On Baptism

By John Gill

From A Body of Practical Divinity,

1773-1770

As the first covenant, or testament, had ordinances of divine service, which are shaken, removed, and abolished; so the New Testament, or gospel dispensation, has ordinances of divine worship, which cannot be shaken, but will remain until the second coming of Christ: these, as Austin says {1}, are few; and easy to be observed, and of a very expressive signification. Among which, baptism must be reckoned one, and is proper to be treated of in the first place; for though it is not a church ordinance, it is an ordinance of God, and a part and branch of public worship. When I say it is not a church ordinance, I mean it is not an ordinance **administered** in the church, but out of it, and in order to admission into it, and communion with it; it is preparatory to it, and a qualification for it; it does not make a person a member of a church, or admit him into a visible church; persons must first be baptized, and then added to the church, as the three thousand converts were; a church has nothing to do with the baptism of any, but to be satisfied they are baptized before they are admitted into communion with it. Admission to baptism lies solely in the breast of the **administrator**, who is the only judge of qualifications for it, and has the sole power of receiving to it, and of rejecting from it; if nor satisfied, he may reject a person thought fit by a church, and admit a person to baptism not thought fit by a church; but a disagreement is not desirable nor advisable: the orderly, regular, scriptural rule of proceeding seems to be this: a person inclined to submit to baptism, and to join in communion with a church, should first apply to an **administrator**; and upon giving him satisfaction, be baptized by him; and then should

propose to the church for communion; when he would be able to answer all proper questions: if asked, to give a reason of the hope that is in him, he is ready to do it; if a testimony of his life and conversation is required, if none present can give it, he can direct where it is to be had; and if the question is put to him, whether he is a baptized person or not, he can answer in the affirmative, and give proof of it, and so the way is clear for his admission into church fellowship. So Saul, when converted, was immediately baptized by Ananias, without any previous knowledge and consent of the church; and, it was many days after this that he proposed to join himself to the disciples, and was received, Ac 9:18-19,23,26-28 and as it is water baptism which is meant, I shall,

1. First, prove that this is peculiar to the gospel dispensation, is a standing ordinance in it, and will be continued to the second coming of Christ. This is opposed to the sentiments of such who say baptism was in use before the times of John, of Christ and his apostles; and of such who restrain water baptism to the interval between the beginning of John's ministry and the death of Christ, when they supposed this, with other external rites, ceased; and of such, as the Socinians {2}, who think that only the first converts to Christianity in a nation are to be baptized, and their children, but not their after posterity. There were indeed various washings, bathings, or baptisms, under the legal dispensation, for the purification of persons and things unclean, by the ceremonial law; which had a doctrine in them, called the doctrine of baptists, which taught the cleansing of sin by the blood of Christ; but there was nothing similar in them to the ordinance of water baptism, but immersion only. The Jews pretend, their ancestors were received into covenant by baptism, or dipping, as well as by circumcision and sacrifice; and that proselytes from heathenism were received the same way; and this is greedily grasped at by the advocates for infant baptism; who fancy that John, Christ, and his apostles, took up this custom as they found it, and continued it; and which they imagine accounts for the silence about it in the

New Testament, and why there is neither precept for it, nor example of it; but surely if it was in such common use as pretended, though no new precept had been given, there would have been precedents enough of it; but no proof is to be given of any such practice obtaining in those times, neither from the Old nor New Testament; nor from the apocryphal books written by Jews between them; nor from Josephus and Philo the Jew, who wrote a little after the times of John and Christ; nor from the Jewish Misnah, or book of traditions: only from later writings of theirs, too late for the proof of it before those times {3}. John was the first **administrator** of the ordinance of baptism, and therefore is called "the Baptist," Mt 3:1 by way of emphasis; whereas, had it been in common use, there must have been many baptizers before him, who had a like claim to this title; and why should the people be so alarmed with it, as to come from all parts to see it **administered**, and to hear it preached, when, had it been in frequent use, they must have often seen it? and why should the Jewish sanhedrim send priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John, to know who he was, whether the Messiah, or his forerunner Elias, or that prophet spoken of and expected? and when he confessed, and denied that he was neither of them, they say to him, "Why baptizest thou then?" by which thing and which they expected it appears it was a new thing, and which they expected when the Messiah came, but not before; and that then it would be performed by some great personage, one or other of the before mentioned; whereas, had it been performed by an ordinary teacher, common Rabbi or doctor, priest or Levite, in ages immemorial, there could have been no room for such a question; and had this been the case, there would have been no difficulty with the Jews to answer the question of our Lord; "The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven or of men?" they could have answered, It was a tradition of theirs, a custom in use among them time out of mind, had this been the known case; nor would they have been subject to any dilemma: but John’s baptism was not a device of men; but the "counsel of God," according to his will and wise determination, Lu 7:30. John had a mission and commission from God, he was a man sent of God, and sent to baptize, Joh 1:6,33 and his baptism was

water baptism, this he affirms, and the places he made use of for that purpose show it, and none will deny it.

Now his baptism, and that of Christ and his apostles, were the same. Christ was baptized by John, and his baptism was surely Christian baptism; of this no one can doubt, Mt 3:13-17 and his disciples also were baptized by him; for by whom else could they be baptized? not by Christ himself, for he baptized none, Joh 4:2. And it is observable, that the baptism of John, and the baptism of Christ and his apostles, were at the same time; they were contemporary, and did not the one succeed the other: now it is not reasonable to suppose there should be two sorts of baptism **administered** at the same time; but one and the same by both, Joh 3:22-23; 4:1-2.

The baptism of John, and that which was practised by the apostles of Christ, even after his death and resurrection from the dead, agreed,

1a. In the subjects thereof. Those whom John baptized were sensible penitent sinners, who were convinced of their sins, and made an ingenuous confession of them; and of whom he required "fruits meet for repentance," and which showed it to be genuine; and hence his baptism is called, "the baptism of repentance," because he required it previous to it, Mt 3:6-8; Mr 1:4. So the apostles of Christ exhorted men to repent, to profess their repentance, and give evidence of it, previous to their baptism, Ac 2:38. John said to the people that came to his baptism, "That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus," upon which they were baptized in his name, Ac 19:4-5 and faith in Christ was made a prerequisite to baptism by Christ and his apostles, Mr 16:16; Ac 8:36-37.

1b. In the way and manner of the **administration** of both. John's baptism was by immersion, as the places chosen by him for it show; and the baptism of Christ by him is a proof of it, Mt 3:6,16; Joh 3:23 and in like manner was baptism performed by the apostles, as of the eunuch by Philip, Ac 8:38-39.

1c. In the form of their **administration**. John was sent of God to baptize; and in whose name should he baptize, but in the name of the one true God, who sent him, even in the name of God, Father, Son, and Spirit? The doctrine of the Trinity was known to John, as it was to the Jews in common; it is said of John's hearers and disciples, that they were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," Ac 19:5. The same form is used of the baptism of those baptized by the apostles of Christ, Ac 8:16; 10:48 which is only a part of the form put for the whole, and is sufficiently expressive of Christian baptism, which is to be performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Mt 28:19.

1d. In the end and use of baptism, John's baptism, and so the apostles was, upon repentance for the remission of sins, Mr 1:4; Ac 8:38 not that either repentance or baptism procure the pardon of sin; that is only obtained by the blood of Christ; but baptism is a means of leading to the blood of Christ; and repentance gives encouragement to hope for it, through it. Now since there is such an agreement between the baptism of John, as **administered** before the death of Christ; and between the baptism of the apostles, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; it is a plain case, it was not limited to the interval of time from the beginning of John's ministry to the death of Christ; but was afterwards continued; which further appears from the commission of Christ, Mt 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them;" and though water is not expressed, it is always implied, when the act of baptizing is ascribed to men; for it is peculiar to Christ to baptize with the Holy Spirit, Mt 3:11; Ac 1:5 nor did he give to his apostles,

nor to any man, or set of men, a commission and power to baptize with the Spirit: besides, an increase of the graces of the Spirit, and a large donation of his gifts, are promised to persons after baptism, and as distinct from it, Ac 2:38. The apostles, doubtless, understood the commission of their Lord and Master to baptize in water, since they practised it upon it; such was the baptism **administered** by Philip, who, having taught the eunuch the doctrine of it, when they came to a "certain water," he said to him, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" that is, in water; and when Philip had observed unto him the grand requisite of it, even faith in Christ, which he at once professed; and the chariot in which they rode being ordered to stand, theft went down both into the water, and he baptized him; this was most certainly water baptism; and so was that which Peter ordered to be **administered** to Cornelius and his friends, upon their receiving of the Holy Ghost, and so a baptism different from that; "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" Ac 8:36,38-39; 10:47-48. And this was designed to be continued unto the end of the world, to the second coming of Christ; as the ordinance of the supper is to be kept to that time, the ordinance of water baptism is to be continued as long; hence says Christ, to encourage his ministers to preach his gospel, and to baptize in his name; "Lo, I am with you always," in the ministry of the word, and in the **administration** of baptism, "even unto the end of the world," Mt 28:19-20.

2. Secondly, I shall next consider the author of it; and show, that it is not a device of men, but an ordinance of God; it is a solemn part of divine worship, being performed in the name of the Three divine Persons in Deity, Father, Son, and Spirit, and by their authority; in which the name of God is invoked, faith in him expressed, and a man gives up himself to God, obliges himself to yield obedience to him, expecting all good things from him. Now for an act of religious worship there must be a command of God. God is a jealous God, and will not suffer anything to be admitted into the worship of him, but what is according to his word and will; if not commanded by him,

he may justly say, "Who hath required this at your hands?" and will resent it: a command from men is not sufficient; no man on earth is to be called master; one is our Master in heaven, and him only we are to obey: if the commandments of men are taught for doctrines, in vain is the Lord worshipped; what is done according to them is superstition and will worship. Indeed, as it is now commonly practised, it is a mere invention of men, the whole of it corrupted and changed; instead of rational spiritual men the subjects of it, infants, who have neither the use of reason, nor the exercise of grace, are admitted to it; and instead of immersion in water, and emersion out of it, a very expressive emblem of the sufferings of Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead; sprinkling a few drops of water on the face is introduced; with a number of foolish rites and ceremonies used by the papists, and some of their usages are retained by some Protestants; as sponsors, or sureties for infants, and the signing them with the sign of the cross. In short, the face of the ordinance is so altered, that if the apostles were to rise from the dead, and see it as now performed, they would neither know nor own it to be the ordinance commanded them by Christ, and practised by them. But as it is **administered** according to the pattern, and as first delivered, it appears to be of an heavenly original; the "counsel of God," a wise appointment of his, and in which all the Three Persons have a concern; they all appeared at the baptism of Christ, and gave a sanction to the ordinance by their presence; the Father by a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" as in his person, so in this act of his, in submitting to the ordinance of baptism; the Son in human nature, yielding obedience to it; and the Spirit descending on him as a dove; and it is ordered to be **administered** in the name of all three, Father, Son, and Spirit. Which, among other things, is expressive of divine authority, under which it is performed. Christ received from God the Father honour and glory, as at his transfiguration, so at his baptism, by the voice from heaven, owning his relation to him, as his Son, and expressing his well pleasedness in him, as obedient to his will; the Son of God, in human nature, not only left an example of it, that we should tread

in his steps; though he himself baptized none, yet he countenanced it in his disciples, and gave them orders to do it; which orders were repeated, and a fresh commission given for the same after his resurrection from the dead: and the Spirit of God showed his approbation of it, by his descent on Christ at his baptism; and his authority for it is to be seen in the **administration** of it in his name, as in the name of the other Two Persons; so that it is to be regarded, not as an institution of men, but as an ordinance of God; as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled, a branch of the righteous will of God, to be observed in obedience to it.

3. Thirdly, the subjects of baptism are next to be inquired into; or who they are to whom it is to be **administered**, and according to the scripture instances and examples, they are such who,

3a. Are enlightened by the Spirit of God to see their lost state by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and Christ as the only Saviour of sinners; who look to him and are saved; and such only can see to the end of the ordinance, which is to represent the sufferings and death, burial and resurrection of Christ; hence baptism was by the ancients; called fwtismov, "illumination;" and baptized persons fwtizomenoi, "enlightened" ones; and the Syriac and. Ethiopic, versions of Heb 6:4 translate the word "enlightened" by baptized; an emblem of this was the falling off from the eyes of Saul, as it had been scales; signifying his former blindness, and ignorance, and unbelief, now removed; upon which he arose and was baptized, Ac 9:18.

3b. Penitent persons; such who having seen the evil nature of sin, repent of it, and acknowledge it; such were the first who were baptized by John that we read of; they were "baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins," Mt 3:6 being made sensible of them, they ingenuously confessed them; and

such were the first who were baptized after Christ had renewed the commission to his disciples, upon his resurrection, to teach and: baptize; such as were pricked to the heart, were exhorted to profess repentance and give evidence of it, and then be baptized, as they were, Ac 2:37-38,41 and it is pity that these first examples of baptism were not strictly followed.

3c. Faith in Christ is a prerequisite to baptism, Mr 16:16 this is clear from the case of the eunuch, desiring baptism, to whom Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;" by which it seems, that if he did not believe, he had no right to the ordinance; but if he did, he had; upon which he professed his faith in Christ; and upon that profession was baptized, Ac 8:36 and the various instances of baptism recorded in scripture, confirm the same; as of the inhabitants of Samaria, who, upon believing in Christ, "were baptized, both men and women;" so the Corinthians, "hearing" the word preached by the apostle Paul, "believed" in Christ, whom he preached, "and were baptized," upon their faith in him, Ac 8:12; 18:8 and without faith it is impossible to please God in any ordinance or part of worship; and what is not of faith is sin; and without it no one can see to the end of the ordinance of baptism, as before observed.

3d. Such who are taught and made disciples by teaching, are the proper subjects of baptism, agreeable both to the practice of Christ and his commission; it is said, "that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John," Joh 4:1 he first made them disciples, and then baptized them, that is, ordered his apostles to baptize them; and so runs his commission to them, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," that is, those that are taught, and so made disciples; and they are the disciples of Christ, who have learnt to know him, and are taught to deny sinful, righteous, and civil self, for his sake, and to take up the cross and follow him.

3e. Such who have received the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of illumination and conviction, of sanctification and faith, as the persons before described may well be thought to have, should be admitted to baptism, Ac 10:47 see Ga 3:2 from all which it appears, that such who are ignorant of divine things, impenitent, unbelievers, not disciples and followers of Christ, and who are destitute of the Spirit, are not proper subjects of baptism, let their pretences to birthright be what they may; and so not the infants of any, be they born of whom they may; and to whom the above characters, descriptive of the subjects of baptism, do by no means belong: with respect to their first birth, though born of believing parents, they are carnal and corrupt, and children of wrath, as others; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and they must be born again, or they cannot see, possess, and enjoy the kingdom of God, or have a right to be admitted into the church of God now, nor will they enter into the kingdom of God, into heaven hereafter, unless born again; their first and carnal birth neither entitles them to the kingdom of God on earth, nor to the kingdom of God in heaven, be it taken in either sense; for the baptism of such there is neither precept nor precedent in the word of God.

3e1. First, there is no precept for it; not the words of Christ in Mt 19:14 "But Jesus said, Suffer little children," &c. For,

3e1a. Let the words be said to or of whom they may, they are not in the form of a precept, but of a permission or grant, and signify not what was enjoined as necessary, but what was allowed of, or which might be; "Suffer little children," &c.

3e1b. These children do not appear to be newborn babes. The words used by the evangelists, neither paidia nor brefh, do not always signify such; but are sometimes used or such who are capable of going alone, and of being

instructed, and of understanding the scriptures, and even of one of twelve years of age, Mt 18:2; 2Ti 3:15; Mr 5:39,42. Nor is it probable that children just born should be had abroad; besides, these were such as Christ called unto him, Lu 18:16 and were capable of coming to him of themselves, as is supposed in the words themselves; nor is their being brought unto him, nor his taking them in his arms, any objection to this, since the same are said of such who could walk of themselves, Mt 12:22; 17:16; Mr 9:36.

3e1c. It cannot be said whose children these were; whether they belonged to those who brought them, or to others; and whether the children of believers, and of baptized persons, or not; and if of unbelievers, and of unbaptized persons, the Paedobaptists themselves will not allow such children to be baptized.

3e1d. It is certain they were not brought to Christ to be baptized by him, but for other purposes; the evangelist Matthew, Mt 19:13,15 says, they were brought to him that he "should put his hands upon them, and pray," as he did, that is, for a blessing on them; as it was usual with the Jews to do, Ge 48:14-15. The evangelists Mark and Luke say, they were brought to him, "that he would touch them," as he did when he healed persons of diseases; and probably these children were diseased, and were brought to him to be cured; however, they were not brought to be baptized by Christ; for Christ baptized none at all, adult or infants; had they that brought them this in view, they would have brought them to the disciples of Christ, and not to Christ, whom they might have seen **administering** the ordinance of baptism, but not Christ: however, it is certain they were not baptized by Christ, since he never baptized any.

3e1e. This passage rather concludes against Paedobaptism than for it, and shows that this practice had not obtained among the Jews, and had not been

used by John, by Christ, and his disciples; for then the apostles would scarcely have forbid the bringing of these children, since they might readily suppose they were brought to be baptized; but knowing of no such usage in the nation, whether of them that did or did not believe in Christ, they forbad them; and Christ's silence about this matter, when he had such an opportunity of speaking of it to his disciples, and enjoining it, had it been his will, does not look very favourably upon this practice.

3e1f. The reason given for suffering little children to come to Christ, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven," is to be understood in a figurative and metaphorical sense; of such who are comparable to children for modesty, meekness, and humility, and for freedom from rancour, malice, ambition, and pride; see Mt 18:2 and which sense is given into by Origen {4}, among the ancients, and by Calvin and Brugensis, among the moderns.

Nor does the commission in Mt 28:19 contain in it any precept for infant baptism; "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. For,

3e1f1. The baptism of all nations is not here commanded; but the baptism only of such who are taught; for the antecedent to the relative "them," cannot be "all nations;" since the words panta ta eynh, "all nations," are of the neuter gender; whereas autouv, "them," is of the masculine; but mayeutav, disciples, is supposed and understood in the word mayhteusate, "teach," or "make disciples;" now the command is, that such who are first taught or made disciples by teaching under the ministry of the word, by the Spirit of God succeeding it, should be baptized.

3e1f2. If infants, as a part of all nations, and because they are such, are to be baptized, then the infants of Heathens, Turks, and Jews, ought to be

baptized, since they are a part, and a large part, of all nations; as well as the children of Christians, or believers, which are but a small part; yea, every individual person in the world ought to be baptized, all adult persons, heathens as well as Christians; even the most profligate and abandoned of mankind, since they are a part of all nations.

3e1f3. Disciples of Christ, and such who have learned to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and to know themselves, and their need of him, are characters that cannot agree with infants; and if disciples and learners are the same, as is said, they must be learners or they cannot be disciples; and they cannot be learners of Christ unless they have learnt something of him; and according to this notion of disciples and learners, they ought to learn something of him before they are baptized in his name; but what can an infant be taught to learn of Christ? to prove infants disciples that text is usually brought, Ac 15:10 which falls greatly short of proving it; for infants are not designed in that place, nor included in the character; for though the Judaizing teachers would have had the Gentiles, and their infants too, circumcised; yet it was not circumcision, the thing itself, which is meant by the intolerable yoke; for that was what the Jewish fathers, and their children, were able to bear, and had bore in ages past; but it was the doctrine of the necessity of that, and other rites of Moses, to salvation; and obliged to the keeping of the whole law, and was in tolerable; and which doctrine could not be imposed upon infants, but upon adult persons only.

3e1f4. These two acts, teaching, or making disciples, and baptizing, are not to be confounded, but are two distinct acts, and the one is previous and absolutely necessary to the other: Men must first be made disciples, and then baptized; so Jerom {5} long ago understood the commission; on which he observes,

“First they teach all nations, then dip those that are taught in water; for it cannot be that the body shouldreceive the sacrament of baptism, unless the soul has before received the truth of faith.”

And so says Athanasius {6},

“Wherefore the Saviour does not simply command to baptize; but first says, teach, and then baptize thus,

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” that faith might come of teaching, and baptism be perfected.”

3e2. Secondly, there is no precedent for the baptism of infants in the word of God. Among the vast numbers who flocked to John’s baptism from all parts, we read of no infants that were brought with them for that purpose, or that were baptized by him. And though more were baptized by Christ than by John, that is, the apostles of Christ, at his order, yet no mention of any infant baptized by them; and though three thousand persons were baptized at once, yet not an infant among them: and in all the accounts of baptism in the Acts of the Apostles in different parts of the world, not a single instance of infant baptism is given. There is, indeed, mention made of households, or families, baptized; and which the "paedobaptists" endeavour to avail themselves of; but they ought to be sure there were infants in these families, and that they were baptized, or else they must baptize them on a very precarious foundation; since there are families who have no infants in them, and how can they be sure there were any in these the scriptures speak of? and it lies upon them to prove there were infants in them, and that these infants were baptized; or the allegation of these instances is to no purpose. We are able to prove there are many things in the account of

these families, which are inconsistent with infants, and which make it at least probable there were none in them, and which also make it certain that those who were baptized were adult persons and believers in Christ. There are but three families, if so many, who are usually instanced in: the first is that of Lydia and her household, Ac 16:14-15 but in what state of life she was is not certain, whether single or married, whether maid widow or wife; and if married, whether she then had any children, or ever had any; and if she had, and they living, whether they were infants or adult; and if infants, it does not seem probable that she should bring them along with her from her native place, Thyatira to Philippi, where she seems to have been upon business, and so had hired a house during her stay there; wherefore her household seems to have consisted of menial servants she brought along with her, to assist her in her business: and certain it is, that those the apostles found in her house, when they entered into it, after they came out of prison, were such as are called "brethren," and were capable of being "comforted" by them; which supposes them to have been in some distress and trouble, and needed comfort. The second instance is of the jailor and his household, which consisted of adult persons, and of such only; for the apostles spoke the word of the Lord to "all" that were in his house, which they were capable of hearing, and it seems of understanding; for not only he "rejoiced" at the good news of salvation by Christ, but "all" in his house hearing it, rejoiced likewise; which joy of theirs was the joy of faith; for he and they were believers in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; for it is expressly said, that he "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house;" so that they were not only hearers of the word, but rejoiced at it, and believed in it, and in God the Saviour, revealed in it to them, Ac 16:32-34 all which shows them to be adult persons, and not infants. The third instance, if distinct from the household of the jailor, which some take to be the same, is that of Stephanus; but be it a different one, it is certain it consisted of adult persons, believers in Christ, and very useful in the service of religion; they were the first fruits of Achaia, the first converts in those parts, and who "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," 1Co 16:15 which,

whether understood of the ministry of the word to the saints, which they gave themselves up unto; or of the ministration of their substance to the poor, which they cheerfully communicated, they must be adult persons, and not infants. There being then neither precept nor precedent in the word of God for infant baptism, it may be justly condemned as unscriptural and unwarrantable.

3e3. Thirdly, nor is infant baptism to be concluded from any things or passages recorded either in the Old or in the New Testament. Baptism being an ordinance peculiar to the New Testament, it cannot be expected there should be any directions about the observance of it in the Old Testament; and whatever may be gathered relative to it, from typical and figurative baptisms, under the former dispensation, there is nothing from thence in favour of infant baptism, and to countenance that; and yet we are often referred thereunto for the original and foundation of it, but to no purpose.

3e3a. It is not fact, as has been asserted {7}, that the "infants of believers" have, with their parents, been taken into covenant with God in the former ages of the church, if by it is meant the covenant of grace; the first covenant made with man, was that of works, made with Adam, and which indeed included all his posterity, to whom he stood as a federal head, as no one ever since did to his natural offspring; in whom they all sinned, were condemned, and died; which surely cannot be pleaded in favour of the infants of believers! after the fall, the covenant of grace, and the way of life and salvation by Christ, were revealed to Adam and Eve, personally, as interested therein; but not to their natural seed and posterity, and as interested therein; for then all mankind must be taken into the covenant of grace, and so nothing peculiar to the infants of believers; of which not the least syllable is mentioned throughout the whole age of the church, reaching from Adam to Noah. The next covenant we read of, is that made with Noah,

which was not made with him and his immediate offspring only; nor were any taken into it as infants of believers, nor had they any sacrament or rite as a token of it, and of God being their God in a peculiar relation. Surely this will not be said of Ham, one of the immediate sons of Noah. That covenant was made with Noah, and with all mankind to the end of the world, and even with every living creature, the beasts of the field, promising security from an universal deluge, as long as the world should stand; and so had nothing in it peculiar to the infants of believers. The next covenant is that made with Abraham and his seed, on which great stress is laid, Ge 17:10-14 and this is said {8} to be

"the grand turning point on which the issue of the controversy very much depends; and that if Abraham'scovenant, which included his infant children, and gave them a right to circumcision, was not the covenant of grace; then it is confessed, that the "main ground" is taken away, on which "the right of infants to baptism" is asserted; and consequently the principal arguments in support of the doctrine are overturned."

Now that this covenant was not the pure covenant of grace, in distinction from the covenant of works, but rather a covenant of works, will soon be proved; and if so, then the main ground of infant's baptism is taken away, and its principal arguments in support of it overturned: and that it is not the covenant of grace is clear,

3e3a1. From its being never so called, nor by any name which shows it to be such; but "the covenant of circumcision," Ac 7:8. Now nothing is more opposite to one another than circumcision and grace; circumcision is a work of the law, which they that sought to be justified by fell from grace, Ga 5:2-4. Nor can this covenant be the same we are now under, which is a new

covenant, or a new **administration** of the covenant of grace, since it is abolished, and no more in being and force.

3e3a2. It appears to be a covenant of works, and not of grace; since it was to be kept by men, under a severe penalty. Abraham was to keep it, and his seed after him; something was to be done by them, their flesh to be circumcised, and a penalty was annexed, in case of disobedience or neglect; such a soul was to be cut off from his people: all which shows it to be, not a covenant of grace, but of works.

3e3a3. It is plain, it was a covenant that might be broken; of the uncircumcised it is said, "He hath broken my covenant," Ge 17:14 whereas the covenant of grace cannot be broken; God will not break it, and men cannot; it is ordered in all things, and sure, and is more immoveable than hills and mountains, Ps 89:34.

3e3a4. It is certain it had things in it of a civil and temporal nature; as a multiplication of Abraham's natural seed, and a race of kings from him; a promise of his being the Father of many nations, and a possession of the land of Canaan by his seed: things that can have no place in the pure covenant of grace and have nothing to do with that, any more than the change of his name from Abram to Abraham.

3e3a5. There were some persons included in it, who cannot be thought to belong to the covenant of grace; as Ishmael, not in the same covenant with Isaac, and a profane Esau: and on the other hand, there were some who were living when this covenant of circumcision was made, and yet were left out of it; who nevertheless, undoubtedly, were in the covenant of grace; as

Shem, Arphaxad, Melchizedek, Lot, and others; wherefore this can never be the pure covenant of grace.

3e3a6. Nor is this covenant the same with what is referred to in Ga 3:17 said to be "confirmed of God in Christ," which could not be disannulled by the law four hundred and thirty years after; the distance of time between them does not agree, but falls short of the apostle's date twenty four years; and therefore must not refer to the covenant of circumcision, but to some other covenant and time of making it; even to an exhibition and manifestation of the covenant of grace to Abraham, about the time of his call out of Chaldea, Ge 12:3.

3e3a7. The covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the federal head of the elect in him, and that from everlasting, and who is the only head of that covenant, and of the covenant ones: if the covenant of grace was made with Abraham, as the head of his natural and spiritual seed, Jews and Gentiles; there must be two heads of the covenant of grace, contrary to the nature of such a covenant, and the whole current of scripture; yea, the covenant of grace, as it concerns the spiritual seed of Abraham, and spiritual blessings for them; it, and the promises of it, were made to Christ, Ga 3:16. No mere man is capable of covenanting with God; the covenant of grace is not made with any single man; and much less with him on the behalf of others: whenever we read of it as made with a particular person or persons, it is always to be understood of the manifestation and application of it, and of its blessings and promises to them.

3e3a8. Allowing Abraham's covenant to be a peculiar one, and of a mixed kind, containing promises of temporal things to him, and his natural seed, and of spiritual things to his spiritual seed; or rather, that there was at the same time when the covenant of circumcision was given to Abraham and his

natural seed, a fresh manifestation of the covenant of grace made with him and his spiritual seed in Christ. That the temporal blessings of it belonged to his natural seed, is no question; but that the spiritual blessings belong to all Abraham's seed, after the flesh, and to all the natural seed of believing Gentiles, must be denied: if the covenant of grace was made with all Abraham's seed according to the flesh, then it was made with his more immediate offspring, with a mocking, persecuting Ishmael, and with a profane Esau, and with all his remote posterity; with them who believed not, and whose carcases fell in the wilderness; with the ten tribes who revolted from the pure worship of God; with the Jews in Isaiah's time, a seed of evildoers, whose rulers are called the rulers of Sodom, and the people the people of Gomorrah; with the scribes and Pharisees, that wicked and adulterous generation in the times of Christ: but what serious, thoughtful man, who knows anything of the covenant of grace, can admit of this? see Ro 9:6-7. It is only a remnant, according to the election of grace, who are in this covenant; and if all the natural seed of Abraham are not in this covenant, it can scarcely be thought that all the natural seed of believing Gentiles are; it is only some of the one and some of the other, who are in the covenant of grace; and this cannot be known until they believe, when they appear to be Abraham's spiritual seed; and it must be right to put off their claim to any supposed privilege arising from covenant interest, until it is plain they have one; if all the natural seed of Abraham, as such, and all the natural seed of believing Gentiles, as such, are in the covenant of grace; since all they that are in it, and none but they are in it, who are the chosen of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, and will be called by grace, and sanctified, and persevere in faith and holiness, and be eternally glorified; then the natural seed of Abraham, and of believing Gentiles, must be all chosen to grace and glory, and be redeemed by the blood of Christ from sin, law, hell, and death; they must all have new hearts and spirits given them, and the fear of God put into their hearts; must be effectually called, their sins forgiven them, their persons justified by the righteousness of Christ, and they persevere in grace to the end, and be for ever glorified; see Jer

31:33-34; 32:40; Eze 36:25-27; Ro 8:30. But who will venture to assert all this of the one, or of the other? And after all,

3e3a9. If their covenant interest could be ascertained, that gives no right to an ordinance, without a positive order and direction from God. It gave no right to circumcision formerly; for on the one hand there were persons living when that ordinance was appointed, who had an undoubted interest in the covenant of grace; as Shem, Arphaxad, Lot, and others, on whom circumcision was not enjoined, and they had no right to use it: on the other hand, there have been many of whom it cannot be said they were in the covenant of grace, and yet were obliged to it. And so covenant interest gives no right to baptism; could it be proved, as it cannot, that all the infant seed of believers, as such, are in the covenant of grace, it would give them no right to baptism, without a command for it; the reason is, because a person may be in covenant, and as yet not have the prerequisite to an ordinance, even faith in Christ, and a profession of it, which are necessary both to baptism and the Lord's Supper; and if covenant interest gives a right to the one, it would to the other.

3e3a10. Notwithstanding all this attention made about Abraham's covenant, Ge 17:1-14, it was not made with him and his infant seed; but with him and his adult offspring; it was they in all after ages to the coming of Christ, whether believers or unbelievers, who were enjoined to circumcise their infant seed, and not all of them, only their males: it was not made with Abraham's infant seed, who could not circumcise themselves, but their parents were by this covenant obliged to circumcise them; yea, others, who were not Abraham's natural seed, were obliged to it; "He that is eight days old shalt be circumcised among you, which is NOT OF THY SEED," Ge 17:12. Which leads on to observe,

3e3b. That nothing can be concluded from the circumcision of Jewish infants, to the baptism of the infants of believing Gentiles: had there been a like command for the baptism of the infants of believing Gentiles, under the New Testament, as there was for the circumcision of Jewish infants under the Old, the thing would not have admitted of any dispute; but nothing of this kind appears. For,

3e3b1. It is not clear that even Jewish infants were admitted into covenant by the rite of circumcision; from whence it is pleaded, that the infants of believers are admitted into it by baptism; for Abraham's female seed were taken into the covenant made with him, as well as his male seed, but not by any "visible rite" or ceremony; nor were his male seed admitted by any such rite; not by circumcision, for they were not to be circumcised until the eighth day; to have circumcised them sooner would have been criminal; and that they were in covenant from their birth, I presume, will not be denied; as it was a national covenant, so early they were in it; the Israelites, with their infants at Horeb, had not been circumcised; nor were they when they entered into covenant with the Lord their God, De 29:10-15.

3e3b2. Circumcision was no seal of the covenant of grace under the former dispensation; nor is baptism a seal of it under the present: had circumcision been a seal of it, the covenant of grace must have been without one from Adam to Abraham: it is called a sign or token, but not a seal; it was a sign or mark in the flesh of Abraham's natural seed, a typical sign of the pollution of human nature, and of the inward circumcision of the heart; but no seal, confirming any spiritual blessing of the covenant of grace to those who had this mark or sign; it is indeed called, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," Ro 4:11 but not a seal to Abraham's natural seed of their interest in that righteousness, but only to Abraham himself; it was a seal to him, a confirming sign, assuring him, that the righteousness of faith, which he had

before he was circumcised, should come upon the uncircumcised believing Gentiles; and therefore it was continued on his natural offspring, until that righteousness was preached unto, received by, and imputed to believing Gentiles.

3e3b3. Nor did baptism succeed circumcision; there is no agreement between the one and the other; not in the subjects, to whom they were administered; the use of the one and the other is not the same; and the manner of administering them different; baptism being administered to Jews and Gentiles, to male and female, and to adult persons only: not so circumcision; the use of circumcision was to distinguish the natural seed of Abraham from others; baptism is the badge of the spiritual seed of Christ, and the answer of a good conscience towards God; and represents the sufferings, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the one is by blood, the other by water; and ordinances so much differing in their subjects, use, and administration; the one can never be thought to come in the room and place of the other. Besides, baptism was in use and force before circumcision was abolished, which was not until the death of Christ; whereas, the doctrine of baptism was preached, and the ordinance itself administered, some years before that; now that which was in force before another is out of date, can never with any propriety be said to succeed, or come in the room of that other. Besides, if this was the case, as circumcision gave a right to the passover, so would baptism to the Lord’s Supper; which yet is not admitted.

Now as there is nothing to be gathered out of the Old Testament to countenance infant baptism, so neither are there any passages in the New, which can be supported in favour of it.

3e3b3a. Not the text in Ac 2:39. "The promise is unto you and to your children," &c. It is pretended, that this refers to the covenant made with

Abraham, and to a covenant promise made to him, giving his infant children a right to the ordinance of circumcision; and is urged as a reason with the Jews, why they and their children ought to be baptized; and with the Gentiles, why they and theirs should be also, when called into a church state. But,

3e3b3a1. There is not the least mention made in the text of Abraham's covenant, or of any promise made to him, giving his infant seed a right to circumcision, and still less to baptism; nor is there the least syllable of infant baptism, nor any hint of it, from whence it can be concluded; nor by "children" are infants designed, but the posterity of the Jews, who are frequently so called in scripture, though grown up; and unless it be so understood in many places, strange interpretations must be given of them; wherefore the argument from hence for "paedobaptism" is given up by some learned men, as Dr. Hammond and others, as inconclusive.

3e3b3a2. The promise here, be it what it may, is not observed as giving a right or claim to any ordinance; but as an encouraging motive to persons in distress, under a sense of sin, to repent of it, and declare their repentance, and yield a voluntary subjection to the ordinance of baptism; when they might hope that remission of sins would be applied to them, and they should receive a larger measure of the grace of the Spirit; wherefore repentance and baptism are urged in order to the enjoyment of the promise; and consequently must be understood of adult persons, who only are capable of repentance, and of a voluntary subjection to baptism.

3e3b3a3. The promise is no other than the promise of life and salvation by Christ, and of remission of sins by his blood, and of an increase of grace from his Spirit; and whereas the persons addressed had imprecated the guilt of the blood of Christ, they had shed upon their posterity, as well as on

themselves, which distressed them; they are told, for their relief, that the same promise would be made good to their posterity also, provided they did as they were directed to do; and even to all the Jews afar off, in distant countries and future ages, who should look on Christ and mourn, repent and believe, and be baptized: and seeing the Gentiles are sometimes described as those "afar of," the promise may be thought to reach to them who should be called by grace, repent, believe, and be baptized also; but no mention is made of their children; and had they been mentioned, the limiting clause, "Even as many as the Lord our God shall call," plainly points at and describes the persons intended, whether Jews or Gentiles, effectually called by grace, who are encouraged by the motive in the promise to profess repentance, and submit to baptism; which can only be understood of adult persons, and not of infants.

3e3b3b. Nor Ro 11:16, &c. "If the first fruits be holy," &c. For,

3e3b3b1. By the first fruits, and lump, and by the root and branches, are not meant Abraham and his posterity, or natural seed, as such; but the first among the Jews who believed in Christ, and laid the first foundation of a gospel church state, and were first incorporated into it; Who being holy, were a pledge of the future conversion and holiness of that people in the latter day.

3e3b3b2. Nor by the good olive tree, after mentioned, is meant the Jewish church state; which was abolished by Christ, with all the peculiar ordinances of it; and the believing Gentiles were never ingrafted into it; the axe has been laid to the root of that old Jewish stock, and it is entirely cut down, and no engrafture is made upon it. But,

3e3b3b3. By it is meant the gospel church state, in its first foundation, consisting of Jews that believed, out of which were left the Jews who believed not in Christ, and who are the branches broken off; into which church state the Gentiles were received and engrafted; which engrafture, or coalition, was first made at Antioch, when and hereafter the Gentiles partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree, enjoyed the same privileges, communicated in the same ordinances, and were satisfied with the goodness and fatness of the house of God; and this gospel church may be truly called, by the converted Jews in the latter day, their "own olive tree," into which they will be engrafted; since the first gospel church was set up at Jerusalem, and gathered out of the Jews; and so in other places, the first gospel churches consisted of Jews, the first fruits of those converted ones. From the whole it appears, that there is not the least syllable about baptism, much less of infant baptism, in the passage; nor can anything be concluded from hence in favour of it.

3e3b3c. Nor from 1Co 7:14 "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;" which is by some understood of a federal holiness, giving a claim to covenant privileges, and so to baptism. But,

3e3b3c1. It should be told what these covenant privileges are; since, as we have seen, covenant interest gives no right to any ordinance, without divine direction; nor is baptism a seal of the covenant: it should be told what this covenant holiness is, whether imaginary or real; by some it is called "reputed," and is distinguished from internal holiness, which is rejected from being the sense of the text; but such holiness can never qualify persons for a New Testament ordinance; nor as the covenant of grace any such holiness belonging to it; that provides, by way of promise, real holiness, signified by

putting the laws of God in the heart, by giving new hearts and new spirits, and by cleansing from all impurity, and designs real, internal holiness, shown in an holy conversation; and such who appear to have that, have an undoubted right to the ordinance of baptism, since they have received the Spirit as a Spirit of sanctification, Ac 10:47. But this cannot be meant in the text, seeing,

3e3b3c2. It is such a holiness as heathens may have; unbelieving husbands and wives are said to have it, in virtue of their relation to believing wives and husbands, and which is prior to the holiness of their children, and on which theirs depends; but surely such will not be allowed to have federal holiness, and yet it must be of the same kind with their childrens; if the holiness of the children is a federal holiness, that of the unbelieving parent must be so too, from whence is the holiness of the children.

3e3b3c3. If children, by virtue of this holiness, have claim to baptism, then much more their unbelieving parents, since they are sanctified before them, by their believing yoke fellows, and are as near to them as their children; and if the holiness of the one gives a right to baptism, why not the holiness of the other? and yet the one are baptized, and the other not, though sanctified, and whose holiness is the more near; for the holiness spoken of, be it what it may, is derived from both parents, believing and unbelieving; yea, the holiness of the children depends upon the sanctification of the unbelieving parent; for if the unbeliever is not sanctified, the children are unclean, and not holy. But,

3e3b3c4. These words are to be understood of matrimonial holiness, even of the very act of marriage, which, in the language of the Jews, is frequently expressed by being sanctified; the word vdq to "sanctify," is used in innumerable places in the Jewish writings {9}, to "espouse;" and in the

same sense the apostle uses the word agiazw here, and the words may be rendered, "the unbelieving husband is espoused," or married, "to the wife;" or rather, "has been espoused," for it relates to the act of marriage past, as valid; "and the unbelieving wife has been espoused to the husband;" the preposition en, translated "by," should be rendered "to," as it is in the very next verse; "God hath called us en eirhnh, to peace;" the apostle's inference from it is, "else were your children unclean," illegitimate, if their parents were not lawfully espoused and married to each other; "but now are they holy," a holy and legitimate seed, as in Ezr 9:2 see Mal 2:15 and no other sense can be put upon the words, than of a legitimate marriage and offspring; nothing else will suit with the case proposed to the apostle, and with his answer to it, and reasoning about it; and which sense has been allowed by many learned interpreters, ancient and modern; as Jerome, Ambrose, Erasmus, Camerarius, Musculus, and others.

There are some objections made to the practice of adult baptism, which are of little force, and to which an answer may easily be returned.

3e3b3c4a. That though it may be allowed that adult persons, such as repent and believe, are the subjects of baptism, yet it is nowhere said, that they are the only ones: but if no others can be named as baptized, and the descriptive characters given in scripture of baptized persons are such as can "only" agree with adult, and not with infants; then it may be reasonably concluded, that the former "only" are the proper subjects of baptism.

3e3b3c4b. It is objected to our practice of baptizing the adult offspring of Christians, that no scriptural instance of such a practice can be given; and it is demanded of us to give an instance agreeable to our practice; since the first persons baptized were such as were converted either from Judaism or from heathenism, and about the baptism of such adult, they say, there is no

controversy. But our practice is not at all concerned with the parents of the persons baptized by us, whether they be Christians, Jews, Turks, or Pagans; but with the persons themselves, whether they are believers in Christ or not; if they are the adult offspring of Christians, yet unbaptized, it is no objection to us: and if they are not, it is no bar in the way of admitting them to baptism, if they themselves are believers; many, and it may be the greater part of such baptized by us are the adult offspring of those who, without breach of charity, cannot be considered as Christians. As for the first persons that were baptized, they were neither proselytes from Judaism nor from Heathenism; but the offspring of Christians, of such that believed in the Messiah; the saints before the coming of Christ, and at his coming, were as good Christians as any that have lived since; so that those good men who lived before Abraham, as far back as to the first man, and those that lived after him, even to the coming of Christ, Eusebius {10} observes, that if any should affirm them to be Christians, though not in name, yet in reality, he would not say amiss. Judaism, at the time of Christ's coming, was the same with Christianity, and not in opposition to it; so that there was no such thing as conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Zachariah and Elizabeth, whose offspring John the first baptizer was, and Mary, the mother of our Lord, who was baptized by John, when adult, were as good Christians, and as strong believers in Jesus, as the Messiah, as soon as born, and even when in the womb of the Virgin, as have been since; and these surely must be allowed to be the adult offspring of Christians; such were the apostles of Christ, and the first followers of him, who were the adult offspring of such who believed in the Messiah, and embraced him upon the first notice of him, and cannot be said to be converted from Judaism to Christianity; Judaism not existing until the opposition to Jesus being the Messiah became general and national; after that, indeed, those of the Jewish nation who believed in Christ, may be said to be proselytes from Judaism to Christianity, as the apostle Paul and others: and so converts made by the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles, were proselytes from heathenism to Christianity; but then it is unreasonable to demand of us instances of the adult offspring

of such being baptized, and added to the churches; since the scripture history of the first churches contained in the Acts of the Apostles, only gives an account of the first planting of these churches, and of the baptism of those of which they first consisted; but not of the additions of members to them in later times; wherefore to give instances of those who were born of them, and brought up by them, as baptized in adult years, cannot reasonably be required of us: but on the other hand, if infant children were admitted to baptism in these times, upon the faith and baptism of their parents, and their becoming Christians; it is strange, exceeding strange, that among the many thousands baptized in Jerusalem, Samaria, Corinth, and other places, that there should be no one instance of any of them bringing their children with them to be baptized, and claiming the privilege of baptism for them upon their own faith; nor of their doing this in any short time after. This is a case that required no length of time, and yet not a single instance can be produced.

3e3b3c4c. It is objected, that no time can be assigned when infants were cast out of covenant, or cut off from the seal of it. If by the covenant is meant the covenant of grace, it should be first proved that they are in it, as the natural seed of believers, which cannot be done; and when that is, it is time enough to talk of their being cast out, when and how. If by it is meant Abraham’s covenant, the covenant of circumcision, the answer is the cutting off was when circumcision ceased to be an ordinance of God, which was at the death of Christ: if by it is meant the national covenant of the Jews, the ejection of Jewish parents, with their children, was when God wrote a "Loammi" upon that people, as a body politic and ecclesiastic; when he broke his covenant with them, signified by breaking his two staffs, beauty and bands.

3e3b3c4d. A clamorous outcry is made against us, as abridging the privileges of infants, by denying baptism to them; making them to be lesser under the gospel dispensation than under the law, and the gospel dispensation less glorious. But as to the gospel dispensation, it is the more glorious for infants being left out of its church state; that is, for its being not national and carnal, as before; but congregational and spiritual; consisting not of infants, without understanding, but of rational and spiritual men, believers in Christ; and these not of a single country, as Judea, but in all parts of the world: and as for infants, their privileges now are many and better, who are eased from the painful rite of circumcision; it is a rich mercy, and a glorious privilege of the gospel, that the believing Jews and their children are delivered from it; and that the Gentiles and theirs are not obliged to it; which would have bound them over to fulfil the whole law: to which may be added, that being born of Christian parents, and having a Christian education, and of having opportunities of hearing the gospel, as they grow up; and that not in one country only, but in many; are greater privileges than the Jewish children had under the former dispensation.

3e3b3c4e. It is objected, that there are no more express commands in scripture for keeping the first day of the week as a sabbath; nor for womens partaking of the Lord's Supper, and other things, than for the baptism of infants. As for the first, though there is no express precept for the observance of it, yet there are precedents of its being observed for religious services, Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:1-2 and though we have no example of infant baptism, yet if there were scriptural precedents of it, we should think ourselves obliged to follow them. As for womens' right to partake of the Lord's Supper, we have sufficient proof of it; since these were baptized as well as men; and having a right to one ordinance, had to another, and were members of the first church, communicated with it, and women, as well as men, were added to it, Ac 8:12; 1:14; 5:1,14 we have a precept for it: "Let a man," anyrwpov, a word of the common gender, and signifies both man

and woman, "examine him or herself, and so let him or her eat," 1Co 11:29 see Ga 3:28; and we have also examples of it in Mary the mother of our Lord, and other women, who, with the disciples, constituted the gospel church at Jerusalem; and as they continued with one accord in the apostles' doctrine and in prayer, so in fellowship and in breaking of bread; let the same proof be given of the baptism of infants, and it will be admitted.

3e3b3c4f. Antiquity is urged in favour of infant baptism; it is pretended that this is a tradition of the church received from the apostles; though of this no other proof is given, but the testimony of Origen, none before that; and this is taken, not from any of his genuine Greek writings, only from some Latin translations, confessedly interpolated, and so corrupted, that it is owned, one is at a loss to find Origen in Origen. No mention is made of this practice in the first two centuries, no instance given of it until the third, when Tertullian is the first who spoke of it, and at the same time spoke against it {11}. And could it be carried up higher, it would be of no force, unless it could be proved from the sacred scriptures, to which only we appeal, and by which the thing in debate is to be judged and determined. We know that innovations and corruptions very early obtained, and even in the times of the apostles; and what is pretended to be near those times, is the more to be suspected as the traditions of the false apostles {12}; the antiquity of a custom is no proof of the truth and genuineness of it {13}; "The customs the people are vain," Jer 10:3. I proceed to consider,

4. Fourthly, the way and manner of baptizing; and to prove, that it is by immersion, plunging the body in water, and covering it with it. Custom, and the common use of writing in this controversy, have so far prevailed, that for the most part immersion is usually called the "mode" of baptism; whereas it is properly baptism itself; to say that immersion or dipping is the mode of

baptism, is the same thing as to say, that dipping is the mode of dipping; for as Sir John Floyer {14} observes

“Immersion is no circumstance, but "the very act of baptism," used by our Saviour and his disciples, in the institution of baptism.”

And Calvin {15} expressly says,

“The word "baptizing" signifies to plunge; and it is certain, that the rite of plunging was used by the ancient churches.”

And as for sprinkling, that cannot, with any propriety, be called a mode of baptism; it would be just such, good sense as to say, sprinkling is the mode of dipping, since baptism and dipping are the same; hence the learned Selden {16}, who in the former part of his life, might have seen infants dipped in fonts, but lived to see immersion much disused, had reason to say,

“In England, of late years, I ever thought the parson "baptized his own fingers" rather than the child,”

because he dipped the one, and sprinkled the other. That baptism is immersion, or the dipping of a person in water, and covering him with it is to be proved,

4a. From the proper and primary signification of the word baptizw, "baptize," which in its first and primary sense, signifies to "dip or plunge into;” and so

it is rendered by our best lexicographers, "mergo," "immergo," "dip or plunge into." And in a secondary and consequential sense, "abluo, lavo," "wash," because what is dipped is washed, there being no proper washing but by dipping; but never "perfundo or aspergo," "pour or sprinkle;" so the lexicon published by Constantine, Budaeus, &c. and those of Hadrian Junius, Plantinus, Scapula, Stephens, Schrevelius, Stockius, and others; besides a great number of critics; as Beza, Casanbon, Witsius, &c. which might be produced. By whose united testimonies the thing is out of question. Had our translators, instead of adopting the Greek word baptize in all places where the ordinance of baptism is made mention of, truly translated it, and not have left it untranslated, as they have, the controversy about the manner of baptizing would have been at an end, or rather have been prevented; had they used the word dip, instead of baptize, as they should have done, there would have been no room for a question about it.

4b. That baptism was performed by immersion, appears by the places chosen for the administration of it; as the river Jordan by John, where he baptized many, and where our Lord himself was baptized by him, Mt 3:6,13,16 but why should he choose the river to baptize in, and baptize in it, if he did not administer the ordinance by immersion? had it been done any other way, there was no occasion for any confluence of water, much less a river {17}; a bason of water would have sufficed. John also, it is said, "was baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, because there was much water," Joh 3:23 which was convenient for baptism, for which this reason is given; and not for convenience for drink for men and their cattle, which is not expressed nor implied; from whence we may gather, as Calvin on the text does,

"That baptism was performed by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water;"

and so Piscator, Aretius, Grotius, and others on the same passage.

4c. That this was the way in which it was anciently administered, is clear from various instances of baptism recorded in scripture, and the circumstances attending them; as that of our Lord, of whom it is said, "That when he was baptized he went up straightway out of the water," which supposes he had been in it; and so Piscator infers from his going up out of it, that therefore he went down into it, and was baptized in the river itself; of which going down there would have been no need, had the ordinance been administered to him in another way, as by sprinkling or pouring a little water on his head, he and John standing in the midst of the river, as the painter and engraver ridiculously describe it: and certain it is, he was then baptized in Jordan; the evangelist Mark says "into Jordan," Mr 1:9 not at the banks of Jordan, but into the waters of it; for which reason he went into it, and when baptized, "came up out" of it, not "from" it, but "out" of it; apo and ex, signifying the same, as in Lu 4:35,41. So the preposition is used in the Septuagint version of Ps 40:2 ex and apo are "aequipollent," as several lexicographers from Xenophon observe. The baptism of the eunuch is another instance of baptism by immersion; when he and Philip were "come unto a certain water," to the water side, which destroys a little piece of criticism, as if their going into the water, after expressed, was no other than going to the brink of the water, to the water side, whereas they were come to that before; and baptism being agreed upon, "they went down both into the water," both Philip and the eunuch, "and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water," &c. Now we do not reason merely from the circumstances of "going down into, and coming up out of the water;" we know that persons may go down into water, and come up out of it, and never be immersed in it; but when it is expressly said, upon these persons going down into the water, that Philip baptized, or dipped, the eunuch; and when this was done, that both came up out of it, these circumstances strongly corroborate, without the explanation of the word

"baptized," that it was performed by immersion; for these circumstances cannot agree with any other way of administering it but that; for a man can hardly be thought to be in his senses who can imagine that Philip went down with the eunuch into the water to sprinkle or pour a little water on him, and then gravely come out of it; hence, as the above learned commentator, Calvin, on the text says,

"Here we plainly see what was the manner of baptizing with the ancients, for they plunged the whole body into the water; now custom obtaining, that the minister only sprinkles the body or the head."

So Barnabas {18}, an apostolic writer of the first century, and who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as a companion of the apostle Paul, describes baptism by going down into and by coming up out of the water;

"We descend,"says he, "into the water full of sin and filth; and we ascend, bringing forth fruit in the heart, having fear and hope in Jesus, through the Spirit."

4d. The end of baptism, which is to represent the burial of Christ, cannot be answered in any other way than by immersion, or covering the body in water; that baptism is an emblem of the burial of Christ, is clear from Ro 6:4; Col 2:12. It would be endless to quote the great number, even of "paedobaptist" writers, who ingenuously acknowledge that the allusion in these passages, is to the ancient rite of by immersion: as none but such who are dead are buried, so none but such who are dead to sin, and to the law by the body of Christ, or who profess to be so, are to be buried in and by baptism, or to be baptized; and as none can be properly said to be buried, unless under ground, and covered with earth; so none can be said to be

baptized, but such who are put under water, and covered with it; and nothing short of this can be a representation of the burial of Christ, and of ours with him; not sprinkling, or pouring a little water on the face; for a corpse cannot be said to be buried when only a little earth or dust is sprinkled or poured on it.

4e. This may be concluded from the various figurative and typical baptisms spoken of in scripture. As,

4e1. From the waters of the flood, which Tertullian calls {19} the baptism of the world, and of which the apostle Peter makes baptism the antitype, 1Pe 3:20-21. The ark in which Noah and his family were saved by water, was God's ordinance; it was made according to the pattern he gave to Noah, as baptism is; and as that was the object of the scorn of men, so is the ordinance of baptism, rightly administered; and as it represented a burial, when Noah and his family were shut up in it, so baptism; and when the fountains of the great deep were broken up below, and the windows of heaven were opened above, the ark, with those in it, were as it were covered with and immersed in water; and so was a figure of baptism by immersion: and as there were none but adult persons in the ark, who were saved by water in it, so none but adult persons are the proper subjects of water baptism; and though there were few who were in the ark, it was attended with a salutary effect to them, they were saved by water; so such who truly believe in Christ, and are baptized, shall be saved, and that "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," which was typified by the coming of Noah and his family out of the ark; to which baptism, as the antitype, corresponds, being an emblem of the same, Ro 6:4-5; Col 2:12.

4e2. From the passage of the Israelites under the cloud and through the sea, when "they were said to be baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the

sea," 1Co 10:1-2. There are various things in this account which agree with baptism; this was following Moses, who directed them into the sea, and went before them; so baptism is a following Christ, who has set an example to tread in his steps; and as the Israelites were baptized into Moses, so believers are baptized into Christ, and put him on; and this passage of theirs was after their coming out of Egypt, and at the beginning of their journey through the wilderness to Canaan; so baptism is administered to believers, at their first coming out of darkness and bondage worse than Egyptian, and when they first enter on their Christian pilgrimage; and as joy followed upon the former, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel," &c. so it often follows upon the latter; the eunuch, after baptism, went on his way rejoicing: but chiefly this passage was a figure of baptism by immersion; as the Israelites were "under the cloud," and so under water, and covered with it, as persons baptized by immersion are; "and passed through the sea," that standing up as a wall on both sides them, with the cloud over them; thus surrounded they were as persons immersed in water, and so said to be baptized; and thus Grotius remarks upon the passage.

4e3. From the various washings, bathings, or baptisms of the Jews; called "various," because of the different persons and things washed or dipped, as the same Grotius observes; and not because of different sorts of washing, for there is but one way of washing, and that is by dipping; what has a little water only sprinkled or poured on it, cannot be said to be washed; the Jews had their sprinklings, which were distinct from washings or bathings, which were always performed by immersion; it is a rule, with them, that

"wherever in the law washing of the flesh, or of the clothes, is mentioned, it means nothing else than

Pwgh lk tlybj "the dipping of the whole body" in a laver—for if any man dips himself all over except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness {20},” according to them.

4e4. From the sufferings of Christ being called a baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptized with," &c. Lu 12:50 not water baptism, nor the baptism of the Spirit, with both which he had been baptized; but the baptism of his sufferings, yet to come, he was desirous of; these are called so in allusion to baptism, as it is an immersion; and is expressive of the abundance of them, sometimes signified by deep waters, and floods of waters; and Christ is represented as plunged into them, covered and overwhelmed with them, Ps 62:7; 69:1-2.

4e5. From the extraordinary donation of the Holy Spirit, and his gifts unto, and his descent upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, which is called "baptizing," Ac 1:5; 2:1-2 expressive of the very great abundance of them, in allusion to baptism or dipping, in a proper sense, as the learned Casaubon {21} observes;

*“Regard is had in this place to the proper signification of the word baptizein, to immerse or dip; and in this sense the apostles are truly said to be baptized, for the house in which this was done, was filled with the Holy Ghost; so that the apostles seemed to be plunged into it, as into some pool.”

All which typical and figurative baptisms, serve to strengthen the proper sense of the word, as it signifies an immersion and dipping the body into, and covering it in water, which only can support the figure used. Nor is this sense of the word to be set aside or weakened by the use of it in Mr 7:4; Lu 11:38 in the former, it is said, "Except they wash, baptizwntai, baptize, or dip themselves, they eat not;” and in it mention is made of baptismwn,

"washings or dippings" of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables or beds; and in the latter, the Pharisee is said to marvel at Christ, that he had not first ebaptisyh, "washed, or dipped, before dinner;" all which agrees with the superstitious traditions of the elders, here referred to, which enjoined dipping in all the cases and instances spoken of, and so serve but the more to confirm the sense of the word contended for; for the Pharisees, upon touching the common people or their clothes, as they returned from market, or from any court of judicature, were obliged to immerse themselves in water before they eat; and so the Samaritan Jews {22}:

"If the Pharisees, says Maimonides {23}, touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled all one as if they had touched a profluvious person, and needed immersion," or were obliged to it: and Scaliger {24}, from the Jews observes,

"That the more superstitious part of them, everyday, before they sat down to meat, dipped the whole body; hence the Pharisees admiration at Christ,"

Lu 11:38. And not only cups and pots, and brazen vessels were washed by dipping, or putting them into water, in which way unclean vessels were washed according to the law, Le 11:32 but even beds, pillows, and bolsters, unclean in a ceremonial sense, were washed in this way, according to the traditions of the elders referred to; for they say {25},

"A bed that is wholly defiled, if a man "dips" it part by part, it is pure."

Again {26},

“If he "dips the bed" in it (a pool of water) though its feet are plunged into the thick clay (at the bottom of the pool) it is clean.”

And as for pillows and bolsters, thus they say {27},

“A pillow or a bolster of skin, when a man lifts up the mouth of them out of the water, the water which is in them will be drawn; what must be done? He must "dip" them, and lift them up by their fringes.”

Thus, according to these traditions, the various things mentioned were washed by immersion; and instead of weakening, strengthen the sense of the word pleaded for.

The objections against baptism, as immersion, taken from some instances of baptism recorded in scripture, are of no force; as that of the three thousand, in Acts 2, not with respect to their number; it may be observed, that though these were added to the church in one and the same day, it does not follow, that they were baptized in one day; but be it that they were, there were twelve apostles to administer the ordinance, and it was but two hundred and fifty persons apiece; and besides, there were seventy disciples, administrators of it; and supposing them employed, it will reduce the number to six or seven and thirty persons each: and the difference between dipping and sprinkling is very inconsiderable, since the same form of words is used in the one way as in the other; and therefore it might be done in one day, and in a small part of it too {28}. Nor with respect to convenience for the administration of it; as water and places of it sufficient to baptize in: here can be no objection, when it is observed, what number of private baths were in Jerusalem for ceremonial uncleanness; the many pools in the city, and the various apartments and things in the temple fit for such a use; as

the dipping room for the high priest, the molten sea for the common priests, and the ten brazen lavers, each of which held forty baths of water sufficient for the immersion of the whole body; all which they might be allowed the use of, as they were of the temple; they "having favour with all the people": not with respect to clothes, and change of garments; it was only everyone's providing and bringing change of raiment for himself. Another instance objected to is, that of the baptism of Saul, Ac 9:18 supposed to be done in the house where he was: but that does not necessarily follow, but rather the contrary; since he "arose" from the place where he was, in order to be baptized; and admitting it was done in the house, it is highly probable there was a bath in the house, in which it might be performed; since it was the house of a Jew, with whom it was usual to have baths to wash their whole bodies in on certain occasions; and had it been performed by sprinkling or pouring a little water on him, he needed not to have rose for that purpose. Besides, he was not only bid to arise and be baptized, which would sound very oddly if rendered, "be sprinkled" or "poured," Ac 22:16 but he himself says, that he, with others, were "buried by" or "in baptism," Ro 6:4. Another instance is that of the jailer and his household, Ac 16:33 in which account there is nothing that makes it improbable that it was done by immersion; for it seems to be a clear case, that the jailer, upon his conversion, took the apostles out of prison into his own house, where they preached to him and his family, Ac 16:32 and after this they went out of his house, and he and his were baptized, very probably in the river without the city, where the oratory was, Ac 16:13 for it is certain, that after the baptism of him and his family, he brought the apostles into his house again, and set meat before them, Ac 16:33-34. Upon the whole, these instances produced, fail of showing the improbability of baptism by immersion; which must appear clear and manifest to every attentive reader of his Bible, notwithstanding all that has been opposed unto it. The next thing to be considered is,

5. Fifthly, the form in which this ordinance is to be administered; which is "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Mt 28:19 which contains in it a proof of a Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence, of the Deity of each Person, and of their equality to, and distinction from each other; and shows, that this ordinance is performed under the authority of all Three; in which a person submitting to it, expresses his faith in them, and invocation of them, and gives up himself to them; obliging himself to yield obedience to what they require of him, as well as putting himself under their care and protection. This form is sometimes a little varied and otherwise expressed; as sometimes only "in the name of the Lord Jesus," Ac 8:16 which is a part of the form for the whole; and includes in it the substance of it, and of Christian baptism; and everything relating to the person and offices of Christ, and his relation to and connection with the other Two persons. Cornelius and his family were ordered to be baptized, "in the name of the Lord," Ac 10:48 that is, in the name of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; for kuriov, Lord, in the New Testament, answers to Jehovah in the Old. The form of baptism in Mt 28:19 is in the name of "the Father," &c. which single name denotes the one Deity, power, and substance of Father, Son, and Spirit; the equal dignity, co-eternal kingdom, and government in the Three perfect Persons; as it is expressed in the synodical epistle of the general council at Constantinople {29}.

6. Sixthly, the ends and uses for which baptism is appointed, and which are answered by it.

6a. One end of it, and a principal one, as has been frequently hinted, is, to represent the sufferings, burial, and resurrection of Christ; which is plainly and fully suggested in Ro 6:4-5; Col 2:12 his sufferings are represented by going into the water, and being overwhelmed in it, his burial by a short

continuance under it, and being covered with it, and his resurrection by an emersion out of it.

6b. It was practised both by John and by the apostles of Christ, for the remission of sins, Mr 1:4; Ac 2:38 not that that is the procuring and meritorious cause of it, which only is the blood of Christ; but they who submit unto it, may, by means of it, be led, directed, and encouraged to expect it from Christ. And so,

6c. In like manner it is for the washing away of sin, and cleansing from it; "Arise, and be baptized, and wash thy sins," Ac 22:16 this only is really done the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; baptism neither washes away original nor actual sin, it has no such virtue in it {30}; but it is a means of directing to Christ the Lamb of God, who, by his atoning blood and sacrifice, has purged and continues to take away the sins of men.

6d. A salutary or saving use and effect is ascribed unto it; "The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us;" should it be asked how, and by what means? the answer follows, "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1Pe 3:21 that is, by leading the faith of the person baptized to Christ, as delivered for his offences, and as risen again for his justification.

6e. In the same passage it is said to be of this use, and to serve this purpose, "The answer of a good conscience towards God;" a man who believes baptism to be an ordinance of God, and submits to it as such, discharges a good conscience, the consequence of which is joy and peace; for though "for" keeping the commands of God there is no reward, yet there is "in" keeping them; and this is their reward, the testimony of a good

conscience: for great peace have they which love God and keep his commandments.

6f. Yielding obedience to this ordinance of Christ, is an evidence of love to God and Christ, 1Jo 5:3 and such who from a principle of love to Christ keep his commandments, may expect, according to his promise, to have fresh manifestations of his and his Father's love, and to have communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, Joh 14:15,21,23. This is an end to be had in view, in obedience to it, and a very encouraging one.

{1} De Doctrina Christiana, l. 3, c. 9.

{2} Vid. Socin. Disp. de Baptismo, c. 15, 16, 17.

{3} See the Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes, at the end of this work. See GillBD: PDVI01 Of the Various Sorts of Proselytes{4} Comment. on Matt. p. 372, 375.

{5} Comment. on Matt. xxviii. 19.

{6} Contr. Arian. orat. 3. p. 209.

{7} Baptism of infants a reasonable service, p. 14, 15.

{8} Bostwick's Fair and Rational Vindication of Infant-baptism, p. 19.

{9} See, my Exposition of 1 Cor. vii. 14. See GILL: 1Co 7:14

{10} Eccles. Hist. l. 1. c. 4.

{11} See my Treatises, "The Argument from apostolic Tradition, in Favour of Infant Baptism, considered;" and "Antipaedo-Baptism, or Infant Baptism, an Innovation," with others.

{12} "Quod longinquitas temporis objicitur, eo major suspicio, inesse debet, emanasse illas traditiones a Pseudo apostolis; qui mirandum in modum conturbaverunt sanctos apostolos; quo magis cavendum est, viri Christiani." Aonii Palearii Testimonium, c. 2. p. 238.

{13} "Consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est," Cyprian. epist. 74. p. 195.

{14} Essay to Restore the Dipping of Infants in Baptism, p. 44.

{15} Institut. l. 4. c. 15. s. 19.

{16} Opera, vol. 6. col. 2008.

{17} Some represent the river Jordan, from Sandys's account of it, as if it was a shallow river, and insufficient for immersion; but what Sandys says of it, is only that it was not navigably deep, not above eight fathoms broad, nor, except, by accident, heady. Travels, b. iii. p. 110. ed. 5. But Mr. Maundrel says, for its breadth, it might be about twenty yards over, and in depth it far exceeded his height. Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 83. ed. 7. vid. Reland. de Palestina, l. 1. p. 278. and Adamnan. in ib. And therefore must be sufficient for immersion. And Strabo speaks of ships of burden sailing through Jordan, Geograph. l. 16. p. 519. And that it was a river to swim in, and navigable, according to the Jewish writers, see GILL: Mt 3:5

{18} Ep. c. 9. p. 235. ed. Voss.

{19} De Baptismo, c. 8.

{20} Maimon. Hilchot Mikvaot, c. 1. s. 2.

{21} In Act. i. 5.

{22} Epiph. contra Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 9.

{23} In Misn. Chagigah, c. 2. s. 7.

{24} De Emend. Temp. l. 6. p. 771.

{25} Maimon. Hilchot Celim. c. 26. s. 14.

{26} Misn. Mikvaot, c. 7. s. 7.

{27} lbid. s. 6.

{28} Ten thousand were baptized in one day by Austin the monk, in the river Swale, if our historians are to be credited. Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. i. p. 154. Ranulph. Polychron. l. 5. c. 10. The twelve sons of Wolodomir, Grand Prince of Russia, with twenty thousand Russians, in cent. 10. were baptized in one day, by a missionary of Photius the patriarch; and the ancient Russians would allow no person to be a Christian, unless he had been dipped quite under water. Strahlenberg. Histor. Geograph. Descript. of the Northern and Eastern Parts of Europe and Asia, ch. 8. p. 283, 286. Vid. Fabricii Lux Evangel. p. 475. No doubt assistance was had in both instances; but these show what numbers may be baptized in a day.

{29} Apud. Theodorit. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. This form was first changed and corrupted by Mark the heretic, and his followers, in the second century; who baptized into the name of the unknown Father of all; into truth the mother of all; into him who descended on Jesus; into union and redemption, and communion of powers: the same also first changed and corrupted the mode; taking a mixture of oil and water, poured it on the head, and then anointed with balsam. Vid, Irenaeum adv. Haeres. l. 1. c. 18.

{30} "Non enim aqua lavat animam, sed ipsa prius lavatur a Spiritu," Aonii Palearii Testimonium, c. 2. p. 24.

[Taken from *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* by John Gill, 1773-1770, published by The Baptist Standard Bearer, Number One Iron Oaks Drive, Paris, AR 72855, pages 896-914]