

A Defense of Infant Baptism

In Answer to a Letter (here recited) from an Anti-Paedo-baptist

By

John Wallis

Doctor of Divinity

and professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford

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Changes made to this edition do not affect the overall language of the document, nor do they change the writer's intention. Spelling, grammar and formatting changes have been made, and modernized wording is used in specific cases to help today's reader more fully grasp the intention of the author.

Note from the Original Publisher:

This letter in defense of Infant-Baptism was written a while ago, and has recently fallen into my hands. Some people recommended it to me who knew about it and thought it was a help to the issue at hand. I thought it would be a good idea to publish it for the benefit of others (with the Author's permission). I have omitted the name of the person who wrote the original letter to Dr. Wallis because I do not know whether or not he would have been willing to have it made public.

A Letter from an Anti-Paedo-baptist to Dr. Wallis

Reverend Sir,

I have read the first part of your discourse concerning the *Christian Sabbath*, and liked it so much that I was very eager to get the second part. In reading it I had to admire at the large measure of understanding that the Lord, out of his goodness, has been pleased to bestow upon you. This is even above many other pious and learned men that have formerly written a work on the Sabbath, and disputed the error of the Jewish Sabbath. Others have attempted to dispute it with so much weakness that the Anti-Sabbatarians and Saturday Sabbatarians have been greatly encouraged in their error. And coming to page 91, to your words there, "You would have had so much modesty, as to think, the mistake may possibly be on your side, rather, than on the whole body of Christians (some very few excepted) who religiously observe the Lord's Day." I reflected on my own life, and am persuaded, that believer's infants are not to be baptized in their infancy, contrary to the opinion of many learned Paedo-Baptists in Christendom. This is actually the opinion of all Christians generally speaking, and it made me to think that the mistake might possibly be on my side, rather than on the body of Christians (only a few excepted) who conscientiously maintain infant-baptism. And I was thinking about you, worthy Sir, by your church affiliation, to maintain Paedo-Baptism. In this I decided to take courage and boldness and write to you to understand your grounds from Scripture on which your conscience is satisfied on this point.

The main reason which satisfies my conscience against Paedo-Baptism is because I cannot find anywhere in Scripture, either in expressed terms, or by any natural or necessary consequence, that it is the will of God - that believer's infants are to be baptized in their infancy. I cannot find any precept to baptize them, or that John the Baptist, or Christ, or His disciples (that appears) ever baptized any of them.

I am very familiar with what Dr. Hammond, Dr. Lightfoot, and the Athenian Society presume (as to an institution) from a custom among the Jews; of their baptizing the infants of proselytes, *as if* Christ out of condescension to the Jew, to win them, included infants in His precept of baptizing all Nations, children being a part of them. But I cannot find in Holy Writ any kind of custom recorded, or that it had a Divine institution. And if those writings from which they would prove, that there was such a custom in our Savior's time amongst them, were of undoubted authority. I cannot see any reason to conclude that Christ would institute Infant-Baptism to gratify infidel Jews, who were the least part of all Nations (if intended thereby Nations). John's baptism was from Heaven, and was such a unique thing that the Jews, in John 1:25, wondered at it, and asked him, "Why baptize thou then, if," etc. [C.C. fails to quote the context and misuses this verse which should be plain. C.M.M.] So the baptism Christ instituted was not from any Jewish tradition, or rudiment of the Jewish world, but from Heaven, and differing from any Jewish baptism. But I believe that John the Baptist and our Lord first made disciples, and then they baptized those disciples. This I think is plain from John 4:1. But I cannot find, that they also baptized the children of those disciples, as if they had been the children of new proselytes. As our Lord did this among the Jews, by his Apostles, so He also did by them among the Nations, and I cannot find anywhere in Scripture that Believing Gentiles were counted and called proselytes because they were Christians, and that their children were baptized for that reason. Dr. Wallis doubtless can certify that point I have made whether or not it was a custom among the Jews and other Nations, for great masters to initiate their disciples by baptism. And if this were so, there would be more probability that Christ instituted baptism from that custom, if from any. If they did not baptize the children of those disciples too, until they became His disciples, so the children of the disciples of Christ, the great Prophet of God, and our Master, are not to be baptized, until themselves also become disciples. "Go ye, and teach all Nations," is explained, Mark 16:15. "Go ye into All the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature;" and so this point is understood in this way by several of the early

church Fathers. And by baptizing them, viz. all Nations, it is not necessary to understand it to mean baptizing all persons absolutely. We have the words [all Nations] in other Texts of Scripture, where they do not mean all persons absolutely, but of a capable condition, as *Adorate eum omnes gentes, & Psallite Deo omnes Nationes*, etc. And if Baptism was the way of discipling persons, as some would have it, then the Apostles should not have required them to have faith and repentance, as previous dispositions and qualifications for Baptism, but rather have exhorted them to be baptized, in order that afterwards they would be taught faith and repentance, with other things commanded by Christ to his Apostles. But as it plainly appears from other Scriptures, that our Savior here excludes those Persons of all Nations from being baptized that are not qualified for it, i.e. that they have not yet become disciples, or repenting believers, those capable of faith and repentance. So it does not appear to me, that infant disciples are here included, because they cannot be qualified or capable as disciples should be.

In Colossians 2 the Apostle tells Gentile believers that they were complete in Christ, seeing they were circumcised in Him by His circumcision, and buried and raised with Him in Baptism, etc. From this some will assert that perhaps he meant circumcision came in the room of baptism, (Note from the original publisher: Perhaps he meant to say, *baptism came in the room of circumcision*.) and consequently that infants are to be baptized, as before they were to be circumcised, which I cannot see how this is true in any way. The Apostles did not ever plead anything like this against the Christian Jews that were zealous for circumcision. John, and Christ by his Apostles, administered baptism among the Jews, while circumcision was still a duty to the Jews and their children. [Which is an interesting point to me that a Baptist would concede to infant inclusion in the covenant in the New Testament, where most vigorously deny this, else they overthrow their whole position. C.M.M.] I grant, that it may be proved from hence, that circumcision was a figure of the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, but not that circumcision prefigured baptism. If it could be proved from here, there does not necessarily follow a necessity of observing this "Circumstance of Age," any more than many other circumstances of the type, as that of the eighth day, of the male sex only, etc. But the analogy will hold this more properly. As infants in the latter were circumcised, so spiritual infants or babes in Christ, which have become like one of these little ones, shall be baptized. Therefore that argument from the Circumstance of Age, which is just a mere conjecture, proves nothing.

The argument that is taken from the action of Christ's blessing the infants does not prove to me that it is the Will of God that infants are to be Baptized. Rather the contrary is proven. We do know everything about that situation, except that Christ dismissed them without baptism.

As for that saying of Christ, *Except a man be born again*, etc. this no more infers a necessity of Infant Baptism than other phrases in other places do. For instance, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man*, etc. does not infer a necessity of their partaking at the Lord's Table. The Gospel speaks to people who can understand what is being said, and it is to them that the Gospel ties to baptism for their salvation, and the baptism which saves them. This is the answer of a good conscience towards God in their obedience to what the Gospel requires which infants are incapable to perform in any way. And for the salvation of infants, God is able still to bestow saving mercies upon infants now, immediately, as He did before the institution of circumcision or baptism. Even as it is in the case of faith, He that does not believe will be damned. Now, because children are no more able to give assent to the Gospel, than to dissent from it, shall we from this infer their damnation? And if the lack of faith does not damn them until they are capable of faith, then how much more the lack of Baptism will not damn them, until then, and may therefore be rationally deferred from the act until they are able to profess true faith?

As to the Promise of the Holy Ghost to the Jew *and their children*, I cannot understand it except conditionally, viz. that it is to them, *if* they should repent and be baptized, (according to Peter's exhortation to them,) and also to their sons and daughters, of the same capacity to receive the

Holy Spirit's effects on their natural faculties, upon their repentance and obedience of faith. For, as the word *children* in Scripture, does not always mean *infants*, or else it would follow, that there were no adult persons in all Israel. So I do not see any necessity to take it in this instance of infants.

As for the holiness of the children of a believer, spoken of in 1 Corinthians 7:14 (whatever that holiness is) it does not necessarily prove that infants of believers are *for that reason* to be baptized, than that the holiness of the unbelieving parent spoken of in the same passage should be, as an infidel, also baptized. For, that holiness said of the children is given to them from their believing parent, as it is to the unbelieving parent, and not from the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And where we look for an Apostolical precedent or sanction on this practice, there is one that some people pretend from baptizing Stephanas' household. But this is a bare conjecture. Could we say, first, that there were little babes in the family, and secondly, that they were baptized? It is said of the Ruler at Capernaum, that he believed, and his entire house. It does not follow from this though that there were infants in his house, and that they believed as he believed. One seems just as probable as the other.

Now, good Sir, I cannot find any certainty, demonstration or probability in these arguments that are usually brought from Scripture for Infant-Baptism. If you can produce any arguments that carry more weight and demonstration in them for what you believe to be the truth in this matter, and also what you believe to be in error here, then I earnestly and humbly entreat you, for my soul's sake to help me. It is your Christian duty and conscience bound to God to be so good as to impart them to me, so that I might not be in error any longer, and may come to know the truth. If you do this for me you will help, not only my spiritual well being, but also my temporal benefit. Please oblige me in this Reverend Sir.

Your very Humble,
And Affectionate Servant,
C.C.

London, February 25, 1696

PS: Pray Sir, will you be pleased to supply me with some good thoughts, and to direct your letter for me to be left with Mr.----- at the ----- in St. Paul's Churchyard, and there I will call for it, three weeks from now, and pay for it.

This letter is to be sent to the Reverend John Wallis, D.D. and Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford.

An Answer to the Foregoing Letter
Oxford, February 28, 1696

Sir,

I received last night, from someone I do not even know, a letter (concerning Infant-Baptism) dated February 25, and Signed "C.C." Whether this is a real name or a made-up name, I am not certain. But guess it to be the latter because I do not remember that I have ever heard of any man by the name of "C.C."

And, as I do not know where this letter came from, so I also do not know how qualified you are in matters of religion. I am not sure whether you have a modest desire to be informed, or a captious humor to quarrel or cavil at a received truth, as being prepossessed with a prejudice to the contrary. If it is the latter with you, I will answer as the Apostle does in such a case, "If any man list to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor the churches of God." And this next particular Scripture seems to me to be written in such a style, not to gratify the nicely captious, but to give a reasonable satisfaction to such as are modesty willing to be taught. *If any man will do his will he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God. And, the meek he will teach his way.* And I do not find that Christ did this though He was certainly fit to comply with those who would be curiously inquisitive for a sign from Heaven (though when and in what manner they pleased) to confirm His doctrine. Or, with the Rich Glutton, who wanted to have one sent from the dead to warn his brothers. Jesus though, took His own time and His own way, to satisfy those who were *willing* to be taught. And, in matters of fact, we must content ourselves with a moral certainty, though we do not always have a "Mathematical Demonstration." And if, then, any doubt remains, as to matter of fact, we must content ourselves with such reasonable satisfaction *as God thinks fit to give us, and what is most likely to be true.*

But I am willing to understand the writer in the other sense; as content (without caviling) with a reasonable satisfaction. I believe the letter was written in a manner as to come to a better understanding of Infant-Baptism, and not to quarrel.

And then, as to this question, concerning matter of fact, whether Christ and his Apostles, or the Church in their time, baptized infants. It is clear, on one hand, that we cannot be certain that they did not baptize infants, (there being no intimation to that purpose) and it is much more reasonable to think they did, and to practice accordingly.

I shall parallel this thought with another idea that is like it. In the time of the early church, did women partake of the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and should they now?

Can it be objected that Christ, at first, celebrated it with men only, (the Twelve Apostles) and the Apostle directs, *Let a man* (not woman or child) *examine himself*, (not herself) *and so let him* (not her) *eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* Do we find anywhere, in Scripture, any express mention of women receiving it?

Yet, I am satisfied, regardless of this objection, (and so, I hope you are as well) that they did then, and ought now, to receive it. Why should we allow it? Well, there is no intimation of the contrary, and there seems to be the same reason for the women, as for the men, to benefit from it. Women were baptized (though not *formerly* circumcised) and also ate of the Passover (as we have reason to presume, though I do not remember that it is expressly said so, even though it is expressly said Exodus 12:48, "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.") The words *House* and *Household* being reasonably supposed to include women and children also; and that the whole family is to be reputed as a circumcised family, wherein all the males are circumcised. And, the practice of the church (which is a great presumption) has always been consonant to admit women, as well as men, to the Lord's Table.

And, in many other cases, particular circumstances may be presumed to be supplied from the reasonableness of the thing, and other parallel examples, though they are not distinctly

expressed in the history of the fact; as may be amply showed, if that were necessary.

Now (to apply this to the present example,) we are first to consider what Baptism is. Baptism is *a solemn rite, appointed by Christ, for the solemn admission or incorporation, of the person baptized, into the Christian Church;* (as circumcision was, into that of the Jews;) and, *a consecration or dedication of the person baptized, to the service or worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* And consequently, those who have the right to be admitted, and so covenanted in the church, have the right to the solemn rite of such admission, and dedication. [Wallis is not referring to a kind of “Baptistic” baby dedication, but a “covenanting” principle even present with adults who are baptized. C.M.M.]

Next we are to consider, that the children of Christians now have as much a right to be reputable members of the Christian Church, as the children of Jews were of the Jewish Church. Consequently they are to be solemnly received into it, that is, into God's visible Church, both of them. Both are alike in obligation to be offered or dedicated to the service of the true God.

And it is not reasonable to suppose that God would so often and so emphatically make promises to the righteous, and their seed, if there were not some kind of peculiar preference intended to them beyond those of the wicked, or those that are out of God's Visible Church.

For no more is to be intended than such a conditional promise, *if they repent and believe* – and this is equally true of the children of the most profligate, and of heathens, as of Jews or Christians. Even though this is an important point, I am not going to argue it at this time, but you should consider that what preference belonged to the Jews I think is now common to Christians.

Otherwise, Christ's coming would render the condition of children, worse than before. And particularly, those very children, who in the Jewish Church were members of the visible Church of God, must have ceased to be so when the Christian Church took place. This is contrary to what Christ seems to suggest when He says, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* This intimates a capacity in children of an interest in Heaven hereafter, and in the visible Church here; especially if by Kingdom of Heaven, is meant “the Gospel Church.”

Also we would look at the Apostle when he says, *Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* This implies certain holiness, as to the children of one, though not of both believing Parents, which they would not have if neither of the parents were believers. Which seems to me to be such clear evidence of some relative holiness, or interest in the visible Church, or dedication to the service of God. That argument alone is not easily avoided. (Some also try to use a bit of slight of hand in mentioning bastard children. But it is such a poor argument to me that it bears no weight at all. For, even if both parents were heathens, their child would not be a bastard.)

And it is to be considered, that in all Religions the children are said to be part of the same Religion as the Parents (while under their care), until they are able to manifest some reaction to the religion on their own to the contrary. The child of a Jew is reputed a Jew; of a Christian, a Christian; of a Heathen, a Heathen; of a Papist, a Papist; and so on. Now what belongs to a Church, as a Church, equally belongs to the Jewish and Christian Church, and does not need any new institution at all. And consequently, that of having their children in the visible Church Communion with themselves, and the blessing appertaining to that visible Communion, is what God says when He promises to Abraham, *I will be a God of thee, and of thy Seed.* And this *blessing of Abraham*, has come upon *the Gentiles also.*

And though it is true, that this does not presently entitle them to Heaven (unless their life is an answerable testimony, in the same way as it was with being the Seed of Abraham,) yet it is to be seen as a real Advantage, as putting them into a firmer prospect of Heaven, and in a greater probability of obtaining saving grace, than is out of the Church.

And this advantage of the Jew above the Gentiles which they then had, the Apostle tells us, is much in every way. (Yet you should keep in mind that a believer, though not a Jew, might be

saved by faith; and an unbeliever, though a Jew, would be damned without it.) The advantage that was given to the Jews (as God's visible Church) is now common to the Gentiles also.

So that the right of believer's children, to be within the Church, is not a new institution, (as if we should now look for a distinct institution of infant-Baptism, beside that of Baptism) but is as old as Adam is plain. But the solemn rite of admission into this Church, (to which the child has a right to be admitted) is a new institution, then by circumcision, appointed to Abraham, and now, by baptism, upon a new institution, appointed by Christ.

By being believer's children, they have *Jus ad rem* (*a right to the matter*), and by being baptized, they have *Jus in re* (*a right in the matter*); whatever the privilege is of being within the promise of the visible Church. And so long as, by our fault, we keep them from baptism, we are, so much as we are able, keeping them from the advantage of that covenant, whatever it be for them.

Nor is it only a privilege of the children to be admitted into the visible Church so early, with the benefits appertaining to them, and so dedicated to the service and worship of God. But the duty of parents, and other superiors, is to dedicate them, and (so far as they are able) give them up to God. And do not need to doubt, but that the parent has a natural right over the child of so doing.

And we do not know how soon the effect of such dedication (upon God's acceptance) may operate. Samson, before he was born, was devoted by Manoah to be a Nazarite. And Samuel was, by his mother, vowed before he was born, and after presented while an infant, to the special service of God. Jeremiah is said to be sanctified from his mother's womb, and Paul likewise, and John the Baptist, while yet unborn, and Timothy, from a child.

And we have no reason to doubt, but many children very early, and even before their birth, may have the habits of grace infused into them, by which they are saved, though dying before the years of discretion. What I mean is that God may, by his Grace, so predispose the soul to an aptness for good; as (by our natural corruption) we are supposed to be Habitually inclined to Evil, though it is not yet in a capacity to act in either way.

For as the habits of corruption, which we call Original Sin, are transmitted by propagation, so the habits of Grace, are transmitted by infusion, and may be inherent in the soul, long before (for want of the use of reason) we are in capacity to act either, whether by the rational faculty, or before we are in a capacity to act reasonably.

And we may have encouragement to expect, or hope for, such work from God on the heart of a child, from our early devoting him to God's service. And the proper way, by Christ's appointment, for thus devoting, or offering up people to God, is baptism, into the Name, and to the service of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

I am saddened to say and charge faulty parents, as a just judgment of God, for such neglect, when we see the unbaptized children prove themselves to be lewd and debauched persons. We have reason to fear that this may be an effect of not devoting them to God by baptism, and a neglect of suitable education. For as we find that corruption strikes them early to sin, so through God's blessing His grace may begin to act very early. In light of this we should seriously consider baptizing the children and devoting them to God's service if He would be gracious on them.

And as persons, when they come to age, ought themselves to give up themselves and (as it were) enter into a sacred Covenant with God, (and renew it, from time to time). The parents should do this for them beforehand, (and they ought to do it, so far they are able to give up their children to God, and engage them in such a Covenant with him.)

We know, among ourselves, a child by his guardians, or his parents, may be put into the possession of an estate or will, and engaged to the heritage of that estate and will before he understands what his parents did for him or her. And in such a Covenant we find the Israelites enter into (Deuteronomy 29:10, etc.) in the name of themselves, their wives, and their *little ones*, and even of those then present, and those not present at that day. In the same way we see those mentioned like Joshua, Asa, Jehojada, Josiah, that God should be a God to them, and they a people

to him, God fulfilling His everlasting covenant with His people and their seed. This is the same, by way of substance, which a person of age makes for himself, and the parent for the child in baptism.

And if children are this capable, or their parents for them, of entering into a Covenant with God, why are they not able to receive the seal of this Covenant? And why does some not treat Baptism now as circumcision was before? For the child is passive in both.

And, if capable, you admit it to be a duty for them – that they should do it (make a covenant with God based on faith, or act). For your exception is, that it is to be understood of persons in a capable condition. Now, since infants are capable of being admitted members of God's Visible church, and capable of being dedicated to God's service, I think there is no question as to their acceptance in the business of baptism.

I am aware that some people object, and say with Matthew 28:19, *Go teach all Nations, Baptizing them* etc. and therefore they are first to be taught (which children cannot be) before they are baptized. And others (who put a greater force upon the word *mathateusate*) chose rather to render it, *Go make disciples all Nations, baptizing them* etc. and therefore (say they) they are to be made disciples (by faith and repentance) before they are baptized.

Now I can well enough admit, that *mathateusate* may there be rendered by *make disciples* (and perhaps better than teach) but their inference in the way they understand this from that text is a great mistake. For, *Go make disciples by faith and repentance*, will not be good sense – that is not the way to translate it properly as to its meaning. For faith and repentance are to be works of the persons baptized, not of the Baptizer.

And it is preposterous to think faith and repentance are intended in the word *mathateusate*. For Christ is here speaking to His disciples entrusting them with what they are to do in planting a Christian Church. Not what each respective Christian is to do in a Church that they planted. (For that is to come in after, among the things that are to be *taught*.)

And the words are plainly this, *Go, Disciple all Nations*, (that is, gather disciples of all Nations, or indifferently of any Nation, Jews or Gentiles, all the world everywhere), *Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*.

Or this, (those who are here called disciples, being after called Christians, the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, Acts 11:26.) make Christians of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them----. And, (if we would lay stress upon the order of the words, baptizing is to go before teaching.) the word *mathateusate* (make disciples) is here an imperative verb, or preceptive, and *baptidzaste* and *didaskontes* (baptizing and teaching) are participles, exegetical or declarative, and demonstrate how that precept is to be discharged.

To use an analogy we may contrast this to examples: if the founder of a Free-School should thus give instructions to him that he makes Schoolmaster, *Make Latinists of any parish in London, taking them into the school and there teaching them the Latin tongue*. Or, in the language of the university (to the Governors there) *Make scholars, or learned men, of any county in England, admitting them into the university, or a college, and teaching them what is to be there learned*. Or, in the language of the city (to the Governors, suppose, of a merchant's company) *Make merchants of any country, taking apprentices, and teaching them the trade*, (for *mathatas*, a disciple, signifies the same as a scholar, a learner, an apprentice.)

Would any man now think, that the boy must first be a Latinist, before he may be taken into the school? Or, the academic must be a philosopher, or learned man, before he may be admitted in the university? Or, the citizen a skillful merchant, before he may be bound to a vocation? No, but the quite contrary. So here, he is to be entered a scholar in Christ's school, in order to be further instructed in the Christian religion, according to his capacity. But, whether one dedicates himself as an apprentice (if a man, and at his own disposal) or is assigned an apprentice by his parents or guardians (since he is at their disposal) if a child, this is all the same thing, as to learning a trade.

All this works in the same way whether (before he is put into an apprenticeship) he has a little skill in the trade, or none at all. And so here, whether he is older in years (if not the child of a Christian, or has been before neglected) as to have been taught somewhat of Christianity, or yet an infant, and to know nothing of it. And whether (as in the former case) he offers himself to baptism, or (as in the latter) he is given to it by his parents, he is to be baptized, and to be instructed, each according to the capacity wherein he is. I see no reason, at least why it should be neglected when it may be had sooner, if it is allowed to be a thing desirable, and advantageous.

Now this, for the most part, was the case of the Apostles, when they converted Jews or heathens to the Christian faith. It was not to be expected, that men at age, and at their own disposal, and brought up in another religion, would be willing to declare themselves Christians, and be baptized before they knew somewhat of it. Therefore I would not lay so much stress on the order of words, as if a person unbaptized might not be taught, if capable of it. But when they were so persuaded as to themselves, they did (with themselves) bring in those who were under their power. As Lydia, and all her household, the Jailor, and all his, the household of Stephanas, Cornelius, and all his, and the like, and I suppose, of others.

And to this purpose I understand that of Acts 2, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, whether Jews or Gentiles*, (this being a mixture of many Nations) for the remission of sins, — For the promise is to you, and to your children, (as well as to Abraham, and his children,) and to as many as our Lord shall call, (*and to their children*, for this I suppose to be understood.) For, though I know that the word “children” does not always signify “infants,” yet, if all Peter meant was “adults” and the whole world besides, then there was no need of naming “children,” for his meaning would have been as full without it.

Now it cannot reasonably be supposed that there were no children in some of those houses, (at least it is more likely that there were in *some*, than that there were *none* in any of them) and therefore that children were then baptized, as well as others, especially when there is no intimation to the contrary. And in such examples, where there is a silence in matter of fact, it is reasonable to think, it was so, as was most likely to be, especially when nothing appears to the contrary, and great presumptions of it.

I know there is *sometimes* mention of faith, in order to being baptized, but it is of grown persons. Nor is it always meant of saving faith, and a cordial Conversion, but a profession of faith, or a preserved willingness to be baptized, and declaring themselves Christians. For it is said, Simon himself believed also, and was baptized. This cannot be referring to saving faith, and a real conversion, for we find him afterward in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity. And when so many thousands were baptized in one day, we cannot think they were all singly examined, in order to give (at least a probable) evidence of saving grace. But, their willingness to be baptized was a sufficient evidence of their declaring themselves Christians, or professing Christianity.

And when all Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about Jordan (that is, great multitudes from all those parts,) went out to John the Baptist, and were baptized of him confessing their sins, it cannot be supposed that such multitudes were all singly examined, and made particular confessions of their sins. All of their verbal expressions, and the continual consent of their coming to be baptized, and the concurrent actings of all who came, was an evident declaration of their common sentiments.

And it can hardly be thought that they did not (many of them) bring children with them, since we know they had then an opinion that children were capable of benefits from the benediction of prophets, and extraordinary persons, as appears by their bringing of little children to Christ, (such as to be taken up in His arms) *for him to lay his hands on them and bless them*.

Now if each of these considerations is not singly convictive, yet so many of them together, of which each is highly probable, and when as nothing (so much as probable) appears to the contrary. It seems to me to be such a great evidence (in matter of fact,) that children were then baptized, that I

do not at all doubt, but that we are rather to think, that infants were then baptized, more than we have premise to believe that they were not.

To which we may add, the continual concurrence of the Church's practice, for nearly Sixteen Hundred Years, [Now 2000 years. C.M.M.] which, in matter of fact, is a great evidence.

For I do not know, that in any age of the Church, it was ever so much as questioned, or at all doubted, (but that the children of Christians might be lawfully baptized,) until about 100 years ago (in our grandfathers time) where the Anabaptists in Germany did (amongst many other extravagant notions) begin to cavil at it and deny it. Whereas, in all the former ages of the Church, nearer to the Apostles time, I do not know that any history mentions, that it was ever questioned.

If any "thing" of such daily practice and regularity is at any time, in any part of the Christian Church, questioned or considerably opposed, it could not go unnoticed, and some history book or historian would have taken notice of it; but we have nothing to the contrary.

And, in such an example a constant silence is, to me, a sufficient evidence, that it has been a constant practice (even from the Apostle's time) without any opposition. And, if this is so, no doubt, they also practiced it. And I do not know of anything alleged, with any show of evidence, why we should think anything to the contrary.

I would practically say that if anyone who were not the children of Christians, but converted from Heathenism, have deferred their Baptism too long, I think they were faulty in so doing.

In conclusion, if anyone will obstinately think that Paul and Peter did not each have two hands, and on each hand five fingers, because it is nowhere written in Scripture (that I know of), and that we are rather to think that they did not have hands and fingers rather than to accept that they did, I cannot accept that at all.

These are my thoughts, hastily drawn up, and I pray to God that they may (through His blessing) be essential to your satisfaction.

Yours,
John Wallis

For Mr. C.C. to be left with Mr. ----- at the ----- in Saint Paul's Churchyard, till it be called for.