

MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT INFANT-BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT OF GOD

Dear brother Pickett and all those concerned, (Chateau, Montana USA, letter wrote Oct. 2008)

It was and it is not my intention to strive with you about your Baptist-opinion on baptism, but to admonish you as my brother in the love of Christ as long as you accept this admonition. **Your heavy accusation against baptism of children needs of course a biblical correction and a serious admonition.** I have and I feel the duty to tell you what the Holy Word of God teaches us about the doctrine of baptism and the Word of God is the end of all opposition of men. I am wondering if you still know what you have preached AGAINST religious traditions on Sunday (Oct. 28), because you yourself are more imprisoned in your own Baptist-baptism traditions than you think.

I have never condemned the (strict)Baptists in their opinion about baptism, because true believers are not allowed to condemn each other, but they have to bear burdens of each other and that is the law of Christ. But if you claim that 'baptism of children' is Roman Catholic, then that is a big insinuation against the Scriptural doctrine of baptism and the covenant of God, and also a slandering against all believers who are baptized as a child, like Rev. William Huntington was baptized. Your claim that Huntington was re-baptized as an adult-believer is an invention. For a moment Huntington has considered to become a Baptist, because he was offered a bigger salary if he would become a Baptist-minister. But, when he bowed his knees before God about this matter, he heard a voice asking him: "*Huntington, why do you want to be a baptist-minister?*" His answer was: "*To make 400 pounds a year!*" Huntington was convinced of his foolishness and therefore he ignored the call of the Baptists.

However, in many ways Huntington's doctrine was closer to the Reformation and more based on the Scripture than the doctrine of the (strict)Baptists, even though, the Strict-Baptists have had many God-fearing church-members and ministers. But (excuse me) the reformers (Luther and Calvin), and later on, especially dr. H.F. Kohlbrugge (Dutch minister and theologian in Elberfeld, Germany), his son-in-law, dr. E. Böhl (theological professor in Vienna) and again: the illiterate Rev. W. Huntington, as well-taught by God theologians, weigh a couple pounds heavier than most Puritan- and (strict)Baptist-ministers. (Philpot's testimony about Huntington's superior theological knowledge is also very clear). Huntington's opinion about (adult) underwater-baptism is very biblical, when he says: "*Baptism with the Holy Spirit is indispensable for salvation, but baptism with water along with that is not important, even if you were to drag someone through the water from Dover to Calais, it wouldn't help him.*"

(Out of: "The life of William Huntington" by Thomas Wright).

On our way home, I felt that the Lord laid a burden on my heart, because of your accusation against infant-baptism, in the framework of children of the covenant. I am sure that you need a real repentance before the Lord, your congregation and us about your rude accusation. I am sure that you don't realize what you have said about this matter. Again, I do not have a strive against flesh, the Lord is my Witness, but woe unto me if I keep my mouth shut about this matter. Not me, not you, but only the truth of the Gospel and for the sake of God's holy Name is that which counts. In a certain sense I write this letter in the framework of Galatians 2 -conflict between Paul and Peter in Antioch- because Peter made a separation between true believers by sitting down with the Jewish Christians and with his back to the heathen Christians. Peter's behaviour was legalistic and against the truth of the Gospel. Then Paul stood up and reprimanded Peter in the presence of everyone, so that everybody feared. I do the same with you, because your behaviour in the framework of being the church is exactly the same as Peter's mistake in Antioch. If Paul would not have reprimanded Peter, the First Christian Church would have been separated and also the Body of Christ. In our days not many Christians feel the burden of the (outward) separation of the Body of Christ. Everybody strives for their own church and their own rules, but everywhere there is death in the pot (2 Kings 4:40).

First of all I have to say that all true believers among the Baptists, the Puritans and all the reformed Christians from all times and places have believed and believe in the doctrine of baptism. The holy sacrament of Baptism is commanded by Christ (Matth. 28:19), but because of much ignorance and a lack of experience of faith concerning Gal. 2:19 there can be many misunderstandings in practice about what kind of people must be baptized and also what the right way of baptism must be. Be aware that you are mixing adult-baptism in a mission-situation with baptism in the framework of the covenant. The last mentioned baptism infants are involved as children of the covenant. **Secondly** I have to say that **DIFFERENCES IN JUDGMENT ABOUT WATER BAPTISM CANNOT BE A BAR TO HAVE SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH OTHER TRUE BELIEVERS.** And that is also what John Bunyan -a real converted Baptist(!) and a called minister- teaches in his works.

(Refer to the link: http://www.bunyanministries.org/works/vol2/37_water_baptism_no_bar_to_communion.pdf).

If you are familiar with the works of John Bunyan, then you will know that Bunyan condemns all Baptists who refuse to have communion of Saints (at the Lord's Supper) with other true believers who are baptized as a child, or even when they are not baptized. And he is right, because in the first place the Body of Christ can never be separated. And secondly, faith can never be a foundation for baptism. And I have to tell you that Baptists failed and still fail in understanding the Scripture about the doctrine of baptism. They make a foundation of their faith to be baptized. That is a harsh mistake, because the foundation of baptism is not my faith, but the covenant of God. Baptism is a requirement of the covenant, not a medal of faith. There is not a church on earth that exists with only Gods' people. If you claim to be such a church, you are on a slippery way, because then you make yourself a legalistic sect.

During our conversation on Sunday (Oct. 28) I couldn't help that I felt a strong feeling that you became something with your baptism ideas and that your strict-Baptist church is the only right one, but the Holy Spirit says in Galatians 6:3: *"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."* I feel a strong spiritual bond with some strict-Baptist ministers, Philpot, Warburton, Gadsby, etc., and the differences about the way of baptism has never been a stumbling block to acknowledge them as my brothers in Christ. But let me say that Philpot was not so strong in the doctrine of justification. Gadsby corrected Philpot in that and brothers in Christ have the duty to do so. However, the Baptists have never been the most truthful theologians in theological sense. For example, dr. H.F. Kohlbrugge has revealed many more hidden secrets of the divine Truth, also in the framework of the experiences of faith. There are not so many ministers and children of God who know a second conversion by experience (Luk 22:32).

Note: The King-James translation of Luk. 22:32 is wrong and not according to the original Greek language. 'Epi'stropho' means 'conversion of conversion' "Turn again!" To whom? To the legal Husband, Christ! This means a second conversion.

After having denied his Master, Peter lost his conversion in the chamber of Caiaphas when he looked in the eternal eyes of love of Jesus. When Peter died to his conversion, then Jesus became his Conversion. **The fulfillment of Luke 22:32!**

However, I have to tell you that you did not yet die to the tradition of Strict-Baptism. One of the reasons is that there must be a lack of understanding the law. The law does not require faith, not baptism, but complete works. So, we cannot appear before the Lord with a baptism-opinion, but in CHRIST only. God's people are died in the death of Christ. That means that there is no movement that people of God have to do as an addition to salvation. The Baptists are doing something with their baptism. They are not ungodly anymore, who are justified by faith alone, but 'holy believers' who have been baptized. The result of that attitude is ecclesiastical sectarianism in being a church. You have some 'special' baptized members in the church and the rest of the church-goers are second hand Christians, or even heathen. You won't find that kind of church in the Bible. The church is not first. Even God's people are not first. The covenant of God is first, a Triune God is the First. God has made His covenant in the eternity and the two Parties were the Father and the Son. And everyone who is born in the framework of the covenant must be baptized, because God deals by means of His servants only in the framework of the covenant. There is written: *"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. 2:15-16.*

How can this two-fold service take place if there are only converted members in the church? Don't you see? Only the Lord's Supper is intended for God's people, but was the tax collector in the back of the church a member of the church, or not? Was Judas Iscariot a member of the church, or not? Was Demas a member of the church, or not? Was Simon the sorcerer a member of the church, or not? Were Ananias and Sapphira his wife members of the church, or not? Peter used the key of discipline to Simon the sorcerer and also to Ananias and Sapphira, BECAUSE THEY WERE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH! The biblical discipline in the church is intended for all church members, converted or not. Why? Because the Old- AND the New-testament church are revealed in the framework of the covenant.

Unfortunately, you are very easy in condemning other churches WITHOUT ANY investigation in the framework of the Scripture. I know, there is a lot of false religion in the reformed churches (in the Baptist churches too), but if you are judging other churches and believers only based on what you **have heard** about them, than you are opposing the command: *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor", Ex. 20:16.* And worse, you are not being a brother in love anymore. We have to judge a righteous judgment, brother, to start with ourselves. In that framework we have to judge false doctrines, but only after a thorough investigation, based on the Word of God and

never on what we have heard about it ourselves, or based on human church rules. Or even on what we sometimes read about it. Who is the author? You said that Calvin was responsible for the killing of many Anabaptists, but the history books are not the Bible. I have warned you about history books already. Did you read Calvin's own writings about this? Did you read his Institution? I'm not saying that I agree with all of the doctrine of Calvin, because he is concentrated too much on the doctrine of regeneration at the expense of the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly. However, I never had the intention to accuse Calvin based on history books. That you do that, has something to say about your intention brother.....

To the point

Sometimes it sounds sharp what I am writing, but I am writing in love and truth. However, the truth can be sharp, no it is: *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart", Hebr. 4:12.*

Your argument that we have no right to sit down at the table of another family as long as they have not invited us, has nothing to do with the Body of Christ and the holy communion of the members of that Body. The law of nature can never be equalized with the divine law of faith, because in nature we have different bodies, but in spiritual life there is only ONE Body with only ONE Head, namely Christ. Even an allegorical and sometimes also a wrong literal way of exegesis of the doctrine of the Scripture has nothing to do with the divine opinion of the Holy Spirit. Many texts of the Bible are meant literally, but also many texts are meant spiritually. Your knowledge about baptism is because of your literal understanding of the biblical doctrine, unfortunately, it is a lacking knowledge.

And if you think that every church (separation) is allowed to have its own rules and rights, then I have to say that you do not have a biblical understanding about the institutions of Christ, the Body of Christ and His congregation. And even worse, then you have no spiritual knowledge about the Holy unity of the Church of Christ on earth and in heaven. *"For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ", 1 Cor. 12:12.*

Government, discipline, covenant and baptism

There must be a government in the church by office-bearers (elders, deacons and ministers) ministers called by God and installed by shaking the right hand of fellowship of true believers in the congregation of Christ (Gal. 2:9). There are two kinds of elders, namely 'preaching and teaching elders' and elders who govern the church by means of pastoral visits, by the keys of discipline and to check the preaching based on the Word of God. There are sometimes some extra-ordinary exceptions (for example: Huntington never had a consistory), but that can never be a ticket to govern the church in any way people feel like.

When we are talking about the discipline of the congregation of Christ, there are two keys. The discipline of the Word and the discipline of the Christian ban. But nobody is allowed to misuse those keys because of so many different church-separations and different church rules. Remember, there is only One Holy Catholic Church, one LORD, one faith, one baptism, and all the true children of God, scattered around the World, belong to that Church, the Body of Christ, and they are the living members of that Body, of which Christ is the divine Head. But there are also dead and unfruitful branches (members) of the church. Listen to the holy Word of God: *"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit", John 15:2.* How is it possible that some branches are cut off, if all the members of the church have to be God's people? If you have spiritual ears, you hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the congregation of Christ.

So, there is no church on earth without hypocrites. Even among the twelve disciples there was a Judas. And the true disciples asked Jesus: *"Am I it, Lord?"* And again, in the first Christian Church, there was an Ananias and a Sapphira. Remember, except the apostles of Christ in doctrine, the Church is never infallible in knowledge and judgment. But the Strict-Baptists are claiming to be so. However, only the Lord knows every heart and every intention. Of course, we have to bow under the authority of the Holy Scripture. But let us never forget that the most exercised child of God knows for a part and prophesies for a part (1 Cor. 13:9). That does not mean that the Word of God is unclear about the doctrine of salvation and holy baptism. If we are born in line of our forefather believers and their generations, our children are children of the covenant and covenant children must be baptized. *"And God said to Abraham: "Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations", Gen. 17:9.* Remember, Abraham is called the father of all believers, among Jews AND heathen, until the last elected child

of God is saved in time by true faith. True faith goes further than the Old Testament, right? So, circumcision was only intended to the Old Testament Jewish people, because they all lived in the framework of the unfulfilled covenant with Moses as mediator. But Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant (Hebr. 7:22).

That does not mean that all the children of the covenant are heir to Christ. The Bible teaches us about inward and outward children of the covenant, also concerning adults. For example: Jacob and Esau, they were both children of the covenant, but only Jacob was the heir to Christ. Esau was not a heathen, nevertheless he was hated by the Lord and He has loved Jacob. All the Jewish male-children were circumcised, because all of them were children of the covenant. I can give you more biblical examples: the rich man in hell calls Abraham "father" and Abraham calls the rich man "son", because he was a covenant child, however without an inward calling (Luk. 16:24-25). Christian children and adults are both 'children of the covenant', and they must receive the sign of that covenant as a little child, like as in the Old testament. No, baptism is not instead of circumcision, because circumcision belonged only to the O.T.-Jews. Baptism belongs to GOD for His Name and His covenant sake and He requires that all the children who have been born in the framework of the covenant must be baptized. In the first Christian Church, complete households have been baptized by the apostles.

Quest.: Why are the little children not so clearly mentioned to be baptized in the Bible?

Answer: In the Old Testament, girls and women were involved in the male-members and they were not circumcised and it is also impossible. In the New Testament, children are not so clearly mentioned by name concerning baptism, but they are involved by the head of the family. In the Old Testament there was an order: God the Head of Christ, Christ the Head of man and the man the head of the woman and their children. The man stood before God with a covered head. Many times his children are not mentioned, but they were surely involved, right? Christ is still the Head of man and the man is still the head of the woman. Now, in the New Testament the woman must cover her head, because the marriage of man and woman is a real image of Christ and His Church. The woman is not allowed to vote in the church and she may not speak in the congregation (1 Tim. 2), because the divine order is still there: God the Head of Christ, Christ the Head of man and the man the head of the woman. And do you claim that Christ, the Head of His Body is without little children who don't carry the sign of His covenant? The devil believes it, but he trembles. Why? The devil believes the Scripture, that means the heaven is full of little children. *"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den", Is. 11:8.* And in Psalms 127:3 we read: *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is his reward."* And there is written in Matth. 21:15-16: *"But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased and said unto Him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"*

Now I have something more to tell you what the Holy Scripture is teaching us about the covenant. The New Testament does not speak of another covenant in contrary to the Old Testament, because there is only ONE covenant of grace which God has made with His Son in the eternity and which He has established with Abraham, the father of all believers, AND HIS SEED, both among Jews and heathen (Gen. 22:18 - Gal. 3:8 - Gal. 3:14). God accepts no angels, but the Seed of Abraham, which is Christ and also all those who are in Christ by true faith. I will show you the proof that the seed of Abraham does not mean many seeds, but ONE, namely Christ. *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ", Gal. 3:16.* What does this mean? The Seed is Christ and He is the Head and the Mediator of the Covenant of grace. And He still requires that all the children of the covenant, -outwardly and inwardly- must be baptized, to carry the sign of that covenant. *"One Lord, one faith, one baptism", Ef 4:5.*

Baptism with water is an expression of the visible Gospel and an image if the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus. Underwater baptism adventures are not necessary, because one drop of the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sins. That means that sprinkling baptism water points to the sprinkling of the blood by the high priest on the mercy seat. That sprinkling act points to the precious blood of Jesus on the cross. And only under the cross as a hell-deserving sinner, you can get one drop of Jesus' blood to be saved for ever. Without blood, without an application of the blood of Christ, there is no forgiveness. But one drop of His precious blood is enough for ever. One kiss from Jesus' mouth is enough for eternal salvation. One blessing with His hands is enough to be blessed for ever. But remember, there are two kinds of covenant-children: outward and inward members. Christ has given us a clear image of the members of the Christian church: Five wise and five foolish virgins. All the virgins belong to the covenant, five in a real sense and five in an outward sense. In the framework of the covenant God makes His election effective in the inward calling of some dead sinners to be alive in Christ. We have no say in this! By

baptizing adult believers only, you are working with God's election AND you deny the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly. Not baptism with water counts to be a living member of the body of Christ, but only the baptism with the Holy Spirit by faith and His witness in our spirit that we are children of God.

Baptists come to God with their faith to be baptized, but the Bible teaches us the very opposite. God comes with His covenant to us, to be our God, for us and our seed. That we do not believe God, is one of the main reasons that we are lost, but the Word of God is saying in Genesis 17:7: *"And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."* That is the same in the New Testament. Hear Peter in Acts 2:39: *"For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."*

Do you hear it? **"...TO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN.....AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL."**

In the framework of the covenant God calls His elected ones with an inward calling and when that happens, then they are regenerated, justified and sanctified by true faith. Spiritual life starts with the revelation of Christ by His Word and Spirit in the forgiveness of all our sins. Do the others remain uncalled? NO, the content of the calling remains the same for outwardly and inwardly called covenant children. ***"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life", 2 Cor. 2:15-16.***

Now, who is calling? True believers? NO, ONLY GOD! *"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth", Rom. 9:11.*

To whom is He calling? To those who are killed to the law through the law, being in the grave of hell! (Gal. 2:19a). Hear the calling of God for totally lost and hell-deserving sinners: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live", John 5:25.*

So, who is acting after His call? True believers? NO! ONLY GOD IN CHRIST! Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6) and only dead people, who are killed by the law, are baptized in the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3). And in the death of our state, in the grave of our sins, Christ was there in my grave and in my death, but eternal wonder: He has killed the death, the sin and the grave of me and for me. He stood in my place as a curse for God and He was cursed and condemned by the law instead of me. *"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification", Rom. 4:25.* How come? Because He loved His people from eternity and Christ was willing to obey and to fulfill the requirements of His Father's law and sacrificed His own Life to death to glorify the honour of God and to reconcile His Father with an unspotted righteousness. Secondly, to save His people from eternal destruction. That is the reason that Christ is the only Head of a better covenant, and He alone. My faith cannot move His covenant, no, His covenant moves me to faith, because in due time He died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). And after justification get at it? No, because Christ is also our Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30).

Again: *"...by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant", Hebr. 7:22.* Yes, better than the covenant of works, because the first Adam failed and we in him, but the second Adam stands for ever and we in Him only by true faith. And even better of the unfulfilled covenant under the law!

The reason that I tell you these things is because of your misunderstanding of the covenant of grace and the consequences of a misunderstanding of the covenant results in many mistakes concerning church-being, church-government, church membership, holy baptism, discipline concerning the partakers of the Lord's Supper, offer of free grace, etc. etc.

Now we have to come to a closer biblical look about the Holy Baptism. You have said that the baptism of children is Roman Catholic. But that is terribly wrong. The Roman Catholic Church came forth of the first Christian Church and became a false church because the Roman Catholic Church turned the biblical doctrine into a false doctrine, including many idolatries. Also Rome's doctrine about baptism became an idolatry. Any well-thinking Christian human being who considers the Roman Catholic baptism ritual, can make an easy conclusion of Rome's false doctrine. You can check it for yourself. But the idolatry of Rome about baptism (of children) does not mean that there is no biblical baptism of children. I will show you the Scripture. Remember, Rome did not make its own doctrine, NO, NO, Rome has FORGED the APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE into a false doctrine with the Bible in her hands and the Word on her lips, also concerning the Holy Baptism. It was not Rome that started with baptism of children, oh no, the baptism of children took place in the New Testament already in the First Christian Church, started at the day of Pentecost. Also the circumcised Jewish believers have been baptized, because Christ has completely fulfilled the law, also the ceremonial law concerning circumcision. Circumcision as a sign of the covenant was bloody, because Christ had to come yet. But baptism is un-bloody, because Christ is crucified already. Christ was

circumcised as a Child, because He had to fulfill the law and had to undergo the requirements of the law. But as our Finisher of faith He was baptized to finish our faith in eternal salvation, NOT FOR HIMSELF, BUT IN OUR PLACE (Matth. 3:15). What does it mean? The baptism of Christ was deputy. The (strict) Baptists understand the baptism of Christ as being an example. But Christ has not been baptized as an example, oh NO, but instead of His people as our Surety. *"By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better covenant", Hebr. 7:22.*

Christ is baptized, for He says to John the Baptist: *"...for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness", Matth. 3:15.* So, the baptism of Christ belongs to the requirements of the law, **"to fulfill all righteousness."**

Using the baptism of Christ as an example for adult-baptism, is pure legalistic, because the baptism of Christ belongs to the fulfillment of the law. Now it must be clear that Christ does not need baptism for Himself. Christ does not need anything for Himself. He is the almighty Son of God, righteous, holy and completely sinless, having all the power and the might in heaven and on earth.

Secondly, it means that baptism becomes legalistic if people count in a two fold sense concerning salvation, namely: 'faith **plus** baptism'. That way of baptism is making the holy sacrament of baptism a legalistic ticket to become a member of the church. Paul teaches the opposite of your wrong understanding of being the CHURCH, when he says: *"Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision [or baptism] by faith and uncircumcision [or non-baptism] through faith", Rom. 3:29-30.*

In the baptism of Christ the whole Church has been baptized. Also in His death the whole elected Church has died. Christ was baptized being a sinner by the imputation of the sin of the first Adam. He didn't need it for Himself, but only to be a Surety for His people, to be a deputy in stead of us.

Further: the baptism of Christ took place when He was an adult. Why? To give a proof that He was a willing Surety for His people to carry away all their sins in His own body and not pushed by another. Besides, Christ did not become a believer before His baptism, but He is the Finisher of our faith from His birth. But He started His official service as Prophet, Priest and King when He was 30 years old, so, first He had to be baptized **to fulfill all righteousness.**

The first baptism with water in the Scripture starts by John the Baptist. He baptized to the baptism of true conversion for those who confess their sins with repentance. However, the baptism of John pointed to Christ Who was to come. *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire", Matth. 3:11.* The final fullness of these words we can find in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit was poured out. But the baptizing with the Holy Spirit happened also by Jesus Himself. *"He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost", John 20:22.* This kind of baptism with the Holy Spirit was necessary for the disciples to preach the Gospel with the authority and anointing of the Spirit and to be inspired by the Holy Spirit (in the fullness at the day of Pentecost) to write the Bible books without any error, by the divine Author, the Holy Spirit Himself.

And that was also the seal after Christ's baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. And later on, on the mountain, the Father pointed to His Son: *"And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Luke 9:35.* We have to hear and obey Him, not our self made church rules. And because Christ was (and still He is) the Surety of His people and anointed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, He, the Son of God, has the right, the might and the power to baptize His people with the Holy Spirit and also to bless the children with the Holy Spirit being regenerated and receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Mark 10:14).

You claimed that the blessing of the children by Christ, when He laid His hands upon their head, was a totally different thing than baptism. But then you don't understand what spiritual baptism is. Remember, what did John the Baptist say? *"He [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire!"* When Christ blesses us with His engraved hands and His divine promises, then we are baptized with the Holy Spirit. That blessing means regeneration, forgiveness of sins, justification, sanctification and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit can only happen when our sins are forgiven. Easter cannot be after Pentecost and not the opposite way either. Easter and Pentecost happens at the same moment, but Easter is first in order and then Pentecost follows at the same time.

Again, when Christ blesses the young children, saying: *"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" Mark 10:14,* those children were regenerated, justified and sanctified in Him and they received also the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

When you decrease the blessing of the Lord Jesus to a lower level than baptism for believers, then you are closer to Rome than you think. Besides, the thought that Christ needs some baptism-water to save His people, is ridiculous. His blessing means baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:16).

By the way, in another sense, Rome also teaches your kind of misunderstanding of baptism in the framework of Mark 16:16: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* Rome claims (like you) that the expression 'is baptized' in the text means baptism with water. Many believers (like you) understand this text literally, but the spiritual meaning has nothing to do with baptism with water.

Again, Rome understands it literally and that is also the reason that because of that false opinion dying babies must be baptized before they die, otherwise they are for ever lost. Rome uses baptism as a part of salvation too. "Without baptism you cannot be saved, because your last sins are not forgiven", Rome says. But that is a terrible accusation against the righteousness of Christ. Not baptism, but only the imputation of the righteousness of Christ we need to appear before God and for our salvation. Mark 16:16 does not mean that baptism is a part of salvation, no, only faith counts, the text says. Why the is baptism mentioned in the first part of the text? Because the baptism with the Holy Spirit is always involved with true faith. You cannot separate faith from a spiritual baptism as the other part of salvation. All the separations between faith and (spiritual) baptism are Roman Catholic. Rome teaches the imputation of the righteousness of Christ as the first part of salvation and the second part as the impartation of the Holy Spirit to be saved. It is blasphemy. That is because of a terrible misunderstanding of the exegeses of Mark 16:16.

Now, do you (still) believe baptism after faith is the second part of salvation? Do you believe in the framework of salvation in the order 'faith PLUS baptism with water'??? That is just Rome's doctrine! Mark 16:16 says: *"...he that believeth and IS baptized shall be saved."* That means that TRUE FAITH is always involved with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. So, that means in the second place that there is a lot of false belief also under very religious PARTAKERS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, but that kind of false believers have never received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, nor the insurance of faith. That is the biblical exegeses and meaning of Mark 16:16.

So, why do you only baptize people with water after they have believed, dear brother? What about the murderer on the cross then? Was he ever baptized with water? But say, was he saved or not? And was he baptized with the Holy Spirit or not? But he has never been baptized with water, right?

To be baptized with water is not a part of salvation, but only a sign of the covenant. Inwardly called people and outwardly called people carry the same sign. But only God's true children are circumcised in their heart and baptized with the Holy Spirit and in the death of Christ.

I tell you one more thing. We, as members of the church of the Reformation, confess Baptism after faith too, but only for converted heathen (Matth. 28:19). When a heathen desires to become a Christian and to be a member of the church, then first he must become a true believer. That happens in the first place on the mission fields and sometimes in the church. But when a male-heathen comes to a true faith in Christ, then he will be baptized and ALSO his entire household (wife and children). Even the unbelieving woman and children are sanctified by the man. *"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy", 1 Cor. 7:14.* Not only in the framework of marriage, but also in the congregation of Christ and therefore all members of the household have to be baptized.

Paul baptized the keeper of the prison (a heathen) after he believed in the Lord Jesus **PLUS all the members of his family**. You can read it in Acts 16:33-34: *"...and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."*

Or would you dare to say that the children of the keeper of the prison were not involved? Do you say that also on your knees in the presence of the Lord? My friend, you have no biblical escape in this.

Your understanding of baptism is because of your literal understanding of the doctrine of baptism, but the doctrine of the Scripture, also the doctrine of baptism we have to understand spiritually. When you remain accusing and condemning baptism of children as being a Roman Catholic act, then you cross the border of the doctrine of Christ like a false prophet, my friend. And that is the reason that I write you this letter. Not to change your mind, that is only God's work, but only for Christ's sake and for the glory of His divine Truth and Name.

You asked me to point to a place in the Bible as a proof for baptism of children, because it is not literally mentioned in the Bible.

Answer: In the first place I ask you the opposite: point me a place where baptism of children is prohibited?! In the second place I have to say again that there are many places in the Bible that women and children are not literally mentioned by their names. For example, when we read the generations of Abraham to Christ in the book of Matthew, chapter 1, you read only the males. Matth. 1:1-4: *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon."*

Where are the women? Are they not involved? Of course! The man is born out of the woman. But the line of biblical generations is mentioned from man to man, because of CHRIST. He is the Son of God, the Seed of Abraham and He, the Word, became FLESH. That means that His Church is involved with and in Him. Christ can never be without Flesh, namely His Church. Are all the members of His Church mentioned by name in the Bible? In a certain sense, yes, but do you know what I am saying? If it was so, the books of the world could not contain the truth and the words of Jesus. *"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen"*, John 21:25.

What I want to say, is, that many times women and children are not mentioned by name in the Bible. For example we can read it in Matthew 14:21: *"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."* And in Matthew 15:38 we read it again: *"And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children."* Were there not women and children attending? Of course, but they are not mentioned and counted. Also, when Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:16: *"...I baptized also the household of Stephanas"*, his wife and his children were involved. But only the name of the man, the head of the family, is mentioned. Also, when Christ is mentioned, His Church is involved. And be sure, many members of the Church of Christ (of the body of Christ) are little children and even a multitude of unborn infants. Christ says to the murmuring Pharisees and Scribes: *"Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"* Matth. 21:16.

What did you say? Little children and unborn babies cannot believe? Friend, don't be so foolish. Don't listen to the devil. Listen to the Holy Word of God in Rev. 19:5: *"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all ye His servants and ye that fear Him, both small and great!"* AND WITHOUT FAITH, NOBODY CAN PLEASE GOD. It is spiritual abortion, my friend, to claim that unborn and little children cannot believe. If you say it like you have said, then faith IS A WORK that only can be done by (grown up) adults. But faith is not a work of men, but a gift of God as an instrument to get free mercy, and a work of the Holy Spirit, also for babies. If you make faith dependent upon adulthood, than faith is a work of men. If you think that the Holy Spirit is not able to give babies real faith, than you are more Roman Catholic than Rome itself.

You said: "It is an exception when an unborn child is regenerated."

I tell you: It is an exception for any person (adult or infants) to be regenerated!

Don't say such foolish things, my brother. The Lord keeps you and everyone responsible for any idle word. I am sure you need true repentance, my friend, about your slandering of believing infants and the baptism of children which happens in the Name of the Father, in the Name of the Son and in the Name of the Holy Ghost.

I have said that not all the covenant-children are children of heir to Christ, because if all the baptized children were saved, then it would be impossible that the Christian unbelievers will be punished with a double punishment of God's covenant-wrath. According to your opinion there is no covenant-wrath, but what about the killing of the millions of Jews in World War II? What did these unconverted covenant-people say in Matthew 27:25? This: *"His blood be on us, and on our children."* God heard that terrible prayer and visited their children with a covenant-wrath in the death of millions of them. You can also see it in different places in the Bible that God punishes people in the framework of the covenant with His covenant-wrath. That covenant-punishment is much more terrible than the punishments which hit the ungodly world.

Finally, I have to say more strongly that your opinion about church membership is contrary to the doctrine of the Lord's covenant. People can become a member of the church after they are baptized as a believer. But what about the other church goers? Do they belong to the heathen in your opinion? If so, do you collect money in the church from heathen then? Do you accept money and/or other gifts from blind and unconverted heathen? Or are they second-hand Christians? Now say, what are they in your opinion?

According to the Scripture there is ONE holy Catholic Church on earth, namely the true people of God. But in the framework of the covenant it is not all Israel what Israel is called. *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be*

ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness", 1 Cor. 10:1-5.

In the Old Testament Church there was no outward separation between converted and unconverted covenant people. And the New Testament Church is build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone (Ef. 2:20). And in that Church there are always hypocrites and foolish but baptized virgins. *"Five of them are wise and five are foolish"*, Christ said. That is what the Lord Jesus says about the revelation of the visible Church. Only the Lord makes the difference. He shuts the door (also by means of the foolishness of the preaching) for the foolish virgins when they are trying to enter in the wedding of the Lamb. The wise virgins have no say in this. God is the Judge of hearts. I am not saying that the church is allowed to invite unconverted people to the Lord 's table, oh no. We have to preach that the Lord's table is only for the true children of God, for the strengthening of their faith. So, faith has to be there. And all those who the Lord has called to preach the Gospel, have the divine calling to preach the distinction between true faith and false faith, also between true doctrine and false doctrine. But nobody can become a member of the covenant of God by baptism. We ARE members (or not) because of the line of our believing generation until the thousandth generation (Psalm 105:8). And that is the reason that we AND our children must be baptized. That has nothing to do with converted or unconverted members of the church, not even with their belief or unbelief, but with the requirements of covenant itself. God requires in the visible framework of His covenant that all the members must be baptized to carry a sign of the covenant to be separated from the world in outward sense. And in spiritual sense the Lord's people are circumcised in their hearts. But the Lord wants a distinction between a baptized people and the ungodly inhabitants of the world. And out of that baptized generation He has elected some people to be a living member of the Body of Christ. And that Body will be increased by His sovereign pleasure, by the conversion among Jews and heathen.

The Body of Christ

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way", 1 Cor 12:13-31.

Dear friend, how can you suffer with those who suffer because of Christ's sake, if you refuse to have communion with other members of the Body of Christ who are baptized as a child? In that case, your church -and all churches that refuse other members of Christ from the Lord's table- are no more than a legalistic sect. Anyone, who separates the Body of Christ between those who are baptized after faith and those who are baptized as a child, even though both members are baptized with the Holy Spirit, are members of a legalistic sect.

Now, I have warned you, brother, be honest for God and people, that I have given you several biblical proofs that your opinion about baptism and to become a church member is contrary to the Word of God and also contrary to the doctrine of Christ discovered by the Reformation, namely the justification of the ungodly. Baptism can never be a proof of true faith and true faith is not a foundation for baptism. The only proof of a true faith is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ in the framework of Gal. 2:19. The justification by God, in the court of conscience of a

hell-deserving sinner, that counts to stand for God. God is a God who justifies the ungodly. But in your opinion baptism is a ticket to be a member of the Church of Christ. But that is a very legalistic doctrine. You cannot please God with faith PLUS baptism with water. That "PLUS" is Roman Catholicism. I have said that the Word is clear about the baptism of converted heathen after faith, but after faith all the members of that household must be baptized and their children's children until the end of the world. Why? Because the promise of the covenant belongs to us and our children and to all that are afar off (Acts 2:39) **as many as the church shall call and baptize... NO! "...as the Lord our God shall call!"** That means with an inward calling to be justified as an ungodly and at the same moment to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. However, faith or no personal faith, our children must be baptized, because the Lord God requires it. He requires from us that we deliver our children in His hands (Mark 10:14) to be called or not, to be saved or lost for ever. God is the Sovereign and what He wants, must happen.

So, we are all members of the church, children of the covenant, **as many as the Lord our God shall call to be heir of Christ.** Inward calling is only up to God and not up to the church. Baptism with water is not an entry code to be a living member of the church, only true faith counts. Faith makes us owners of the inheritance of Christ. *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together", Rom. 8:17.*

However, the visible revelation of God's covenant makes no separation between the members of the church, converted or unconverted, with the exception of the Lord's Supper. Partakers of the Lord's Supper must be true children of God. That has to be preached and if there are members who use the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, the key of the discipline should be applied.

But again, God makes the difference by His sovereign election and an inward calling in the time. He gathers His Church with a capital letter and the church with a small letter has to serve all the members in accordance to the institutions of Christ and the keys of discipline. That biblical doctrine includes the baptism of all the children who are born in the framework of the covenant, otherwise you play games with God's covenant in contrary to the will of God: *"Suffer the little children come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God", Mark 10:14.* How can we bring our children to Christ if we refuse to baptize them?

In that case we will displease God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. And that is the way it works in the Baptist churches, but is that your intention? I cannot believe that. There is much more to say about this matter, but now I have to say: So will it be. May the Lord bless His own Truth for the sake of His glorious Name and for the salvation of our souls and the souls of our children. And He will do that until the end of the world. So, do not forbid them to be baptized, be not a stumbling block for them, because our children are children of the covenant. Only God can claim them and nobody is allowed to separate them (outwardly) from the covenant. And God will establish His covenant with Abraham and his seed (Christ), from child to child until the last generation (Ps. 105). Amen.

GPPB.

Note. I never have got an answer back on this letter of the Strict-baptist-minister and that is a typical fruit of his legalistic biblicism faith

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