

after the reformation, several able writers have handled the subject. Besides what was written by *Lecher, Cahen, Cassander, Pagnin*, and other foreigners; several persons of our own nation have distinguished themselves in this controversy—such as *Dr. Hammond, Dr. Featly, Bishop Taylor, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Wills, Mr. Waller, Mr. Wall*, to mention no others. It is very difficult to say any thing new on a subject that has been treated by so many eminent hands. The learned reader will perceive that I have availed myself of those who went before me; tho' I am not indebted to any of them so much as to *Mr. Wall*; and to any person who desires to be well acquainted with this controversy, I would recommend the perusal of his learned, judicious, candid and elaborate *History of Infant Baptism*. However, I have pursued that method which appeared to be most natural and proper, and made such reflections as occurred to me on the different subjects; without confining myself to the order or arguments of any others. Wherever I have quoted any author, I have marked the quotation with inverted commas; and where I have used arguments that others used before, which is unavoidable in writing on a beaten subject, I have given them in my own language. I can truly say I have made use of no argument which did not appear as me convincing in the instance where it is produced; and I have stated the objections of Anabaptists in all their force.

If I had had more leisure, it is probable, this *Essay* had appeared with fewer imperfections. Parochial duties and other avocations gave me constant interruption. Weeks have often passed, since it was begun, without being able to write, or even think any thing about it. I went to it, and departed from it, just as business and duties of another kind would permit me. Notwithstanding the inconveniencies arising hence, I have, so far as was consistent with the limits I had prescribed to myself, omitted nothing that I thought necessary to elucidate the subject, satisfy the reasonable, impartial inquirer after truth, or make the arguments in favour of infant baptism, intelligible to the weakest capacity. And whilst I endeavoured to vindicate the cause of truth, I have treated those who hold the principles here confuted, with tenderness and charity.

Whoever is so adventurous as to appear in print in these times, may expect to pass thro' the ordeal of an angry examination and answer. Should this be my fate, my answerer shall meet no return from me but pity and silence—Christianity forbids me to say—contempt. I know no greater discouragement from replying to a book, than its being filled with abuse and slander—when invective supplies the place of argument, and effrontery that of truth. However—I am open to conviction, and shall willingly follow truth wherever it leads me. If any person should think proper to animadvert on this *Essay*—tho' in Reality, as I said before, it was intended

* *Cassander* was a rising catholic; but a man of great piety, moderation and learning.