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**SERMONS AND TRACTS OF JOHN GILL  
BAPTISM: A PROFESSION OF THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL**

**Infant Baptism:  
A Part & Pillar Of Popery**

*by John Gill*

*(London: George Keith, 1766)*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*

— Psalm 60:4

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## SERMON 69

### INFANT BAPTISM: A PART & PILLAR OF POPERY

*Being called upon, in a public manner, to give proof of what I have said concerning infant-baptism, in a preface to my Reply to Mr. Clark's Defense, etc., or to expunge it, I readily agree to the former, and shall endeavor to explain myself, and defend what I have written;* but it will be proper first to recite the whole paragraph, which stands thus: "The Paedobaptists are ever restless and uneasy, endeavoring to maintain and support, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant-baptism; though it is no other than a pillar of popery; that by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations; is the basis of national churches and worldly establishments; that which unites the church and world, and keeps them together; nor can there be a full separation of the one from the other, nor a thorough reformation in religion; until it is wholly removed: and though it has so long and largely obtained, and still does obtain; I believe with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on, when infant-baptism will be no more practiced in the world; when churches will be formed on the same plan they were in the times of the apostles; when gospel-doctrine and discipline will be restored to their primitive luster and purity; when the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper will be administered as they were first delivered, clear of all present corruption and superstition; all which will be accomplished, when The Lord shall be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord and his name one." *Now the whole of this consists of several articles or propositions, which I shall reconsider in their order.*

*That "infant-baptism is a part and pillar of popery; that by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations"* I use the phrase infant-baptism here and throughout, because of the common use of it; otherwise the practice which now obtains, may with greater propriety be called infant-sprinkling. That unwritten traditions with the Papists are equally the rule of faith and practice as the holy Scriptures will not be doubted of by any conversant with their writings. The Council of Trent asserts that

“Traditions respecting both faith and manners orally delivered and preserved successfully in the Catholic church, are to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence as the books of the Old and New Testaments;”

yea the Popish writers prefer traditions to the Scriptures. Bellarmine says,

“Scriptures without tradition, are neither simply necessary, nor sufficient, but unwritten traditions are necessary. Tradition alone is sufficient, but the Scriptures are not sufficient.”

Another of their writers asserts, that

“The authority of ecclesiastic traditions is more fit than the scriptures to ascertain anything doubtful, even that which may be made out from scripture, since the common opinion of the church and ecclesiastical tradition are clearer, and more open and truly inflexible; when, on the contrary, the scriptures have frequently much obscurity in them, and may be drawn here and there like a nose of wax; and, as a leaden rule, may be applied to every impious opinion.”

Bailey the Jesuit, thus expresses himself,

“I will go further and say, we have as much need of tradition as of scripture, yea more; because the scripture ministers to us only the dead and mute letter, but tradition, by means of the ministry of the church, gives us the true sense, which is not had distinctly in the scripture; wherein, notwithstanding, rather consists the word of God than in the alone written letter; it is sufficient for a good Catholic, if he understands it is tradition, nor need he to inquire after anything else;”

and by tradition, they mean not tradition delivered in the Scripture, but distinct from it and out of it; unwritten tradition, apostolical tradition, as they frequently call it, not delivered by the apostles in the sacred Scriptures, but by word of mouth to their successors, or to the churches; that we may not mistake them. Andradius tells us,

“That of necessity those traditions also must be believed, which can be proved by no testimony of scripture:”

and Petrus a Soto still more plainly and openly affirms:

“It is,” says he, “a rule infallible and catholic, that whatsoever things the church of Rome believeth, holdeth and keepeth, and are not delivered in the scriptures, the same came by tradition from the apostles; also all such observations and ceremonies, whose beginning, author, and original are not known, or cannot be found, out of all doubt they were delivered by the apostles.”

This is what is meant by apostolic tradition.

Now the essentials of popery, or the peculiarities of it, are all founded upon this, even upon apostolic and ecclesiastic tradition; this is the Pandora from whence they all spring; this is the rule to which all are brought, and by which they are confirmed; and what is it, be it ever so foolish, impious and absurd, but what may be proved hereby, if this is admitted of as a rule and test? It is upon this foot the Papists assert and maintain the observation of Easter, on the Lord’s Day following the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, the fast of Quadragesima or Lent, the adoration of images and relics, the invocation of saints, the worship of the sign of the cross, the sacrifices of the mass, transubstantiation, the abrogation of the use of the cup in the Lord’s Supper, holy water, extreme unction or the chrism, prayers for the dead, auricular confession, sale of pardons, purgatory, pilgrimages, monastic vows, etc.

Among apostolical traditions infant-baptism is to be reckoned, and it is upon this account it is pleaded for. The first person that asserted infant-baptism and approved it, represents it as a tradition from the apostles, whether he be Origen, or his translator and interpolator, Ruffinus; his words are,

“For this (i.e., for original sin) the church has received a tradition from the apostles, even to give baptism unto infants.”

Austin, who was a warm advocate for infant-baptism, puts it upon this footing, as a custom of the church, not to be despised, and as an apostolic tradition generally received by the church; he lived in the fourth century, the same Ruffinus did; and probably it was from his Latin translation of Origen, Austin took the hint of infant-baptism being an apostolic tradition, since no other ecclesiastical writer speaks of it before as such; so that, as Bishop Taylor observes,

“This apostolical tradition is but a testimony of one person, and he condemned of many errors; so that, as he says, to derive this from

the apostles on no greater authority, is a great argument that he is credulous and weak, that shall be determined by so weak a probation, in a matter of so great concernment.;"

and yet it is by this that many are determined in this affair: and not only Popish writers, as Bellarmine and others make it to be an apostolical tradition unwritten; but some Protestant-Paedobaptists show a good will to place infant-baptism among the unwritten sayings and traditions of Christ or His apostles, and satisfy themselves therewith. Mr. Fuller says,

“We do freely confess that there is neither express precept nor precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants;”

yet observes that St. John saith, (~~4025~~21:25),

“And there are also many other things, which Jesus did, which are not written; among, which for ought appears to the contrary, the baptizing of these infants (those whom Christ took in his arms and blessed) might be one of them.”

In like manner, Mr. Walker argues,

“It doth not follow our Savior gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in the scripture; for our Savior spoke many things to his disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before his passion, and also after his resurrection, which are not written in the scriptures; and who can say, but that among those many unwritten sayings of his, there might be an express precept for infant-baptism?”

And Mr. Leigh, one of the disputants in the Portsmouth-Disputation, suggests, that though infant-baptism is not to be found in the writings of the apostle Paul extant in the scriptures, yet it might be in some writings of his which are lost, and not now extant; all which is plainly giving up infant-baptism as contained in the sacred writings, and placing it upon unwritten, apostolical tradition, and that too, conjectural and uncertain.

Now infant-baptism, with all the ceremonies attending it, for which also apostolical tradition is pleaded, makes a very considerable figure in the Popish pageantry; which according to pretended apostolical tradition, is performed in a very pompous manner, as by consecration of the water, using sponsors, who answer to the interrogatories, and make the

renunciation in the name of the infant, exorcisms, exsufflations, crossings, the use of salt, spittle, and oil. Before the party is baptized, the water is consecrated in a very solemn manner; the priest makes an exorcism first; three times, he exsufflates or breathes into the water, in the figure of a cross, saying, "I adjure thee, O creature of water;" and here he divides the water after the manner of a cross, and makes three or four crossings; he takes a horn of oil, and pours it three times upon the water in the likeness of a cross, and makes a prayer, that the font may be sanctified, and the eternal Trinity be present; saying,

"Descend from heaven and sanctify this water, and give grace and virtue, that he who is baptized according to the command of thy Christ, may be crucified, and die, and be buried, and rise again with him."

The sponsors, or sureties, instead of the child, and in its name, recite the creed and the Lord's prayer, make the renunciation of the devil and all his works, and answer to questions put in the name of the child: the form, according to the Roman order, is this:

"The name of the infant being called, the presbyter must say, Dost thou renounce Satan? A. I do renounce; and all his works? A. I do renounce; and all his pomps? A. I do renounce: three times these questions are put, and three times the sureties answer."

The interrogations are sometimes said to be made by a priest, sometimes by a presbyter, and sometimes by an exorcist, who was one or the other, and to which the following question also was added:

"Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, etc.? A. I believe."

Children to be baptized are first exsufflated or breathed and blown upon and exorcised, that the wicked spirit might be driven from them, that they might be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ: the Roman order is,

"Let him (the minister, priest, deacon or exorcist) blow into the face of the person to be baptized, three times, saying, Go out thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter."

The form, according to St. Gregory, is,

“I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God.”

Salt also is put into the mouth of the infant, after it is blessed and exorcised, as a token of its being seasoned with the salt of wisdom; and that it might be preserved from the corruption and ill savor of sin: the priest first blesses the salt after this manner:

“I exorcise thee, O creature of salt; and then being blessed, it is put into the mouth of the infant saying, Receive the salt of wisdom unto life everlasting.”

The nose and ears of infants at their baptism are touched with spittle by the priest, that they may receive the savor of the knowledge of God, and their ears be opened to hear the commands of God; and formerly spittle was put upon the eyes and upon the tongue, though it seems now disused as to those parts; and yet no longer than the birth of King James the First, it seems to have been in use; since at his baptism his mother sent word to the archbishop to forbear the use of the spittle, saying, “She would not have a pocky priest to spit in her child’s mouth;” for it seems the queen knew that the archbishop, who was Hamilton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, then had the venereal disease. And so in the times of the martyrs in Queen Mary’s days; for Robert Smith, the martyr, being asked by Bonner, in what point do we dissent from the word of God? meaning as to baptism; he answered,

“First, in hallowing your water, in conjuring of the same, in baptizing children with anointing and spitting in their mouths, mingled with salt, and many other lewd ceremonies, of which not one point is able to be proved in God’s word.”

All which he calls a mingle mangle. Chrism, or anointing both before and after baptism, is another ceremony used at it; the parts anointed are the breast and shoulders; the breast, that no remains of the latent enemy may reside in the party baptized; and the shoulders, that he may be fortified and strengthened to do good works to the glory of God: this anointing is made in the form of a cross; the oil is put on the breast and beneath the shoulders, making a cross with the thumb; on making the cross on the shoulders, the priest says,

“Flee, thou unclean spirit, give honor to the living and true God;”

and when he makes it on the breast, he says,

“Go out, thou unclean spirit, give place to the Holy Ghost:”

the form used in doing it is

“I anoint thee with the oil of salvation, that thou mayest have life everlasting.”

The next ceremony is that of signing the infant with the sign of the cross: this is made in several parts of the body, especially on the forehead, to signify that the party baptized should not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, and not be afraid of the enemy Satan, but manfully fight against him. After baptism, in ancient times, honey and milk, or wine and milk, were given to the baptized, though now disused; and infants were admitted to the Lord's Supper, which continued some hundreds of years in the Latin church, and still does in the Greek church. Now for the proof of the use of these various ceremonies, the reader may consult Joseph Vicecomes, a learned Papist as Dr. Wall calls him, in his *Treatise de Antiquis Baptismi Ritibus ac Ceremoniis*, where and by whom they are largely treated of, and the proofs of them given. All which are rehearsed and condemned by the ancient Waldenses in a treatise of theirs, written in the year 1120. It may be asked to what purpose is this account given of the ceremonies used by Papists in the administration of baptism to infants by them, since they are not used by Protestant-paedobaptists? I answer, it is to show what I proposed, namely, what a figure infant-baptism, with these attending ceremonies, makes in popery, and may with propriety be called a part of it; besides though all these ceremonies are not used, yet some of them are used in some Protestant-paedobaptist churches, as sureties, the interrogations made to them, and their answers in the name of infants; the renunciation of the devil and all his works, and signing with the sign of the cross; and since these and the others, all of them claim apostolic authority, and most, if not all of them, have as good and as early a claim to it as infant-baptism itself; those who admit that upon this foot, ought to admit these ceremonies also. See a treatise of mine, called *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition in Favor of Infant-baptism Considered*. Most of the above ceremonies are mentioned by Basil, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and as then in use, and which were had from apostolic tradition as said, and not from the scriptures; and says he,

“Because this is first and most common, I will mention it in the first place, as that we sign with the sign of the cross; —Who has taught this in Scripture? We consecrate the water of baptism and the oil of unction as well as him who receives baptism; from what scriptures? Is it not from private and secret tradition? Moreover the anointing with oil, what passage in scripture teaches this? Now a man is thrice immersed, from whence is it derived or delivered? Also the rest of what is done in baptism, as to renounce Satan and his angels, from what scripture have we it? Is not this from private and secret tradition?”

And so Austin speaks of exorcisms and exsufflations used in baptism, as of ancient tradition, and of universal use in the church. Now whoever receives infant-baptism on the foot of apostolic tradition, ought to receive those also, since they stand upon as good a foundation as that does.

The Papists attribute the rise of several of the above ceremonies to their popes, as sponsors, chrisms, exorcisms, etc., though perhaps they were not quite so early as they imagine, yet very early they were; and infant-baptism itself, though two or three doctors of the church had asserted and espoused it, yet it was not determined in any council until the Milevitan Council in 418, or thereabouts, a provincial of Africa, in which was a canon made for Paedobaptism and never till then: So says Bishop Taylor, with whom Grotius agrees, who calls it the Council of Carthage; and who says in the councils no earlier mention is made of infant-baptism than in that council; the canons of which were sent to Pope Innocent the First, and confirmed by him: And Austin, who must write his book against the Donatists before this time, though he says the church always held it (infant-baptism) and that it is most rightly believed to be delivered by apostolic tradition; yet observes that it was not instituted, or determined and settled in or by councils; that is, as yet it was not, though it afterwards was in the above council confirmed by the said pope; in which council Austin himself presided, and in which is this canon,

“Also it is our pleasure, that whoever denies that new-born infants are to be baptized, --- let him be anathema,”

and which is the first council that established infant-baptism, and anathematized those that denied it; so that it may justly be called a part of popery: besides baptism by immersion, which continued 1300 years in the Latin church, excepting in the case of the Clinicks, and still does in the

Creek church, was first changed into sprinkling by the Papists; which is not an indifferent thing, whether performed with much or a little water, as it is usually considered; but is of the very essence of baptism, is that itself, and without which it is not baptism; it being as Sir John Floyer says, no circumstance, but the very act of baptizing; who observes that aspersion, or sprinkling, was brought into the church by the Popish schoolmen, and our dissenters, adds he, had it from them; the schoolmen employed their thoughts how to find out reasons for the alteration to sprinkling, brought it into use in the 12<sup>th</sup> century: and it must be observed, to the honor of the Church of England, that they have not established sprinkling in baptism to this day; only have permitted pouring in case it is certified the child is weakly and not able to bear dipping; otherwise, by the Rubric, the priest is ordered to dip the child warily: sprinkling received only a Presbyterian sanction in times of the civil war by the Assembly of Divines; where it was carried for sprinkling against dipping by one vote only, by 25 against 24, and then established by an ordinance of Parliament, 1644: and that this change has its rise from the authority of the Pope, Dr. Wall himself acknowledges, and that the sprinkling of infants is from popery. “All the nations of Christians,” says he, “that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling; and though the English received not this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighbor-nations as had began it in the times of the pope’s power; but all other Christians in the world, who never owned the pope’s usurped power, do, and ever did, dip their infants in their ordinary use;” so that infant-baptism, both with respect to subjects and mode, may with great propriety be called a part and branch of popery.

But it is not only a part of popery, and so serves to strengthen it, as a part does the whole; but it is a pillar of it, what serves greatly to support it; and which furnishes the Papists with one of the strongest arguments against the Protestants in favor of their traditions, on which, as we have seen, the essentials of popery are founded, and of the authority of the church to alter the rites of divine worship: they sadly embarrass Paedobaptist Protestants with the affair of infant-baptism, and urge them either to prove it by scripture, both with respect to mode and subjects, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church, or give it up; and if they can allow of unwritten traditions, and the custom and practice of the church, as of authority in one point, why not in others? This way of arguing, as Mr.

Stennet observes, is used by Cardinal Du Perron, in his reply to the answer of King James the First, and by Mr. John Ainsworth, against Mr. Henry Ainsworth, in the dispute between them, and by Fisher the Jesuit, against Archbishop Laud; a late instance of this kind, he adds, we have in the controversy between Monsieur Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and a learned anonymous writer, said to be Monsieur de la Roque, late pastor of the Reformed church at Roan in Normandy. The Bishop, in order to defend the withholding the cup in the Lord's Supper from the laity, according to the authority of the church, urged that infant-baptism, both as to mode and subject, was unscriptural, and solely by the authority of tradition and custom, with which the pretended Reformed complied, and therefore why not in the other case; which produced this ingenuous confession from his antagonist, that to baptize by sprinkling was certainly an abuse derived from the Romish church, without due examination, as well as many other things, which he and his brethren were resolved to correct, and thanked the bishop for undeceiving them; and freely confessed, that as to the baptism of infants, there is nothing formal or express in the gospel to justify the necessity of it; and that the passages produced do at most only prove that it is permitted, or rather, that it is not forbidden to baptize them. In the times of King Charles the Second, lived Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister, famous for his talent at disputation, of whom the king having heard, sent for him to dispute with a Romish priest; the which he did before the king and many others, in the habit of a clergyman: Mr. Ives pressed the priest closely, showing the whatever antiquity they pretended to, their doctrine and practices could by no means be proved apostolic; since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age; the priest, after much wrangling, in the end replied, that this argument of Mr. Ives was as of much force against infant-baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the church of Rome: to which Mr. Ives answered, that he readily granted what he said to be true; the priest upon this broke up the dispute, saying, he had been cheated, and that he would proceed no further; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established church, and it was now evident that this was an Anabaptist preacher. This behavior of the priest afforded his majesty and all present not a little diversion: and as Protestant Paedobaptists are urged by this argument to admit the unwritten traditions of the Papists; so dissenters of the Paedobaptist persuasion are pressed upon the same footing by those of the Church of England to comply with the ceremonies of that church, retained from the church of Rome, particularly by Dr. Whitby; who having pleaded for some

condescension to be made to dissenters, in order to reconcile them to the church, adds:

“and on the other hand”, says he, “if notwithstanding the evidence produced, that baptism by immersion, is suitable both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life; as the apostle doth clearly maintain the meaning of that rite: I say, if notwithstanding this, all our dissenters (i.e. who are Paedobaptists, he must mean) do agree to sprinkle the baptized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our church? for, since it is as lawful to add unto Christ’s institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony, which he or his apostles instituted; and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? and why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them, to perform the one, as is their mercy to the infant’s body to neglect the other?”

Thus infant-baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the church of Rome and of the church of England.

I have added in the preface referred to, where stands the above clause, that infant-baptism is “that by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations;” which is abundantly evident, since by the christening of children through baptism, introduced by him, he has made whole countries and nations Christians, and has christened them by the name of Christendom; and thereby has enlarged his universal church, over which he claims an absolute power and authority, as being Christ’s vicar on earth; and by the same means he retains his influence over nations, and keeps them in awe and in obedience to him; asserting that by their baptism they are brought into the pale of the church, in which there is salvation, and out of which there is none; if therefore they renounce their baptism, received in infancy, or apostatize from the church, their damnation is inevitable; and thus by his menaces and anathemas, he holds the nations in subjection to him: and when they at any time have courage to oppose him, and act in disobedience to his supreme authority, he immediately lays a whole nation under an interdict; by which are prohibited, the administration of the sacraments, all public prayers, burials, christenings, etc., church-doors are

locked up, the clergy dare not or will not administer any offices of their function to any, but such as for large sums of money obtain special privileges from Rome for that purpose: now by means of these prohibitions, and particularly of christening or baptizing children, nations are obliged to comply and yield obedience to the bishop of Rome; for it appears most dreadful to parents, that their children should be deprived of baptism, by which they are made Christians, as they are taught to believe, and without which there is no hope of salvation; and therefore are influenced to give-in to anything for the sake of what is thought so very important. Once more, the baneful influence spread by Antichrist over the nations by infant-baptism, is that poisonous notion infused by him, that sacraments, particularly baptism, confer grace *ex opere operato*, by the work done; that it takes away sin, regenerates men, and saves their souls; this is charged upon him, and complained of by the ancient Waldenses in a tract of theirs, written in the year 1120, where speaking of the works of Antichrist, they say,

“the third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regeneration of the Holy Spirit unto the dead, outward work, baptizing children in that faith, and teaching that thereby baptism and regeneration must be had; and therein he confers and bestows orders and other sacraments, and groundeth therein all his Christianity, which is against the Holy Spirit”:

and which popish notion is argued against and exposed by Robert {Smith} the martyr; on Bonner’s saying

“if they (infants) die, before they are baptized, they be damned;” he asked this question, “I pray you, my lord, shew me, are we saved by water or by Christ?”

to which Bonner replied,

“by both;” “then,” said Smith, “the water died for our sins, and so must ye say, that the water hath life, and it being our servant, and created for us, is our Savior; this my lord is a good doctrine, is it not?”

And this pernicious notion still continues, this old leaven yet remains, even in some Protestant churches, who have retained it from Rome; hence a child when baptized is declared to be regenerate; and it is taught, when capable of being catechized to say, that in its baptism it was made a child

of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, which has a tendency to take off all concern, in persons when grown up, about an inward work of grace, in regeneration and sanctification, as a meetness for heaven, and to encourage a presumption in them, notwithstanding their apparent want of grace, that they are members of Christ, and shall never perish; are children and heirs of God, and shall certainly inherit eternal life. Wherefore Dr. [John] Owen rightly observes

“That the father of lies himself could not easily have devised a doctrine more pernicious, or what proposes a more present and effectual poison to the minds of sinners to be drank in by them.”

*The second article or proposition in the preface is, as asserted by me, that, "infant-baptism is the basis of national churches and worldly establishments; that which unites the church and world, and keeps them together;"* than which nothing is more evident: if a church is national, it consists of all in the nation, men, women, and children; and children are originally members of it, either so by birth, and as soon as born, being born in the church, in a Christian land and nation, which is the church, or rather by baptism, as it is generally put; so according to the order of the Church of England, at the baptism of a child, the minister says, “We receive this child into the congregation of Christ’s flock.” And by the Assembly of Divines, “Baptism is called a sacrament of the New Testament, whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church.” And to which there is a strange contradiction in the following answer, where it is said, that “baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church;” but if by baptism the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, then before baptism by which they are admitted, they must be out of it: one or other must be wrong; either persons are not admitted into the visible church by baptism, or if they are, then before baptism they are out of it, and have baptism administered to them in order to their being admitted into it; and Calvin says, according to whose plan of church-government at Geneva, that of the Scotch church is planned, that baptism is a solemn introduction to the church of God. And Mr. Baxter argues, that

“if there be neither precept nor example of admitting church-members in all the New Testament but by baptism; then all that are now admitted ought to come in by baptism; but there is neither precept nor example in all the New Testament of admitting church

members but by baptism; therefore they ought to come in the same way now.”

So then infants becoming members of a national church by baptism, they are originally of it; are the materials of which it consists; and it is by the baptism of infants it is supplied with members, and is supported and maintained; so that it may be truly said, that infant-baptism is the basis and foundation of a national church, and is indeed the sinews, strength, and support of it: and infants being admitted members by baptism continue such when grown up, even though of the most dissolute lives and conversations, as multitudes of them are; and many, instead of being treated as church members, deserve to be sent to the house of correction, as some are, and others are guilty of such flagitious crimes that they die an infamous death; yet even these die in the communion of the church; and thus the church and the world are united and kept together till death doth them part.

The Independents would indeed separate the church and the world according to their principles; but cannot do it, being fettered and hampered with infant-church-membership and baptism, about which they are at a loss and disagreed on what to place it; some place it on infants' interest in the covenant of grace; and here they sadly contradict themselves or one another; at one time they say it is interest in the covenant of grace that gives infants a right to baptism, and at another time, that it is by baptism they are brought and entered into the covenant; and sometimes it is not in the inward part of the covenant they are interested, only in the external part of it, where hypocrites and graceless persons may be; but what that external part is no mortal can tell: others not being satisfied that their infant-seed as such are all interested in the covenant of grace, say, it is not that, but the church-covenant that godly parents enter into, which gives their children with them a right to church membership and baptism: children in their minority, it is said, covenant with their parents, and so become church members, and this entitles them to baptism; for according to the old Independents of New England, none but members of a visible church were to be baptized; though Dr. [Thomas] Goodwin is of a different mind: hence only such as were children of members of churches, even of set members, as they call them, were admitted, though of godly and approved Christians; and though they may have been members, yet if excommunicated, their children born in the time of their excommunication might not be baptized; but those children that are admitted members and

baptized, though not confirmed members, as they style them, till they profess faith and repentance; yet during their minority, which reaches till they are more than thirteen years of age, according to the example of Ishmael, and till about sixteen years of age, they are real members to such intents and purposes, as, that if their parents are dismissed to other churches, their children ought to be put into the letter of dismissal with them; and whilst their minority continues, are under church-watch, and subject to the reprehensions, admonitions, and censures thereof for their healing and amendment as need shall require; though with respect to public rebuke, admonition, and excommunication, children in their minority are not subject to church-discipline, only to such as is by way of spiritual watch and private rebuke. The original Independents, by the covenant-seed, who have a right to church membership and baptism, thought only the seed of immediate parents in church-covenant are meant, and not of progenitors. Mr. Cotton says infants cannot claim right unto baptism but in the right of one of their parents or both; where neither of the parents can claim right to the Lord's Supper, there their infants cannot claim right to baptism; though he afterwards says it may be considered whether the children may not be baptized where either the grandfather or grandmother have made profession of their faith and repentance before the church, and are still living to undertake for the Christian education of the child; or if these fail, what hinders but that if the parents will resign their infant to be educated in the house of any godly member of the church, the child may be lawfully baptized in the right of its household-governor, But Mr. Hooker, as he asserts, that children as children have no right to baptism, so it belongs not to any predecessors, either nearer or farther off removed from the next parents to give right of this privilege to their children; by which predecessors, he says, he includes and comprehends all besides the next parent; grandfather, great grandfather, etc.. So the ministers and messengers of the congregational churches that met at the Savoy declare

“that not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized, and those only”:

and the commissioners for the review of the Common Prayer, in the beginning of the reign of King Charles the Second; those of the Presbyterian persuasion moved on the behalf of others, that

“there being divers learned, pious, and peaceable ministers, who not only judge it unlawful to baptize children whose parents both of them are Atheists, Infidels, Heretics, or unbaptized; but also such whose parents are excommunicate persons, fornicators, or otherwise notorious and scandalous sinners; we desire, say they, they may not be enforced to baptize the children of such, until they have made open profession of their repentance before baptism.”:

but now I do not understand that the present generation of dissenters of this denomination adhere to the principles and practices of their predecessors, at least very few of them; but admit to baptism, not only the children of members of their churches, but of those who are not members, only hearers, or that apply to them for the baptism of their infants, whether gracious or graceless persons: and were only the first sort admitted, children of members, what are they? No better than others, born in sin, born of the flesh, carnal and corrupt, are of the world, notwithstanding their birth of religious persons, until they are called out of it by the effectual grace of God; and as they grow up, appear to be of the world as others, and have their conversation according to the course of it; and many of them are dissolute in their lives, and scandalous in their conversation; and yet I do not understand, that any notice is taken of them in a church-way, as to be admonished, censured, and excommunicated; but they retain their membership, into which they were taken in their infancy, and continue in it to the day of their death: and if this is not uniting and keeping the world and church together, I know not what is.

Moreover all the arguments that are made use of to prove the church of Christ under the gospel-dispensation to be congregational, and against a national church, are all destroyed by the baptism and membership of infants. It is said in favor of the one, and against the other, that the members of a visible church are saints by calling, such, as in charitable discretion may be accounted so; but are infants who are admitted to membership and baptized, such? The holiness pleaded for as belonging to them, is only a federal holiness, and that is merely chimerical: are they called to be saints, or saints by effectual calling? Can they in charitable discretion, or in rational charity be thought to be truly and really holy, or saints, as the churches of the New Testament are said to be? and if they cannot in a judgment of charity, be accounted real saints, and yet are admitted members of churches, why not others, of whom it cannot be

charitably thought, that they are real saints? Besides, it is said by the Independents,

“that members of gospel churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing by their profession and walk their obedience to that call; who are further known to each other by their confession of faith wrought in them by the power of God; and do willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the gospel”:

now are infants such? Do they manifest and evidence by a profession and walk their obedience to a divine call? And if they do not, and yet are admitted members, why not others, who give no more evidence than they do? Do they make a confession of faith wrought in them? Does it appear that they have such a faith? and in a confession made, and so made as to be known by fellow-members? and if not, and yet received and owned as members, why not others that make no more confession of faith than they do? Do infants consent to walk with the church of Christ, and give up themselves to the Lord and one another, and profess to be subject to the ordinances of the gospel? and if they do not, as most certainly they do not, and yet are members, why may not others be also members on the same footing? It is objected to a national church, that persons of the worst of characters are members of it; and by this means the church is filled with men very disreputable and scandalous in their lives. And is not this true of infant members admitted in their infancy, who when grown up are very wicked and immoral, and yet their membership continues? and why not then national churches be admitted of, notwithstanding the above objection? So that upon the whole, I think, I have good reason to say, “that there cannot be a full separation of the one from the other, that is, of the church from the world, nor a thorough reformation in religion, until it (infant-baptism) is wholly removed.”

***In the said preface, I express my firm belief of, "the entire cessation of infant-baptism, in time to come:" my words are,***

“though it (infant-baptism) has so long and largely obtained (as it has from the 4<sup>th</sup> century till now, and over the greater part who have since borne the Christian name) and still does obtain; I believe

with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on, when infant-baptism will be no more practiced in the world,”

I mean in the spiritual reign of Christ; for in His personal reign there will be no ordinances, nor the administration of them; and this is explained by what I farther say,

“when churches will be formed on the same plan they were in the times of the apostles; when gospel-doctrine and discipline will be restored to their primitive purity and lustre; when the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper will be administered as they were first delivered; all which will be accomplished, when ‘the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord and his name one;’”

that is, when there shall be one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, acknowledged by all Christians; and they will be all of one mind with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel. And as it becomes every man to give a reason of the faith and hope he has concerning divine things, with meekness and fear; *the reasons of my firm belief, that infant-baptism will be no more practiced in the latter day and spiritual reign of Christ, are, some of them suggested in the above paragraph, and others may be added, as*

**First,** Because churches in the time referred to, will be formed on the plan churches were in the time of the apostles; that this will be the case, see the prophecies in ~~2025~~ Isaiah 1:25,26; ~~2008~~ Jeremiah 30:18,20; ~~6119~~ Revelation 11:19. Now the apostolic churches consisted only of baptized believers, or of such who were baptized upon profession of their faith; the members of the first Christian church, which was at Jerusalem, were first baptized upon their conversion, and then added to it; the next Christian church at Samaria, consisted of men and women baptized on believing the gospel, preached by Philip; and the church at Corinth, of such who hearing, believed and were baptized; and on the same plan were formed the churches at Rome, Philippi, Colosse, and others; nor is there one single instance of infant-baptism and of infant-church-membership in them; wherefore if churches in the latter day will be on the same plan, then infant-baptism will be no more practiced.

**Secondly,** Because, then the ordinances of the gospel will be administered, as they were first delivered, clear of all present corruption and superstition;

this is what is meant by the temple of God being opened in heaven, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet (~~611B~~ Revelation 11:19 and ~~611B~~ 15:5), which respects the restoration of worship, discipline, doctrines and ordinances, to the free use of them, and to their original purity; when, as the ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be administered clear of all corruptions and ceremonies introduced by Papists and retained by Protestants; so likewise the ordinance of baptism both with respect to subject and mode, which as it was first delivered was only administered to persons professing faith and repentance, and that by immersion only; and if this will be universally administered in the latter day, as in the first ages of Christianity, infant sprinkling will be practiced no more.

**Thirdly,** Because Christ will then be king over all the earth in a spiritual sense; one Lord, whose commands will be obeyed with great precision and exactness, according to His will revealed in His Word; and as baptism is one of His commands He has prescribed, as He is and will be acknowledged the one Lord and head of the church, and not the pope, who will be no more submitted to; so there will be one baptism, which will be administered to one sort of subjects only, as He has directed, and in one manner only, by immersion, of which His baptism is an example; and therefore, I believe that infant sprinkling will be no more in use.

**Fourthly,** At this same time the name of Christ will be one, that is, His religion; which will be the same, it was at first instituted by Him. Now it is various, as it is professed and practiced by different persons that bear His name; but in the latter day, it will be one and the same, in all its branches, as embraced, professed, and exercised by all that are called Christians; and as baptism is one part of it, this will be practiced in a uniform manner, or by all alike, that shall name the name of Christ; for since Christ's name or the Christian religion in all its parts, will be the same in all the professors of it; I therefore firmly believe, that baptism will be practiced alike by all, according to the primitive institution, and consequently, that infant-baptism will be no more: for

**Fifthly,** As at this time, the watchmen will see eye to eye (~~251B~~ Isaiah 52:8), the ministers of the gospel will be of one mind, both with respect to the doctrines and duties of Christianity; will alike preach the one, and practice the other; so the people under their ministrations will be all agreed, and receive the truths of the gospel in the love of them, and submit to the precepts and institutions of it, without any difference among themselves,

and without any variation from the word of God; and among the rest, the ordinance of baptism, about which there will be no longer strife; but all will agree that the proper subjects of it are believers, and the right mode of it immersion; and so infant-sprinkling will be no more contended for; saints in this as in other things will serve the Lord with one consent (Zeph. 3:9).

**Sixthly,** Another reason why I firmly believe, infant-baptism will hereafter be no more practiced, is, because Antichrist will be entirely consumed with the spirit or breath of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of His coming (<sup><318></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8), that is, with the pure and powerful preaching of His word, at His coming to take to Himself His power, and reign spiritually in the churches, in a more glorious manner; when all Antichristian doctrines and practices will be entirely abolished and cease, even the whole body of Antichristian worship; not a limb of Antichrist shall remain, but all shall be consumed. Now as I believe, and it has been shown, that infant-baptism is a part and pillar of popery, a limb of Antichrist, a branch of superstition and will-worship, introduced by the 'man of sin, when he shall be destroyed, this shall be destroyed with him and be no more.

**Seventhly,** Though the notion of infant-baptism has been embraced and practiced, by many good and godly men in several ages; yet it is part of the wood, hay and stubble, laid by them upon the foundation; is one of those works of theirs, the bright day of the gospel shall declare to be a falsehood; and which the fire of the word will try, burn up, and consume, though they themselves shall be saved; and therefore being utterly consumed, shall no more appear in the world: for

**Eighthly,** When the angel shall descend from heaven with great power, and the earth be lightened with his glory, which will be at the fall of Babylon and ruin of Antichrist (<sup><660></sup>Revelation 18:1,2), such will be the blaze of light then given, that all Antichristian darkness shall be removed, and all works of darkness will be made manifest and cast off, among which infant-baptism is one; and then the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (<sup><210></sup>Isaiah 11:9), even of the knowledge of the word, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances of God, and all ignorance of them vanish and disappear; and then the ordinance of baptism will appear in its former lustre and purity, and be embraced and submitted to in it; and every corruption of it be rejected, of which infant-baptism is one.

**Ninthly**, Whereas the ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are to continue until the second coming of Christ, or the end of the world (~~4189~~ Matthew 28:19,20; ~~4115~~ 1 Corinthians 11:26), and whereas there have been corruptions introduced into them, as they are generally administered, unless among some few; it is not reasonable to think, that those corruptions will be continued to the second coming of Christ, but that they will be removed before, even at His spiritual coming, or in His spiritual reign: and as with respect to baptism particularly, there must be a mistake on one side or the other, both with respect to subject and mode; and as this mistake I firmly believe is on the side of the Paedobaptists; so, I as firmly believe for the reason given, that it will be removed, and infant-sprinkling for the future no more used.

**Tenthly**, the Philadelphian church-state, which answers to and includes the spiritual reign of Christ in His churches, is what I refer unto in the preface, as the time when the practice of infant-baptism will cease; in which I am confirmed, by the characters given of that church and the members of it; as that it kept the word of Christ; that is, not only the doctrines of the gospel, which will be then purely preached and openly professed, but the ordinances of it, baptism and the Lord's Supper; which have been (particularly baptism) sadly corrupted in almost all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apostolic one; but will in this period be restored to their pristine purity and glory; hence it is promised to this church, and that it represents, that because it kept the word of Christ's patience, truly and faithfully, it should be kept from the hour of temptation that should come on all the earth; and is exhorted to hold fast what she had, both the doctrines and ordinances, as they were delivered by Christ and His apostles, and as she now held them in the truth and purity of them. These are the reasons why I believe with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is coming, and I hope will not be long, when infant-baptism will be no more practiced in the world.

Since, now at this time, we are greatly and justly alarmed with the increase of popery; in order to put a stop to it, let us begin at home, and endeavor to remove all remains of it among ourselves; so shall we with the better grace, and it may be hoped, with greater success oppose and hinder the spread of it.

## POSTSCRIPT

The writer who lately appeared in a newspaper, under the name of Candidus, having been obliged to quit his mountebank-stage on which he held forth to the public for a few days; has, in his great humility, condescended to deal out his packets, in a less popular way; under the title of, *The True Scripture-Doctrine of the Mode and Subjects of Christian Baptism, etc.*, in six letters. It is quite unreasonable that we should be put, by every impertinent scribbler, to the drudgery of answering, what has been answered over and over again in this controversy. However I shall make short work of this writer, and therefore I have only put him to, and shall only give him a little gentle correction at the cart's tail, to use the phrase of a late, learned professor, in one of our universities, with respect to the discipline of a certain Bishop.

The first and second letters of Candidus, in the newspaper, are answered in marginal notes on my sermon upon baptism, and published along with it. His third letter is a mean piece of buffoonery and scurrility; it begins with a trite, vulgar proverb, in low language, fit only for the mouth of a hostler or a carman; and his friends seem to have spoiled one or other of these, by making him a parson. He goes on throughout the whole of the letter, as one that is in great haste, running after his wits, to seek for them, having lost them, if ever he had any; and it concludes with a poor, pitiful, foolish burlesque, mixed with slander and falsehood, on an innocent gentleman; quite a stranger to him, and could never have offended him, but by a conscientious regard to what he believed was his duty. However, by this base and inhumane treatment, it appears that his moral character is unimpeachable, or otherwise it would have been nibbled at. His fourth letter begins with representing the sermon published, as so mangled, changed, altered and added to, that it has scarce any remains of its original; in which he must be condemned by all that heard it: and he has most unluckily charged one clause as an addition, which, there cannot be one in ten but will remember it; it is this, "if any man can find any others in his (the jailer's) house, besides all that were in it, he must be reckoned a very sagacious person;" and he himself, in his first letter published before the sermon was, has an oblique glance at it; calling me, in a sneering way, "the sagacious doctor." What he says in the following part of the letter, concerning the subjects of baptism, and what he intended to say concerning the mode in another letter, which was prevented, I suppose are contained in a set of letters now published; and which are addressed, not to Mr.

Printer, who cast him off, but to a candid Anti-paedobaptist, and indeed the epithet of candid better agrees with that sort of people than with himself, of which he seems conscious, if he has any conscience at all; for it looks as if he had not, or he could never have set out with such a most notorious untruth, and impudent falsehood; affirming that I said in my sermon, that “the ten commandments, styled the moral law, were not binding on Christ’s disciples:” a greater untruth could not well have been told: my writings in general testify the contrary, and particularly two sermons I have published, one called *The Law Established by the Gospel*, and the other, *The Law in the Hand of Christ*; which are sufficient to justify me from such a wicked calumny; and the paragraph with which my sermon begins, attacked by him, and which I declare, are the words I delivered in the pulpit, that “the ten commandments, are the commands of God, and to be observed by Christians under the present dispensation;” for which I quoted ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 9:21, this I say, must stare him in the face, and awaken his guilty conscience, if not seared as with a red hot iron; which I fear is his case. As for his flings at eternal justification, which he has lugged into this controversy, and his grand concluding and common argument against it, that it is eternal nonsense, I despise; he has not a head for that controversy: and I would only put him in mind of what Dr. [John] Owen said to [Richard] Baxter, who charged him with holding it,

“What would the man have me say? I have told him, I am not of that opinion; would he have me swear to it, that I am not? but though I am not, I know better and wiser men than myself that do hold it.”

Somebody in the newspaper observing that this man was froward and perverse, and fearing he should do hurt to religion in general, in order to divert him from it, and guide him another way; complimented him with being a man of wit, and of abilities; and the vain young man fancies he really is one: and being a witty youth, and of abilities, he has been able to produce an instance of infant-baptism about 1500 years before Christian baptism was instituted; though he must not have the sole credit of it, because it has been observed before him: the instance is of the passage of the Israelites through the sea, at which time, he says, their children were baptized, as well as they: come then, says he, in very polite language, this is one scripture-instance; but if he had had his wits about him, he might have improved this instance, and strengthened his argument a little more; by observing that there was a mixed multitude, that came with the Israelites

out of Egypt, and with them passed through the sea, with their children also. And since he makes mention of Nebuchadnezzar's baptism, it is much he did not try to make it out that his children were baptized also, then or at some other time. This is the true scripture doctrine, of the subjects of Christian baptism, according to his title.

That the Jews received their proselytes by baptism, before the times of Christ, he says, I know; but if I do, he does not. I observe, he is very ready to ascribe great knowledge of things to me, which he himself is ignorant of; I am much obliged to him: the great names he opposes to me, don't frighten me; I have read their writings and testimonies, and know what they were capable of producing, and to what little purpose; though I must confess, it is amazing to me, that any men of learning should give into such a notion, that Christian baptism is founded upon a tradition of the baptism or dipping of proselytes with the Jews; of which tradition there is not the least hint, neither in the Old nor in the New Testament; nor in the Apocryphal writings between both; nor in Josephus; nor in Philo the Jew; nor in the Jewish Misnah, or book of traditions; compiled in the second century, or at the beginning of the third, whether of the Jerusalem or Babylonian editions. I am content to risk that little reputation I have for Jewish learning, on this single point; if any passage can be produced in the Misnah, mentioning such a tradition of the Jews, admitting proselytes by baptism or dipping, whether adult or children. I own it is mentioned in the Gemara, both Jerusalem and Babylonian, a work of later times, but not in the Misnah; though Dr. Gale has allowed it without examination. The only passage in it which Dr. Wall refers to from Selden, though not fully expressed, is this "a female stranger, a captive, a maiden, which are redeemed and become proselytes, and are made free; being under (the next paragraph is above) three years and one day old, are allowed the matrimonial dowry;" i.e., at marriage: but not a tittle is here or anywhere else in the Misnah, of receiving either minors or adult as proselytes by baptism or dipping: and supposing such a Jewish tradition, five hundred, or three hundred, or two hundred years after Christ; or even so many years before Christ, of what avail would it be? He must be strangely bigoted to an hypothesis, to believe that our Lord, who so severely inveighed against the traditions of the Jews, and particularly those concerning their baptisms or dippings; should found His New Testament ordinance of baptism, on a tradition of theirs, without excepting it from the other traditions, and without declaring His will it should be continued, which He has not done;

and yet this, as Dr. Hammond suggests, in the basis of infant-baptism: to what wretched shifts must the Paedobaptists be driven for a foundation to place infant-baptism on, as to place it on such a rotten one; a tradition of men, who at other times, are reckoned by them, themselves, the most stupid, sottish, and despicable of all men upon the face of the earth? For the farther confutation of this notion, see Sir Norton Knatchbull on ~~1~~ Peter 3:20,21; *Stennett against Ruffen*, p. 61; *Gale's Reflections on Wall's History of Baptism*, letters 9 and 10; *Rees on Infant-Baptism*, P. 17-29.

I shall not pursue this writer any farther, by giving particular answers to his arguments, objections, and queries, such as they are; but shall only refer the reader to the answers that have been already given to them: as to the threadbare argument, from Abraham's covenant, and from circumcision; for Old Testament times and cases, are chiefly dealt in, to settle a New Testament ordinance, see Ewer's Answer to Hitchin, Rees against Walker, and my answers to Dickinson, Clarke, and Bostwick. Of the unreasonableness of requiring instances of the adult baptism of children of Christian parents, in the scriptures, see my *Strictures on Bostwick's Fair and Rational Vindication*, etc., p. 106. Of the testimonies of the ancient Christian writers, in favor of infant-baptism, see *Gale's Reflections, etc.*, letters 11, 12, 13; *Rees on Infant-baptism*, p. 150 and etc.; some treatises of mine, *The Divine Right of infant-baptism Examined, etc.*, p. 20-25; *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, etc.*; *Antipaedobaptism; Reply to Clarke*, p. 18-23; *Strictures on Bostwick*, p. 100-103.

I called upon this writer, in the notes on my sermon, to name any lexicographer of note, that ever rendered the word baptize by "perfunto" or "aspergo," "pour" or "sprinkle;" and behold! Leigh's *Critica Sacra* is the only book quoted! and he the only lexicographer mentioned, if he may be so called! a book which every one of our illiterate lay-preachers, as they are called, are capable of quoting, and of confronting this writer with it; by observing that Leigh says, that "the native and proper signification of the word, is to dip into water, or to plunge under water, ~~1~~John 3:22,23; ~~1~~Matthew 3:16; ~~1~~Acts 8:38." In proof of baptism by immersion, and of the true signification of the word, see *Gale's Reflections, etc.*, letters 3 and 4;

*Rees on Infant-baptism*, p. 121; and my treatises of *The Ancient Mode of Baptizing and the Defense Of It*, with *The Divine Right of Infant-baptism Examined, etc.*, p. 90, etc.

I bid this writer adieu: God give him repentance for his sins, and the pardon of them; and this I am sure he cannot charge, neither with uncharitableness, nor with Antinomianism.

When the Paedobaptists write again, it may be expected they will employ a better hand; or should they choose to fix upon one of their younger sort again; let them take care, first to wring the milk well out of his nose, before they put a pen in his hand.