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Dissertations

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM;

IN WHICH IS SHEWN THAT

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM

IS IN OPPOSITION TO

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

AND THE

GENERAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN ALL AGES.



BY THE LATE

REV. MICAIAH TOWGOOD.



A NEW EDITION,

RECOMMENDED BY SEVERAL MINISTERS.



TO WHICH ARE ADDED

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

OR

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ANTHROPOLOGY

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RECOMMENDATION.

AMONGST the great variety of publications which have appeared on the much controverted subject of Christian Baptism, the following Dissertations from the pen of a learned and respectable divine, are deemed well deserving a general circulation and an attentive perusal.

Instead of employing a method too common in the present days, and which, on controverted points, is liable to great objections, *viz.* presenting the subject in the form of a dialogue, in which the author creates and manages the leading characters in the drama at his own pleasure, and doubtless renders them subservient to his own purposes; Mr. Towgood makes a direct appeal to divine revelation and authentic history; his statements are fair and accurate; his criticisms learned and solid; his reasonings manly and conclusive: and in every part he displays the spirit and manners of the gentleman and the christian.

Although several editions of each of these treatises have already been printed separately, yet they have never been printed as a whole; and the impressions, though repeated, have been but small, so that the work has not been circulated to the extent which its merits deserve. We, therefore, most cordially unite in recommending this little volume to all who wish for correct information on the subject.

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T. DURANT, Poole.

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REC. APR 1881
H. H. O. T. O. C. T.

THE
BAPTISM OF INFANTS, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

A general view of the several dispensations of religion with respect to INFANTS.

FROM the exactest observations, it appears, that of those who are born into the world, scarce a third part attain to the age even of *one* year. Thousands of infants every day languish under grievous distempers; are tortured, convulsed, and in piteous agonies give up the ghost.—This, at first, seems a very strange dispensation; hardly reconcileable with the wisdom and justice, much less, with the goodness and mercy of God. It is scarce possible not to ask—how comes it to pass, that millions of harmless babes, in whose frame is displayed such infinite skill; who are formed with capacities of such exalted attainments, both intellectual and moral; with capacities of an happiness evergrowing, and everlasting, in the knowledge, imitation and enjoyment of God:—How

comes it to pass, that they only thus glance, upon the coasts of life; are just brought into the world with exquisite pains, moan away a few weeks of misery and disease upon it, and then in terrible convulsions, fall victims to death! What light has God cast upon this dark scene of his providence? Has he left it quite covered with impenetrable clouds? And, where the interest and comfort of so great a part of his intelligent creation are deeply concerned, has he given no intimations which may be a solid ground of hope? It can never be supposed.

There are *four dispensations*, under which religion has principally subsisted since the fall, viz. the dispensation of the *Light of Nature*, the *Abrahamic*, the *Mosaic*, and the *Christian*. Now, each of these casts some light upon this awful scene, and administers some hope as to suffering and dying infants. Let it then be inquired:—

First. What judgment doth reason, or the LIGHT OF NATURE, pass upon their case? There are but two ways, in which reason can account for this procedure of providence, viz. by supposing these suffering infants to have existed in some former state; or that they will exist in some future.

Some have imagined, that they have existed and misbehaved in a former state of being; and that their sufferings in the present, are a correction or punishment for evils done there. This the

Platonic philosophy taught: and it seems to have been an opinion not uncommon amongst the Jews, in the days of our Saviour. Concerning the man *that was born blind*, the disciples, therefore, ask him—*master, who did sin; this man, or his parents; that he was born blind?** But, this præ-existence of infants, being a matter of absolute uncertainty, unsupported by any solid or probable grounds, reason derives its principal satisfaction from the supposition of their existencé in a state after death. There, the Almighty Rewarder can give them pleasures and entertainments abundantly to counterbalance the sufferings of their present state.

This is what reason, I say, surmises and hopes; but cannot *certainly* conclude. It wants some revelation, some promise from God, to give stability and vigor to these wavering hopes. And under all the conflicts and pains which he sees his dying child suffer, the pious parent has nothing, from the light of nature, whereon to trust, but the uncovenanted goodness and mercy of God. Now, were it not, in these circumstances, a most desirable thing, that God would give us some revelation or promise concerning our infants? Some covenant to assure us, that they are the objects of his favour and peculiar regard; and that as they suffer and die in this world, so they shall be raised again to life and happiness in the other? Was

* John ix. 2.

not, I ask, some such covenant, revelation or promise, concerning our infants, what nature greatly wanted, wished for and desired; and, if God should be pleased to grant it, ought it not to be highly valued and most thankfully received? * Behold!——

Secondly. This we see done in the ABRAHAMIC DISPENSATION. For as God's covenant transactions with Abraham was the foundation, or charter of the church, which, in after ages, he intended to gather, and to erect amongst men; so

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\* There is a very rational and just sense, in which God may be said to *establish his covenant with INFANTS*. For the scripture expressly says, Gen. ix. 9, 10, 12, 13. that he *established his covenant, even, with the cattle and the fowl; solemnly engaging no more to drown them by a flood*. Is there any thing *strange*, then, or *unreasonable*, in God's establishing his covenant with infants; solemnly engaging to *pour his spirit and blessing on them*. Or, that the evils they suffer in consequence of Adam's sin, shall be removed and amply recompensed through the righteousness of Christ? Most surely not at all.—

But, if there is a rational and just sense, in which God may *establish his covenant with INFANTS*; there is the highest reason to presume that he actually has done it, and that they are taken into his covenant: for if he graciously condescended to establish his covenant with the brute creation, promising no more to deluge them; and appointed a standing token or memorial of this covenant, viz. the *bow in the clouds*; much more, surely may we hope, that he hath established his covenant also with infants, promising to deliver them from the fatal consequences of the fall; and that he has appointed a standing token or sign of this covenant, to perpetuate its knowledge and remembrance in the church.

he here gives pious parents an express promise and revelation concerning their infants. He promises to be a God to *Abraham, and to his seed*; and takes his infants into covenant, together with himself; commanding the token of the covenant to be solemnly affixed to them, as a standing testimony or sign that JEHOVAH was their God. See Gen. xvii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14. God said, *I will establish my covenant between me, and thee (Abraham) and thy seed after thee, in their generations; to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee,—and I will be their God. This is my covenant which ye shall keep—every man-child among you, that is eight days old, shall be circumcised. The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people.* Circumcision then, by God's express command, was affixed to Abraham's infants, and to the infants of all such as believed in the God of Abraham, as a token of his covenant; which covenant was, that Jehovah would be their God.

Now, when the Almighty covenants and promises to be the God of these infants, what does it imply? Undoubtedly something great, *viz.* that he will be, in a peculiar manner, their guardian and benefactor; that he will take them under the especial patronage and care of his providence, influences of his spirit, and ministration of his angels; and that if they died in their infant state, before any transgression had put them out of the covenant, they should certainly be raised to a happiness after

death.—That this was the undoubted import or meaning of this promise, the scripture hath clearly taught us.—*Now that the dead are raised* Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, &c.\* And again, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city,† i. e. an happiness in some future state. And again, *I will be his God,*‡ is explained by, *he shall be my Son*: but whoever is a son of God, and dies in that relation, will infallibly be declared or manifested to be such by a glorious resurrection. See Rom. viii. 19. Luke xx. 36.

That this token of the Abrahamic covenant, assured a resurrection to future happiness to an infant dying under it, may be further proved thus:—Suppose one of Abraham's circumcised infants lay languishing under tormenting pains, and gave up the ghost? An infidel stands by, and seeing the mark in its flesh, scoffingly asks—what that mark means? He is told, it is a token of the covenant into which Jehovah took the child; and by which he solemnly declared, that he received it as his own, and engaged to be its God. But what gets the child, the infidel demands, by having Jehovah for its

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\* Luke xx. 37. A state of death, is a state of punishment; God's calling himself then, the God of Abraham, when he lay in a state of death, was a clear proof that he would not leave him always to continue in it.

† Heb. xi. 16.

‡ Rev. xxi. 7.

## INTRODUCTION.

God? Is he not ashamed to *be called* the God of that emaciated, tortured, breathless infant? No, it is replied, because he will *raise it from the dead*, and give it happiness in a future state. Else, indeed, he would *be ashamed to be called* the God of such a babe. But we proceed to consider:—

Thirdly. The MOSAIC DISPENSATION; and the farther strength which this gives to these rational hopes. Now, here, we see another covenant, besides that of *circumcision*, into which infants were taken. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. *Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God; your captains, your elders, your little-ones, your wives, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself; and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, &c.—* So Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. *Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons, and thy daughters, which thou hast born unto me; and these hast thou sacrificed unto the idols: thou hast slain my children.\*—*Hence then, it is most evident, that the Jewish infants, in consequence of their dedication to God, and admission into his covenant, were in a peculiar manner his; his property, and his children, in a sense in which the infants of the idolatrous and uncircumcised *gentiles* were not. But of these, multitudes, no doubt, died



\* A child on the day of its circumcision, was wont to be called *Chatan*, because it was then considered as espoused to God, and united to his people. Vid, Schindler in Verb. Lexic. Pent. page 677.

in their infant state. What now might be concluded concerning the case of such? Undoubtedly this:—That, as they died in covenant with God, (by which covenant he had engaged to take them for *a people to himself*, to acknowledge them as *his children*, and to be to them *a God*) and as no advantage nor happiness was given them in this world, at all answerable to these characters; but they miserably languished, like all other infants, and at last died under the primitive condemnation or judgment, it therefore certainly remained, that they will be raised again and exist in some after state; where a happiness will be given them suitable to these great promises, and where they will be treated as the people and the children of God. For else, God would plainly seem to have broken his covenant; and the solemn and grand promise of being *a God* to such an infant, and of taking it for his child, proves a very mean and insignificant thing.

These are the hopes which REASON surmises, and which the several dispensations both of ABRAHAM, and of MOSES, strongly confirm. We proceed to observe:—

Fourthly. How they are farther brightened by the DISPENSATION OF JESUS CHRIST. As this was to be the last, and the most perfect display of God's mercy to fallen men; in which the riches of his abounding grace were to be most fully revealed; it can never be imagined to come short, in any points of the two former dispensations. Did God take the infants of believers

into covenant with himself, under Abraham and Moses; and command that, as a standing token of it, *the seal of the covenant* should be solemnly affixed to them; but, under Jesus his Son, has he made no such manifestation of his merciful regard to them; admitted them visibly into no covenant; nor appointed any token that he receives them as his children, and that he will be to them a God? How utterly unlikely, as well as uncomfortable is the thought. Thanks to his mercy!—We can with good assurance say, *that* is not the case!

No. When infants were once brought to our Saviour, to be made partakers of the blessings of his kingdom: he openly and severally *rebuked* his disciples, and was highly displeased with them, for endeavouring to hinder it. He kindly *took them* (infants) *into his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them*: and commanded *that* little children *should be suffered to come, i. e.* be brought, *to him* and not be forbidden; declaring *that of such is the kingdom of God*;\* *i. e.* that these, also, have a place in the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now to be set up; and a right to the blessings which himself, the promised king, was come to bestow.

At another time, he *took* a little child *into his arms*, and shewing it to his disciples, says, *whosoever shall receive one such little child, in my*

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\* Matt. xix. 14. Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16.

*name, receiveth me.\** Now the receiving a child in Christ's name must mean the considering, or treating it as standing in some peculiar relation to Christ; as *τὸ χροῖσιν ὡν* belonging to Christ; as being a subject of his kingdom, or a part of his flock. That this is what our Lord means by, *receiving in his name*, himself has expressly shewn by thus explaining it in this same discourse, *because ye belong to Christ:† whoso shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, &c.* Hence, then it is most evident, that infants may be, yea are to be, received in Christ's name; and that by this we are to understand, *receiving them as belonging, or standing in some peculiar relation, to Christ*; but in this peculiar relation to Christ an infant can no otherwise stand than by being solemnly devoted to him, and admitted into his kingdom and church.

And, that infants were to be admitted into the kingdom of the Messiah, or into that incorporated society of which he is the head, is quite rational to presume: for as they stood in absolute need of the redemption or grace which Messiah, the king, came to bestow on mankind; and as provision was made by the covenant of God for their actual receiving it; so there was the strongest reason to

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\* Mat. xviii. 5. Mark ix. 37. Luke ix. 48.

† Mark ix. 41.



expect, that they would be solemnly acknowledged, and declared to be a part of that society or church which should be thus blessed and saved by him. In other words, that as they were condemned through the first Adam, and treated as sinners; so they should be justified through the second Adam, and treated as righteous. But, if they were to be treated as righteous, and to be solemnly declared a part of that society, or church, whom Christ came to save, they were then to be baptized; for, baptism was the ceremony in which all, who by God's covenant had a right to salvation, were to be admitted into the church, and solemnly declared to be of the number of the saved.

That, in the eye of the christian law, infants are actually under a sentence of condemnation and considered as sinners, by being made to suffer death the punishment and effect of sin, cannot be denied. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for that ἐφ' ᾧ, ad quod, as far as which) or (per quem through whom) all are treated as if they had sinned.\* Rom. v. 12.*



\* *Iniquity* and *sin* are very frequently used in scripture, where not any real guilt or moral turpitude is meant, but only the *effects* or the *punishment* of sin. See Gen. xix. 15. 1 Sam. xxviii. 10. 2 Kings vii. 9. Isa. liii. 6, 11, 12.—1 Pet. ii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. ix. 28. And this suggests an easy, and, doubtless, the *true* sense of that much controverted text, *Psaln* li. 5. *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;* alluding to the *bitter* sorrows in which, in consequence of the first sin, (Gen. iii. 16.) the woman is sentenced *to conceive and to bring forth.* T.

*By one man's offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation. ver. 18. By one man's offence many were made sinners. ver. 19. In Adam all die. 1 Cor. xv. 22.* Though infants are incapable of any *moral* or *proper* guilt, yet as in the wise scheme of God's providence they are at present subjected to innumerable pains, diseases, and death, the penal effects of sin, through the disobedience of Adam; they are, agreeably to the style of scripture, said to *have sinned*, and *to be made*, i. e. treated as *sinners*.

Now, the same discourse of the Apostle, which represents them as condemned and suffering through Adam, represents them also as justified and saved by Jesus Christ. For, *as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (Christ) the free gift came upon all men to justification of life: for as by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.\** As much as to say, the salutary effects of the second Adam's virtue, are as ex-



On this text Mr. Henry observes, "It is to be sadly lamented by every one of us, that we brought into the world with us a corrupt nature, wretchedly degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude; we have from our birth the snares of sin in our bodies, the seeds of sin in our souls, and the stain of sin upon both." *Nam vitiiis nemo sine nascitur. Horat. Sat. l. 1. s. 3. Ed.*

\* Rom. v. 18, 19.

tensive as the penal ones of the first Adam's sin: or, as the malignity of that first offence reached even to infants, subjecting them to death; so the benefit of Christ's obedience reaches also to infants, justifying, absolving, and restoring them to life. It procures for and gives to them that *spirit of life*, which releases and sets them free from the *law of sin and death*. Now of God's giving and of men's receiving this *life-giving spirit*, the baptismal water is the appointed *token, or emblem*, in the church.

This the scripture plainly intimates, by saying, Tit. iii. 5. We are saved, *by the washing of regeneration* (i. e. *Baptism*, the sign) *and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost* (the thing signified in that ceremonial washing) *which he hath shed* (ἐξέχεεν poured out upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From this discourse of the Apostle (Rom. v.) the following deductions evidently flow. <sup>^</sup>1. That in the construction of the christian law, infants are, most certainly, in a state of condemnation, and are treated as sinners. 2. That they are, therefore, capable of justification or remission, and stand in absolute need of it; in as much as, without it, they must eternally lie under the sentence of death. 3. As they are capable of this grace, and stand in absolute need of it, express provision is made, in the constitution of the gospel-covenant, for their *being justified and saved*. But 4. All who by the gospel-

covenant are entitled to justification, salvation and life, are entitled also to baptism; for baptism is a rite, instituted by God, to signify or betoken that those, who are entitled to the blessings of his covenant, shall certainly receive them.

The baptism of infants, viewed in this light, is a very rational institution. The great parent of mankind having, in the wisdom of his providence, subjected so vast a part of the race to miseries and pains through no default of their own, it was quite reasonable to believe, that his mercy would appoint them some testimony of his favour, some monument or pledge that he had not abandoned this noble part of his creation to the ruin and death under which they were fallen. That, as they continually suffered the visible tokens of his displeasure in a variety of tormenting agonies; so, he would graciously ordain them also some visible token of his good-will, some perpetual and standing sign, of his still accounting them his children, and that they were yet the objects of his tender and parental regard. It was perfectly just, I say, and reasonable to imagine that the great Parent of these tortured and suffering innocents, whenever he erected a church upon earth, would appoint some such standing token of his mercy and favour to them. Now this, we see, he did under the two former dispensations, both of Abraham and of Moses: and doubtless, it gave their pious parents great consolation under these dispensations, when they saw him languishing in

extreme pains and giving up the ghost, to reflect upon the solemn token by which the Almighty had accepted them as his children, and had promised to be *their* God. But, can it ever be conceived, that the dispensation of Jesus Christ is defective in this important point! That it, herein, comes behind, and is inferior to both the former! That it has no such standing token of God's mercy to condemned infants, nor any rite by which he visibly admits them now, as he formerly did, into his family or church! —Is he a God in covenant to the *Abrahamic*, and to the *Jewish* infants only, and not to *Christian* infants also? With great assurance we can say, to christian infants also.\*



\* We are not to imagine, that all infants dying such, but those of believers, or all which die unbaptised, will be annihilated or never rise again; but the superior advantage to believers' infants, above others, is:—1. That with respect to these, God has been pleased to lay himself under a more particular covenant or promise of a resurrection to a future happiness; whereas the other are left more to his uncovenanted mercy. And 2. Their circumstances in a future state may agreeably to all the moral perfections of God, be supposed more happy and advantageous than theirs who were never thus solemnly devoted to him. It being an evident and important part of the scheme of God's moral government, that great blessings and favours shall be conferred upon some, in consequence and as a reward of the earnest and sincere prayers and piety of others.

All rational creatures, there is reason to believe, are, somewhere or other, placed in a state of discipline or probation, before they pass into a state of fixed and unalterable bliss. Heaven itself was, if it be not at present, a state of trial to angels. Infants dying such, therefore, there is

And as it thus evidently appears, that, in the original construction and frame of his church, provision was made that the infants of God's people should be admitted into his *covenant*, so it may be added—that such a *solemn dedication*, as is made in baptism, of an infant by its parents to God the Supreme Parent, seems to be a most *natural* and *rational* service: a service which a pious mind can scarce possibly forbear. Having received so great a gift and trust from the *Almighty Sovereign*, how natural and proper is it, that soon upon its birth, and while a sense of the obligation is yet warm upon the heart, he should make some *solemn acknowledgment* that he has received it from God; should *openly* devote it to him, and lay himself under a *sacred vow* to educate it religiously, and bring it up in his fear! The light of nature itself seems plainly to have taught this. It was the custom of the Romans, on the ninth day from the child's birth



ground to presume, pass into such a state. Now, as in our present state of trial, some are placed in circumstances far more advantageous and favourable than others, so, probably, is it in the state to which dying infants pass. Abraham's posterity were put in circumstances more favourable, for attaining virtue and happiness, than other nations of the earth, on account of their father's piety. The same may be justly hoped as to the dying infants of good men; who, according to God's command, have been solemnly devoted to him, whom he hath acknowledged for *his children*, and to whom he hath, by a sacred covenant, *promised to be a God*.

(which was called the *lustrical*, or the day of purification) for its friends and relations to bring it to the temple, and before the altars of the gods, to recommend it to the protection of some tutelar deity. A ceremony of the same nature also, was performed among the Greeks. Is not this evidently, a becoming *temper* and *action*, upon receiving such a trust? Would it not naturally have a good influence on the conduct of the parent, with regard to his child; disposing him either to *resign it* more cheerfully, if taken from him by death; or to *train it up* more religiously if its life be continued? And might it not be hoped, that God would graciously accept and reward the piety of such a parent, with *peculiar blessings* on such a child?

But, from this *general view* of the several dispensations of religion with respect to *infants*, from which their right to *baptism* may be strongly *presumed*,—We proceed farther to establish it by clear and direct proofs.

## ARGUMENT I.

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*The FIRST ARGUMENT shall be presented under the following Propositions.*

I. IT is an incontestable fact, that the infants of believers, were, in former dispensations or ages of the church, taken together with their parents *into covenant with God*; and had, by his express command, a sacrament or rite given them, as a *token that Jehovah was their God*; and that in consequence hereof, he counted them for his children, and as standing in a *peculiar relation* to himself. Gen. xvii. 7, 10, 11, 12. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. See these scriptures already cited, pages 4—6.

II. When these infants of believers were thus *taken into covenant*, it was certainly, a great privilege, a favour or grant most thankfully to be received; for, by this token, the Most High obliged himself and covenanted to be the God *of that infant*. And what *that* implies, see before explained, pages 4, 5. Now—

III. If this great privilege was once granted by God to his church, it is a privilege still subsisting, and is now in actual and full force, if it has not been revoked. But—



IV. This privilege or grant has never been revoked. No such revocation, nor any shadow of it, appears in the whole book of God. Therefore,—

V. The infants of believers having still a right to their ancient unrepealed privilege, of being admitted with their parents into covenant with God, and of having its token applied to them; it hence necessarily follows, that they have a right to christian baptism; for baptism is now the only appointed token or ceremony of admission.

These propositions it is humbly apprehended, amount to a demonstration of the point in debate. Which of them can be denied? Will any man say, 1. That the infants of believers, in the former ages of the church, were not taken, with their parents into covenant with God; had not, by his express command, a sacrament or rite given them in token that Jehovah was their God; and that in consequence of this, they were not considered and treated as being in a peculiar manner his? This no man will affirm. Will it then be said:—2. That *this*, though it was granted to the infants of good men of old, was really no privilege nor favour to them? Neither durst any man assert this. Can it be urged then:—3. That this privilege, though granted antiently to the church, and enjoyed by it many ages, does not, now, continue to it, nor ought, now, to be enjoyed by it; though it be at the same time acknowledged not to have been

repealed? Absurd to imagine! Will it be said then:—4. That this ancient privilege or grant has, indeed, been repealed? Let the repeal be shewn, and the point shall be given up. There appears no such repeal, nor any thing like it, in the whole sacred scriptures: on the contrary, there appear many things, as will presently be seen, abundantly to confirm this invaluable privilege; and to strengthen and enlarge it. And, indeed it were the height of absurdity to imagine, that Jesus Christ came to cut short the privileges of the church, in any single point; and to cast the children of believers out of God's covenant, who before were taken into it.

It being impossible to deny, then, that the infants of believers have still a right to their ancient unrepealed privilege, of being admitted with their parents into God's covenant, and of having its token applied to them; the consequence is inevitable:—That they have then a right to baptism, the appointed token of God's covenant, and the only initiatory rite by which persons are now admitted into it.

The point is farther proved thus.

## ARGUMENT II.

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*From the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.*

THE covenant which God made with Abraham and with his seed, Gen. xvii. (into which *his infants* were taken, together with himself, by the right of circumcision,)—That covenant I say, is the very same which we are now under, even the christian or gospel covenant; and Abraham, in that transaction, acted and is considered under the character of our father, the father of us believing gentiles: the original grants, therefore, and privileges of that covenant must necessarily belong to us, believing gentiles, his seed.—Now it was an indisputable grant or privilege of that covenant, that infants should be received, together with their parents, into it; and solemnly pass under its sacrament or seal. This grant, therefore, or privilege, in behalf of our infants, we, believing gentiles, may now confidently claim.

That we, believing gentiles, are the seed really included and intended in that covenant; and that Abraham, in that transaction, was considered as our father—is a point actually and most clearly determined by St. Paul. For in two several epistles (Rom. iv. and Galat. iii.) where he is ex-

plaining the nature and extent of the christian or gospel covenant, he quotes this covenant made with Abraham, (Gen. xvii.) refers to it, reasons from it, and fetches arguments thence to prove, that believers from among the gentiles, are, under the christian dispensation, to be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and are the real seed of Abraham, intended in that covenant. See Rom. iv. 9.—particularly ver. 16, 17. *Therefore it (i. e. the blessedness, or justification, of the Abrahamic covenant) is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (i. e. of believing gentiles as well as Jews,) as it is written (Gen. xvii. 5.) I have made thee a father of many nations.*

Expressly to the same purpose, the Apostle also assures us, Galat. iii. 7. *That they who are of faith (believers) the same are the children of Abraham.* And ver. 29. *If ye are Christ's (i. e. believers) then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* And again ver. 16, 17. *That to Abraham, and to his seed, were the promises made; (which seed he proves to be all true believers, taken in a collective sense as the body of Christ; and adds;) now this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before by God in Christ (εις χριστον respecting Christ, or true believers) the law, which was 430 years after, cannot dis-*

*annul, that it should make the promise of no effect.*—Now that the promises, or covenant, here referred to, which the apostle affirms to be still in force, and not to be disannulled, must be, and is this covenant, (Gen. xvii.) into which infants were taken by a visible rite, is most evident; because, this is the only covenant, in which God ever made and confirmed promises to Abraham and to his seed.

Seeing, then, it is incontestable—that we believing gentiles, are the seed intended in that covenant; it follows, that we have an undoubted right to all its privileges and grants; consequently, to the admission of our infants into it; and consequently, to their passing under its token or sign.

This token or sign was originally circumcision: but when God sent his Son into the world further to explain and confirm this covenant, and to publish it to all nations, he was pleased to alter its token, or initiating rite, from circumcision to baptism: partly, perhaps, as circumcision was a painful and bloody rite, and obnoxious to great reproach and contempt amongst the gentiles; but principally, because both sexes were now to be alike visibly received into the covenant; and under this new dispensation of it, there was to be neither male nor female. Galat. iii. 28.\*



\* That circumcision is abolished, is acknowledged by all; but the Abrahamic covenant still subsisting, and being

Thus, then stands the argument, in short:—*if we are Christ's (believers) then are we Abraham's seed*: (Gal. iii. 29.) but, if we are Abraham's seed, we have then a right to all the grants and privileges of that covenant which God made with Abraham, and with his seed: but the admission of his infants, together with himself, was an indisputable grant or privilege of that covenant: therefore, as it was given to Abraham our father, it must necessarily remain and endure to us his seed.\*

no other than the gospel covenant; and of this gospel covenant it being acknowledged that baptism is now the appointed token or sign; it hence evidently follows, that baptism now succeeds in the room of circumcision. Accordingly it is called the christian circumcision, or *circumcision of Christ*. Col. ii. 11, 12.

\* Infants are not baptised as being themselves the seed of Abraham; but as being the children, or property, of those who are the seed of Abraham: for as Abraham's faith brought not himself only, but his infants together with him, into the covenant of God, so the faith of Abraham's seed (believers) brings not themselves only, but their infants together with them, into the same covenant: else the covenant would not be established in the same manner to his seed, as it was to Abraham himself; which yet is plainly promised. Gen. xvii. 7, 10, 11.

### ARGUMENT III.

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#### FROM THE COMMISSION.

A THIRD argument for admitting infants to baptism, may be drawn—from the sense in which the apostles, when sent forth to baptize, would naturally and even necessarily understand their commission. GO TEACH (*μαθητευσατε* disciple or proselyte) ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM.\* It is now enquired, in what sense they would understand this commission? Whether, as authorizing them to baptize only the believing adult; or, to give this token of God's covenant also to the infants of such believers? The commission is delivered in such general terms as not certainly to determine this. If any part of it can be said to exclude infants, it must be the word *teach*.† But suppose it had been said—*go teach, proselyte, all nations, CIRCUMCISING them*:—Would not the apostles, without any farther warrant, have natu-

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\* Mat. xxviii. 19.

† The word rendered *teach* (*μαθητευσατε*) in the 19th verse, is not the same with that in the next verse, *teaching them to observe all things*—(*διδασκοντες*) but is of a more large and comprehensive signification, and is better rendered to proselyte or disciple.

rally and justly thought, that upon proselyting the gentile parent and circumcising him, his infants also were to be circumcised? Or, if a divine command had been given to the twelve patriarchs of old, to go into Egypt, Arabia, &c. and *teach them the God of Abraham, circumcising them*:—Would they not, must they not, have understood it as authorizing them to perform this ceremony, not upon the parent only, but also upon the infants of such as believed in the God of Abraham? Without all question they would.

Hence then it is plain, that the word, *teach*, (disciple or proselyte) concludes nothing, certainly, against infants being admitted, with their believing parents, into God's covenant by baptism. But, if the word, *teach*, does not necessarily exclude infants, let us see, whether there are not such circumstances attending this commission, as would naturally and even necessarily lead the apostles to apprehend infants to be actually included therein.

Now, here let it be considered—who the persons were, to whom the commission was given? They were Jews; men, who had been educated in the knowledge of that covenant, which God had made with Abraham and their fathers; and who knew it still to be in force.—Men, who had seen, that in all covenant transactions, betwixt God and his church, the infants of believers had always been admitted, together with their parents, and passed



under the same initiating rite.—Men, who apprehended this their admission to be a great privilege or favour to them; and knew, or were to be soon informed, that the gentiles, (*all nations*) were now to be taken into a joint-participation of all the privileges of the Jewish church; to be grafted into the *same olive-tree*; and to be joint-heirs with them of all their religious immunities or grants.—They, moreover knew it to be the constant, immemorial practice of the church, that when any gentile was taught (proselyted to the worship of the God of Israel) himself was baptized, and all his infants were baptized with him, and these infants were called proselytes. Further, they were men extremely jealous and tenacious of their antient rites.—They had seen also, under their law, by God's express command, children of a month old, and upwards, enrolled in the temple register; and entered, as ministers to Aaron, as *doing the service of the tabernacle*, and as *keeping the charge of the sanctuary*.\*—They had been often witnesses to the kind regard their master had shewn to *little children*; and had been once severely rebuked by him for hindering their being brought to receive his benediction; and saw him *laying his hands on them*, and solemnly declaring them to be *subjects of his kingdom*.—Further, they knew that baptism was



\* Numb. iii. 6, 7, 8, 28. And claimed by God as his servants. Levit. xxv. 41, 42.

appointed as a token from God of the remission of sin, or of justification; and that infants were in the eye of the christian law treated as sinners, and under a sentence of condemnation. Finally: they knew that Christ came, not to lessen or abridge the privileges of God's church (of which this admission of infants was confessedly one) but to heighten and to enlarge them.—Let these several circumstances be impartially weighed, and then let any man say—whether, as the commission will admit of a favourable and a large sense, so as to include infants, the apostles would not naturally, and even necessarily, suppose them comprehended therein? And whether there was not a most strong, and most manifest necessity, if Christ intended that infants should not be included in it, that he should have expressly excepted them?

The commission viewed in this, which is its proper and true light, is so far from concluding any thing against the baptising infants, that it strongly favours and supports it. For since, it is delivered in such general terms as to be capable of admitting infants; and since, from the above circumstances, the apostles would naturally and unavoidably understand it as intending their admission; it follows, that our Lord's silence, as to these, is a strong and most manifest presumption in their favour; and that his not excluding, or excepting them from the christian covenant, is, in all equitable construction, a permission or order that they should be admitted into it.

## ARGUMENT IV.

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*Shall be drawn, from the EVIDENT AND CLEAR CONSEQUENCES of other passages of SCRIPTURE.*

I. IN Rom. xi. the Apostle, discoursing of the exclusion of a chief part of the Jews from the visible church of God, and the reception of the gentiles in their stead, speaks of it under this figure, ver. 17. *And if some of the branches (the Jews) be broken off, and thou (a Gentile) being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not, &c.* Here let it be noted.

1. The *olive tree*, is the Abrahamic covenant or church; from which, the unbelieving Jews are cast out; and into which, the believing Gentiles are taken in their stead. 2. The *root and fatness* of this olive tree, of which the ingrafted branches partake, are the religious privileges or grants belonging to that covenant or church. Now 3. It was a very valuable and indisputable privilege of that covenant, that the faith of a parent grafted his children, together with himself into that olive tree, i. e. admitted them into the church, or into a covenant-relation to God. Therefore 4. The unbelieving Jew being cut off from this root, and the

believing Gentile succeeding, and being grafted into his room, and partaking jointly with the natural branches of all their church privileges, immunities and grants, he must undoubtedly partake of this privilege too.

What part of this argument can possibly be denied? Will it be said—that the faith of a parent did not *graft* his children, together with himself, into the visible church before the coming of Christ? No—or, that this was not a privilege? No.—Can it be urged then, that believing Gentiles are not now taken in to be *Συγκοινωνοι της ριξης* *Joint-Partakers of the root*,\* i. e. of the church privileges and grants which the unbelieving Jew hath lost? This were highly absurd: for they are expressly declared by the Apostle,† to be *Συγκληρονομοι* fellow-heirs; *Συσσωμα* of the *same body*; and *Συμμετοκοι της επαγγελιας* *joint-partakers* of the promise.

The argument, then, most clearly and strongly concludes for the visible admission of the infants of believing Gentiles, together with themselves, into the covenant and church of God. Is he the *God of the Jews only*? Is he not *also of the Gentiles*? A God, in the same manner, in the same latitude and extent to us, as he was to them? Yes; he is undoubtedly, thus a God to believing Gentiles also. Accordingly Isaiah, speaking of the

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\* Rom. xi. 17.

† Eph. iii. 6.

christian dispensation, or the state of the church under the Messiah, says, that not only believers should be esteemed the seed of the blessed of the Lord, (or the blessed seed of the Lord) but also, their offspring together with them.\*

II. From our Saviour's own words, Mark x. 14. *Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.* And John iii. v. *Except any one (Τίς) is born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* From these two passages, I say, put together, the right of infants to baptism may be also clearly inferred. For in one, they are declared actually to have a place in God's kingdom or church; and yet into this kingdom or church, the other, as expressly says, none can be admitted without being baptised.

The *kingdom of God*, in the gospel denotes either the visible church on earth; or the invisible one in heaven. Answerable to these, there is a two-fold regeneration, namely a being *born again of water* (i. e. baptism, which is therefore called the *washing of regeneration*, Tit. iii. 5.) which admits into the visible church; and a being *born again of the spirit* (called the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*,) which admits into the invisible. Now, in which soever of these senses the expression is

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\* Isaiah lxxv. 23.

here taken, it strongly concludes for the baptism of infants. For

I. If, by the *kingdom of God*, be meant the visible church on earth, our Lord, by saying of such is the kingdom, declares that infants are to be considered as having a place in this kingdom, i. e. as being members of that body, society, or church, which he, as Messiah came to rule and to save. But, if they are to be considered as a part of this kingdom, or visible church, they are then to be baptized, or born again of water, for this is the only appointed rite of entering into it. Or

2. If, by the *kingdom of God*, we understand the invisible church in heaven; into that infants cannot enter, except they are born again of the spirit, i. e. regenerated, quickened and raised from the dead.\* But, if they are capable and proper subjects of a regeneration by the spirit, they must be also of baptism; for the baptismal water is nothing else but the appointed token or emblem of this regenerating spirit. Seeing then, that God grants them the thing signified, viz. the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, it can never be thought his will, that the sign or token be denied them, viz. *the washing of regeneration*, or baptism.



\* A resurrection from the dead is frequently spoken of in scripture as a being *born again*, or a *regeneration*. Vide Romans i. 4. Luke xx. 36. Matt. xix. 28. Acts xiii. 33. Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 18.

The argument then is conclusive in whatever sense we take the kingdom of God. For our Lord having, in one place, declared *that the little children should be brought to him, because of such is the kingdom*: and in another, *that except any one is born of water, baptised, he cannot enter into this kingdom*—it most evidently follows—that infants are capable of being born again of water, or baptised; because, else, they could not enter into this kingdom, into which our Lord here expressly declares, they *do enter*, and are admitted.\*

It cannot be here said—that the words of *such*—are to be understood, not of infants in years, but of persons of a childlike and humble disposition. Because, this would represent our Lord's conduct as extremely absurd. For, why should he be very angry with his disciples, for forbidding infants in years to be brought to him, because of grown persons of an humble disposition his kingdom consisted? There is no just connection be-

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\* The words, John iii. 5. thus interpreted, are a very pertinent and just rebuke of Nicodemus's cowardice. It is as though our Lord had said—"Except you have the  
 " courage to profess openly my religion, signified by your  
 " submission to the ceremony of Baptism, you cannot be a  
 " member of my visible church on earth: and, notwith-  
 " standing your descent from Abraham, if you are not born  
 " of an higher principle, even of the spirit, or Holy Ghost,  
 " your mind will be never raised to that state of purity and  
 " moral rectitude, nor your body to that incorruptibility,  
 " spirituality and life, which is necessary to your admission  
 " into my invisible kingdom in heaven."

twixt his great displeasure at them for keeping infants from him, and his giving, as the reason of it, that to quite different subjects, meek and humble persons, his kingdom belonged. According to this interpretation, our Lord might rationally have done the same, had lambs or doves been going to be presented to him; he might have been very angry with those who should have forbid them, and have said—*suffer them to be brought, for of such, i. e. of persons of a meek and harmless temper, is the kingdom of God.\**

Finally: let it be added—that as our Lord took these infants *into his arms, laid his hands upon and blessed them*; hence it appears—that infants are capable of the divine influence, benediction, and the operations of the Holy Spirit. Now what are these, but the very things principally intended to be represented by the baptismal water? Though our Lord did not pour water on them, putting up a prayer for them, he performed a religious ceremony on them equally solemn, and of much, (perhaps, exactly) the same purport; *he laid his hands upon them, and prayed*; which was an act of religious worship hardly at all different from baptising them with water. Yea, it was a far greater thing for the Saviour of the world to take up



\* Dr. Gale, therefore, ingenuously owns, that this passage is to be understood of infants in years. Reflections, &c. page 421.



infants in his arms and solemnly to bless them, than for any minister now to baptise them with water in his name. Further

III. It is also very worthy to be observed—that the Christian dispensation, as well as the Jewish, makes an evident distinction betwixt the children of believers and the children of infidels.

Several of the Corinthian converts having unbelieving yoke-fellows, doubted of the lawfulness of cohabiting with them; and seemed to think themselves obliged to separate; lest the offspring of such unequal marriages should be deemed impure and unmeet to be taken into covenant with God. This their doubt seemed to be just, and to carry in it great weight; being grounded on the known conduct of Ezra, and the Jewish elders, in a parallel case. See Ezra x. 1, 2, 3. But the Apostle resolves it, by telling them—that *the unbelieving yoke-fellow was so far sanctified by (or to, or because of) the believing, as that their children which would otherwise be unclean, are now holy.\** Here then we see a most clear and evident distinction made betwixt the children of believers and the children of infidels: the one are *unclean*, i. e. do not stand in any visible covenant relation to Jehovah, and the other are *holy*, i. e. in the same sense



\* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

holy, as the Jews were an holy nation, taken into a peculiar relation to God.\*

These several scriptures being impartially weighed, the propriety and fitness of bringing children to baptism seems to be established beyond all rational doubt. As a conclusion of this argument I beg leave to ask,—Must not the Christian dispensation be allowed, in all things, to have the preference, and to be better than the Jewish? But if it excludes our infants from the covenant of God, and from standing in any federal relation to heaven; then here is one, and that a very important and considerable instance in which it is vastly inferior. Now, had this really been the case, how mighty and just a prejudice would it have raised in the Jews against christianity! What



\* This sentiment of an infant's holiness, and of the propriety and duty of its being brought into the church of God, and there solemnly devoted to him, was quite scriptural and rational; as well as perfectly agreeable to the appointed customs and forms, and language of those times. For, Luke ii. 22, 23, 'tis said—they brought the infant Jesus to the temple, to present him to the Lord: as it is written in the law; *Every first-born male shall be holy to the Lord.* Hence it plainly follows. 1. That infants are capable of holiness: and that some were accounted holy (i. e. taken into a more peculiar relation to God) whilst others were not. And 2. That our Lord himself, when an infant, passed under a sacred ceremony, of the same nature with our infants when we bring them to be baptised. The infant Jesus, like ours, was brought to the place of worship, there solemnly to be presented, or devoted, to the Lord.

complaints and objections should we, doubtless, have heard them making against this new dispensation, and casting their children out of God's covenant, and putting them upon a level with those of infidels and pagans! But, as amongst their many and loud cavils at the religion of Christ, and the continued oppositions and reproaches of the Judaizers, we find not the least shadow of a complaint of this kind, it may with great assurance be concluded, there was no such occasion given; but that christianity, as it found, so it continued and confirmed, the infants of good men in the covenant of God.

Having proceeded thus far in the argument; I beg leave here to recapitulate, and sum up the force of what has been offered, in the following queries; which will soon lead a fair enquirer to an easy issue of the debate.

**Query I.** Are not infants, in the eye or construction of the christian law, under a sentence of condemnation, and treated as sinners?

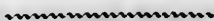
**Query II.** Are they not, consequently, in the eye of that law, capable of justification and of being treated as righteous?

**Query III.** If, then, they are capable of justification and remission, is it not most highly reasonable, and even necessary to suppose that the christian law, which is a manifestation of God's richest mercy to mankind, has made provision for it, and given some token of it?

Query IV. Were not the infants of believers taken into covenant with God; and did they not stand in a more immediate relation to him, than the infants of unbelieving Canaanites, Moabites, &c. both under the Abrahamic and Mosaic dispensations?—And was not this a peculiar honour and advantage to these infants?

Query V. Are not the infants of us, christians, as capable of this favour, viz. of being taken visibly into God's covenant, as their (the Israelites) infants were: but if ours are not, is not here an important circumstance in which both the Abrahamic and Mosaic dispensations were more favourable to mankind, and manifested greater grace than the dispensation of Jesus Christ?—But can this possibly be?

Query VI. Are not the infants of christians (who are now an holy priesthood, and who succeed to all the privileges of the Jewish church) are not, I say, their infants as capable *τε μαθητευεσθαι* of being discipled, as the infants of the Jewish priesthood were, of being enrolled in the temple register, and entered as ministers to Aaron, and as *φυλασσοντες τας φυλακας των αγιων* keeping the charge of the sanctuary:\* and are not infants as capable, under the christian covenant, of being baptised as they were of circumcision both under the Abrahamic and Mosaic?



\* Vide Numb. iii. 6, 7, 8, 28.

Let the scriptures, then interpret themselves ; and one part of the divine dispensation be suffered to explain the other (of which other, it was intended to be a figure or type) and we shall find it perfectly agreeable to the analogy and style of scripture, as well as to the reason of things, that infants should be admitted as members of the christian church, and are therefore included in the commission to baptise.

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## ARGUMENT V.

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### FROM APOSTOLIC TRADITION.

THE baptism of infants was the undoubted practice of the christian church, in its purest and first ages ; the ages immediately succeeding the Apostles ; who could not but know what the apostolic doctrine and practice was as to this matter.

This, I apprehend, to be an argument of great weight. For the enquiry being about a fact, which could not but be publicly and perfectly known, and not possible to be mistaken, in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles, the sense of those

ages, concerning this fact, must needs be of great moment in deciding the point,—Whether the apostles and the evangelists formed the first churches throughout the whole world, upon the plan of infant baptism, or not; that is to say, whether they admitted infants, together with their believing parents, into the church by baptism; or did not so admit them, was a fact of such nature as could not but be evident, and indubitably known to all the christians of the first age. Nor was it, humanly speaking, possible, that the apostolic practice in this point should be universally departed from, disused and thrown out, in so short a space of time, as we shall presently see the baptism of infants to have universally prevailed. To prepare the way to this proof, I beg leave to premise these two things.

1. To weaken the testimony of the antient writers and fathers upon this point, some have objected, the many foolish and absurd opinions and interpretations of scripture with which their writings abound. But this is extremely weak. For they are not here appealed to as reasoners, or interpreters, but only as historians or witnesses to a public standing fact.

2. If any think it strange, that we have no more express testimonies to this practice of the church, in the writings of these fathers, let him consider,—That the far greater part of their writ-

ings are lost; and that it is but little more than their names and a few pieces of their works especially as to the first age, that are transmitted down to us.—And also, that the baptism of infants being then universally practised, and no doubts or dispute having ever been moved about it; and it being likewise the constant ever-prevailing custom of all the enemies of christianity, both Jews and pagans, to admit infants to a participation of their religious ceremonies and rites together with their parents. These things considered, it will not appear strange that this point is so rarely touched on in the writings of those times. There are a thousand religious books written in the present age, in which the least hint is not to be found about baptising of infants, though the point has now been so long and so warmly controverted amongst us: much less, then, should one expect to find any thing but a few allusions and hints as to this matter, in the books of those early times.

This being premised, we proceed to the testimonies. The first shall be from

**JUSTIN MARTYR**, who wrote about forty years after the apostolic age. He says “Και πολλοι τινες  
 “ και πολλοι εξηκοντῃται καὶ εβδόμεκοντῃται οι εκ παιδων  
 “ εμαθητευθησαν τω χριστω.”—“ *Several persons among*  
 “ *us, both men and women, of sixty or seventy years*  
 “ *old, who were proselyted, or made disciples, to*  
 “ *Christ in, or from their infancy do continue un-*

“*corrupt.*”\* Now, *proselyted to Christ from their infancy*, they could not be, without being, from their infancy, considered and treated as proselytes to Christ; that is, without being from their infancy baptised.—For whosoever *εμαθητευθησαν τω χριστω* were disciples or proselyted to Christ, were by his express order, Mat. xxviii. 19. to be baptised. Note, seventy years from Justin carries us back, almost, into the middle of the apostolic age.

IRENÆUS, who wrote about sixty-seven years after the apostles, and was born, it is said, some years before the death of St. John, says concerning Christ.—“*Omnes enim venit per semetipsum* “*salvare; omnes inquam, qui per eum renascuntur* “*in Deum, INFANTES et parvulos et pueros et* “*juvenes.*”†—“*That he came to save all persons by* “*himself; all, I mean, who by him are regenerated,* “*i. e. baptised, unto God, INFANTS and little ones,* “*and youths and elder persons.*”—That the word, *renascor, regenerated*, in the writings of these ancients, particularly of Irenæus, is most familiarly used to signify, baptised, see from a vast variety of instances proved, beyond all doubt, in *Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism. Vol. I. Chap. iii. § 2, 3.* and *Defence page 318. 324.*—And that by infants, are here meant, *children*, before they come to the

\* Just. Martyr. Apol. ii.

† Irenæus adv. Hæres lib. iii. cap. 39.



use of reason, is evident, not only as these must necessarily be included in the ALL whom he came to save; but also because, after he had mentioned infants and others regenerated, he runs over the several ranks of age again: but with this remarkable difference, that whereas he mentions the benefit of Christ's example, as what was to be taken by each of the other ranks, *viz.* the *parvuli*, the *juvenes* and the *seniores*, he says no such thing concerning the *infantes* infants; for this reason, no doubt; *viz.* that *these only*, of all the mentioned ranks, were incapable of this benefit.

TERTULLIAN, who flourished about an hundred years after the apostles, is the only person, among the antients, who advises to defer the baptism of infants, except in cases of necessity or in danger of death. But his advising to defer it, except in cases of necessity, is an incontestible proof that the baptising of infants was the practice of those times. And as he appears to be quite singular in this his advice; so, that he was extremely whimsical and absurd in his opinions on this, as well as several other points of religion, all who have read his works perfectly well know. For, upon the same grounds on which he recommends the deferring the baptism of infants, he advises also—“*That unmarried persons should be kept off from this sacrament, who are likely to come into temptation; as well those who never were married, as those in widowhood; until they*

“either marry, or be confirmed in continence. They who understand the weight of baptism will rather dread the receiving of it, than the delaying of it.”\*

This is TERTULLIAN’S reasoning upon the point; but we have nothing to do with that; all we cite him for is a voucher to an antient fact, to prove that in his days infants were baptised. To this fact he bears incontestible witness. His saying—“Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione,” &c. Therefore according to every one’s condition, disposition and also age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of children;—and his asking—“Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum? Quid enim necesse est, si non tam necesse sponsores etiam periculo ingeri.”—“Why does that innocent age make such haste to the remission of sins, i. e. to the laver of baptism? What occasion is there, except in cases of necessity, that the sponsors or godfathers, be brought into danger.”† These questions plainly prove the baptising of infants to have been the practice of his days.‡

Note. There are some, who upon very probable grounds, understand these passages of Tertulian as relating only to the baptism of the infants of heathen parents; which when they came into their power by purchase, conquest, &c. the chris-



\* Tert. de Baptismo: cap. 18.

† Ibid.

‡ Vide the notes at the end of this volume.

fians of those times were wout to baptise. And that it is only to delay the baptising of such infants as these, which Tertullian advises, there is strong reason to believe.

Hitherto, we find this point, of infant baptism, but transiently touched on by these early writers: there having yet no controversy or doubt arisen in the church which might give occasion to their speaking more expressly concerning it. But about this time, there arose some dispute about original sin, or the nature and degree of that pollution with which new-born infants are tainted. Henceforward, therefore, we shall find more direct and express passages relating to their baptism.

ORIGEN, about an hundred and ten years after the apostles, speaking of the pollution which cleaves to infants, says,—“ *Adde his etiam, &c.*—“ Besides this also let it be considered; what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for the forgiveness, infants also by the usage of the church are baptised! when if there were nothing in infants which wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them.”\*

And again, “ *Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem.*—Infants are baptised for the remission of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver hold good in

\* Homil. viii. in Levit. Cap. 12.

“ their case ; but according to that sense before  
 “ mentioned ; none is free from pollution, though  
 “ his life be but the length of one day upon the  
 “ earth? And it is for that reason, because, by the  
 “ sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is  
 “ taken away, that infants are baptised.”\*

In another treatise he says—“ *Pro hoc et eccle-*  
 “ *sia, &c.*”—“ For this also it was, that the church  
 “ had from the apostles a tradition, or order, to  
 “ give baptism also to infants. For they to whom  
 “ the divine mysteries were committed, knew that  
 “ there is in all persons the natural pollution of  
 “ sin, which must be done away by water and the  
 “ spirit.”†

There are other passages of Origen, full to this point: but these, already cited, abundantly prove the baptism of infants to be the standing custom of his days. That they are genuine and authentic, see clearly shewn in *Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. I. p. 55.—and *Defence*, p. 372.

Note. ORIGEN was born, about *eighty-five years* after the age of the apostles; and if baptised in infancy (as there is no reason to question but he was, his father and grandfather having both been christians) here is clear proof of its practice very near the apostolic age. Though he resided chiefly at Alexandria in Egypt, he had been conversant in

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\* Orig. in Luc.

† Ibid. Comment. in Epist. Rom. I. 5.

almost all the noted churches of the world. His testimony, therefore, to the point, may justly be supposed to speak the sense of them all.\*

We next proceed to CYPRIAN, who wrote about an *hundred and fifty* years after the apostles; and gives, if it be possible, a yet more indubitable testimony to this fact. In his time, (*Anno Domini* 253) a council of sixty-six bishops being convened at Carthage; one *Fidus*, a country bishop, having entertained some doubt (not whether infants should be baptised at all, but) whether baptism might lawfully be given them, till they were eight days old, according to the law of circumcision? In answer to this doubt, they unanimously decreed:—"That the baptism of infants was not to be deferred till the eighth day."—And after many things spoken to the point they conclude thus—"Caterum si homines impedire aliquid, &c. But if any thing could hinder men from baptism, it will be heinous sins, which will debar the adult and mature therefrom. And if those who have sinned extremely, yet if afterward they believe, are baptised, and no man is prohibited from this grace; how much



\* The learned Dr. Gale, who with great acuteness had disputed the preceding authorities, (but whose objections have been abundantly answered by Dr. Wall) does not so much as pretend to contest those which follow, from Cyprian and Austin. These, therefore, being admitted as incontestible by our opponents, we shall see presently, the strength with which they conclude in our favour.

“ more ought not an infant to be prohibited ; who,  
 “ being **BUT JUST BORN**, is guilty of no sin, but of  
 “ original, which he contracted from Adam.—  
 “ Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is our opinion  
 “ that from baptism and the grace of God, who is  
 “ kind and benign to all, none ought to be prohi-  
 “ bited by us ; which as it is to be observed with  
 “ respect to all, so especially with respect to *in-*  
 “ *fants*, and those who are *but just born*, who  
 “ deserve our help and the divine mercy.”\*

Hence, then, it incontestibly appears, that the baptism of infants was the constant, established practice of the church at this time : inasmuch, as neither the person who proposed the doubt, nor any one of the sixty-six bishops who answer it, made the least question of the baptism of infants, but speak of it as a thing universally acknowledged and practised in the church.

Now, as this was but an hundred and fifty years after the apostles ; and some of these bishops may reasonably be supposed seventy or eighty years old ; if they were baptised in their infancy, (which can with no reason be doubted) it carries up the practice to within eighty years of the apostles themselves. And at the time of their infancy, there were many alive who were born within the very age of the apostles, and could not but certainly and infal-



\* Cyprian Epist. ad Fidum. Epist. 64.

libly know what the apostolic practice and appointment was as to this matter.

*The Clementine Constitutions*, (a book thought by some to be of very great antiquity; and by all acknowledged to be extant in the fourth or fifth century, and to contain a good account of the ancient discipline and practice) have this express admonition “*Βαπτισετε δε υμων και τα νηπια.*”—“*And baptise your infants, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God;*” for he says, “*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*”

There are several other testimonies, from *Clemens Alexandrinus*; quest. et. respon. apud *Just. Martyr*; *Greg. Nazian*; *Bazil*; *Ambrose*; *Chrysostom*; and *Jerom*, most full to this purpose, to be seen in *Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, too long to be here inserted: I shall further insist, only, upon a very remarkable and decisive one, from the writings of *Austin* and *Pelagius*; about three hundred and ten years after the apostles. I bring it not to prove baptism of infants to have been the undoubted, universal practice of the church in their days; (this would be quite needless, after the much earlier, and the indisputable evidence already produced from the council at *Carthage*, &c.) but, to shew it to have been the constant and immemorial practice from the very beginning of christianity.

In his controversy with *Pelagius*, about ori-

ginal sin; to prove infants to be tainted with it, Austin frequently and with great triumph urges their baptism; demanding:—"Why infants are baptised for the remission of sin, if they have none?" Pelagius seems exceedingly embarrassed by this argument,\* and every one sees, how



\* It is surprising, to see the shifts by which *Pelagius*, *Celestius* and their followers, endeavour to evade the force of this argument. Sometimes they acknowledged infants to have actual sin, and that their peevishness and froward temper is to be considered as such.—Sometimes, they urged, that infants had pre-existed; and it was for sins done in some former state that they were brought to the baptismal laver.—Sometimes, they said, that they were not baptised for the forgiveness of sin; but that they may be made heirs of the kingdom.—Sometimes, that they were baptised for forgiveness; not that they had any sin, but that the uniformity of the words might be kept: or, because they were baptised into the church, where forgiveness was to be had; and with a sacrament, which had the means of forgiveness for those who wanted it. *Vide Wall's History*, Vol. I. p. 280.

To such extreme difficulties they thought themselves reduced, to reconcile their opinion with the baptism of infants. But, these had all instantly removed, and the battery which so annoyed them been demolished at once, by only denying that infants were to be baptised. Yet, so far are they from this, that they seem not to have raised the least doubt of this kind. Pelagius owns, as above cited. And Celestius confesses, that infants are to be baptised according to the rule of the universal church.

Note, Pelagius and Celestius were born, one in Britain, the other in Ireland; they lived a long time in Rome, the then centre of the world, and reputed head of the church: they were both, for some time, at Carthage, in Africa; then, the one settled at Jerusalem; the other travelled



much it concerned him to deny the baptism of infants, had there been any possible ground for it; and to do all that in him lay, to invalidate and disprove it. Had it been an innovation, a departure from the apostolic practice; it is impossible but so very learned and acute a person as Pelagius, who lived so near the apostles, and had been personally conversant in some of the most noted churches of Europe, Asia, and Africa, must have been able to discover it, and both to have and to give at least some strong suspicion of it. But does the very sagacious Pelagius attempt any thing like this? No: so far from it, that some of his adversaries having drawn as a consequence of his opinion, that infants are not to be baptised, he warmly disclaims it, and with indignation complains.—“ *Se ab hominibus infamari quod neget parvulis baptismi sacramentum, &c.* That he had been slanderously represented, by men as denying the sacrament of baptism to infants.” And adds, “ *Nunquam se, vel impium aliquem hæreticum,*

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through all the noted Greek and Eastern churches, in Europe and Asia. If there had, then, been any church, or number of churches, throughout the whole world, not only in that, but in the two preceding ages, who denied the baptism of infants; it is impossible but these two very learned and sagacious persons must have known, or heard of it, and that they would not have failed to take mighty advantage from it to check the triumphs of their opponents; and to wrest from them this argument, by which, of all others they were most grievously pressed.

“ *audisse qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis diceret.*”  
 —“ That he never heard, no not even any impious  
 “ heretick, who would say that which he had men-  
 “ tioned, viz. that unbaptised infants are not liable  
 “ to the condemnation of the first man, and that  
 “ they are not to be cleansed by the regeneration  
 “ of baptism.” And then proceeds—“ *Quis enim*  
 “ *ita evangelicæ lectionis ignarus est, &c.* For who  
 “ is so ignorant of that which is read in the gos-  
 “ pel as, I do not say boldly to affirm, but even  
 “ lightly to suggest, or even to imagine such a  
 “ thing? In a word, who can be so impious, as to  
 “ hinder infants from being baptised and born again  
 “ in Christ; and so make them miss of the kingdom  
 “ of God?”

And having cited these words of our Saviour,  
 John iii. 5, *no one can enter into the kingdom of  
 God, except he is born again of water and of the  
 spirit*, he goes on—“ *Quis ille tam impius est qui*  
 “ *cujuslibet ætatis parvulo.*”—“ Who is there so  
 “ impious as to refuse an infant, of what age so-  
 “ ever, the common redemption of mankind? ”\*  
 Austin also, reciting the above-mentioned decision  
 of the council at Carthage, which determines that  
 infants are in no wise to be denied baptism, adds,  
 —“ *Non solum in catholicâ ecclesiâ, verum etiam*  
 “ *in qualibet heresi vel schismate constitutis, non*  
 “ *memini me aliud legisse.*—That, neither from

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\* Austin. de peccato Origin. cap. 17, 18.

“ such as were of the catholic church, nor of such  
 “ as belonged to any sect or schism, whatsoever,  
 “ he remembered to have read otherwise in any  
 “ writer.”\* i. e. of any who denied, that infants  
 were baptised upon the account of original sin.  
 “ This the church has *always* had, has *always*  
 “ held.”†

These, now, are the evidence, on which we rest the antiquity of this fact; and by which we prove the baptism of infants to have been the practice in the christian church, from the very beginning. Justin Martyr about forty years; Irenæus about sixty-seven; and Tertullian about an hundred years after the apostles, gave plain intimations of its being the christian practice in their times. From Origen an hundred and ten years; and from Cyprian and the synod of sixty-six bishops, one hundred and fifty years from the above date, we have indisputable proof of its being then the established and standing usage of the church. And Austin and Pelagius, about three hundred and ten years after the apostles, (though the latter was under the strongest temptation, and even necessity to deny the baptism of infants, had there been any possible ground for it) acknowledge, that they never heard, nor read of any, whether,

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\* Austin de pec. & merit. cap. 6.

† Serm. x. de verb. Apost.

true christian, heretick, or schismatic, who denied baptism to infants. This is the evidence: let us now argue from it.

1. *All* the churches, throughout the whole christian world, were in the age of the apostles, formed and established upon *one* and the *same* plan.

That is to say, they *all* either baptised infants; or else they *all* rejected them from baptism. What the opinion, and the practice of the apostles was in this matter, (who were sent out into all the world to preach and establish churches) must be perfectly, universally, infallibly known; nor could it possibly be mistaken, by any one single church throughout the whole earth, during the apostolic age. The Corinthians, for instance, the Galatians, the Thessalonians, &c. all perfectly knew, whether Paul and his companions, when they baptised and formed them into a church, baptised their infants also; or else rejected them from baptism. And

2. As to the age, immediately following the apostles; it is impossible that they should be ignorant or mistaken as to this fact. They could not be in the least doubt, how their fathers had received and learnt from the apostles, and practised as to this matter. For whether infants were, or were not, then baptised, was so notorious and plain a fact, a fact of so public and conspicuous a

nature, as could not possibly escape the knowledge of every particular christian, then living upon earth.\*

Now if *all* the churches throughout the world, were really established by the apostles upon the plan of only adult baptism, and they every where rejected infants, and forbid them to be baptised; it will appear a thing absolutely inconceivable, and even a moral impossibility, that the baptism of infants should so early, so widely, so universally prevail, throughout the whole world, as we have now seen it to have done.

For if the baptism of infants was not an apostolic institution and practice, how must the persons, who first attempted to introduce it, be received? Would not all their neighbouring christians immediately cry out upon the innovation, and demand,—“By what authority do you presume to perform this quite new, this unheard of and strange ceremony of baptising an infant!”—



\* With whatever credulity as to miracles, said to be wrought in their days, these early writers may be charged, it cannot at all affect their evidence as to the fact, here in debate. For, as there was no possibility of their being themselves deceived as to this matter; so neither could they be under temptation to falsify in their accounts of it. Nor indeed, had the temptation been ever so strong, could they have ventured to falsify in a fact notorious to all the world; and when every christian then living could have stepped forth, and borne witness to the falsehood of their account.

Suppose them to have urged, in support of their practice, the same scriptures with us; would it not have presently been replied upon them with unanswerable strength?—"But did not the apostles  
" and first preachers of christianity understand the  
" true sense and force of these scriptures? Yet  
" not one of them all, nor any one of their follow-  
" ers, ever baptised an infant, as we all perfectly  
" know, and as you cannot but own. Look into all  
" the churches throughout the whole earth, into  
" Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Africa,  
" Spain, &c. and you will find there never was such  
" a thing known, nor heard of amongst christians,  
" as baptising an infant."

What! I greatly wonder, could the first baptisers of infants possibly reply? Could they urge that it was an apostolic injunction and practice? No: the whole christian world would have rose up against them, and borne witness to the falsehood of such a pretence. Could they hope then to establish this invention of their own; yea, was it actually established, in direct opposition to the apostles' authority, and to their then perfectly well-known institution and practice?—Impossible to imagine!

What then? I again ask, could the first baptisers of infants urge in favour of their practice? Or how was it possible, it should be received, yea, prevail, yea so universally prevail, that the very learned and acute Pelagius about three hundred

years after, never heard of a church amongst either catholics or hereticks, who did not baptise infants, if *all* the churches in the world were constituted by the apostles upon the directly opposite plan? Yea, and when the persons who first began this practice could not but own, that the authority and example of *all* the apostles, and of *all* the primitive christians, and of *all* the churches in the world were absolutely against them?

Well; but suppose a few persons were of so odd a turn of mind, as to run into this quite novel and unheard of practice, of baptising infants; can it be imagined that whole churches would be led blindly away after them? Or, if whole churches might be thus seduced, could whole nations be so too? Yea, if whole nations might, can it enter into the heart of any reasonable man, that all the nations of the christian world, both the eastern and the western churches, in the space of about two hundred years, universally fell in with this anti-apostolic and new invented rite of worship; and so strangely apostatised from the primitive and pure doctrine of Christ as to this matter! It were the height of absurdity even to surmise such a thing.

The extravagance of the supposition is moreover mightily increased, by remembering—that a vast number of sects and heresies sprung up, and the christian church was rent into many angry and

contending parties, during these times.\* In the second century, or the age immediately following the apostles, there were those who took their names from *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, *Valentinus*, *Carpocrates*, *Marcion*, *Montanus*; and the whole church was rent into two furious and angry sects, the eastern and the western, by the controversy about Easter. In the third century there arose *Novatian*, *Sabelius*, *Paulus Samosatensis*, *Manes*, &c. with their followers. In the fourth, the *Maletians*, *Arians*, *Athanasians*, &c. Now these several inflamed parties, into which by divine permission, the church was then divided, were watchful and severe spies upon each others conduct: so that if any of them had innovated in this matter, of baptising infants, how readily would the rest have entered their protest against it, and exclaimed loudly upon the innovation? But, it seems, so far were they from this; that however mutually inflamed and angry as to other points; yet, laying aside their animosity, they all surprisingly agree, in the affair of baptising infants, to depart from the apostolic practice; and



\* No less than *ninety* different heresies are said to have sprung up in the three first centuries. Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Austin, and Theodoret, it may be justly observed, each of these wrote catalogues of the several sects and sorts of christians they had ever heard of; but none of them mention any that denied infant baptism, except those who denied all baptism.



by an unaccountable confederacy connive at one another in this dangerous superstition.—Strange! beyond all belief!—That amidst their many mutual accusations, reproaches, complaints, we meet not, in all antiquity, with one upon this head; and not a man, catholic nor heretic, dropping a single word against this gross innovation; except, perhaps, Tertullian; and he not absolutely, (if at all) censuring it; and supporting his dislike of it, by reasons which are no strength but a dishonour to any cause.

For an hundred years after the death of the apostles, *their* authority was sufficient, our brethren acknowledge, to keep such an innovation from entering the church. They therefore usually place the introduction of this practice about the beginning of the third century. But behold! in the short space of about two hundred years more, without a single precept to warrant, or a single example to encourage it, yea with the well-known practice of the apostles themselves, and of all the churches they ever planted throughout the whole world, confessedly, openly, directly against it; under all these disadvantages, the baptism of infants, it seems, so *every where prevailed*, that upon the face of the whole earth there was not a church found where it was not performed!—To him that believes this, what can be incredible?

Some, perhaps, to evade the force of the fore-

going argument, may object—"There have been other great corruptions, such as image-worship, transubstantiation, &c. which have alike universally prevailed in the church." But the answer is extremely obvious. 1. This is far from being true; nay it is entirely without foundation. Neither image-worship, nor transubstantiation ever universally prevailed. The latter has by the greater part of the christian church been in all times rejected as it is at this day; and though the former, since, the seventh century, has spread itself wide, and too generally prevailed, yet it was not without mighty struggles and oppositions in the church; numerous synods of bishops zealously declared against it: solemn decrees of councils, not one kingdom or church only, but in diverse regions of the earth, publicly condemned it: the arm both of civil and military power was strenuously exerted to establish and support it: grievous persecutions were raised upon its account: and many testified their abhorrence of it by bitter sufferings, and death itself. —And is this a case at all parallel to that of infant baptism, which we have now been considering? The most prejudiced judgment must confess it is not. Besides—

2. Had these corruptions, indeed, as universally prevailed, as infant baptism ever did; yet would this, by no means, have put them upon an equal foot with that; or have made the cases at

all parallel. For, when the bishop of Rome had claimed and was acknowledged to be the infallible head, the supreme pastor of the church, the vicar of Christ, &c. when emperors and kings took upon them to convene councils to explain doctrines, and establish faith by dint of civil authority; cherishing and upholding one party by worldly honours and preferments; but terrifying and crushing others by banishment, confiscations, imprisonment and death: finally; when the clergy had both the terrors and the riches of this world, much at their disposal; and the spirit of true piety, fortitude and faith began to languish in the church, (as it miserably languished, in the times when image-worship and transubstantiation were brought in) and a spirit of pride and domination, of sensuality and sloth sprung up in its room:—When this, I say, was the case, such an universal departure from the apostles' doctrine and practice may seem easily to be accounted for, and has nothing in it so strange. But—when the circumstances of the church were the very reverse of all this; harassed and severely pressed by persecutions from without; split into various sects and angry parties within; destitute of worldly honours to recommend, and of worldly terrors to enforce any doctrine or practice; and acknowledging no visible, supreme, infallible head, as having dominion over its faith; when this was the case (as in the three first

centuries, when infant baptism has been shewn universally to prevail, it manifestly was,) every one sees the wide, the vast difference; and must confess the impossibility of so universally corrupting the apostolic doctrine and practice of baptising only the adult, if any such there had been; and of foisting in, throughout the whole world, infant baptism in its stead.

So that, upon the whole, it appears a clear and a very strongly attested fact:—That the practice of baptising infants was primitive and apostolic; and that the first christian churches were every where formed and established upon this scheme.

But the examples of scripture-baptism, our brethren are wont to urge, are all on their side.—This is confidently, indeed, asserted; but upon a closer examination will be found a manifest mistake. There being not, in the whole scripture, *one single instance* of the baptism for which they plead, and which is practised amongst them; viz. *That those who are born of christian parents, are to be suffered to become adult before they are baptised.*—This, it is to be observed carefully, is the point in question betwixt us. As for the case of adult proselytes, or converts to christianity, these, we all agree, are not to be baptised till they personally profess faith. The scripture instances therefore of such proselytes, baptised upon such profession, are of no pertinence nor weight

at all in the controversy before us: for these are exactly consonant to our sentiments and practice. The only point in debate is—*what is to be done with the infants of these proselytes?*—Are they to be baptised with their parents?—Or; are they to be let alone till they become adult, and then be baptised upon their personal profession? The latter, our brethren say; but have not in the whole scripture, I again affirm it, one instance of such practice; no, nor any shadow or appearance of it. Their boasts, therefore, of scripture instances, precedents, examples, are mere sound, and nothing else. Whereas the instance of *Lydia*, Acts xvi. 14, 15. (not to mention *Stephanas* and the *Jaylor*) strongly favours our practice; whose faith *alone* is mentioned, and, immediately it is added, *her household were baptised.*



*The RELIGIOUS or MORAL purposes of  
Infant-Baptism.*

IF it be asked—what are the *moral* purposes of this Baptism of Infants? or, of what real benefit or use in religion? It were sufficient to reply—of the same benefit and use as infant-circumcision was; which is acknowledged to have been enjoined by God, and practised by his church, for more than two thousand years.—But I add; it is of great moral benefit; as it is

both a solemn vow or dedication on our part, and a gracious condescension and promise on God's.

FIRST. It is a solemn vow or dedication on our part. For, herein, the religious parent publicly recognises his own covenant with God: binds himself by a sacred promise to watch over the immortal soul now committed to his charge, and to train it up in a religious manner; and devotes first himself, and then his helpless infant, to the divine patronage and care. By being baptised into the *name*, the child is solemnly given up to the dominion and favour, and is received as the peculiar property, the subject and charge, *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.\** And to one who well considers into what a world of various difficulties, temptations and sins, his infants are born; how every age and path of life is beset with dangers and snares; and what consequences, of awful moment, depend upon the manner in which they pass the present state:—to him that considers this, it cannot but appear an inestimable privilege to be permitted to



\* *Baptising in (or unto) the name*—signifies, commending a person to the peculiar *blessing* and *patronage* of him, or them, in whose *name* he is baptised. Thus, when the form of solemn benediction is described, Numb. vi. 23.—*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, &c.* It is added—*And they shall PUT MY NAME upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.*

give them up, in this solemn manner, to the gracious protection and conduct of heaven.

The sentiments of a religious parent, on such an occasion, may be thus expressed.—“ I acknowledge, Almighty God, with the greatest thankfulness and joy, thine absolute right in me, and in all that is mine. This child, which thou hast given me, I receive as from thine hand. It is thine, for thou hast formed it, and redeemed it by the blood of thine only begotten Son. To THEE therefore I now solemnly devote and give it up: to be guarded by thy providence; ministered to by thine angels; influenced by thy spirit; conducted safe through the many dangers and evils of this present world, and to be preserved to thine everlasting kingdom and glory in the other.

“ For ever blessed be thy name, that as *by one man's offence, judgment came upon all to condemnation and death; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift comes upon all to justification of life.* That as the fatal effects of the first Adam's sin extended to our infant-offspring, so, the salutary effects of the second Adam's righteousness extend also to these, raising them to glory, to happiness and life.

“ I render unfeigned thanks, that the blessings of redemption and of the covenant of grace, reach also to them. That thou hast commanded that little children be brought into thy presence

“ to receive thy solemn benediction, and hast  
 “ declared them to belong to thy family and king-  
 “ dom. That the baptismal water is appointed as  
 “ a standing monument of thy favour and gracious  
 “ acceptance of them; and that by this figure is  
 “ represented, thy readiness, *to pour down thy spirit*  
 “ *upon our seed, and thy blessing upon our off-*  
 “ *spring.\**—Lord I believe! I most thankfully ac-  
 “ cept this liberty which is given me. I here  
 “ bring my helpless infant, commending it to God,  
 “ and the power of his grace. Oh take it into  
 “ thy family, and into the arms of thy love! Pour  
 “ down thy blessings on it, and write its name in  
 “ the book of life! May it be *sanctified from the*  
 “ *womb*: consecrated a chosen vessel, fitted for  
 “ thy service! May thy spirit descend upon, and  
 “ dwell continually in it, as a new principle of  
 “ life; gradually rectifying the disorders of its na-  
 “ ture; rooting out the seeds of vanity and folly  
 “ which may spring up in its heart; enlightening  
 “ its understanding, strengthening its moral powers,  
 “ purifying and controlling its appetites and pas-  
 “ sions; and forming it into a living temple and  
 “ habitation of God!

“ Guard and preserve the life, which thou hast  
 “ thus graciously bestowed! Conduct it through  
 “ the dangers of childhood and youth! Spare it,  
 “ if it be thy will, to be a blessing to its friends,



\* Isaiah xl. v. 3.



“ and a burning and shining light, amidst a dark  
 “ and corrupt world! As it grows in years, may  
 “ it continually grow in grace, in wisdom, and in  
 “ virtue, and *in favour with God and men!* Grant  
 “ me, ever to walk before it with a wise and  
 “ perfect heart; to bring it up in the fear and in  
 “ the nurture of the Lord: and so faithfully to  
 “ discharge my duty, in every respect towards  
 “ it, that I may at last meet it with joy at thy  
 “ kingdom and appearance, and with triumph then  
 “ say—*Behold me and the child which thou hast*  
 “ *given me!*”

“ And as it is thus a solemn *vow* and *dedication*  
 on our part: so it is—

SECONDLY. A most gracious *condescension*  
 and *promise* on God's. It is a token of his co-  
 venant; a memorial or sign that he graciously  
 accepts both the religious parent and his child,  
 and *that he will be their God.* By this rite he  
 assures us, that as, in the wisdom of his provi-  
 dence, he treats infants as sinners, through the  
 transgression of Adam; so, in the riches of his  
 grace, he has opened a fountain for their cleansing;  
 will treat them as righteous through the obedience  
 of Christ; and will give them his spirit to quicken,  
 regenerate and raise them to life. Of this spirit  
 the baptismal water is the appointed emblem or  
 sign; and by commanding it to be poured on them  
 he virtually says—

“ *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and*

“*forbid them not*: for *these* also I account as subjects of my moral kingdom, and as a part of that church, or chosen society, over whom I will exercise a peculiar providence and care.

“And the child, which the pious parent has thus publicly devoted to me by baptism, I deliver back to him again; with a solemn charge that he ever, henceforth, consider it as my property:—train it up as for my service; teach it early the principles of christian knowledge and virtue:—pray daily with, and for it; set before it a good example; and watch over it as one who must shortly give an account, to the great shepherd when he shall appear. So only, mayest thou hope that it will be thy comfort and delight in this world; and thy joy, and everlasting crown of rejoicing, in the other.”

These are some of the pious sentiments, which the baptism of infants naturally suggests. Considered in this light, it appears to be of great moral benefit: a most rational and proper service, or act of religion. It manifestly tends to enlarge and to confirm a christian's faith and hope in God, with regard to his helpless child—to a clearer and more extensive view of the great scheme of redemption—to render parents more faithful, more diligent, and serious in the education of their children, if their lives are continued: and if they are taken from them, it affords the noblest support and consolation in their death.

I here beg leave to add—that there is a vast difference in the genius and temper of children, even in their most early years, every one sees. What influence the divine Spirit has in forming the human mind, even in its infant state, and moulding it into a preparation for future usefulness and virtue—we cannot certainly say. Probably very great; for JOHN, it is said, Luke i. 15. *was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.* The prophet ISAIAH, *was called and formed from the womb,* to be a peculiar messenger of heaven to instruct and reclaim the people. Isaiah xlix. 1, 2, 5. And of JEREMIAH it is said, *before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee: and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Jer. i. 5.

It is then, a rational act of worship, for parents, from the very dawn and first beginnings of life, to devote their children to God, and to the peculiar influences of his Spirit. And it is a very merciful and wise appointment, surely, if God has instituted a rite, or sacrament of religion, in which believing parents are commanded thus to dedicate their infants to him; and in which he gives them a solemn token that he will pour his spirit and blessing on them. This is done in baptism. The water poured on them, being an apt and proper emblem of his readiness to hear the prayers of the pious parent and to give his Spirit to the child—to preside over, and assist, its intellectual and moral powers—

to form it to a love of virtue—and to fit and predispose it for usefulness in future life.\*

Upon the whole then we conclude—that it being an undoubted PRIVILEGE of the *Christian* dispensation, as it was of both the *Abrahamic* and *Mosaic* of old, that the *infants of believers*† should be taken, together with themselves, into *covenant with God*; it becomes us, with great thankfulness, to accept of this favour; to dedicate our *children*, as well as *ourselves*, in this solemn manner to him: and thus publicly to declare—that WE and OUR HOUSEHOLD, will serve the LORD.

\* Mr. Tombs, the learned Antipædobaptist, acknowledges that the grace of God may put infants into Christ, and unite them to him by his spirit. Vide *Examen*. §. 10. Suppose, says one, there were a *master*, who had the secret of *predisposing* the brain in order for future learning, or of giving a *principle* or *power* of future knowledge; would it not be a very reasonable and desirable thing to put infants under his management; and might they not thenceforward be counted scholars, or *disciples*, to him, though not yet actually taught?

† By infants of believers, are not to be understood only their natural offspring; but any infants which are their property, or members of their household, or for whose religious education they will solemnly undertake. Thus, not only *Abraham's* own children, but all *born in his house*, or *bought with his money*, he was commanded to *circumcise*. Gen. xvii. 13. So when *Lydia*, the *Jaylor* and *Stephanas* were baptised, it is particularly observed, that their household were baptised with them. Foundling infants, therefore, are very rationally brought to baptism, by those who will engage solemnly for their christian education.

# DIPPING

NOT THE ONLY

SCRIPTURAL AND PRIMITIVE MANNER

OF

## BAPTIZING.

AND SUPPOSING IT WERE, YET A STRICT ADHERENCE  
TO IT NOT OBLIGATORY ON US.



BY

MICAH TOWGOOD.



FOURTH EDITION.



In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor  
uncircumcision, but a new creature..... *Galat. vi. 15.*

# DIPPING

THE

SCRIPTURAL AND PRACTICAL

AND THE HISTORY OF THE

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## PREFACE.



THE subject of the ensuing treatise is, in itself, of so little moment, that it may seem needful to apologize for offering it to public view. But no one knows any thing of the history of religion, that hath not seen, with astonishment, the power of that name to make little things become great; to give trifles a solemn air; and to exalt circumstances and modes into objects, not of men's grave attention only, but of their warmest passions and zeal.

Even under the *christian* dispensation, that rational, sublime and spiritual scheme of worship, the minds of its professors have with great violence been agitated, and fierce controversies have arisen upon the most frivolous points.—Whether the *sacramental supper* is to be eaten with *leavened*, or with *unleavened* bread?—Whether *Easter* is to be kept precisely on the *fourteenth day* after the first *vernal* moon; or, not till the *Sunday* following?—Whether the *Holy Ghost* proceeded from the *Father* AND the *Son*; or, from the *Father* BY the *Son*?—Whether the *christian laity* were to cross themselves with *two* fingers only; or, whether,

like the *clergy*, they might not use *three*?\*—Furious and dire controversies to the terrible convulsion of kingdoms and states, and to the infinite reproach of the christian doctrine and name, have been kindled up in the church, upon such trifling debates.

Of much the same moment is the point here discussed; viz. whether *baptism* is to be administered by *dipping* the body under water; or, by *sprinkling* or *pouring* on.

There are some worthy and good persons—(extremely strange to consider!) who lay so great stress upon this trivial circumstance in religion, as to allow none to be *baptised* christians but those who have been *dipt*—to break off christian fellowship, and renounce communion as saints, with men of the most shining piety, if they have not been thus baptised—and even to think themselves obliged to be unwearied in raising doubts and anxieties in the breasts of such, concerning the validity and truth of their baptism.



\* The church, through the vast empire of Russia, was greatly rent and inflamed, even to tortures and death itself, in the reign of Czar Theodore, by this insignificant dispute. Vide *Present State of Russia*—Vol. I. page 238. Voltaire says, a violent sedition was raised by it in Astracan. *Life of Charles XII.* page 21.



Many pious, but weak minds have been greatly disturbed, not to say distressed, with scruples on this head. When they hear it confidently affirmed—That *baptism* evermore, and constantly, implies *dipping*—That no person ever was, or can be, *baptised*, who has not been *dipt*—And consequently, that themselves are as really *unbaptised*, as *pagans* or *Turks*.—It fills them with concern. They doubt whether they are not wanting in obedience to an express command and institution of Christ.

Effectually to remove every scruple of this kind; to shew, that there is no occasion of putting this *yoke upon the neck of the disciples*, and to vindicate CHRISTIANITY from the unworthy imputation of laying so great a stress upon so merely *circumstantial* and *external* a thing, is the design of the ensuing treatise. How far it shall be effectual to answer this purpose, is humbly left to the favour of heaven; and to the calm and impartial judgment of those into whose hands it may happen to fall.



THE  
QUESTION.

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IS CHRISTIAN-BAPTISM TO BE ADMINISTERED ONLY BY IMMERSION, OR DIPPING THE BODY UNDER WATER? OR, MAY IT NOT ALSO, BY SPRINKLING, OR POURING WATER ON IT?

THE following tract is intended to prove,

FIRST, That *dipping* the body under water, was not the *only* antient and scriptural way of *baptising*. And

SECONDLY, That, if it was, yet a strict adherence to it, is not obligatory upon us; but that this *circumstance* may, very lawfully and properly be now exchanged for that of *sprinkling* or *pouring*.

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SECTION I.

IT is, first, to be shewn that dipping the body under water, was not the only antient and scriptural way of baptising. To which purpose, the three following things are premised; in which all are agreed.

I. That *baptism* (i. e. water-baptism) is but an *emblematical*, or *figurative* thing.

II. That the general nature or design of this emblem or figure, is—by the application of water, to signify or betoken a person to be holy or clean; appropriated to, and fit for the divine service. And,

III. That *baptism* was really a *divine* institution; and, by the express command of GOD, practised as a religious rite in his church; both long before, and at the time of *John's* and CHRIST'S appearing, and beginning to baptise.

This last proposition is not, perhaps, so carefully attended to, as it ought. We are wont to consider baptism, as a purely christian institution; and to trace it to no higher origin than JESUS CHRIST, or *John the Baptist*. But this is certainly wrong. Baptism was, unquestionably, a divine institution; practised as a religious and sacred ceremony, in the church of God, ages before. There were *διαφοροι Βαπτισμοι* *divers kinds of baptisms*, the apostle expressly says,\* in which the worship of God stood, under the Jewish dispensation. Neither John, nor our Saviour, did properly institute this rite;† but only took this ancient, standing, religious institution, and applied it to a particular purpose, in their mission: namely,

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\* Heb. ix. 10.

† It is a great truth (says *Grotius*) what the most learned *Broughton* notes, that *Christ* instituted no new rites. Vide Tract concerning Communicating, &c.

by the application of water, to betoken to certain persons, that they should be accepted of God, as holy and pure; fit for his service, and for a place in that church, or kingdom of the Messiah, which was then going to be set up.\*

They made no alteration in its general nature or design. Baptism, under the New Testament, has the very same general meaning, purpose or intent, with baptism under the old; and is but an application of water to signify or betoken a person to be holy, or consecrated to the service of God. It is a ceremonial, and but a ceremonial washing in both.

Now, forasmuch as neither CHRIST, nor *John the Baptist*, did properly *institute*, but only *borrowed* or *continued* this previously instituted ceremony; and forasmuch, as it has the very same general meaning and design under the christian scheme of worship, as it had under the Jewish; it follows, that to look back to the *manner* of its administration under the *Old Testament*, will be of great use to direct us, as to the *manner* of its administration under the *New*.

What, then, was the manner, in which baptism

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\* Our Lord took (says Dr. *Lightfoot*) into his hands baptism, such as he found it; adding only this, that he exalted it to a nobler purpose, and to a larger use. *Hor. Heb. Matt. iii. 6.*

was wont to be administered; that is to say, in which water was wont to be applied, by God's express command, to persons or things, to betoken them holy, and consecrated to his service; at that time, and in that church, in which both John and Jesus Christ were born, and brought up? Was it *only* by *dipping* wholly under water? Or, was it not *also* by *sprinkling*, or *pouring* it on? I reply—Undoubtedly by *both*.

That it was sometimes by dipping, there is no dispute. And that it was also, sometimes, by sprinkling, or pouring on, the case is equally clear. Amongst a multitude, I shall mention but the following texts.

Levit. xiv. When a leper, who had been put out from the camp of Israel (the then enclosure, or church of God) as being unclean or unholy, was again to be taken in, and received to the communion of saints, (i. e. of the Israelites, the holy people) and to a free access to God; by what ceremony was it done? **SPRINKLING** *water on him*, was one of the principal rites by which he was thus received. Verse 7. *And he, the priest, shall SPRINKLE upon him, that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean.* By the same rite also, of *sprinkling*, the *infected house was to be purified*, i. e. declared *holy* or *clean*. Verses 51, 52.

Note. It ought carefully to be remembered,

that the *law* is expressly said to be a *shadow* or exemplar of the *christian* dispensation; and the then scheme of worship, was intended to be a sacred figure or type of the present.\*

Numb. viii. When the Levites were to be separated from the rest of the tribes, and consecrated a holy priesthood to God (a figure of christians, who, at their baptism, are separated from the rest of the world, and are consecrated a *holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.*†) How was it done? Verses 6, 7. *Take the Levites, from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them: and thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them, SPRINKLE water of purifying upon them.*

Numb. xix. 11. If a man had *touched a dead body*, and was thereby become *unclean*, unfit to approach God, and to stand before him in his sanctuary; by what right was he to be declared clean, and re-admitted to the divine presence? *The water of separation was to be SPRINKLED upon him, and upon his tent, and upon his vessels.*

Finally;—When the Israelites were called out from among the idolatrous Egyptians; and were sanctified and set apart as a *holy people* or church to God; they *were all baptised*, the apostle says,‡ *by the cloud, and by the sea, εν τη νεφελη και εν τη*



\* Heb. viii. 5. ix. 9. x. 1. Vide *Peirce* in *Loc.*

† 1 Peter ii. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 2. See more concerning this text, p. 89.

θαλασση; i. e. by the cloud *pouring down* water on them, and by the sea *sprinkling* them with its surges, as they passed through. And when they were, in the most solemn manner, entered into covenant with Jehovah at Sinai, and formed into a church; by what token or rite did Moses, the mediator, initiate or admit them? *When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law; and they had publicly consented and promised to obey; he took the blood of sacrificed beasts, and water, and SPRINKLED both the book and all the people.\**

Hence, then, it is indisputable; that SPRINKLING, or POURING ON *water*, was one of the principal ways in which it was applied, by God's express command, to betoken persons to be *holy*: Or, that it was a religious ceremony, by which men were taken from a state of distance, into a state of nearness or access to Almighty God, in the very church, wherein *John* and JESUS CHRIST were brought up, and from which they borrowed this religious rite of baptising; for it is carefully to be observed that this is but a *borrowed rite*.

But, perhaps, it will be replied—"That none of the instances, now mentioned, of applying water for purification, were really baptising; for the *true* and the *only* import of that word is



\* Heb. ix. 19. .



“*plunging or dipping.*” If this, indeed, can be proved, all that has been alleged must be owned of little weight. But if the contrary be clearly shewn; if it can be evidently demonstrated that the word *Βαπτίζω*, to baptise, is frequently (and even generally) used in scripture, where the act of *pouring or sprinkling*, not *dipping*, is intended; and that the above-mentioned applications of water, under the Jewish law, are expressly called *baptisms*,—the point will be then fully cleared; and there remains no further room for doubt, as to this matter. But both these, I apprehend, are very evidently to be shewn.—To begin with the latter.

I. The above-mentioned applications of water, under the Jewish law, are, in scripture, accounted and actually called *baptisms*. For, Heb. ix. 10. it is said the Jewish dispensation *stood in meats, and drinks, and DIVERSE BAPTISMS*, *διαφοροῖς Βαπτισμοῖς*. All, who understand the original, know, that the words do and must mean *diverse sorts of baptisms*, or baptisms of different species or kinds. It is not said *πολλοῖς many*, nor *ποικίλοις various*, but *διαφοροῖς diverse*, or *different sorts*. The only place, in the New Testament, where the word (*διαφορος*) is used, besides this, is Rom. xii. 6. Where, by *διαφορα χαρισματα* differing, or diverse gifts, is indisputably meant several *differing kinds of gifts*; as the words following demonstrate, viz. *prophecy, teaching, ruling, &c.* The word *Βαπ-*

τισμοι *baptisms*, in the one place, like the word *χαρισματα* *gifts*, in the other, is used as a genus, or general term, under which are comprehended several species or kinds; and, when here joined with *διαφοροι* *diverse*, must necessarily signify several different manners, or modes, of applying water, for ceremonial purification, under the Jewish law. Some of these were by dipping, some by sprinkling or pouring. Should, then, a person now say—That there is *no* baptism but by dipping,—he would most plainly and undeniably contradict the apostle; for he would hereby affirm, that there is but *one* kind of baptism; whereas the apostle declares there are more kinds than one.\*

As, in the forecited passage, Rom. xii. 6. by calling the several powers in the christian church, viz. *prophecy, ruling, teaching, διαφορα χαρισματα* *differing gifts*, the apostle does, undoubtedly, pronounce each to be a gift; so, by calling the several ways of Jewish purification, viz. *sprinkling, pouring, dipping, διαφοροι βαπτισμοι* *differing baptisms*, he does, as certainly and undoubtedly, pro-

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\* Concerning the sense of the word *διαφορος* *diverse*, see also *Wisdom*, vii. 10. *διαφορας φυτων* *diversities*, or diverse sorts, of plants. *Dan.* vii. 19. *θηριον διαφορον παρα παν θηριον* a beast of a *kind* or species different from all other beasts. So the word *διαφορωτερος* is twice used, in this same epistle. *Heb.* i. 4. and viii. 6. in both which places, it signifies of a *very different kind*. A name of a *very different kind*; and a ministry, of a *very different kind* from theirs.

nounce each to be a baptism. Yea, that the apostle has, in this place, a more particular regard to the Jewish *sprinklings*, than *dippings*, seems highly probable (to say the least) from his express mention of the *sprinklings*, verse 13, as some of the principal of those legal purifications, or different baptisms, concerning which he had spoken. Verse 10. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, (with which the water of purification was made) SPRINKLING the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more, &c.*

If any shall imagine that the baptising of cups, pots, tables, human bodies, &c. is meant by these *diverse baptisms*, the reply is obvious. These, if they must be all dipt, in order to their being baptised, can with no truth or propriety be called diverse or differing kinds of baptisms; for they are then but one and the same baptism of differing things.

Here, then, is full proof that the scripture uses the word *Βαπτισμος*, baptism, in so general and large a sense, as evidently to comprehend *sprinkling*, if not chiefly to intend it. *Sprinkling* then, in the judgment of an inspired writer, is an authentic and divinely instituted manner of baptising. I proceed,

2. To shew, that the word *Βαπτίζω*, to baptise, is frequently used, in scripture, where the act of

*pouring* or *sprinkling*, not *dipping* is intended: and that a person is said to be *baptised*, when not his whole body was plunged under water, but when water was applied only to a part.

Luke xi. 38. The pharisee, who invited our Lord to dine with him,  *marvelled that he had not first been BAPTISED before dinner*,  *οτι ο πρωτον εβαπτισθη*. Did he expect that our Lord should have plunged his whole body under water before dinner? Undoubtedly not. But what his expectations were may be learnt from those of his brother-pharisees, in the very same case, as to the disciples; they found fault with them for eating with defiled, that is to say, with *unwashed hands*.\* So Grotius explains it—*Εβαπτισθη* baptised; that is, says he,  *ενιψατο τας χειρας*,  *had not first washed his hands*.† And “ Dr. Pocock observes, and quotes Beza as “ saying, that *βαπτιζεσθαι*,  *to be baptised* (Luke “ xi. 38.) means the same as  *λυεσθαι* and  *χερνιπτειν* “  *to wash*, and  *to wash the hands*. And since that “ washing the hands might be done, either by “ putting them into the water, or by pouring water “ on them; here is a word used, *εβαπτισθη*, which

\* Mark vii. 2.

† Note, Aaron and his sons, even when they went into the tabernacle, and officiated in the most solemn manner, to offer up the burnt-offering upon the altar unto God, are directed (Exodus xxx: 18—21.) to wash their hands and their feet at the laver, verse 19—(not to bathe the whole body) and again, verse 21. “*So shall they wash their hands and their feet, that they die not*.”

“comprehends both the one and the other of these ways.”\*

Mark vii. 3, 4. *The pharisees and all the Jews, when they come from the market, εἰν μὴ βαπτισωνται except they are BAPTISED, eat not.* Did they think themselves obliged, on every such occasion, to be dipt wholly under water? Absurd to imagine! For it is said, not only the *pharisees*, but *ALL the Jews*—If the pharisaic severity might, possibly, subject those very precise persons to such a total immersion, at all times, even in the depth of winter, whenever they *came from market*; it can never be imagined, that *ALL the Jews* did the same. Dr. Pocock proves, Maimonides and the whole body of the rabbins, that the Jews had no such custom.† Some, indeed, to weaken this testimony of the rabbins, have alleged the many whimsical and silly notions with which their writings abound: but this is, certainly, itself, extremely weak. The enquiry is about a national custom, a common, familiar, well known fact. Were their heads so strangely turned that they could not transmit to us a credible account what their national usage was as to washing the hands? Should a papist, or mahometan be called into a court of judicature to give testimony to any public, indifferent fact; would not any person draw upon himself the smiles of the court, who should attempt to set aside their

\* Dr. Wall's Defence, &c. page 111.

† Ibid.

evidence, by alleging their absurd notions and speculations in religion?

Others aware of the force of this text, endeavour to evade it by a different rendering, viz. *And what they buy in the market, unless it be washed, dipt, they eat not.*\* But this will by no means, help off the difficulty. They might, indeed, thus baptise, or dip, the flesh and herbs they brought from the market; but did they also dip their corn, honey, meal, salt, oil, milk, &c.?

Others object,—That, not to suppose the evangelist here to mean a total immersion, by βαπτίζονται, is to make him guilty of an insipid tautology. For after having said, verse 3. *The pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft eat not.* He would not immediately have added, verse 4. *And when they come from the market, except they wash they eat not*—had not this latter washing been something different from the former. But, why not? Is it not quite proper to say—*The pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft* (πυγμα sedulò, crebrò, sæpissimè, so the Syriac. Casaub. Vulg. Erasm. Arab. i. e. *frequently and carefully*) *eat not.* And (particularly, one occasion, in which they are wont thus carefully to wash, is) *when they come from the market*; for then, *except they wash they eat not.*

In the same Mark vii. 4. we read of the wash-



\* Dr. Gale's Reflections, &c. page 167.

ing (Gr. Βαπτισμοὺς the *baptisms*) of cups, and pots, and Κλινῶν of beds. Did they wash their couches and beds by putting them wholly under water? No; this word Βαπτισμοὺς *baptisms*, says Dr. Lightfoot,\* does not always signify dipping or putting under water; but sometimes washing only, or even sprinkling.†

1 Cor. x. 1, 2. The apostle says—*All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all BAPTISED into Moses, εβαπτισαντο εν τη νεφελη και εν τη θαλασση by the cloud and by the sea.* But how were they baptised *in*, or *by*, the cloud, and *by* the sea? By being immersed into, or totally overwhelmed with them? Most certainly, not. The Egyptians were thus baptised; the Israelites were not. For it is said, Exod. xiv. 21, 22. *The Lord caused the sea to go back, by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry land; and the waters were divided; and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.* Note: though they might possibly be said to be covered or overwhelmed by the cloud; yet so were they

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* Vide Poli. Syn. in Loc.

† I must say, and I will make it good, says Dr. Owen, that no honest man, who understands the Greek tongue, can deny the word to signify to *wash* as well as to dip. Dr. Owen on Infant Baptism and Dipping.

not, nor could they be, by the sea. The sea, it is undeniable, never overwhelmed, or covered, them at all: yet behold! they are expressly said to be baptised in, or by, the sea, as well as by the cloud. Their being baptised, then, by the sea, must signify something else besides being immersed into, or covered or overwhelmed with it. What then, does it mean? Or how were they baptised by it?—As God sent a strong east wind to drive back and divide the waters; the same instrument was, no doubt, employed to continue them in this state. Now by the mighty agitation into which the waters were cast, by this violent repulsion; and the strong wind at the same time furiously blowing; it is easy to conceive the passing Israelites must be sprinkled with the spray of the tossing waves, and thus were baptised by it.

Here, then, is another incontestible instance of a scripture baptism without immersion. The Israelites are expressly said *to be baptised in, or by, the sea*, as well as by *the cloud*; yet no one will presume to say they were buried or overwhelmed in it.

In further confirmation of this sense of the word, βαπτίζω *to baptise*, I beg leave to ask—what is the real nature or design of christian baptism? It is unquestionably but an emblematical, or figurative thing. But what is the water, in this religious rite, designed to figure or represent? Un-

doubtedly the *Holy Ghost*.* This is frequently in scripture, spoken of and promised, under the emblem of *water*:† and is represented as the great instrument of purifying, refreshing and strengthening the soul, as water is of the body. Accordingly, John says, *I indeed baptise you with water; but he, Christ, shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost.—Except a person is born of water, and of the Spirit:—Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?—Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost?—The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.—* It is therefore, carefully to be observed, that the water, which in christian baptism is applied to the body, being intended as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to the soul, to sanctify and cleanse it; it will throw great light on the present subject to take notice in what manner this Spirit is represented, in scripture, as communicated or given to us. Are we, generally, represented as *immersed into*, or *overwhelmed with the Spirit*: or else, as having it *poured down* upon us? Undoubtedly by the latter.

By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body



* See Luke iii. 16. John iii. 5. Acts i. 5. ii. 38. x. 47. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Tit. iii. 5.

† Isaiah xlv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27. John iv. 10, 14. John vii. 38, 39.

—And, *he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* How was this done? The scripture itself informs us—viz. *By the Holy Ghost descending, and sitting on them, in the form of cloven tongues of fire.* Note, they were not overwhelmed, or covered, with the fire, when they were baptised with it; but it only fell upon, and rested on them. And see how St. Peter remarks upon this fact, namely, their being *baptised with the Holy Ghost, and its resting on them in the form of fire!* verses 16, 17, 18. *This is that, which was spoken by the Prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD, I will POUR OUT of my Spirit UPON all flesh—And ON my servants, and ON my handmaids I will POUR OUT, in those days, of my SPIRIT.* Observe, *THIS is THAT which was spoken*—i. e. *By this fact, of our baptism with the Spirit, is that prophecy, I will pour out fulfilled.*—So *Acts* x. 44, 45. And xi. 15, 16. *When Peter, and the Jews which were with him, saw the HOLY GHOST επεπεσε, και εκκεχυται επι τα εθνη, FALL ON, and POURED OUT UPON the gentiles; then remembered I, says he, the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed BAPTISED with water; but ye shall be BAPTISED with the HOLY GHOST.* Hence, then, it is most evident, that *this POURING OUT of the Spirit, which Peter saw, was that BAPTISM with the SPIRIT of which CHRIST spake; and of which baptism with water was an intended emblem or sign.*

See also, how the Apostle *Paul*, Tit. iii. 5, 6. joins the sign, and the thing signified; and illustrates the one, by the other. The *washing of regeneration* (i. e. the baptismal water, the sign) and *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, (the thing signified by it, not, with which we are overwhelmed, nor into which we were dipt, but) which he hath shed ἐξέχεεν *poured out upon us* abundantly—So then, the manner in which *we all, by one Spirit, are baptised into one body*, is by having that *Spirit shed down, or poured out* upon us; and of the imparting to us this *Spirit*, the baptismal water is the appointed emblem, representation or sign. Let it hence, then, be now fairly and impartially judged—In what manner this water is most significantly applied—If baptism, by immersion, be allowed to be more significative of a *death unto sin*, as is usually urged from Coloss. ii. 12; *sprinkling* or *pouring* on, surely, is much more significative of the promise of the *Holy Spirit*, and of its cleansing, supporting, and quickening influences; which is the principal thing intended to be represented, and shewed forth in this ceremony.

I beg leave farther to observe—In the christian scheme, every true disciple is represented as being consecrated a *king*, and a *priest*; a *royal priesthood to God*,* when admitted into the christian church. Now the divinely appointed rite of con-



* 1 Peter ii. 9. Rev. v. 10.

secration to these offices, was unction, or pouring on them the sacred oil. But the baptism of christians is their inauguration into these offices; and the Holy Ghost, represented by the baptismal water is expressly called *the unction* or *anointing*,* by which we are consecrated to them. Now baptism by affusion, is a significant and lively emblem of this unction or consecration; whereas, in the mode of immersion, this part of the allusion is entirely lost.

Again.—Was not the baptismal water designed to signify and represent, that *purging from an evil conscience*; that *cleansing* or purification; which we obtain by *the blood of Christ*? But are we ever spoken of in scripture as overwhelmed with, or dipt into, that blood of the son of God? Is it not, on the contrary, always represented as sprinkled upon us?

Finally. The circumstances or state of those in the ark, (1 Pet. iii. 21.) is said to be a *figure*, or resemblance, of christian baptism; but they were not dipt into the water and taken up again; as it is contended baptised persons ought to be; but only had water poured down upon them.

From these observations on the sense of the word, Βαπτίζω *to baptise*, in the New Testament; we proceed to its use in the Greek version of the



* 1 John ii. 20, 27.

old, and in the Apocrypha. And here it is found but in the four following places.

Eccles. xxxiv. 26. The person who was purified after the touch of a dead body, is called βαπτίζομενος, *one baptised*. Now the ceremony of his purification consisted chiefly, if not entirely, in *sprinkling* water upon him, see Numb. xix. 18. *And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon him that touched a bone, &c.* And this water which was to be sprinkled, is emphatically and expressly called the *water of separation*, and a *purification for sin*, verse 9. There is mention indeed, verse 19, of washing his cloaths and bathing himself in water. But this may, possibly, be understood not of the sprinkled, but of the sprinkler; who, it is plain from verse 21. contracted a defilement from his sprinkling, and even touching the water of separation; but as for the person sprinkled, from verse 12. it seems to follow that the mere sprinkling the water on him, the third and the seventh days, was all requisite to his cleansing. But supposing that he was also obliged to bathe his flesh; it is most evident that this bathing was not that application of water in which the ceremony of his cleansing chiefly consisted, nor on which his purification is made to depend, but the *sprinkling* it upon him. This fully appears from verses 13, 20. where the person, who had neglected this ceremonial purification, is threatened to be *cut off*. For what! For

not having bathed his body? Nothing like it. No, but in each distinct threatening, his guilt is expressly made to consist, in his *not* having the water of purification *sprinkled* upon him. And the apostle, it is observable, speaking of this very same purification, makes the efficacy of the ceremony to consist entirely in the sprinkling, without the least mention of the bathing. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, (with which this water of purification was made) sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more, &c.** But the person thus purified is here called βαπτίζομενος one baptised.

In Judith xii. 7. It is said—*She went out, in the night, into the valley of Bethulia and washed καὶ ἐβαπτίζετο and was baptised, in a fountain of water, by the camp.* Did she dip her whole body in this fountain of water? Yes, some earnestly contend. But utterly without reason, and against all probability. For as there appears to have been but this single fountain in the valley of Bethulia; at, close by, or around which (ἐπι τῆς πηγῆς verse 3.) an army of above two hundred thousand soldiers lay incamped, it is the height of absurdity to imagine that Judith, in the night, could with any convenience or modesty unclothe herself and plunge her whole body therein: or, if she could, that the

* Heb. ix. 13.

soldiers would have suffered it; in a country, where water was both so much needed and so scarce; and so prodigious an army, with its infinite multitude of attendants and cattle, were to be continually supplied from it. When therefore it is said, she *εβαπτίζετο εν τη παρεμβολη επι της πηγης τω υδατος** *was baptised in the camp, at the fountain of water,* (this is the exact rendering) it may be left to any one to judge—Whether, she was totally immersed, or had the water applied only to a part of her body. This, then, must be accounted another very clear and incontestable instance, where a person is said to be baptised, without being overwhelmed.

Isaiah xxi. 4. It is said, *η Ανομια με βαπτίζει iniquity baptises me.* This passage is confessedly an error of the seventy. But it seems to allude to a form of speaking exceeding common in the scriptures, where God is represented as *pouring out* his fury or wrath, upon transgressors. So Jer. xiv. 16. *I will pour their wickedness upon them.* And Rev. xvi. 2. The vengeance heaven executes upon kingdoms and nations is represented as poured out from a vial, or cup. Now, the penal effects of sin being thus usually represented as poured out upon men; it is a beautiful and easy figure to speak of iniquity as pouring them out.

The only remaining passage is, 2 Kings v. 14.



* Note, It is not *εις πηλην* which might be rendered *in the fountain*; but *επι της πηγης* *at the fountain.*

Then went he, (Naaman) down and dipt himself εβαπτισατο washed or baptised himself) seven times, in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God. This is the only place, in the whole bible, where βαπτίζω is rendered *to dip*; nor is it at all necessary that it be so rendered here. Naaman, it is plain, expected that the prophet should have come and *stroked his hand over the place, and recovered the leper.* See verse 11. Instead of this, he bids him—*Go and wash in Jordan seven times.* Verse 10. *Then went he down* (i. e. either from his chariot, or from Samaria to the river Jordan) and εβαπτισατο *washed seven times, according to the saying.*—It is now enquired—Whether he plunged himself all over seven times? Or, whether he only sprinkled or poured water seven times upon the leprous place?—There is nothing in the expression, (by which the command is given,) λσαι wash, to determine it; for this may be alike understood either of a total, or a partial, washing; but there is a remarkable circumstance which seems to give it strongly for the latter: which is this. The prophet, in commanding him to wash seven times, alludes, no doubt, to the manner of cleansing the leper appointed by the Jewish law. Now there were two ways of applying water to the leper's body, enjoined by that law; both alike commanded, and necessary to his cleansing, viz. *bathing*, and *sprinkling*: the former, bathing, to be used but once; the latter, sprinkling, to be done seven

times. See Levit. xiv. 7, 8. When, therefore, the prophet bids him—*Wash seven times*, it is much more natural to understand it of sprinkling, or pouring water, seven times upon the leprous part (over which he expected the prophet should have stroked his hand) than of dipping his whole body seven times; of which kind of washing there is not the least footstep nor shadow in the law.—So the blind man is commanded, John ix. 7. *Go wash in the pool of Siloam*: when not his whole body, doubtless, but only his eyes, besmeared with clay, were to be washed.

Thus have we considered the scripture sense of the word βαπτίζω to baptise; and have, it is presumed, fully proved it to be used when the act of pouring, or sprinkling, not dipping is intended.—Amongst a multitude of authorities which might be produced from other writers, in confirmation of the same, I shall only beg leave to mention one from Origen.* He is speaking of John's baptism; and considering him as the Elias, he says—"How
 " came you to think that Elias when he should
 " come would baptise, who did not, in Ahab's time,
 " baptise the wood upon the altar, but orders the
 " priests to do that; not only once, but says, do
 " it a second time, and they did it the second time.
 " —He therefore who did not himself baptise then,
 " but assigned the work to others, &c."—Now the

* Comment. in Joan. p. 116. D.

act which Origen here calls baptising, and which Elias ordered the priests to perform, was not dipping the wood into water, but *pouring water on it*. See 1 Kings xviii. 33. *Fill four barrels of water, and pour it—on the wood.*

The force of the word βαπτίζω having been thus carefully examined, it may, in the opinion of some, at least, throw some light on this enquiry, to observe:—That as water-baptism is confessedly but a figurative thing; so the scriptures frequently speak of God's giving or imparting to us those very spiritual blessings, which the water in christian baptism was designed to represent as given or imparted, under the figure of *sprinkling* or *pouring*. Thus, when David prays—*Purge me with hyssop,** (alluding to the rite of *sprinkling with hyssop*) *and I shall be clean.* He means the very same thing, viz. pardon, or justification, which is signified by the baptismal water, corresponding to which are the words of Ananias, Acts xxii. 16. *Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins.* When Ezekiel† speaks of God's gathering the Jews from among the heathen, purging them from their uncleanness, and forming them into a church, a peculiar people under his protection, (the very things which are intended to be represented by christian baptism) what figure does he use? *I will sprinkle clean water upon them, and they shall be clean.* So

* Psalm li. 7.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

when Isaiah describes the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, or of the christian dispensation (when the *blessing of Abraham, even the promise of the Spirit, was to come upon the nations,**) he does it under the same figure.—*He shall sprinkle many nations.†*—And, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.‡* Now from these, and other like passages, it may be fairly argued thus:—Forasmuch as the water in christian baptism applied to the body, is confessedly but an emblematical or figurative thing, and was intended to represent some spiritual blessing to be imparted to the soul; and forasmuch as this spiritual blessing, which is intended to be represented by it, is in the old testament often spoken of, as to be given when the new should take place, under the emblem of water *sprinkled or poured out*; it follows, that if the word βαπτίζω to baptise will at all admit of this sense, then it is perfectly agreeable to the analogy of scripture to administer the baptismal water by *sprinkling or pouring*.

It further strengthens this argument to observe—That these very spiritual blessings, of which the baptismal water was the appointed emblem or figure, are in the New Testament also spoken of as actually imparted to us under the figure of

* Gal. iii. 14.

† Isaiah lii. 15.

‡ Isaiah xlii. 3.

sprinkling or *pouring*. Thus, we are said to have *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*,* or a consciousness of guilt. *To be come to the blood of sprinkling*.† *To be chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*.‡ And to have *an unction, or anointing, from the Holy One*,§ poured on us.—Now what, I ask, is meant by all these emblematical and figurative expressions? Is it not remission, justification, or the Holy Spirit; the very things of which the water, in this christian ceremony, was intended to be an emblem?

But it is objected—*John was baptising in Ænon because there was much water there*.|| Does not this very clearly and certainly imply that he baptised the multitudes by dipping? I apprehend, not at all. For there were other necessary and important uses for *πολλα υδατα many waters*¶ besides dipping the multitudes; other weighty and just causes why John should chuse this well-watered and fruitful country for the scene of his ministrations; and not that desert and barren region, where he before sojourned; *that dry and thirsty land* (as the Psalmist** calls it) *where no water is*. Let it be considered—How valuable and

* Heb. x. 22. † Heb. xii. 24: ‡ 1 Pet. i. 2.

§ 1 John ii. 20, 27. || John iii. 23.

¶ *πολλα υδατα* many rivulets, a well-watered country.

** Psalm lxxiii. 1.

scarce water was in those parts—how hot the climate—how numerous the crowds which flocked to John's baptism—From how distant parts they came—How long they tarried to hear his doctrine and instructions; for the mere act of baptising was the least part of John's mission and of the people's end in flocking to him:—Let these be considered, and there will appear sundry good reasons for his choosing this well watered and fruitful country for the place of his preaching, without any regard had to the convenience of dipping. That this therefore was the reason of his making this choice, does by no means appear. So 2 Chron. xxxii. 4. *They stopped all the fountains and brooks—Saying, why should the kings of Assyria come and find MUCH WATER? For what? Why, to drink and refresh their army.*

And here it cannot be improper to ask—If these multitudes were all dipt, how was it done? Were they naked? This modesty forbids. Had they all change of raiment, to undress, and put on dry apparel, when they came out of the water? This the vastness of the multitudes, the openness of the country, and the great distance whence they came, will not easily admit. And that they stood in their wet garments, and hearkened to John's doctrine, or travelled in them many miles to their homes, seems equally improbable. I pretend to no certainty that John did not dip at all. But, as he had seen, by the express appointment of God,

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water applied both ways to the human body, for ceremonial purification, viz. by *sprinkling* and *dipping*; and both these are by the Spirit, which sent him to baptise, actually called *baptisms*, it is possible, he might use both ways of administration, according as the circumstances of time, place, and persons required.*

* It seems an observation of some weight in this debate—That as water was used by divine appointment under the Jewish law in a figurative and sacramental manner, or as an emblem of moral purity; and the christian ceremony of baptising is, undoubtedly, adopted from this usage under the law; so the only way, in which one person (the priest) was ever directed or known to use it upon another, for this symbolical or sacramental purpose, was by *sprinkling* or *pouring* it on, never by *dipping* him into it.

There were *diverse baptisms* under the law: Heb. ix. 10. These baptisms were generally performed by the priest; but the priest amongst the various rites he is directed to use, to sanctify and cleanse a person, and receive him into the church, is never once directed to *dip* or *plunge* him in water, but only to *sprinkle* or *pour* it upon him.

The priests plunging a person, in order to his separation or cleansing, is a ceremony quite strange, and absolutely unheard of through all the sacred records. Persons were, indeed, on some occasions, directed to plunge or bathe themselves; but that one man should take another, and plunge him under water, is a thing utterly uncommanded, unprecedented, and unknown, throughout the whole constitution and history of the Jewish church. It may, therefore, strongly be presumed, not to have been the practice either of John or of Jesus Christ when the christian was set up.

For John being of the priestly race; and beginning his ministrations agreeable to their law, at thirty years old; and using, like them, an application of water to the body

So, that the Jayler* and his whole family; who were all taught, converted and baptised about midnight without any previous thought of, or preparation for this ceremony; had it done by dipping—As, likewise, that Saul, afterwards St. Paul, having neither eaten nor drank† for *three days before*; and being greatly enfeebled, by the mighty shock which he received from the vision in the way, as well as by the great remorse with which he reviewed, and repented of his crimes; and it being now also in the depth of winter;‡ as the learned have supposed; that, in this weakly and feeble state, I say, *he arose and was baptised*, by being totally put under water:



as an emblem of moral purity; it is left to any impartial judgment—Whether he is, most rationally, supposed to have plunged men under water, (a thing unpractised amongst them) or, whether he only sprinkled or poured water on them,—a rite divinely instituted, and every day familiarly practised in that church.

If it be said—But that question of the Jews—“*Why baptisest thou, if thou art not that prophet?*” implies there was something new and unprecedented in John’s baptism;—the answer is obvious. 1. That it could not be his mere using the ceremony of baptising which occasioned this enquiry, because it was, confessedly, a ceremony perfectly well known and familiar amongst them. But 2. It was his using this ceremony upon the Israelites or Jewish nation; who looked upon themselves as a people already holy, and in covenant with God; and therefore not to need this ceremony of cleansing or separation, under which the Gentiles were wont to pass, when received into the church.

* Acts xvi. 33.

† Acts ix. 18.

‡ About the 25th of January.

—And finally, that the *three thousand** also, who were converted at Jerusalem, and baptised in one day, were all overwhelmed—seems, to say the least, to have scarce an air of probability.

Nor will the circumstance of Philip and the Eunuch going down (*εις*) unto† *the water*; and coming up (*εκ*) from it,‡ with any certainty prove, that he there dipt him. For as waters run in the valleys, they might go down from the chariot *εις* to, or unto, the rivulet (for geographers find but little streams there) and Philip baptise, by pouring water on him; and from thence go up to the chariot again, in the most perfect consistence with this account of the matter.

So, when the people of Judea are said to be baptised of John *εν τῷ Ιορδανῇ* in the river Jordan: And, that Jesus, when baptised, came up out of *απο το υδατος* from the water; it will by no means hence follow, that they were totally plunged under it. For, it being the custom of those countries to wear sandals only on their naked feet, and the washing these being, amongst them, a very familiar and delightful thing; the going down into the water, to have it poured upon their heads, is quite natural and likely. So that the arguments drawn



* Acts ii. 41.

† Acts viii. 38, 39.

‡ Note, The Greek particles *εις* and *εκ* are thus rendered unto, and from, the one several hundred, the other above a hundred times in the New Testament.

hence also in favour of overwhelming will in no wise conclude.*

* Note. The laying any weight on it's being said—*were baptised in Jordan*—shews extreme ignorance of the original. For, 1. The word *εν* here translated *in*, is in no less than a hundred and fifty places of the New Testament (a learned gentlemen hath observed) rendered *with*. And had it thus been rendered here—baptised *with* Jordan—meaning *with* the water of that river; it would have been a form of speaking, neither more figurative nor improper, than is familiar both in scripture and in common life. But, to lay no stress on this:—

2. The word *εν* is more than a hundred times in the New Testament rendered *at*, and *εν τω Ιορδανη* may most justly be rendered *at* the river Jordan; and so, the whole strength of the argument, from John's baptising *in* Jordan, evaporates at once.

Let a short and easy experiment be made upon one of Mr. Booth's premises, by proposing and solving three plain and very obvious questions; as,

1. Can it be proved that baptism is immersion only? Though three questions have been mentioned, this principle of the Baptists will be won or lost upon the first only. Who can prove that the term Baptism means immersion, and nothing else but immersion? Could Dr. Gale do this? He was able to have done it if any one could;—but did he prove it? Not he. Nay, he proved the contrary, and so overthrew himself; for meeting with a passage in Aristotle, in which the thing baptised was not put into the water, but the water came upon it, he said, “The word Baptise, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general, a thing being in that condition, no matter how it came so.”—Another passage came in his way, in which the thing baptised was only partially wet. His assertion was, “That the word does not always necessarily imply a total immersion of the whole thing spoken of, all over.” These two things put together amount to this: that a thing is baptised if the element come upon it; and if

But the chief argument for immersion is taken from Rom. vi. 4. and Colos. ii. 12. Where it is



it come only on one part, it is baptised. Dr. Wall laid hold of this; and shewed to the world, that while Dr. Gale contended for immersion only, he held fast the mere word; but completely lost the thing.

If baptism meant immersion only, there could be no different or differing baptisms; but there are differing baptisms, so not immersion only. In Heb. ix. 10. the apostle, speaking of the ablutions among the Jews, calls them divers washings, *διαφοροῖς Βαπτισμοῖς*. The true meaning of the first word is differing, or different. Rom. xii. 6. Thus it is, "baptisms differing," or different; and this directly overturns the sentiment of the Baptists, who contend that baptism is immersion only.

Had Origen thought as the Baptists do, he would not have said, "That when Elijah ordered water to be poured upon the wood, the wood was baptised." Nor would the seventy translators have said, that Nebuchadnezzar was baptised,—which they do, when he was wet with the dew of heaven. Much less would the scripture have called the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, Baptism. Nor can it be proved that the word Baptism, in the New Testament, does ever mean immersion, we will not say only, but at all; and if not immersion only, the Baptist principle is lost.

2. Can it be proved that any one person in the New Testament was immersed?

There are seven instances of baptisms, which have some connection with place and circumstances: the baptism of Jesus at Jordan,—the baptising at Enon,—the baptism of the Eunuch,—of St. Paul,—of Cornelius,—of the Jailer,—and the three thousand in Jerusalem. Of these instances, three were in the open air, and at streams of water, two in private houses, one in a jail, and one in a city.

If we look for a proof of the immersion of any one, it must be from the first three instances; but here is no proof at all that any one was immersed. It is true, here

said, *that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death; and buried with him by baptism.*



were persons, and there was water; but whether any person was immersed in water, there is not a word said. All that could be said, and all that the most sanguine could say, would be this, "It may be,—it is likely,—it is highly probable,—I am apt to think so! Such forms of speech shew there is no proof; and that the best is merely presumption; but if we attend to the other instances, the private houses, the jail, and the city, there is neither proof nor presumption: or, if there be any presumption upon the case, it is entirely on the other side, that is, that there was no immersion practised; and the sum of all is this, that in the first instances there is not the least proof; and that in the others, there is not the least presumption.

3. Can it be proved that any person baptised was so much as in the water at all?

The putting of this question may appear singular to some, who would be ready to say, Can any thing be more evident than this? Did not our Lord come up out of Jordan? Did not Philip and the eunuch go down into, and come up out of the water? The truth is, that, whether they went into the water or not, depends upon three small words: *εἰς*, *ἐκ* or *ἐξ*, and *απο*. The two last are used in the New Testament, I suppose a hundred times, to signify from; and the first as often, to signify to; and they necessarily signify no more than to the water and from the water;—so here is no proof that any one person baptised was in the water at all.

If, therefore, it cannot be proved that baptism is immersion only,—if it cannot be proved that any one was immersed,—if it cannot be proved that any one baptised was at all in the water, we may be exceedingly easy respecting Mr. Booth's consequence; for if it appear formidable to such as admit his principles, yet, while there is no proof that these principles are true, to others it must appear as nothing.—*Evangelical Magazine.*

Now, here, let it be considered. 1. That the weight of the argument rests entirely upon the supposition, that the apostle in these passages alludes to the mode of christian baptism; which can with no certainty be proved. For, 2. The apostle in both places may be justly understood as speaking, not concerning the external and ceremonial part of christian baptism, but concerning the internal and moral part; not concerning the application of water, which has no power to kill, or destroy, *the body of sin*; but concerning the regenerating influences of the Spirit; by which Spirit the scriptures often speak of christians as baptised; and by the influences of which Spirit (or in consequence of their baptism by which) alone it is, that they are said *to be dead*.* *Dead with Christ*.† *Dead to sin*.‡ Now as this Spirit only has power to kill, or destroy, *the old man*, (to use the apostle's phrase) and to make us *dead with Christ*, and *dead to sin*; and as we are very frequently represented as *baptised with this Spirit*; it is perfectly natural to understand the apostle as speaking of these internal and moral influences of the Spirit, when he tells christians—that they were *buried with Christ by baptism into death, &c.* And it is further observable—That we are, in this discourse of the apostle, as much said to be *crucified* and *circumcised* by, or with Christ, as we are to be

* Colos. iii. 3.

† Colos. ii. 20.

‡ Rom. vi. 11.

buried with him: and *baptism* is as expressly styled the *circumcision of Christ*, or the christian circumcision, as a burial with Christ. Why, then, must we not in administering this ceremony, seek for some visible allusion to the one, as well as to the other?

The apostle, it is manifest, is here all along talking in figurative terms; such as *planted*, *crucified*, *dead*, *buried*, *rising*, *walking*, *reigning*—his mere use of the word *buried*, then, seems a much too feeble bottom to rest an argument upon. It may be said, there is as much necessity of finding something, in the christian worship, answering to the other figurative expressions, as to this single one of being *buried*: and that persons baptised should be signed with the cross, to signify, that their old man is crucified; as that they should be put under water to signify their being buried with Christ.*



* I beg leave here to subjoin the note of a very learned and ingenious writer on this passage—Colos. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism*.—The apostle frequently speaks of christians as being very closely united to Christ, as *members of his body*, and parts of his person. Eph. i. 23. v. 30. Consequently, whatever was done to Christ, was, as it were, at the same time done to them. When he was crucified, his members were crucified, Gal. ii. 20. When *Christ was quickened*, they were *quickened together with him*. Eph. ii. 5. *Because he lives, they shall live also*. John xiv. 19. When *Christ was raised*, they were *raised*. Eph. ii. 6. And when *he ascended and sat down in heaven*, they *sat down with him there*. Ibid. Now, in the same sense, it is true, that christians

But 3. Were it absolutely certain, which it by no means is, that the apostle doth here allude to the mode of christian baptism; all that will follow is—That immersion was the most usual, but not that it was the only way of administering this rite; and this at Coloss and at Rome only, and the warmer regions of the world; but not that it was the most usual, much less the only way, in all other the most northern and coldest climates of the earth. But if it was not the only way; not only there, but throughout the whole christian world, no argument can hence be drawn, that baptism must always be administered in this manner.



were buried with Christ (i. e. when Christ was buried, they, as members and parts of him, were buried with him) *εν τω βαπτισματι* either in baptism, or by means of baptism. If we chuse the former rendering, the meaning must be—That at the time of our being baptised, we were united to Christ; and consequently then looked upon as having been *buried with him*. If we prefer the latter rendering, *viz.* by means of baptism (which seems best, because in the parallel place, Rom. vi. 4. the apostle uses *δια*) then the sense will be—It is by means of baptism that we are united to Christ, and so must be considered as having been buried, when he was buried. Whichever rendering we take, we may be allowed to say, by analogy, the same things of our being *crucified, quickened* and *risen* with Christ; all which also happened by means of our baptism, and at the time of our being baptised.

As then, there can be no reference to a mode of baptism, in our being *crucified* and *quickened* by baptism; so, there is no reason to suppose any reference to a mode of baptism, (dipping) when we are said to be *buried with Christ by baptism*.

Finally. Should it be granted, that these two texts (Rom. vi. 4. and Colos. ii. 12.) favour the mode of dipping, it must certainly be also allowed, that the several texts, above cited, do equally favour sprinkling, or pouring, in baptism. So that the matter may admit of an easy compromise, by supposing—That as this christian ceremony undoubtedly had its origin, and was borrowed from the Jewish law; and as persons and things were purified, or set apart, under that law, sometimes by dipping, and sometimes by sprinkling; so the apostles performed this ceremonial purification in the christian church, sometimes in one form, and sometimes in the other; as the circumstances of time, place, persons—required.

Let us now briefly review, and sum up the evidence upon the point in debate—That the word *βαπτίζω* to baptise does not necessarily, nor constantly, signify to dip; but is very frequently, if not generally, used in sacred writ in a more large and extensive sense; and signifies an application of water by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, has been evidently shewn; and the whole learned world, (an antipædobaptist or two, perhaps, excepted) readily acknowledged*—We have also seen—That there were under the Jewish law, different ways, of applying water for ceremonial purification, which



* See a cloud of witnesses from Lexicographers, Divines, Grammarians—in WALKER'S *Doctrine of Baptism*.

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are expressly called *different baptisms*: Dipping, therefore, in the scripture judgment, is not the *only* way of baptising—That our Lord is said not to have been baptised before dinner; and that all the Jews when they came from market eat not, except they are baptised; when not a plunging the whole body is meant, but only washing the hands—That the apostle actually says, the Jewish fathers *were all baptised in the sea*; when the fact is incontestable that they were not overwhelmed, or covered, with the sea, but only sprinkled with its spray—That John says of Christ that he should *baptise the disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; which baptising them was performed, not by their being *overwhelmed*, or *immersed*, in the Holy Ghost and in fire, but by its being *poured out*, and *resting on* them—In the Greek version of the Apocrypha we have seen a person styled, Βαπτίζομενος, *one baptised*; when the principal part, if not the whole ceremony, of his cleansing, consisted in sprinkling water on him.—That Judith is said to have *baptised herself*; when the circumstances of the story will, by no means, suffer us to imagine, that she dipped herself wholly, but only washed herself in part—That in Origen, the priests at Elijah's command are said to *baptise the wood* upon the altar, when they only *poured water on it*.—We have seen farther: That from several circumstances attending those who were baptised; *viz.* the vast multitudes of both sexes, baptised by

John in the open country, far distant from their habitations; Paul, under extreme weakness and after several days fasting; the Jailer and his family, at midnight, and in their own house, immediately upon their sudden conversion; and the several thousands in one day, by the apostles at Jerusalem; it seems highly improbable that they were all totally plunged.—Finally, That viewing the matter with the eye of impartial reason, *pouring water* on the body, as effectually, and fully answers all the moral ends of baptism, as *dipping* into it; yea, is much more significative of one principal thing intended to be represented or signified by this christian rite, namely, the *giving us the Holy Spirit*, that *unction from above*, which is poured down upon us.

These things being considered, it seems not a little strange, that some, who profess to think freely in religion, lay so great a stress upon baptism by dipping *only*—That they make it to enter into the very *essence* of christian baptism—That they think it justifiable to break off from the churches of their fellow-christians partly on this account—And can, without a smile, hear the few brethren of that way speaking of themselves as the *only baptised christians*; and looking upon the whole christian world, besides themselves, as to the matter of christian baptism, as being much upon a level with Hottentots and Pagans.

But such consider not, with due attention, the

consequences of their opinions; nor observe, how this preciseness as to ritual matters naturally genders strife, and ministers occasion to endless, contemptible, and foolish debates. For if overwhelming the person be of the essence of christian baptism, hence obviously springs a doubt—What if the person, when lying beneath the water, should lift up a hand, so as to be not quite covered with the element; is the person, nevertheless, truly baptised? Or, suppose in the great hurry which such an operation may occasion, both the hands, or even the arms, should be so incautiously extended as not to be overwhelmed; I ask, is that baptism good? Or again, if through the bulk of the baptised, and the weakness of the baptiser, some part even of the face or head should be uncovered; what is to be pronounced concerning such a baptism? Is it valid; or not?—Suppose the person whose hands, or part of whose face, was not quite overwhelmed, should be desired by the administrator to submit to a second dipping, because the first being not total, he thinks not to be sufficient; and either himself, or some attending friends, should steadily refuse: alleging, the defect to be not material; and that the baptism was valid:—Would there not hence arise a very important debate; perhaps, an actual separation, or rent in that church? Some insisting, that the person be received to full communion, as a truly baptised brother: others strenuously opposing, and refusing

communion with him as not being baptised, because not totally overwhelmed.—How much to the edification and honour of the christian world would such a contest appear? What matter of ridicule would it furnish to unbelievers? And how naturally draw contempt; not upon baptism only, as a solemn trifle; but upon christianity itself, as ministering occasion to such frivolous debates? And yet, really, to this issue, does the making immersion essential to christian baptism, naturally and directly tend. If it does not, in fact, gender such debates, it is because those, who avow the principle, do not follow it into all its consequences, nor closely adhere to it in every emergence of this kind. The Greek christians, who dip their infants, hold it necessary that every part of the child be dipped. And so the Jews of old held.* “That if a man be baptised all over, saving the tip of his little finger; or if clay, or any the like thing, cleave to the flesh of man, and keep it from the water, it is unclean still as it was, and the baptising profiteth nothing.”—

And, if washing the whole body be of such moment in christian baptism, as our brethren represent; they ought, surely, to consider, that the dipping a clothed body seems not a strictly just or adequate performance of it. The bathings of the



* See Ainsworth on Levit. xv. 11.

Jewish law were, doubtless, of the naked body; and it is an incontestible fact that in the primitive times, (those of Chrysostom, and the ages after,) such as were baptised by dipping, were naked when baptised.*

Nor ought it to be overlooked, that upon this scheme of our brethren, there are two parts of the character of an *able minister of the New Testament*, which St. Paul, in his epistles both to Timothy and Titus, entirely omits; yea, which neither himself, nor his beloved Timothy, seem to have possessed; *viz.* hardiness of constitution, and bodily strength. Without a good degree of these, in a variety of cases which must frequently occur, it will be rash and highly criminal for a christian minister to give this sacred rite of religion to some of the most worthy and capable subjects: inasmuch, as he cannot do it without apparent hazard, not only to his own life, but to that also of the baptised.

Besides, after all the ceremonial zeal and *fulfilment of all righteousness*, which is pretended in this point; the person dipt, in truth and real fact, is not baptised by him that undertakes to perform



* Vide *Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms*, Ch. xv. § 15. *Vossius de Baptis. Disp. 1. Thes. 6.* See also a sad accident which befell a company of women in these circumstances, in the great church of Constantinople. *Bower's Hist. Popes. vol. ii.*

that office on him; but, in great part, if not principally, baptises himself: such matter of endless doubts, and unprofitable disputes, does a circumstantial exactness as to the mere rite of religion gender!—But, *we have not so learned Christ.* We proceed.

SECTION II.

Should immersion be allowed to have been the only ancient, apostolic and scriptural mode of baptising; yet a strict adherence to it is not obligatory on us: but this circumstance may very lawfully and fitly be exchanged, for that of sprinkling or pouring.

To be satisfied of this, we need but consider—What is the true spirit and design of christianity; which the apostle calls, a *law of liberty*: James i. 25. That a great part of its intention was, to take off men's regard from things ritual and ceremonial. It is a *doctrine according to godliness*; a spiritual, exalted, heavenly scheme of worship; in which *the Father seeks such to worship him*, as will do it *in spirit and in truth*.* It expressly declares that *the kingdom of God*,† (or the state of

* John iv. 23.

† Rom. xiv. 17.

religion under the Messiah) *is not meat and drink ; i. e. stands not in things ceremonial and ritual ; but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and, he that in these serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. And in Christ Jesus, (or under the christian dispensation) neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.** To imagine, therefore, that our Lord intended absolutely and immutably, to bind down his followers, of all nations, and of all ages, to the Jewish form of baptising ; supposing it to have been by dipping only ; is quite repugnant to that mild, that generous and free spirit which his religion every where breathes.— And here it is natural to observe—

1. That concerning a certain ceremonial, emblematical washing, much like this of christian baptism, our divine lawgiver hath determined—“ That the quantity of water, or its application to the whole body is little to be regarded.” *Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only but my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, he that is washed (in such an emblematical and figurative washing, as I am now going to perform) needeth not save to wash his feet : †*—The application of water to one part only,

* Galat. vi. 15.

† John xiii. 8, 9, 10.

is as effectual to his cleansing, as if his whole body was actually overwhelmed.

Note: The washing, concerning which our Lord has left this determination, was of the very same nature with baptism: i. e. it was an application of water to the body, for a religious or moral end. And this determination, was, no doubt, left upon record, that it might be applied by us (as, in the reason of the thing, it is most justly applicable) under his spiritual dispensation, to every like ceremonial washing. And it evidently teaches us, that in such ritual purifications, the quantity of water and the manner of its application, are things of no great concern; upon which no important stress is to be laid in his church. It is farther to be observed—

2. That even under the Jewish, which was confessedly a weak and ceremonial dispensation, and which laid infinitely more weight upon ritual observances than the christian religion does, a liberty was given to human prudence to dispense with some of the most express and most solemn institutions, in cases where only mercy or great convenience required it.

Thus the rite of circumcision, though enjoined under the awful penalty to the neglecter of *being cut off*,* was yet, without offence, laid aside, for the space of forty years;† and upon no other

* Gen. xvii. 14.

† Josh. v. 5.

ground as far as appears, but because the frequent and uncertain decampments, marches and wars of the Israelites, in their passage through the wilderness, rendered it inconvenient and troublesome to be observed.

So by an express command, none but the priests were to eat of the *hallowed* or *shew bread*.* Yet David and his men, when no other supply could conveniently be had, violated this injunction: they eat of that bread, which it was not *lawful for them to eat*, and are justified by Christ.†

So also, the *brazen serpent*, which was set up by the command of God; honoured by many great and miraculous cures; and designed, probably to be an instructive memorial to future ages (which is the very nature of a rite or sacrament in the christian church) was yet, when abused to superstition, broken down by Hezekiah and actually destroyed.‡

Now, if under the Jewish, ceremonial and weakly dispensation, such liberty was indulged to human prudence and convenience, as to dispense with and set aside its ritual injunctions; and this, when they were enjoined under so awful and severe a penalty; how absurd is it to imagine, that our divine lawgiver Jesus Christ has, under his infinitely more free and spiritual dispensation (un-

* Levit. xxiv. 5—9.

† Matt. xii. 4.

‡ Numb. xxi. 8, 9. 2 Kings xviii. 4.

der which our state is as much freer than that of the Jews, as the state of sons is than that of servants; or of friends, than that of slaves) tied us up to a strict and invariable exactness, as to merely ritual observances; and that no considerations of decency, health, convenience, or mercy, ought now to substitute the form of sprinkling the baptismal water, instead of a total immersion into it? But, farther,

3. Many rites of undoubted apostolical usage if not injunction, are now, without blame, not only altered, but entirely laid aside; which is a far greater liberty, than the mere substitution of sprinkling instead of dipping.

The greeting one another with the holy kiss, was unquestionably an apostolical practice. See Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 26. 1 Pet. v. 14. In all which places it is expressly recommended, if not enjoined. Αλληλους φιληματι ασπαζομεθα πανσαμευοι των ευχων. "Having finished our prayers, we salute each other "with a kiss:" says Justin Martyr. A like apostolic practice and command was the anointing the sick with oil, in the name of the Lord. See Mark vi. 13. and James v. 14.*

Now to our good brethren, who declaim zealously upon—*Fulfilling all righteousness*—and who ask—"By what authority do you take upon you

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\* Apol. 2.

“ to alter Christ’s institution ; and laying aside the  
 “ scriptural and apostolic mode of immersion, to  
 “ substitute sprinkling or pouring in its room ? ”  
 —With great confidence we reply—“ By the very  
 “ same, Sirs, by which you also quite abolish and  
 “ lay aside the scriptural, apostolical, institution  
 “ or practice of saluting with the *holy kiss*, and  
 “ of *anointing the sick with oil in the name of the*  
 “ *Lord.*”—These we can prove, with ten times  
 clearer evidence, to have been either actually com-  
 manded or practised, by the apostles, than you can  
 baptism by immersion only. Now, if these signi-  
 ficant and holy rites, unquestionably once enjoined,  
 or practised, by the apostles, in conformity to the  
 common usage of their countries and times, are  
 by you wholly laid aside ; because they would  
 seem odd in this country and age where no such  
 customs obtain ; we demand, why bathing the whole  
 body (which was also among the eastern nations  
 and warm climates, where christianity was first  
 planted, a very familiar and delightful thing) why,  
 I say, may it not in like manner be exchanged,  
 for pouring water on the body : seeing such total  
 immersions are in this country and age, an unusual,  
 a troublesome, a scarcely modest and decent, and  
 in many cases a cruel and a very dangerous thing ?  
 —Especially, as the form of pouring is every whit  
 as significative as that of dipping can be.—Let  
 those, who contend warmly for a circumstantial ad-  
 herence to scripture practice in one rite, say, how

it is they justify the great liberty they take quite to abolish and change others.\*

Again, why do they not insist also, that *unleavened bread* and but *one loaf*, ought constantly to be used in the sacred rite of the supper? (To which, perhaps, may be added, the mixing water with wine in the sacramental cup.) It is incomparably more certain that these only were used by our Lord and his apostles, in that sacrament; than that they invariably practised immersion only, in the other.

It was *unleavened bread* which our Lord *took and broke* (for the Jews at that time, by the express command of God, were to have no other in their houses†) when he instituted the supper, and said—*Do this in remembrance of me*: and concerning which, it is said—*As oft as ye eat this bread*—What bread was that? *Bread* that was *unleavened*. Yea, and both these circumstances, *viz.* The *bread being unleavened*, and the having but *one loaf* are as expressly alluded to by the apostle, and represented as significative of something moral in this sacrament, as immersion is of

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\* Though a kiss of peace, and an order of deaconesses, were the practices of the apostolic time; yet when the one gave occasion to raillery, and the other to scandal, all the world was, and still is, satisfied with the reasons of letting both fall. Bishop *Burnet*, on Art. xx.

† Exod. xiii. 7.

being *buried with Christ*, in the other. By the former, the unleavened bread, the christian worshippers are reminded, of the purity and sincerity with which they should assemble, and celebrate this religious rite. *Therefore let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.\** Behold how emblematical and significative it is made! And by the latter, the *one loaf*, the *unity of the church* is, with great beauty and propriety, figuratively shewn forth, and the *communion in one body*, into which all christians are received. *For we being many, are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread,†* or, as the passage ought to have been rendered, *because there is one bread, or loaf* used in this sacred ceremony, *we who are many are one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf.‡*

Let some reason be now shewn—Why we are to be tied down to a rigorous conformity to the circumstance of dipping, in one sacrament; but are not to the circumstance of *unleavened bread*, and of *one loaf*, in the other? If we must indeed fulfil all righteousness (as is warmly urged on this head) if we must observe exactly *all* the institu-

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\* 1 Cor. v. 8.

† 1 Cor. x. 17.

‡ Οτι εις Αρτος, εν σωμα οι πολλοι εσμεν: οι γαρ παντες εκ τω ενος αρτου μετεχομεν.

tions and rites of the apostolic church; let us indeed, fulfil it. But then let us be consistent and uniform in our obedience: fulfilling the righteousness of *saluting with the holy kiss*—of *anointing the sick with oil in the name of the Lord*—of *unleavened bread, and one loaf* in the sacrament of the supper; as well as the righteousness of *dipping the baptised*. To conclude—

4. From our Lord's decision in a like case, viz. *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*; and *I will have mercy and not sacrifice* :\* —It appears plainly to be his will, not to tie up his followers to a rigid and severe exactness in things of a ritual and positive kind.

The law injoining the sabbatical rest, was one of the ten delivered, with infinite pomp, at Mount Sinai—Is often spoken of as an important part of the covenant which subsisted betwixt God and his people—Great blessings are promised to its religious observation; and severe threatenings denounced upon those who neglect it—Yea, a transgressor was once, by the express command of God, *stoned to death* for its violation, as a warning to future ages.—This is a thousand times more than can be said in support of the form of dipping in baptism: yet behold! The strict observance of this sabbatical rest, even under the Jewish, cere-



\* Matt. xii. 7. Mark ii. 7.

monial, weakly dispensation, was violated by the apostles, and dispensed with by our Lord, when convenience or compassion to the body required it. Much more, then, may we conclude, that the strict observance of dipping, may be innocently neglected, under the infinitely more exalted dispensation of Christ; when either decency, or mercy, or great convenience forbids its use.

This fact, *viz.* the disciples breaking the sabbatical rest, by plucking and rubbing ears of corn, and our Lord's reasoning thereon, happened, no doubt, and was recorded with a view to the instruction of after ages; and was designed as a precedent, a rule of judgment and action, by which we are to be directed in every like case.—Our divine legislator hath hereby taught us to reason thus—When the strict observance of a merely ritual command will be attended with danger and great inconvenience to the disciples, it may lawfully be waived—Or thus: *baptism* was made for *man*, and not *man* for *baptism*. If, therefore, through any change of national custom, or of climate, the form of dipping in baptism should become odd and unbecoming, (as the love-kiss would now be) hazardous to the health, or troublesome to the disciples, it might then innocently be waived; and a form less burthensome and disagreeable be substituted in its room.

And here I beg leave to ask—Whether a strict adherence to dipping the baptised, would not,

probably, be attended with as much danger and inconvenience to the bodies of the disciples now ; as a strict observance of the sabbatical rest would have been to the twelve apostles, when going through the field of corn ? In other words :— Whether it be not as much mercy to excuse some at least (viz. new-born infants, weakly and unhealthy persons, and even all others throughout the winter season, in these northern and cold climates) from being totally plunged in baptism ; as it was to excuse the twelve for plucking and rubbing the corn on the Sabbath day ?

It enters into the nature of things ritual and circumstantial, to be mutable, transient and liable to be changed. As they are often but an adoption of some national custom (which is apparently the case as to the institution of baptism) or, an accommodation of a common usage to some purpose in religion : so, they are alterable in their nature ; and are themselves in some measure to be accommodated to prevailing customs and tastes ; to the several countries, climates, and tempers of mankind. This, I apprehend, is the only reasoning on which it is possible to justify our disuse of the primitive, apostolic practice of saluting with a kiss of love, in our worshipping assemblies. The custom of those ancient times rendered such salutations neither odd nor ridiculous : but should the practice be introduced into our present churches,

and worship, it needs not be said—with how just an offence!

Now, if, for no other reason than a change of national custom, we lay aside this undoubtedly ancient, apostolic, religious ceremony, the *kiss of charity*; why should not a like change of national custom, with regard to bathing the whole body be allowed to justify its disuse in the ceremony of baptism? For a woman, in thin apparel, before a multitude of spectators, to go into the water, and be taken into the arms of him who officiates, and be laid under the water, is, in the present nation and age, an equally indecent and disagreeable sight, as for men, at the conclusion of public prayers, to salute one another with a kiss of charity or peace.

To conclude:—If after all that hath been said any still think it their indispensable duty to baptise by immersion only; let them, by all means, thus baptise; but then, we beseech them to forbear all severe censures of those, who are not dipt. Let them not represent us as persons unbaptised—withdraw from our churches—refuse communion with us, at the common table of our Lord, upon so trifling a difference. This, surely, were to dishonour our sacred religion; and too naturally brings not only christian baptism, but christianity itself, into manifest contempt.

Let us therefore, according to the apostolic



precept—*receive one another, but not to doubtful disputations.* To maintain an *unity of spirit*, by mutual forbearance, and to live together in perfect charity, is a matter of infinitely more importance, than the quantity of water, or the manner of its application, with which a person is baptised. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And the end of the commandment is charity; out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.*

*Now the God of patience and consolation grant us to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus. That we may with one mind, and one mouth glorify God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## APPENDIX.

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IN the preceding pages Mr. Towgood has presented a clear and striking view of the testimonies of the fathers of the christian church, in defence of the universal prevalence of Infant Baptism. Nor does it appear, that any one of the fathers, even in appearance, favoured Antipædo-baptism excepting Tertullian; and, upon unprejudiced investigation, it will be evident, that he did not oppose infant baptism, but only recommended delay, as he did also to adults, who were likely to be exposed to strong temptations, thinking, that if they fell into sin after baptism, it would so far aggravate the offence, as to be almost, if not altogether, unpardonable.

Mr. Pirie, a sensible and judicious writer, in his Dissertation on Baptism, speaking of the origin of the Baptists, says—

“ We have already seen, that the famous Tertullian had adopted a fancy, that every sin committed after baptism was either unpardonable, or nearly so; for which reason, he earnestly recommended the delay of baptism till, at least, the heat of youthful passion subsided. Now, as Tertullian was a man of such eminence in his time, we may be sure that an advice from him, urged with vehemence, and supported by such plausible arguments, could not fail to influence many. This was also a leading opinion among the sect called Novatians; in consequence of which, infant-baptism could not be practised among that sect; and I may add, nor could adult-baptism either, till the hour of death, as they denied the remission of sins to christians, sinning after baptism.

Others, again, imagined, that the very act of baptism washed away all sin whatever, and hence deferred

baptism, that every one might gratify his lusts without restraint, knowing that, if he could get himself baptised before death, he was sure of a full remission. Others would delay baptism till they had attained the thirtieth year, because Christ was baptised at that period of his life. On a similar pretence, Constantine the Great would not be baptised but in the river Jordan; and hence, as he never came to that place, he only submitted to baptism on his death-bed. Some, moreover, deferred baptism till they could have access to be baptised by some eminent bishop. All these opinions, and refutations of each of them, are to be found in the writings of Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Augustine's Confession, and Eusebius' Life of Constantine.

From the above short detail, it is easy to see what a powerful and extensive influence these ideas must have exerted among mankind, ideas suited to the taste of the whimsical, the capricious, the fond of novelty, the lovers of pleasures, supported at the same time, by men of talents, in eminent stations, and renowned for piety and learning. Seeds so congenial to the soil of man, and cherished with so much care, must have taken such a firm hold of the human heart, that we need not wonder if time itself has not been able to extirpate them. Had they not been checked in their progress, by the strenuous efforts of men of great eminence in the churches, they would probably have overspread the far greater part of the christian world. The votaries of these opinions, howbeit, still maintained a footing in various places, and although, for a long time, they seem to have inculcated the delay of baptism for such reasons as have been mentioned, yet, as the transition from these to an absolute denial of the divine authority for infant-baptism was so very easy, in process of ages infants were excluded from baptism altogether, and that, as is usual,

in the name of Jesus Christ. When or where this last idea had its birth, I imagine cannot be ascertained. It seems to have dwelt in obscurity for a time, till at last it burst forth from its solitude in the sixteenth century, and made a considerable progress in Germany, extending its influence to Holland, Britain, and other countries, in all which it still maintains its ground. Thus it has assumed various forms. At first, it deferred the baptism of infants on prudential considerations; at last, it divested them of their right, and made the sacred oracles pronounce against them the sentence of exclusion. In all stages, however, it seems unhappily to have laid a disproportionate stress, on what the schoolmen call the *opus operatum*, the act itself, and the mode of performing it. A finger undipped would render baptism of no effect! would make it "a mere human ordinance!" Scripture, too, must be called in to support this fancy. What has not been spoken and done in the name of the Lord! False ideas, in religion, it seems, must still be

#### The maggots of corrupted texts.

While pædobaptism appears to be as antient as the apostolic age, antipædobaptism appears only as a modern invention. In Dr. Wall's defence of his learned and elaborate History of Infant Baptism, he affirms, "antipædobaptism does not appear to have been practised till after the middle of the eleventh century; and that by a people few, ignorant and quickly converted."

As the evidence from history enters so essentially into the merits of the question between pædobaptists and antipædobaptists, the statement of the learned Dr. Osgood shall here be presented to the reader.

We acknowledge, indeed, that during the ages of darkness which preceded the Protestant reformation, the institution, as well as the doctrines of Christ, were exceedingly corrupted by the mixture of human inven-

tions. We learn from history the origin of these corruptions, and that, in each successive age, there were witnesses against them, whose testimony shews that they never were, even at the season of the thickest darkness, universally received. I shall now prove that infant baptism stands not on the foot of these corruptions, was not introduced on them, and during the course of many revolving ages, was not scrupled by a single christian. Of the writings of the primitive fathers, the immediate successors of the apostles, some scattered fragments only have reached modern times; yet, in these fragments, we have unquestionable evidence that infant baptism was the general practice in the very century after the apostles. They had been dead about forty years, when *Justin Martyr* published his apology, in which he mentions some "aged christians who were made disciples in or from their infancy." This is understood as implying that they were baptised, as that was the known method of making visible disciples. *Irenæus*, who was born before the death of St. John, is yet more full in his testimony. *Origen* was born about one hundred years after the decease of the apostles, and from him we have these words, "The church received a tradition or order from the apostles to administer baptism to infants." About fifty years after this, or one hundred and fifty from the apostles, baptism being then universally considered as supplying the place of circumcision, a question arose, whether it ought not, as circumcision was, to be deferred till the eighth day after the birth of the child. For the discussion of this question, a council of sixty-six bishops, or pastors of churches, was assembled at *Carthage*. In their result, they give it as their opinion, that "baptism ought least of all to be referred to a new born infant;" and as to its being put off to the eighth day, they add, "there is not one that approves of it: it appears to us all, who

are here met, in council, far otherwise." Undoubtedly, some of the elders upon this council could remember what the practice of the church had been for seventy or eighty years before, at which period there were probably many living who were born within the age of the apostles, and who must have known what their practice had been. If the baptising of infants had not originated with the apostles, is it credible that all the churches of Christendom should have so soon and so universally departed from the apostolic institution? If so striking and notorious an innovation had been attempted, is it not beyond all belief, that it should have been every where received without a single objection from any of those myriads of saints, confessors, and martyrs, who lived in the purest and best ages of the church?

After this period, as we come down to the third and fourth centuries, the writings of *Austin*, *John Chrysostome*, *Pelagius*, and a multitude of others, show that, in those centuries, there was not a single exception to the baptism of infants. The learned *Dr. Wall*, who inquired most accurately into this subject, says, "For the first four hundred years, there appears only one man, *Tertullian*, that advised the *delay* of infant baptism, in some cases, and one *Gregory* that did, perhaps, practice such delay, in the case of his own children; but no society so thinking, or so practising; nor any one man saying, that it was unlawful to baptise infants. In the next seven hundred years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either *spoke for*, or practised any such *delay*, but all the contrary. And when, about the year 1130, one sect among the *Waldenses* declared against the baptising of infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion; and those of them that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away and disappeared, there being no more heard of, who held that tenet, until the rising of

the German Antipædobaptists, in the year 1522." This account by Dr. *Wall* brings us down to the era of the Protestant reformation. Amidst the commotions attendant upon that great revolution, sprang up the founders of the present sect of Anabaptists. "Soon after *Luther's* appearance," says Dr. Robertson, in his *History of Charles V.* "the rashness or ignorance of some of his disciples led them to publish tenets no less absurd than pernicious, which being proposed to men extremely illiterate, but fond of novelty, and at a time when their minds were turned wholly towards religious speculations, gained too easy credit and authority among them. The most remarkable of their religious tenets related to the sacrament of baptism, which, as they contended, ought to be administered only to persons grown up to years of understanding, and should be performed, not by sprinkling them with water, but by dipping them in it. For this reason they condemned the baptism of infants, and re-baptising all whom they admitted into their society, the sect came to be distinguished by the name of Anabaptists.—To this peculiar notion concerning baptism, they added other principles of a most enthusiastic as well as dangerous nature. By a monstrous and almost incredible conjunction, voluptuousness was ingrafted on religion, and dissolute riot accompanied the austerities of fanatical devotion. Luther, who had testified against this fanatical spirit on its first appearance, now deeply lamented its progress, and exposed the delusion with great strength of argument, as well as acrimony of style." Not *Luther* only, but *Calvin, Melancthon, Bullinger, Zuinglius, Gualter, Sleidan, Zanchy*, and indeed all the eminent reformers, united their voice in bearing solemn testimony against the principles of this sect, reprobating them in terms of great severity.

Perhaps these great and good men would have used

less asperity of language in speaking of them, had they been chargeable with no other errors besides those relating to baptism; but, in that age, they did not content themselves with disturbing the peace of religious societies, and breaking up of churches; they committed outrages upon civil society, which united all the states of Germany against them. They were subdued and dispersed by military force. But, as generally happens in this mode of suppressing any sect or party, the fugitives were the more confirmed in the belief of their principal peculiarities, and spread their tenets in every country whither they fled for shelter. Dropping the extravagances which had armed the civil magistrates against them, they rigidly adhered to many of their other notions. "The party," says Dr. Robertson, "still subsists in the *Low Countries*, and a small number of this sect is settled in *England*.\*

This Tract is presented to the public, not with the most distant idea to degrade the Baptist denomination, amongst whom are, doubtless, many respectable characters, who view the turbulence and enthusiasm of the German Baptists with the greatest detestation, but merely to shew that their views of baptism are not so antient and apostolic as many are prone to imagine and zealous to propagate."

Notwithstanding this declaration of the Editor, he has been represented as illiberal, unjust, ungenerous, unkind, if not base in the highest degree and even antichristian. Is this meeting the historical question, or pouring out a torrent of abuse? As it was in their

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\* The whole of Dr. Robertson's narrative respecting the German Anabaptists, or Antipædobaptists, or Baptists, call them by whichever name, the Doctor evidently intended the same people, is published separately, and sold by Williams and Son, Stationers' Court, price 2d, or 12s. per hundred.



beginning is *now*.—\*\*\*\* This Tract and three others by the learned, acute, and profound Towgood are represented in the Baptist Magazine as “*flippant pieces*.” Such a judgment upon *Robertson* and *Towgood* reminds us of the lines of Cowper—

The moles and bats in full assembly find,  
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle's blind.

Having found their way into England, some of them very early appeared in America, formed a society at *Swansey*, and another at Boston, in the year 1665. Of this last, Dr. Mather relates, “that they admitted into their society persons whom our churches had excommunicated for moral scandal, and employed them as administrators of the two sacraments.” From such an origin and such beginnings has this sect arisen. If there be any truth in history, their opinions are wholly modern and unknown to antiquity. If infant baptism be a human invention and an absolute nullity, as they pretend, it is certain that, three centuries ago, there was not a society of baptised christians in the world, nor had been for many preceding ages. What then are we to conclude? Did the church of Christ remain, during the lapse of centuries, overpowered by the *gates of hell*? If we could suppose this; yet, would it not be more difficult still to suppose, that it was, at length, recovered by the madmen of Munster, the German Anabaptists?

Though the scriptures be, at last, our only sure guide, yet it is a satisfaction to know in what sense our fellow christians understand the scriptures with reference to any disputed point, and how they have been understood by the church of Christ in former ages; and if we be able, as in this question concerning infant baptism, to trace the practice of it up through all preceding ages to that of the apostles, it must be allowed

a strong presumptive argument in favour of its having originated with the apostles themselves. It is in this way, that we argue the change of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week. The New Testament contains no express order or command upon the subject; but as we can trace the observance of the first day of the week up to the age of the apostles, and find that *they* actually met on that day for religious worship, we conclude that the practice originated from their authority and appointment. In my view, the argument is equally full and strong in favour of infant baptism.

As our Antipædobaptist brethren do not seem destitute of a disposition to celebrate the worthies of their denomination (and which indeed is to be commended) for we have voluminous publications, devoted to the *English* Baptists, and the *American* Baptists, and how is it that we have never had a biographical work containing the lives of *ancient* Antipædobaptists, this is certainly a desideratum. Should such an attempt be made, it is hoped they will not claim in one line, as has been done in the Baptist Magazine, the whole body of the Waldenses.

On this subject Dr. Wall writes, "The present Waldenses, or Vaudois in Piedmont, who are the posterity of those old, do practice infant baptism: and they were also found in the practice of it when the Protestants of Luther's Reformation sent to know their state and doctrine, and to confer with them; and they themselves say, that their fathers never practised otherwise. And they gave proof of it from an old book of theirs, called the Spiritual Almanack, where infant baptism is owned: and Perin, their historian, gives the reason of the report that had been to the contrary, viz. that their ancestors being constrained for some hundred years, to suffer their children to be baptised by the priests of the Church of Rome, they deferred the

doing thereof as long as they could, because they had in detestation those human inventions that were added to the sacrament, which they held to be the pollution thereof. And forasmuch as their own pastors were many times abroad, employed in the service of churches, they could not have baptism administered to their infants by their own ministers. For this cause they kept them long from baptism: which the priests perceiving, and taking notice of, charged them with this slander.

THE END.

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In the Baptist Magazine for November last, these Tracts are designated “*flippant pieces*.” Is this true? Could the writer believe what he wrote? At any rate it falsifies public opinion; for, as authors, Who have acquired (and justly too) more celebrity than Towgood and Robertson?

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PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

PHILOSOPHY 101

LECTURE NOTES

These notes are intended to provide a summary of the main points discussed in the lectures. They are not intended to be a substitute for the original text, but rather a guide to the material.

The first lecture dealt with the history of philosophy, from ancient Greece to the modern era. We discussed the contributions of Plato, Aristotle, and the medieval philosophers, as well as the rise of modern philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The second lecture focused on the philosophy of language, particularly the work of Wittgenstein. We explored the idea of language as a game and the concept of private language.

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