

To the Editor.

DEAR SIR,—When our sentiments as a denomination are publicly attacked, you will allow that it is but justice that we should have an opportunity of defending them. On this account I request the insertion, in your *Magazine*, of the following observations. Your's truly,

ALPHA.

A Reply to OMEGA on *Christian Baptism*, in the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW for May.

SIR,—As your article on Baptism touches the subject in all its parts, I cannot, in the small compass of a letter, notice the whole of it, but must confine my remarks to such things as appear to me chiefly objectionable. It is with pleasure I observe that it contains a number of admirable sentiments; and the whole of the first part is worthy of the regard and approbation of the entire Christian Church; but there are others which I think objectionable, and I will state my reasons.

I. I object, Sir, to your branding a Christian and evangelical denomination with a nick-name, a title of reproach, calling them *Anabaptists*, when you know that they are distinguished every where amongst Christian denominations by a name to which they have no objection, and which is borne by no other body of Christians. Pretty much in the same way have the disciples of Christ been branded in all ages by some epithets of reproach, Nazareans, Galileans, Lollards, Cathari, &c. &c.

II. I hold it as particularly dishonourable to the character of Jesus Christ to speak of baptism, one of the public ordinances of his Kingdom, as if it had a *heathenish, superstitious, and traditional origin*.* Your words are, "It may be useful to advert to the history of this rite; for it was not

peculiar to the Christian system. It existed long antecedent to it, and under very different forms of religion, and even of heathenism. Accordingly we find that those who were initiated into the mysteries or certain forms of heathenish superstition, bathed before their initiation in a *particular stream*, where they were supposed to have left their previous errors and defilements, &c. This baptizing of proselytes was common also among the Jews, although it was not enjoined in any part of their law. Thus when a Gentile sought to become a disciple of Moses he received the initiatory rite of baptism, the sprinkling or dipping of water." So in *conformity* to this you would have us believe that John baptized his own disciples; and that our Saviour incorporated it with the ritual of his dispensation, that it might answer a similar intent to that in which it had before been employed, as you suppose. But in one thing, all Christians, for the honour of their Saviour and Legislator, should agree—that he never, like a Roman Catholic Priest, assimilated his divine institutions to either heathen *superstition*, or Jewish *tradition*. For he always marks such human traditions with open disapprobation and censure. What might be found amongst the heathen I know not; but I am satisfied that there was no such thing as *proselyte baptism* prior to the baptism of John and our Saviour. I confess it has been subsequently adopted by the Jews, perhaps in imitation of John's, and marked with antiquity to gain to it reverence and respect. On the negative side of this question appear the very first men in point of historical research, and Rabbinical learning, in the whole world. Amongst these are Dr. Lardner, Dr. Owen, Dr. Jennings, and Dr. Horne, amongst the Pedobaptists of England; and Dr. Gale and Dr. Gill amongst the Baptists. Witsius and Venema with

* Although virtually you deny this in other words in another place.