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James B. Finley Letters

3-30-1844

Letter from J.M. Stevenson to James B. Finley

J. M. Stevenson

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Troy March 3^d 1844

Dear Father Amory

I have from sickness in my congregation & other causes been prevented thus long from complying with your request - to give an outline of my sermon on Infant Baptism. I can't imagine that it will be of any service to you as I have no doubt it has many defects - Still it is at your service & if it shall contribute the least to the common cause we have or the gratification of a Father I respect so much - I shall be more than satisfied this day even by & respectfully in the bonds of the blessed Gospel I M. Stearns

Questions

Who are fit subjects of Baptism?

Ans. (1st) Believing Adults - Agreed

And (2^d) The children of believing parents - Denied by some

Proof - - - - -

Proposition I Infants were once members of the church & administered by a religious rite

Definition - A visible church
The declaration of God which constitutes the church visible viz - I will be a God to thee & thy seed after thee
Hence Infants were members

Now prove that circumcision is a "religious rite"

Gal. 5=3 Rom 4=11 &c

Proposition II The church under both dispensations the same identical church

Proof (1st) The same covenant exists Gal. 3=17

" (2^d) The prophecies speak of the Gentiles as to be added to their existing church Is. 2=2 & 60=3-5

" (3^d) No Baptist taught the same Matt 3=12

" (4th) Christ also Matt 8=11-12

Proof (5th) In the parable of the vineyard - Matt 21=23-44

" (6th) Compare Eph 5=25 & Heb 9=15

" (7th) Eph 2=14 & 20-22

" 8th Rom 11=17-24

Hence must be the same church

Illustrations - A colony - an empire
A youth - a man
A grand drama &c

Proposition III

Their right to membership was never taken away by God or man

Don't often prove a negative - but can here

Thus - If it was taken away either (1st) Before the Christian Dispensation

or (2^d) When it was introduced

or (3^d) Sometime after

Baptists won't affirm the 1st or 3^d

& we can disprove the 2^d By "the olive tree" "partition wall" &c

Proof 2^d No Law in New Test -

to set aside Church members -
Give them a little Latin

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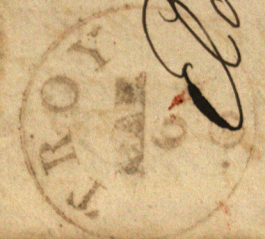
James Amory

Jamesville

Nov

Eden

Single



Recd Mr Stearns on Infant Baptism

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"Manente natione, ipsa Lex manet"
The reason of the Law remaining the
Law itself remains - A true principle

Proof 3^d The Jews in Christ's
time don't seem to have
suspected that infants were
to be excluded - & & &

Conclusion - Infants still have a
right to church membership
But Baptism is the door of
admission - therefore & &

Prove further (as a work of
supererogation I assume)
that Circumcision & Baptism
are but different modes
of administering the same
seal

Proof (1st) The chh being
the same & the Lords Supper
taking the place of Passover
Bap^m must of Circum^c

"(2^d) The covenant of
the chh being the same
what else can be its visible
token?

"(3^d) Cir & Bap. are of
precisely the same import
Rom 2:29

Pastoral Proof (4th) Col 2=11,12
Gal 3=27

Final Conclusion
Infants of believing parents should
be admitted by Baptism

This argument I believe is logical
& conclusive but there ^{are} some
collateral views that may be
stated

1) Small compacts civil &
religious, infants sustain a
certain relation & have certain
rights Adam Noah Abraham
civil Governments & & &

2) Infants are members of
The chh in Heaven
Luke 18:15 Matt 19=13-15 & 21=43

3) The principle of family B^m
was adopted & repeatedly practiced
in the apostolic chh
See Stephanus jailor Lydia & &

4th & finally - the history of
of the chh for 1800 yrs
proves Infant B^m to be of
divine origin

Read Wesley's assertion Doctrinal
tracts page 256 at the bottom &

Let us trace the history back
How stands it now?

Of Peda Baptists there are

150,000,000	Catholics
60,000,000	Greek chh
18,000,000	Episcopal chh - Englan
1,500,000	Pres - in Scotland
300,000	Pres in N.S.
250,000	Congregationalists
1,000,000	Methodists

Without enumerating more we
have here 231 millions of Peda
Baptists & about 1 million Bap^m
is all they claim
or if you throw off 200 millions
as more nominal + no state you
have 31 millions against 1 million

Go back 300 yrs - the time of the
Reformation - almost ^{all} Peda Bap^m

Go back 400 yrs - (the 11th century)
& the Petro brussians alone were
ana-Bap^m - a small body

Go back 600 yrs (5th century)
& there were no Ana Bap^m
See the discussion between Augustine
& Pelagius

Go back 200 yrs (2^d century)
See what Bishop Julius of Africa
said

And the council at Carthage
(656 bishops) says - that we ought
not to deny infants & & &

Go back 68 yrs - about 85
yrs after the death of the Apostles
Quote Origen

Go back a few yrs - (say 10)
(75 after death of Apostles)
Show why Tertullian opposed
Infant B^m

Go back - Justin Martyr
wrote about 50 yrs after the
death of a pastor - & he says
"Every child"

of 60 & 70 yrs of age of both
sexes who were made disciples
to Christ in their childhood
do now continue uncorrupted"
This settles the question & & & &

Dear Father. The answer to
objections - improvement of
the subject & & I suppose
you don't care about & & so
I will not trouble you with
them. I have not reviewed
this subject since you heard
me speak on it & I don't
wot you will find much
capable of improvement

No news - except 5
sickness & two or 3 deaths
my chh recently - a time
of coldness in religion in all
our churches Oh that the
Lord would make haste
come - May you speedily
arise & shine

Sabbath operations go
ahead here

Bro Charles Gellispie
married Miss C. Millikin
6 miles below Troy - a very
pleasant girl

Yrs & I M. Stinson