudroyen and Lodensteyn agreed. So too did Ridderus, and especially the great Witsius. In Germany, so too did Cocceius and Wendelin and J.H. Heidegger. In Switzerland, Turretin held that children of even uncommitted covenant parents should rebuttably be regarded as themselves having a seminal faith -- and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* re-affirmed the holiness of such covenant children. In Britain, Flavel regarded covenant infants as holy twigs of holy branches -- and Watson insisted God's kingdom belongs to such children.

Dutch Late-Classical Calvinism agreed. Thus, Koelman taught that covenant infants partake of regeneration. Vtringa: the Spirit sanctifies them. Smytegelt: God inserts grace into them, from the womb. Brakel: they are regenerated during infancy. Venema and Maastricht: all covenant children are apparently born under grace. John á Marck: the infant seed of believers have salvation. Vander Honert: covenant infants have been made holy by the Spirit. De Moor, Tuinman and Aemilius: such babies are holy before baptism. The Leydekker's: they belong to Christ. Groenewegen and Van Toll: they are regenerate.

Back in Britain, the great Matthew Henry insisted covenant infants were 'slaves of God' because the children of His handmaid. Isaac Watts held covenant children were apparently within the Church Invisible. Indeed, John Willison affirmed that covenant children are within the kingdom of God. So too Philip Doddridge, Thomas Boston, John Brown of Haddington, and even the great founder of Methodism himself (John Wesley).

Colonial America professed 'infant faith' Calvinism -- in Brazil, in Florida, in Canada, in New York, in New England, and in Virginia. American Puritans like Cotton were invited to attend the Westminster Assembly -- and soon affirmed its *Westminster Standards* in their own 1648 *Cambridge Platform*. The Mather's long professed this theology, and the Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterians were distinctly Anti-Anabaptist. Indeed, long prior to the Adopting Act of 1729, not a single Presbyterian Minister in America is known to have been anything but a rigid Calvinist (thus Charles Hodge).

The anti-covenantal catastrophe of the so-called 'Great Awakening' swiftly changed all this. The Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards was still Anti-Anabaptist. However, after the Neo-Paganism of the French Revolution and the Neo-Semipelagianism of divisive Dispensationalism -- American Presbyterianism backslid into Semi-Baptistic heresy (especially after its disastrous 1801 Union with a now-mediochre and long-deconfessionalized Congregationalism).

Yet Calvinism now began its international recovery. In Scotland, there were Alexander Smith Patterson and John Dick before the *Great Disruption* -- and thereafter James Buchanan and David Russell. In America, there was George Bethune. Even in revolution-torn Holland, there were Hendrik de Cock, H.P. Scholte, and J.A. Wormser. All of the above were advocates of infant faith in the babies of believers.

In the PCUSA, there was a concerted yet a weakening resistance to Arminian revivalism. This was and is notable especially through the 'infant faith' views of the Alexanders, Atwater, Carnahan, Green, Humphrey, and especially the great Samuel Miller.

The Old School General Assembly of 1845, however, was a watershed. Its victor, the catabaptist Thornwell, soon denounced covenant infants as 'enemies of Christ.' The Classic Calvinist Charles Hodge rightly and stoutly opposed this. But overreaction to men like Horace Bushnell; the slavery issue; and especially the looming War Between the States -- all prevented a rational consideration of the important implications of the covenant.

In Germany, the Lutheran Delitzsch and the Calvinist Heppe both advocated infant faith even prenatally. In Britain, David Brown insisted that covenant infants are within God's Kingdom. In America, the great Charles Hodge clearly sounded forth Calvinism's presumptive regenerationism of covenant infants. So too did the Lutheran Krauth and the Calvinists Bomberger and A.A. Hodge. Indeed, even Southerners like A.W. Miller and R.L. Dabney distantiated themselves from Thornwell's semi-baptistic aberrations. However, both the Northern and the Southern Presbyterians continued to capitulate to Baptistic antipaedofideism.

In Scotland, especially Bannerman and Candlish and Walker were strong advocates of infant faith. In Holland, there was Gravemeijer and especially the great Abraham Kuyper Sr. In

America, there were W.G.T. Shedd, Philip Schaff, Henry J. van Dyke Sr, and Henry van Dyke Jun. They were followed by the great advocate of infant faith and salvation -- Benjamin B. Warfield.

In Holland, Kramer wrote his classic work on *Baptism and Regeneration* -- and Littooy embraced that historic viewpoint. There were many merger problems in the Netherlands' Dutch Reformed denominations. Yet the Synod of Utrecht nevertheless clearly pronounced that all covenant infants were to be regarded, rebuttably, as already regenerate. Also Kuyper's famous sons -- Abraham Jr. and H.H. Kuyper -- strongly asserted this. So too did Bavinck, Bouwman, Dijk, and Honig. Even Schilder did not disagree. Especially H.N. Ridderbos and D.J. De Groot strongly affirmed it -- and Douma has strongly opposed the antipaedofideism of the British Baptist David Kingdon.

In Britain, even the Ex-Baptist Campbell Morgan strongly presumed faith within the children of believers. So too John Inchley. Indeed, also South Africa's Andrew Murray asserted God's covenantal faithfulness *Unto Children's Children!* So too did his later fellow-countrymen, F.J.M. Potgieter and J.A. Heyns.

In America, R.A. Webb wrote his 'baby belief' *Theology of Infant Salvation*. Even the Baptist A.H. Strong believed elect infants receive faith before arriving in glory. Lewis Schenck produced his invaluable anti-revivalist *Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant*. Against Karl Barth and other heretics, Louis Berkhof set forth the Classic Calvinist position. So too did Carl McIntire, John Murray, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, R.B. Kuiper, J.M. Boice and Herman Hanko.

As elsewhere, in Australia too the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches are now giving an increasingly orthodox witness. This is so, in all aspects of Calvinistic doctrine. It includes the Calvinian doctrine of "conscious saving faith" within believers' babies -- even before their infant baptisms. This is seen in the writings of Chris Coleburn, and also the present writer.

Endnotes

- 1) *Sub. Stands. of Free Ch. of Scot.*, p. 6.
- 2) T. Manton: *Epistle to the Reader* (of the Westminster Standards). In *Sub. Stands. of Free Ch. of Scot.*, pp. 7-9.
- 3) T. Manton: *Complete Works*, Maranatha, Worthington Pa, rep. ed., n.d. (ca. 1975), XIV pp. 81-89 & 205.
- 4) T. Manton: *Sermon 66* (on Heb. 11), in his *Comp. Works* XIV pp. 406f. 5) T. Manton: *Comp. Works* XV pp. 466f.
- 6) See D. Dickson's *Exposition of the Evangel of Jesus Christ According to Matthew* (Ralph Smith, 1697 ed.); his *Truth's Victory Over Error* chs. 10 & 28 (John Reid, Edinburgh, 1684); and his *Therapeutica Sacra: Shewing Briefly the Method of Healing the Diseases of Conscience Concerning Regeneration*, (James Watson, Edinburgh, 1697 ed.). Cf. too J. Howe's *Scots Worthies* (p. 294) and C. Coleborn's *op. cit.*, April 1991, p. 22.
- 7) J. Trapp: *Commentary on the New Testament*, Sovereign Grace, Evansville, 1958 ed., on Mt. 19:13-15.
- 8) See Himburg's *Baptismal Controversies* (164), cited in ed. Gilmore's *op. cit.* pp. 279 & 288.
- 9) Cited in Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VIII p. 287.
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- 47) *Ib.* Quest. XX thes. 18 (cited in A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Sac.* in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 143).
- 48) F. Turretin's *Theological Institutes* XV:14:1-2,13-16 (in Gerstner's *Selections from Turretin's [mimeographed] 'Theological Institutes'*, Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Grandville. Mich., 1980, pp. 459f).
- 49) *First Helvetic Confession* art. XXI (XXII): "We baptize our children...of whom one should presume they are elected by God." Compare too the *Second Helvetic Confession* ch. XX: "We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny

that newborn infants of the faithful are to be baptized.... Why should those who belong to God and are in His Church not be initiated by holy baptism?"

50) *Formula Consensus Helvetica* art. XXVI: "Moreover, in order that no one may be induced to propose publicly or privately some doubtful or new dogma of faith hitherto unheard of in our churches and contrary to God's Word, to our *Helvetic Confession*, our Symbolical Books and to the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*...."

51) *Formula Consensus Helvetica* arts. VIII-X & XIV & XXI-XXV.

52) 1745 ed. Cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 231 n. 6. 53 *Hist. Apol.*, p. 72

54) *Id.* II pp. 655a & 20b. Our nn. 53 & 54 here, are both cited from Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 328.

55) J. Koelman: *The Heresy of the Lbadists Thoroughly Uncovered and Refuted*, II pp. 726 & 665f. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 330.

56) C. Vtringa: *Sacred Observations*, Bk. II, *Concerning the Foundations and Reasons of Christian Infant Baptism*, 6:26-28. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 343f.

57) "*Juste praesumimus ex lege charitatis eos esse sanctificados per Spiritum Sanctum.*" Cited in L.H. Atwater's *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d., pp. 103f.

58) B. Smytegelt: *Explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 74 (& III p. 417, ed. 1756).

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69) P. Mastricht: *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, Amsterdam, 1725, III p. 617. Cited in Kuyper's *E Voto* III p. 58.

70) *Op. cit.* III pp. 229 & 308. Cited in A.G. Honig's *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1938, p. 551.

71) *Op. cit.* VII:4:25 (*On Baptism*). Cited in Kuyper's *Sac.* in his *Dict. Dog.* IV p. 143; and in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 336. Mastricht's original Latin is given by Gravemeijer (*op. cit.* III:20:24 p. 166 n. 11). That Latin, *fidem...seminali*, was translated rightly into Dutch as *zadelijk geloof* (alias *seminal faith*). Unfortunately, however, it then got misprinted as *zedelijk geloof* (alias *moral faith*).

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- 189) D. Brown: *The Four Gospels* 1863. 190) See our text above at its nn. 108, 151, 159ff & 179f.
- 191) C. Hodge: *Essays and Reviews*, Carter, New York, 1857, p. 316.
- 192) C. Hodge: *The Church Membership of Infants*, in *Princeton Review*, April 1858, XXX No. 11, Art. VII, pp. 376, 389, 375n., 375f & 377f. Also cited in J. Murray's *Christian Baptism*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Philadelphia, n.d., p. 57 n. 30.
- 193) Hodge: *op. cit.* pp. 375n. & 375-77f. See too J. Murray's *Christian Baptism*, p. 57 n. 30.
- 194) C. Hodge: *Systematic Theology* (1871), Nelson, London, ed. 1873, II pp. 247f & 685-90; and III pp. 546f, 552, 555, 573f, 578f & 590 (*cf.* 31f).
- 195) C. Hodge: *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism (with a Practical View of Infant Baptism)*, The Evangelical Bookshop., Belfast, 1966 rep., pp. 34f & 41f.
- 196) J.H.A. Bomberger: *Infant Salvation in its Relation to Infant Depravity, Infant Regeneration and Infant Baptism*, Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia, 1859, pp. 30f, 161f & 172.
- 197) *West. Dir. Pub. Worsh.*, section *Of the Administration of the Sacraments*, "and first of baptism."
- 198) J.H. Thornwell: *Coll. Writ.* IV pp. 329-31 & 340.
- 199) C. Hodge: *The General Assembly*, in *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, XXX:3, Art. V, pp. 603f. Also see Schenck's *op. cit.*, pp. 98f.

- 200) L.B. Schenck: *op. cit.* p. 2.
- 201) C. van Rensselaer: *The Revised Book of Discipline*, in *The Presbyterian Magazine*, IX, March 1859, pp. 109f & 116. See too Schenck's *op. cit.* pp. 99-100.
- 202) J.H. Thornwell: *A Few More Words on the Revised Book of Discipline*, in *Coll. Writ.* IV pp. 341 & 348.
- 203) Schenck's *op. cit.*, p. 100. 204) Schenck: *op. cit.* p. 101.
- 205) J.B. Jordan (ed.): *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture*, Christianity and Civilization, Tyler Tx., Spring 1982.
- 206) *Op. cit.* p. 103. 207) *Op. cit.* pp. 101f. 208) A.W. Miller: *The Status of the Baptized Child*, Petersburg, 1860.
- 209) A.W. Miller: *The Relation of Baptized Children to the Discipline of the Church*, Nov. 1866. In *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, July 1867, XVIII No. 1, Art. IV, pp. 15, 19 & 67.
- 210) R.L. Dabney: *The Changes Proposed in Our Book of Discipline* (in *Southern Presbyterian Review* XX:1, 1859, art. III p. 44); and his *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* (Richmond, 1871, p. 762).
- 211) R.L. Dabney: *The Revised Book of Discipline* (1857), in his *Disc. Evang. & Theol* II pp. 319f.
- 212) R.L. Dabney: *The Revised Book of Discipline* (1859), in his *Disc. Evang. & Theol* II pp. 384f & 389f.
- 213) *Ib.* pp. 385f & 389.
- 214) R.L. Dabney: *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976 ed., pp. 576f, 741, 759, 778f, 790f & 794f.
- 215) W.G.T. Shedd: *Dogmatic Theology* (1888), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969 ed., II p. 574.
- 216) H. Heppel: *The Dogmatics of the Evangelical Reformed Church*, Elberfeld, 1861, Loc. XXV, *De baptismo*, pp. 443,5. Cited in Schaff-Herzog *ERK*, I pp. 207f.
- 217) H. Heppel: *Reformed Dogmatics* (1861), Baker, Grand Rapids, 1950 ed., pp. xi & 616f.
- 218) A.A. Hodge: *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism*, Belfast, 1966 ed., pp. 41-43. See too his undated tract *Whose Children Should Be Baptized?* (Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d., p. 6.
- 219) A.A. Hodge: *Outlines of Theology* (1860), Nelson & Sons, London, 1879, pp. 5,8, 363f, 453, 458-60, 463f, 616 & 622-26f.
- 220) A.A. Hodge: *Confession of Faith* (1869), Banner of Truth, London, 1958, pp. xvf, 174 & 347f. See too A.A. Hodge & H.A. Hodge: *The System of Theology contained in the Westminster Shorter Catechism Opened and Explained*, 1888.
- 221) A.A. Hodge: *Evangelical Theology* (1890), Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1976 ed., pp. ii, 324-37.
- 222) C.P. Krauth: *Conservative Reformation*, Philadelphia, pp. 557-64. Cited by A.A. Hodge in his own *Outlines* pp. 595 & 628f.
- 223) C.P. Krauth: *Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System*, in his *Tracts* Vol. III. Cited in J.W. Stagg's *Calvin, Twisse and Edwards on Universal Salvation of Infants*, Presb. Committee of Pub., Richmond, n.d., pp. 5 & 24f.
- 224) J. Bannerman: *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinance, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974 rep., II pp. 30 & 50 & 114f.
- 225) *Ib.* pp. 117f & 121. Unfortunately, Bannerman there (pp. 118f) inconsistently insists that infants are "yet incapable of faith or repentance" and that many of them are regenerated precisely during their infant baptism. The truth, however, as clearly implied even by Bannerman, is that elect early-dying infants are regenerated and given a personal faith in Christ before their infant baptism. The latter merely ingrafts them *ipso facto* into the Church Visible, as those rebuttably presumed to be members of the Church Invisible.
- 226) W. Cunningham: *Historical Theology* (1862), Banner of Truth, London, 1969 rep., I pp. 167f.
- 227) W. Cunningham: *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, pp. 240f & esp. 291. He himself might perhaps here seem to be critiquing the Protestant Reformers' views anent presumed regeneration prior to infant baptism (even in Protestant Churches). Yet it must be remembered that Cunningham is here rebutting precisely the baptismal regeneration of Romanism. See Coleborn's *op. cit.* pp. 50.
- 228) *Hist. Theol.*, II, pp. 144 & 149. 229) *Hist. Theol.*, II, pp. 151f.
- 230) R.S. Candlish: *The Sacraments*, Clark, Edinburgh, pp. 66f
- 231) H.E. Gravemeijer: *Doctrine of the Reformed Faith*, Wiarda, Sneek, 1887, II:14:10 p. 38 & III:20:18f pp. 109,138,166f & 168 n. 2
- 232) *Ib.* III:20:25f pp. 171-84.
- 233) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Regeneration and Conversion*, in his *From the Word*, Kruyt, Amsterdam, 1879, III pp. 71 & 82f.

- 234) A. Kuyper Sr.: *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (1888), ET, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, ed. 1941, pp. 290, 295, 299f, 318 & 320.
- 235) A. Kuyper Sr.: *E Voto Dordraceno* [In Agreement with Dordt] (1892), Wormser, Amsterdam, 1892, Vol. 1, Part I, pp. 126 & 133f.
- 236) *Ib.* Vol. 1, Part II, pp. 479 & 481. 237) See our text at ch. V's n. 377 above.
- 238) *Ib.* pp. 533f, 543f & 559f. 239) *Ib.*, Vol. 2, Part III, pp. 6f, 14, 47f, 60.
- 240) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Calvinism and Confessional Revision*, in *The Presbyterian Quarterly* IV No. 18, Oct. 1891, Art. 1, pp. 501f.
- 241) A. Kuyper Sr.: *God's Angels*, Höveker & Wormser, Amsterdam & Pretoria, n.d.
- 242) A. Kuyper Sr.: *A Myrtle Tree in the Place of a Thistle*, as cited in P. Van Woerden's *The Promises of the Gospel with a Few Meditations about Faith, Regeneration, Baptism, Profession and Assurance*, Van den Tol, Dordrecht, 1949, p. 79.
- 243) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Salvation* pp. 118f, in his *Dict. Dog.* IV. 244) A. Kuyper Sr.: *On Sin* pp. 73f, in *Dog. Dict.* III.
- 245) A. Kuyper Sr.: *On the Church* pp. 46 & 50f & 158, in his *Dict. Dog.* IV.
- 246) A. Kuyper Sr.: *On the Sacraments* pp. 133f, 69f, 121f, 126, 137f & 145f, in his *Dict. Dog.* IV.
- 247) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, Kok, Kampen, I pp. 506f.
- 248) A. Kuyper Sr.: *The Doctrine of the Covenants*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 197 & 206f.
- 249) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Our Liturgy*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 359f, 366f, 400, 407f & 415f.
- 250) W.G.T. Shedd: *Dogmatic Theology* (1888), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969 ed., II:505f & 575-77 and III:469.
- 251) H.J. Van Dyke: *The Church -- Her Ministry and Sacraments*, New York 1890, p. 74. See too his *The Baptism of Infants* in *The Presbyterian Review* (January 1885) p. 50. Cited in Schenck: *op. cit.* pp. 132, 134, 142 & 177.
- 252) H. Van Dyke Jun.: *God and Little Children. The Blessed State of All who Die in Childhood Proved and Taught as a Part of the Gospel of Christ.* Compare Schaff-Herzog ERK IV pp. 225 & 292.
- 253) N.L. Walker: *The Church Standing of Children*, Clark, Edinburgh, 1891.
- 254) Walker's *op. cit.* as cited by B.B. Warfield in the latter's *Review of N.L. Walker's "The Church Standing of Children"*, in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 1892, pp. 181f.
- 255) B.B. Warfield's *Review of N.L. Walker's "The Church Standing of Children"*, in *Presb. & Reformed Review*, 1892, pp. 181f.
- 256) B.B. Warfield: *Baptism: Discussion of Controverted Points* (in *New Schaff-Herzog ERK*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1960 ed.); *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 1892, pp. 181-82; *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*, Christian Literature Company, New York, 1891; *The Polemics of Infant Baptism* (in *Studies in Theology*, New York, 1932, p. 390); and *Christian Baptism and Christ's "Little Ones" and Children* (all in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield -- I*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1970 ed., pp. 223-52 & 325f); and *How Shall We Baptize?* (in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield -- II*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1973 ed., pp. 329f).
- 257) J. Murray: *Christian Baptism*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Philadelphia, n.d., p. 58 n.
- 258) B.B. Warfield: *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, Mack, Cherry Hill N.J., 1972, p. 66 & n. 112.
- 259) In *Sel. Short. Writ. I*, pp. 224, 228f, 231
- 260) *Op. cit.* in *Sel. Short. Writ. I* pp. 238f, 247, 264.
- 261) *Op. cit.*, in *The Presbyterian Quarterly* (April 1899) pp. 313f. Compare in Warfield's *Studies in Theology*, pp. 389f & 407.
- 262) *Op. cit.* pp. 6, 37, 49f & 57. 263) *Ibid.*, as cited in Warfield's *Studies in Theology* pp. 429f & 447.
- 264) B.B. Warfield's *Baptism: Discussion of Controverted Points.* Art. in *New Schaff-Herzog ERK*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1960, I, pp. 446-50.
- 265) B.B. Warfield's *How Shall We Baptize?* In *Selected Shorter Writings of B.B. Warfield*, II, pp. 328f (also citing A.H. Strong's 1909 ed. *Systematic Theology*; see Pickering & Inglis, London, 1956 rep.).
- 266) B.B. Warfield's *Christian Baptism.* In *Selected Shorter Writings I* pp. 326-30.
- 267) G. Kramer: *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*, De Vecht, Breukelen, 1897.
- 268) A. Kuyper Sr: *Introductory Word to Kramer's 'The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration'*, in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. i-v.
- 269) G. Kramer: *op. cit.*, pp. 357-62.
- 270) See R.J. Dam & B. Holwerda & C. Veenhof: *Around '1905'*, D.H. Littooi Azn, Terneuzen, 4th ed., 1946, pp. 45f & 58 n. 57a.

- 271) A. Littooy: *The Labour of Philip and the Covenant of Grace*, 1901, p. 12. Cited in Wielenga: *op. cit.* pp. 173 & 126. For his previous views, see A. Littooy: *Covenant of Grace and Church*, 1880.
- 272) See E. Smilde: *A Century of Struggle about Covenant and Baptism*, 1946.
- 273) Wielenga: *op. cit.* p. 246; Dam, R.J (& Others): *Around '1905': A Historical Sketch*, Littooj, Terneuzen, 1946, pp. 140f.
- 274) C.N. Impeta: *Ecclesiastical Chart of the Netherlands*, Kok, Kampen, 1964, pp. 104 & 120f.
- 275) R.E.D. Clark: *Morgan, George Campbell (1863-1945)*, art. in ed. J.D. Douglas's *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1974, p. 677.
- 276) G.C. Morgan: *The Crises of the Christ*, Pickering & Inglis, London.
- 277) A. Murray: *The Children for Christ*, Nisbet, London, 1905, pp. 43,71,74,199.
- 278) A. Murray: *How to Raise your Children for Christ*, chs. IV-VI.
- 279) M. Neethling: *Unto Children's Children*, privately published, South Africa.
- 280) R.A. Webb: *The Theology of Infant Salvation*, Presb. Committee of Pub., Richmond Va., 1907, pp. 1,13f,16f,24f.
- 281) *Ib.* pp. 35-39 & 313f.
- 282) A.H. Strong: *Systematic Theology* (1907), Pickering & Inglis, London, 1956, pp. 661f.
- 283) P. Schaff: *History of the Christian Church* (1910), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970, I p. 470 & II p. 255.
- 284) Kuyper, A., Jr.: *The Firmness of the Covenant*, Kirchner, Amsterdam, 1908; *Covenantal Collectivism*.
- 285) Kuyper, A., Jr.: *The Watchman*, 7th Oct. 1904; compare his *The Bond of the Covenant*, Zwagers, Rotterdam, 1928, p. 118; cited in Dam & Others' *op. cit.* pp. 60, 88 & 112.
- 286) Kuyper, H.H.: *The Authentic Text of the Liturgical Writings Maintained*. 1901.
- 287) H.H. Kuyper: *The Children of the Covenant*, arts. in the *Herald*, Holland, 1915f, Nos. 1949f.
- 288) H.H. Kuyper: *Hamabdil: On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*, Van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, 1907, pp. 100f, 152f, 158f, 168, 172, 175, 181f, 184f, 191f.
- 289) Thus *The Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy of the Reformed Dutch Church*, p. 129.
- 290) Bavinck, H.: *The First Baptismal Question*, Bazuin, 1900 (as cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 240). See too Bavinck's *Calling and Regeneration*, and his *Parents or Witnesses*.
- 291) H. Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei: Instruction in the Christian Religion according to the Reformed Confession*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 493f & 616.
- 292) H. Bavinck: *The Christian Family*, Kok, Kampen, 1912, pp. 66f.
- 293) H. Bavinck: *Principles of Psychology*, Kok, Kampen, 1923, pp. 77 & 88.
- 294) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics* I p. 29 & n. 1, and III pp. 266f (as cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* pp. 241f).
- 295) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1930, IV p. 28 n. 2 (also citing Kromsigt's *Something About Calvin's View of Baptism*, Trowel and Sword, 1905), p. 29 & n. 1, pp. 42 & 53f.
- 296) *Ib.* IV pp. 100f & 485f.
- 297) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1930, IV p. 486, p. 501 (citing M. Vitringa's *Doctrine* VII:134), p. 511.
- 298) H. Bavinck: *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Kok, Kampen, 1932, pp. 208f.
- 299) B. Wielenga: *Our Baptismal Formula*, Kok, Kampen, 1920, pp. 11,47,51,85. See too his *Heirs of the Covenant*.
- 300) *Ib.* pp. 166f, 215, 250 & 296.
- 301) H. Bouwman: *Baptism*, art. in *Christian Encyclopaedia*, Kok, Kampen, 1925, I pp. 629f.
- 302) C.W. Bogue: *Dr. John Gerstner Withdraws from the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, in *Christian Observer*, Manassas Va., June 8th 1990, p. 20.
- 303) K. Dijk: *The Prophetic Word*, The Standard, Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 698f.
- 304) K. Dijk: *Short Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, n.d. (circa 1960), pp. 5, 251-52.
- 305) A.G. Honig: *Manual of Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok. Kampen, 1938, p. 3.
- 306) *Op. cit.* pp. 549, 645 & 650f.
- 307) L.B. Schenck: *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1940, pp. iii & viii.
- 308) His namesake, W.E. Schenck, had formerly published the work *Children in Heaven: or the Infant Dead Redeemed by the Blood of Jesus*, Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d.
- 309) L.B. Schenck: *op. cit.*, pp. 157f.
- 310) L. Berkhof: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1932, II p. 247. 311) Coleburn: *op. cit.* p. 36.
- 312) L. Berkhof: *The History of Christian Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969, pp. 258f.

- 313) L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, Banner of Truth, London, 1959, p. 637.
- 314) See in G.C. Berkouwer: *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism*, Kok, Kampen, 1947, pp. 6 & 76f.
- 315) *Ib.* pp. 83 & 97. 316) Impeta: *op. cit.*, pp. 104 & 127. 317) *Ib.* pp. 122f.
- 318) Compare C. Veenhof: *In Order to Remain the Church*: Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 1966.
- 319) See our text below at its nn. 353f.
- 320) *Ib.* pp. 124-29. Other issues included personality clashes (especially between H.H. Kuyper and Schilder). There were also different attitudes toward the *de facto* Nazi government of the Netherlands during World War II.
- 321) K. Dijk: *Report to the Synod of 1949-50 on 'Too Narrow Binding' [to the baptismal formula of 1905]*, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, 1946-50, p. 480. Cited in G.C. Berkouwer's *The Sacraments*, Kok, Kampen, 1954 p. 243 n. 61.
- 322) See Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, p. 243 n. 61.
- 323) *Acts of the GKN Nov. 1943*, comp. the 1946 *Acts of the Extraordinary General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands*, Utrecht, 1949 pp. 49f. Cited in Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, p. 243 n. See too De Groot: *The Rebirth*, p. 239 & n. 85.
- 324) K.H. Miskotte: *The Chief Sum of History*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1945, pp. 7,170,172f,184f.
- 325) Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, pp. 245f.
- 326) H.N. Ridderbos: *The Covenant of Grace*. In G.C. Berkouwer & G. Toornvliet: *The Christ's Dogma*, Haan, Groningen, 1949, pp. 310 & 313.
- 327) H.N. Ridderbos: *The Means of Grace*. In G.C. Berkouwer & G. Toornvliet: *op. cit.*, pp. 533-36 & 541f.
- 328) D.J. de Groot: *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. In Berkouwer & Toornvliet: *op. cit.* pp. 427f.
- 329) D.J. de Groot: *The Rebirth*, Kok, Kampen, 1952, pp. 226-36. Cf. A. Kuyper Sr.: *The Work of the Holy Spirit* [original Dutch version], II pp. 134f.
- 330) C. McIntire: *Infant Baptism*, Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood N.J., 1951, p. 20.
- 331) J. Murray: *Letter to F.N. Lee*, Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, Jan. 9th, 1960.
- 332) J. Murray: *Christian Baptism*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Philadelphia, n.d. [1952], pp. 57f nn. 30 & 31 and pp. 59 & 65.
- 333) J. Murray: *Baptism*, in *Collected Writings*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, II pp. 370f. This essay is undated in the *Coll. Writ.*, yet it was clearly written only after 1962. For it mentions a 1962 work in its terminal "Bibliography" (Jeremias's 1962 *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*). See *Coll. Writ.* III p. 375. Murray's essay *Baptism* thus represents a greater degree of maturity than does his apparently earlier book review of D.H. Small's 1959 book *The Biblical Basis for Infant Baptism*. In the latter, Murray had commented: "The 'principle of presumption' (cf. pp. 64,80,87) to which Small appeals in connection with infant baptism, is scarcely one that can be biblically supported. It is far better to rest the case upon the divine institution. This is all that is necessary, and to append a questionable inference does not strengthen the argument." See *Coll. Writ.* IV pp. 321-23. Clearly, however, in his own 1962 work, Murray himself (rightly) now himself gravitates precisely in that very direction. See our main text at n. 334 below.
- 334) J. Murray's *Regeneration*, in his *Coll. Writ.*, II pp. 199f.
- 335) F.J.M. Potgieter: *Redemption*, Sacum, Bloemfontein, 1953, pp. 1,3,38f,71f.
- 336) F.J.M. Potgieter: *Calvin for Today*, United Protestant Pubs., Capetown, 1980, pp. 306f.
- 337) *Trinity Hymnal* (1961), Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1976 rep., pp. iii & 666f.
- 338) J.O. Buswell Jr.: *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1963, II:162f & 171.
- 339) H. Hoeksema: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Reformed Free Pub. Assoc., Grand Rapids, 1966, pp. 462, 650f & 670-74.
- 340) H. Hoeksema: *Believers and their Seed*, Reformed Free Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1971, pp. iii, 46 & 132.
- 341) R.B. Kuiper: *The Glorious Body of Christ*, Banner of Truth, London, 1967 ed., pp. 11, 208, 212f.
- 342) Compare too the influx of Calvinists into her bosom thereafter, and note their baptismal views. See P. Bloomfield's *Covenant Baptism*, Brisbane, 1984.
- 343) 1965 *Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 2nd ed., 1965, pp. i & 155f.
- 344) *Ib.* pp. 79f.
- 345) Notwithstanding the above excellent words, the prayer immediately before the baptism (*ib.* p. 82) contains the unfortunate arminianizing if not ritualizing words: "Let his name be written in the Lamb's book of life! Being baptized outwardly with water, let him be baptized inwardly with Thy Holy Spirit; let him receive Thy grace in its fulness and remain for ever in the number of Thy faithful children!" So too the prayer immediately after the baptism: "O heavenly Father..., we thank Thee that it hath pleased Thee to receive this child as a member of Thy

holy Church.... Forgive us wherein we have come short of the grace of our own baptism by wandering from Thy ways; and bring us back with true repentance!" *Ib.* pp. 83f. Thankfully, the *Book of Common Order* itself declares that its use "is not mandatory." *Ib.* p. iii.

346) *Ib.* pp. 70f.

347) *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America*, Committee for Christian Education and Pubs. of the PCA, Montgomery Alabama, 1975, p. 4.

348) *Ib.* pp. 98f. 349) *Ib.* pp. 78f. 350) *Ib.* pp. 45f.

351) J. Inchley: *All About Children*, Coverdale, London, 1976, pp. 17-20.

352) D. Kingdon: *Children of Abraham*, Carey Pubs., Haywards Heath, 1975, pp. 64 & 98f.

353) J. Douma: *Infant Baptism and Regeneration*, Copieerinrichting Van den Berg, Broederweg 6, Kampen, 1976, pp. 20f & 31f.

354) On p. 31 of Douma's *op. cit.*, there is a glaring misprint. Namely: "Kingdon tells us that we have to treat are children as if they are unconverted" (my underlining: F.N. Lee). There, "are" is misprinted for "our" (see Kingdon's *op. cit.* p. 99). In our own main text above, we (F.N. Lee) have accordingly corrected this glaring misprint.

355) Apart from the printer's misprint discussed in our previous note, there is also another far more glaring error made apparently not by his typesetter but by Douma himself. That is Douma's statement (on his p. 31) that "in Kuyper's view, we cannot come further than the presumption that the baptized child will be reborn." Douma's misstatement here falsely implies that Kuyper's doctrine of presumptive regenerationism is at variance with the massive consensus of Pre-Kuyperian Calvinists (whereas in actual fact the latter too rebuttably presumed the prebaptismal regeneratedness of covenantal infants). Even more erroneously, Douma here misrepresents Kuyper's view as if Kuyper were presuming "that the baptized child will be reborn." Underlining mine (F.N. Lee). In actual fact, however, Kuyper (together with all consistent Pre-Kuyperian Calvinists) rebuttably though strongly presupposed that all baptized Protestant children of godly parents had already been reborn.

356) J.A. Lamb (ed.): *Ordinal and Service Book for Use in Courts of the Church: The Church of Scotland*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 3rd ed., 1962, pp. iii-v & ix-x.

357) G.M. Dale: *Reformed Book of Common Order*, National Church Association of the Church of Scotland, Brunswick Impression, Edinburgh, 1978 ed., pp. iii-vi: "We have...a *Book of Common Order*.... The last edition was published in 1940.... The inspiration and source of such material are not Reformed doctrine based upon the Scriptures, but Anglo- and Roman Catholic doctrine. We see here what clearly appears to be the intention to undermine the Reformed basis of the Church of Scotland indirectly, by those whom we may call Scoto-Catholics....

Rev. D.N. Samuel, a clergyman of the Church of England, indicates the trend there very clearly -- in a recent booklet *The Reformation and the Church of England Today*. He shows how the Tractarians (now familiar as the Anglo-Catholics) in the 19th century, led by Pusey and Newman...concentrated upon undermining...by infiltrating the liturgy and thus the content of public worship.... The Scoto-Catholics, led by G.W. Sprott and T. Leishman in the 19th century, and by W.D. Maxwell in this, have followed a similar course.... Dr. Maxwell's book *An Outline of Christian Worship and Concerning Worship* clearly show that Dr. Maxwell and his school disapprove of the order of public worship which is common in Scotland today."

358) *Id.*, pp. 16,19,20,21f. Just consider the following Quasi-Baptistic and clearly Anti-Calvinistic statements in the so-called *Reformed Book of Common Order*. "Do you present this child to be baptised, earnestly desiring that in His own appointed time the Holy Spirit will[!] effectually work in this child's life all that is meant and signified by Christian baptism?" "Although these promises are not fulfilled in infants at the moment at which baptism is ministered, the Lord Jesus will[!] effectually work...in the hearts of His chosen...in His appointed time." "May it please Thee...to receive into the number of Thy children this infant.... Grant that this child, in thine own appointed time, may be[!] born again...." "Grant that...he may, in time to come, truly...enter Thy kingdom by faith..., and his name be found in the Lamb's book of life."

359) *Ib.* pp. 23f. Even here, the word "truly" is redundant and betrays an over-reaction against baptismal regenerationism. For baptism is truly a sign and a seal of ingrafting into Christ's Church Visible by the righteousness of faith in Christ as such, even if the baptizee never exercises such faith in Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. For circumcision bore that character even to the reprobate Esau, See Romans 4:11-14 & 9:4-16!

360) *Ib.* p. 19. 361) *Ib.* p. 17.

362) J.A. Heyns: *Dogmatics*, D.R.C. Booksellers, Pretoria, 1978, pp. 337-40 & 344.

363) J.M. Boice: *God and History*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove Ill., 1981, pp. 101f.

364) H. Hanko: *We and Our Children: The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, Reformed Free Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1981, pp. 55f.

- 365) W.A. Mackay: *Immersion and Immersionists*, American Presbyterian Press, Columbus N.J., pg. 71 sect, VIII.
- 366) B. Snapp: *An Interview with Dr. R.J. Rushdoony*, in *The Presbyterian Witness*, Cedar Bluff, Va., Feb. 1991, pp. 10 & 14f.
- 367) F.N. Lee: *The Biblical Theory of Christian Education*, Shelton College Press, Cape May N.J., 1966, pp. 5f.
- 368) F.N. Lee: *The Salvation of Early-dying Infants*, in D.R.C. Theological Journal, Stellenbosch, March 1971 pp. 103,114, and nn. 5, 113
- 369) F.N. Lee: *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!*, D.R.C. Pubs., Capetown, 1971, pp. 10f.
- 370) F.N. Lee: *What About Baptism?*, Scottish Reformed Fellowship, 1976, pp. 9f.
- 371) F.N. Lee: *Effective Evangelism*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1980, pp. 11 & 23. See too his *All Wet Baptism Is All Wet!*, Counsel of Chalcedon, Atlanta, March 1981.
- 372) F.N. Lee: *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?*, Jesus Lives, Australia, 1981, pp. 1 & 4.
- 373) F.N. Lee: *Revealed to Babies!*, Commonwealth Pub., Rowlett Tx., 1986, pp. 3f,6,14,18.
- 374) F.N. Lee: *Daily Family Worship*, D.Min. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1987, p. 65. See too his *Sprinkling is Scriptural!* In *The Presbyterian*, Bristol, 1990.
- 375) F.N. Lee: *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!*, M.Div. manuscript, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1990, pp. 134.
- 376) F.N. Lee's *Rebaptism Impossible!*, S.T.D. manuscript, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1990, II, pp. 498f.
- 377) F.N. Lee's *Introduction* to ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* Committee on Training for the Ministry of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, [Brisbane, Australia,] 1991, p. ii.
- 378) F.N. Lee's *Revival and Daily Family Worship*, in ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!*, p. 30.
- 379) F.N. Lee's *Catechizing Toward Revival*, in ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!*, p. 39.
- 380) C. Coleburn: *Scriptural, Confessional and Historical References re the Regeneration of Children, and their Status before the Lord and in the Church*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 1.
- 381) *Ib.* p. 36. 382) *Ib.*, p. 37.