

# Henry Danvers

## On Infant Baptism

1674

### Chapter 5

Wherein you have an account of several Mischiefs, Absurdities, and Contradictions that are justly to be charged upon the Practice.

#### Of Infant *Baptism*

I. BY its *altering* Christs *Order* in the *Commission*, Mat. 28.19. where in *teaching* Repentance and Faith, are required always *precede* or *go* before Baptism, which this makes to *proceed* or *follow* after altogether.

II. By its *changing* the *Subjects* of Christs appointment, *viz.* *Men* and *Women* of *Knowledge* and *Understanding* capable to Evidence Faith and Repentance for *ignorant unconverted* Babe that know neither good nor evil, their right hand from their left.

III. By frustrating all the *Holy* and *Spiritual Ends* of the Ordinance which you have before at large, *viz.* to be a *Sign* of present Regeneration, a dying, burying, and rising with Christ, to be the answer of a good Conscience, to be a mutual *stipulation* or contract *then* and *there* entered into betwixt *God* and the *Party*, as well as a visible *entrance* into the Church, all which as applied to a poor *Ignorant Infant*, are but *mock shows*, and utterly *insignificant* and *invalid*.

IV. By its *inverting* the *Order* and manner from *dipping* the whole Man, into *sprinkling* or *pouring* a little Water upon the Head or Face, contrary to the *Since* of the Word, *Nature* of the Ordinance, and constant *Usage* of the Primitive times, as confessed by *Parties* themselves, obliging thereby the Administrator to tell *a lie* in the name of the Lord, saying he doth *Baptize*, when he doth but *Rantize*.

V. By *introducing* so much *Error* and false *Doctrine* into the world, *viz.*

1. That it was to *take away Original sin.*
2. To work *Grace* and *Regeneration*, and to effect *Salvation* by the *Work done*
3. That it was an *Apostolical Tradition.*
4. That Children have *Faith*, and are *Disciples* of Christ.
5. That all Children of *Believers* are in the *Covenant* of Grace, and *federally* Holy.

VI. By defiling and polluting the Church, *viz.*

1. By bringing false *Matter* therein, who are no Saints by Calling, being neither *capable* to perform duties, nor enjoy *Privileges.*
2. By laying a foundation of much *ignorance* and *profaneness.*
3. By *confounding World* and *Church* together which Christ hath *separated*, bringing the World into the Church, and turning the Church into the World.

VII. By *introducing* and *establishing* many *Humane Traditions* and *Inventions* of Antichrist together with it; as *Gossips* or *Sureties*, *Bishoping* or *Confirmation*, *Chrism*, *Exorcism*, *Consignation*, &c. profaning thereby so solemn an Ordinance, taking Gods name in vain, and making his Commandments void.

VIII. By being such a make-bate, such a Bone of Contention; and that amongst themselves too that own it, as well as with those that oppose it: For what Divisions and Sub-divisions are there amongst them both, as to Subject, Time, Order, Circumstances, what endless strife about *Women's baptizing*, and whether Bastards, or the Children of Apostates, Heathens, or Excommunicated persons should be baptized.

IX. By being an occasion to stir up much bitter *hatred, wrath, strife, enmity* and *persecution* against those that oppose it. Oh, how have they been loaded with *Calumny* and *Reproaches* as the vilest of *Men*, and how in all Ages have they been followed with *Stripes, Imprisonments, Confiscations, yea Death itself*, as the Historical Part informs you.

X. By *confirming* hereby the whole *Antichristian* Interest, as made good in the Preface.

XI. By ushering in great Absurdities, *viz.*

1. That persons may have *Regeneration* and *Grace* before Calling.

2. That Persons may be visible *Church-Members* before *Conversion*.

3. That Persons may *Repent, believe*, and be Baptized, and saved by the *Faith of another*.

4. That *Types* and *Shadows* are profitable, after the Antitype and Substance is come, introducing thereby the Legal Birth-priviledge, the Carnal Seed, the Typical Holiness, the National Church, &c. to the reviving Judaism, and outing Christianity.

5. That the better to exclude believers Baptism, new Church-Covenants are invented to enter into the Visible Church by, instead thereof, especially amongst those that own Infants Baptism, yet deny them the right of Church Membership.

XII. By the manifold *Contradictions*<sup>\*</sup> that attend the Practice.

1. By asserting, that Baptism is a *Symbol* of present *Regeneration wrought*, and yet apply it to ignorant unconverted Babes, so incapable of regeneration, as *Ja* 1:18. *1 Pe* 1:23. *Jn* 1:12, 13.

And as so well defined by Dr. *Owen* in his *Theo.* 50: 6. c. 4 p. 480. *viz.* *To be a Renovation, new Creation, Vivification, opening blind Eyes, raising from Death to Life, &c.*

2. That it truly figures and represents a Death, Burial, and Resurrection, and yet do nothing but sprinkle or pour a little Water on the Face.

3. That *Faith* and *Repentance* is required in Persons to be baptized, and that it is *ridiculous*, *yea impious* and *profane* to do it without, and yet *confess* that Children, to whom they apply it, have *neither*.

4. That it is the declaration of the Spiritual *Marriage*, the stipulation that is mutually entered into *betwixt God* and the *Believer*, and yet assign it to *Subjects* as incapable of either, as Stocks or Stones, Bells or Church-walls, that yet Antichrist makes capable Subjects thereof, as well as Infants.

5. That the Baptismal Covenant enters into the Visible Church, and yet deny the Church-Members the Priviledge thereof, or separate from them without any warrantable cause shown, or orderly proceeding either against them, or they that do own them as such.

6. That *separate* from *Rome* as the false *Church*, and yet own their *Baptism* the Foundation Stone thereof: And others that pretend *separation* from National and Parish *Churches*, and to disown the baptizing the Children of all, good and bad, with the sinful Ceremonies attending it, yet if Papist or Protestant either, upon their Teams tender to their fellowship, they are received without Renouncing their sinful Baptism and performing it in the way they judge right.

7. That they own the Doctrine of Perseverance, and disown falling from Grace, yet baptize all the Children of Believers, because they conclude them in the Covenant of Grace, yet afterwards teach them Conversion, and in Case of unbelief reject them as Reprobates.

And to all which you may familiarly add by your daily observation, which Chapter we shall conclude with these high expressions of Dr. *Tayler*, in his *Lib. Pro. P. 244*. *And therefore whoever will pertinaciously persist in this opinion of the Paedobaptists, and practice it accordingly, they pollute the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant: They dishonor and make a Pageantry of the Sacrament: They ineffectually represent a Sepulture into the Death of*

*Christ, and please themselves in a Sign without effect, making Baptism like the Fig-Tree in Gospel, full of Leaves, but no Fruit; and they invoke the Holy Ghost in vain, doing as if one should call upon him to illuminate a Stone or a Tree.*

[From Bro. J. C. Settlemoir via E-Mail, December 1, 2021 – language updated]

[Editor's note: Henry Danvers was born 8 July 1622 in Swithland, Leicestershire, second son of William Danvers (1591–1656), a minor member of the Landed gentry, and his wife Elizabeth Babington (died 1678). In March 1644, he married a distant relative, Ann Coke, daughter of Sir John Coke, Secretary of State to Charles I from 1625 to 1640. They had seven children, of whom only three survived to adulthood; Samuel (1652–1693), Mercy (1654–1702) and William (1666–1740). Originally a religious Independent, during his time in Stafford Danvers became a General Baptist, a sect whose members included many radicals within the New Model Army and the Levellers. In early 1653, he was nominated to Barebone's Parliament as MP for Leicestershire and moved to London where he joined the church of Edmund Chillenden. In 1657, when he held the rank of major, Danvers, with Harrison, Vice-admiral Lawson, Colonel Rich, and other Baptists, was placed under arrest on suspicion of being concerned in a conspiracy against Oliver Cromwell's life. – Copied from *Wikipedia* on March 21, 2023 – by Leon King]