

1815

The Doctrine of Baptism

William Dell

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet_collection

Recommended Citation

Dell, William, "The Doctrine of Baptism" (1815). *Pamphlet Collection*. 20.
https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet_collection/20

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pamphlet Collection by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

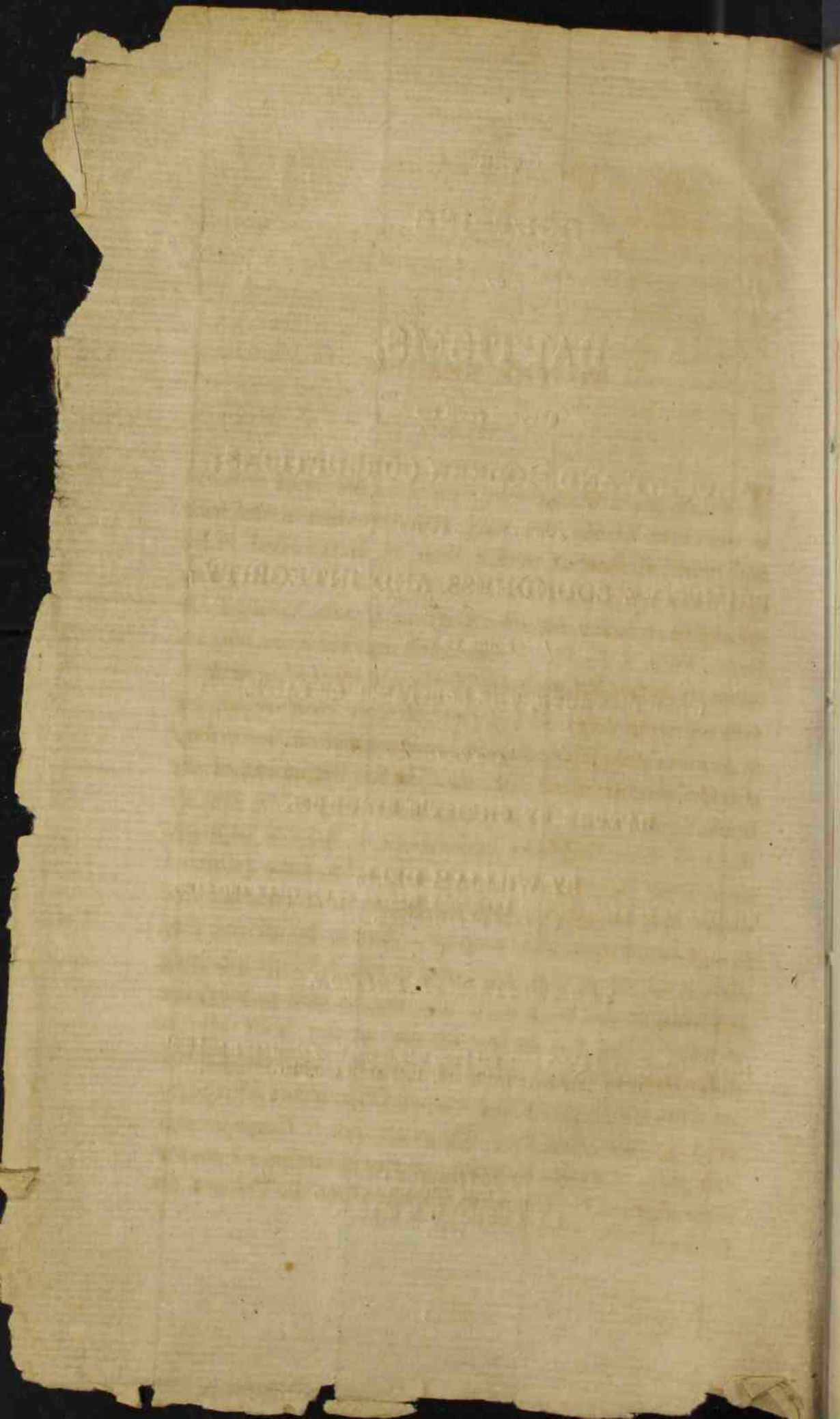
THE
DOCTRINE
OF
BAPTISMS,
REDUCED FROM ITS
ANCIENT AND MODERN CORRUPTIONS;
AND RESTORED TO ITS
PRIMITIVE SOUNDNESS AND INTEGRITY;
ACCORDING TO THE
WORD OF TRUTH, THE SUBSTANCE OF FAITH,
AND THE
NATURE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY WILLIAM DELL,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND FORMERLY MASTER OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS
COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE.

THE THIRTEENTH EDITION.

ISAIAH lli. 16.—That which hath not been told them, they shall see; and that
which they have not heard, they shall consider.

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED AT THE AMERICAN OFFICE,
BY GODDARD & MANN,
1815.



TO THE READER.

THE doctrine of baptisms hath been dark and obscure in the church from the very primitive times, and hath had more of human notion than of divine truth in it; and therefore Zuinglius, writing touching this point, speaks thus in the beginning of his book, entitled *De Bapt.* Tom. 2. F. 57. “*Illud mihi ingenue circa libri initium dicendum est, fere omnes eos, quotquot ab ipsis apostolorum temporibus, de baptismo scribere instituerunt, non in paucis (quod pace omnium hominum dictum esse velim) a scopo aberravisse:*” that is, “In the beginning of my book,” saith he, “I must ingenuously profess, that almost all those that have undertaken to write of baptism, even from the very times of the apostles, have (which I desire may be spoken with the favour of all) not in a few things erred from the scope.” And as he affirms, that almost all before him had erred in many things touching baptism, so did he himself also err, as well as they, not in a few: and it is as free for me or any body else to differ from him, and other late writers; especially if that be true, which godly and learned Chemnitius affirms out of Augustine, that these things are not “*Tanquam articuli fidei, a quibus diversum sentire piaculum sit anathemate dignum.*” Chemnit. *Examen Concil. Trident.* lib. de Bapt.

And therefore, Reader, I acquaint thee beforehand, that in this point I shall speak much otherwise than all former or later writers whatever, that I have met with: and though I do not, without some fear and trembling, dissent from so many worthy and gracious men that have been, and are otherwise minded; yet it is the less grievous to me, because I differ from them (I can say it in the truth before the Lord) not out of any desire to be singular, or for any worldly or carnal end whatsoever, but only that I might cleave to the clear and evident word of God alone, even there where I see the very faithful to leave it; seeing I am rather to join to the word without men, than to join to men without the word; and where I find the holiest men in the world and the word parting, I am there to leave them, and to go along with the word.

And so in all love and meekness I tender this discourse to thee; desiring that if thou canst not at present agree to what is therein contained, yet that thou wouldst not rashly judge and reproach it, seeing, through God's goodness, it may come to pass, that what thou knowest not now, thou mayst know afterwards.

But because I see this present generation so rooted and built up in the doctrines of men, I have the less hope that this truth will prevail with them; and therefore, I appeal to the next generation, which will be farther removed from those evils, and will be brought nearer to the word; but especially that people whom God hath, and shall form by his Spirit for himself; for these only will be able to make just and righteous judgment in this matter, seeing they have the Anointing to be their Teacher, and the Lamb to be their Light.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS.

THE Lord, foreseeing how great an evil it would be in the church, to leave men either to their own or other men's opinions and judgment in the things of God, did, in the very beginning of the gospel, command and bind all the faithful to hear Christ alone ; saying from Heaven, that we might give absolute credit to his voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him : " and the more the faithful have kept to the word of Christ, the more they have been free from error ; and the more they have left this, and turned aside after the doctrines of men, though men in some measure faithful and holy, the more have they been perverted and seduced ; insomuch that the true church of God, and the very faithful themselves, have received, held, and maintained, divers errors, false doctrines, and opinions, even for many ages and generations ; yea, and have not been altogether free from some, from the very apostles' time : and because many, or most godly men, in former ages, held such and such opinions, therefore the following ages have taken them upon trust from them, and have entertained them as sure and certain, though not at all consulting in those points with the great Doctor and Apostle of the New Testament, Jesus Christ. And thus have the very elect themselves been drawn into much error, though they have still had Christ for their foundation, and were built on him so firmly by faith, that the gates of hell could not prevail against them.

Now, to free the faithful from the former mistake, and consequently from all error, there is no other way than this, wholly to forsake the doctrines of men, and to lay by all those opinions that we have sucked in from our very cradles, and which are now become even a natural

religion to us ; I say, utterly to lay by, and wholly to forget all these things, and to come immediately to the pure unerring word of God, and to the voice of Jesus Christ himself, by his spirit, wherein all things are true, sincere, and perfect ; and not bring hearts to the word that are prepossessed with doctrines and opinions learned of men, but to come thither with hearts and consciences free and unengaged ; and in all meekness, uprightness, and simplicity of heart, to hear what Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, will say by his Spirit, which also is the Spirit of Truth ; and to receive and believe that alone, though never so differing from the opinions and doctrines of this present age, as well as of the former, and though perhaps the whole nation would be offended with it.

And this is the course that I have observed, to come to some clear and certain knowledge in the doctrine of baptism : for, having read much, and discoursed with many, touching this point, and having seriously considered what they say, as one that searched after the truth, for itself only, and for the satisfaction of my own soul ; I do profess, I could not find any thing almost, spoken for my spirit boldly and safely to lean on, as perceiving most of what they said, to be but the apprehensions and thoughts of men, and that they spake very much by conjecture, and at uncertainty in this matter ; and thereupon I resolved wholly to withdraw from such discourse, and to lay down whatever opinions I had before entertained touching this point, and to come to the plain and manifest scriptures, and from thence (after much seeking God) to learn whatever the Lord should please to teach me ; choosing rather to build on the clear word, though alone, than on any uncertain inferences and blind conjectures of men, though embraced and magnified by all the world.

Now, in this inquiry from the word, I met with that place, Heb. vi. 2. where the apostle, speaking of some of the first and initial points of the Christian religion, names *Βαπτισμῶν Διδασχῆς*, “the doctrine of baptisms ;” whence I perceived, that in the primitive church they had the doctrine of baptism in the plural number ; and therefore did apply myself to search from the word, what these bap-

tisms might be, and so met with the Baptist's own doctrine, touching baptisms, mentioned in Mat. iii. Mark i. Luke iii. and John i. (for all the evangelists make mention of this, it being a matter of so great concernment) and Luke makes mention of the ground of this doctrine of the Baptist, chap. iii. 15. "As the people were in expectation," saith he, "and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answered, saying," &c. The people, it seems, had great and high thoughts of John, because he was the son of the high priest, conceived after an extraordinary manner, his parents being both well stricken in age, and past children by the course of nature: and then the manner of his life was strange, for he lived in the wilderness, out of the ordinary converse of the world; and his apparel and diet were unusual, being raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat, locusts and wild honey; but especially his ministry was mighty, being in the spirit and power of Elias; and his baptism new and famous; so that all the people stood in great expectation of some work or event from him, that should manifest him to be the Christ: wherefore John, to take them off from that gross and dangerous mistake, plainly told them all, and that openly, that he was not the Christ; but that there was a great deal of difference between himself and the Messias, and that both in regard of his person and office.

First for his office. For he begins to shew the difference from thence, because the newness of his baptism was the occasion of the people's conceiving that he was the Messias; whereupon he vilifies his own baptism in respect of Christ's, saying, "I indeed baptize you with water;" that is, my baptism is but water baptism, that washes the body only with a corporeal element; "but one mightier than I comes," for I am but a creature, he the Power of God; I but a servant, he the Lord of all; and one so infinitely excellent above all that I am, that "the latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose:" that is, I am unworthy to perform the meanest and lowest office for him. And having thus first spoken meanly of his own baptism, and then magnified Christ's person above his own, now he proceeds also to magnify Christ's

baptism above his own; "he," saith he, "shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire:" that is, I that am a servant do baptize with water, but he, that is, the Son, baptizes with the spirit; my baptism washes but the body from the filth of the flesh, but his, the soul from the filth of sin; so that by how much the spirit excels water, and God the creature, so much his baptism transcends mine.

Now hence I gather clearly, even from the Baptist's own mouth, that John's baptism and Christ's were distinct baptisms, the one water baptism, the other fire baptism: and though our late writers and teachers have, and do affirm, that John's baptism and Christ's make up but one entire baptism; yet all generally of the ancient Christians apprehend them to be distinct; one whereof saith, "*Illud manifestum est, alium fuisse Johannis baptismum, alium Christi.*" August. contra Liter. Petil. cap. 37. And I could produce many more testimonies besides, but it is not my meaning to entangle any body with the authorities of men, and therefore I shall make it plain by clear Scriptures, and evidences from them, that John's baptism and Christ's are distinct.

1. John's baptism and Christ's are distinct in their appellations in Scripture; for John's baptism was still so called, even when the apostles used it; and it was not called by their names who administered it, but was still called John's baptism: yea, after Christ's baptism came in, John's still retained its name, as being distinct from it; and therefore in Acts xviii. 24, 25, it is said, "Apollon taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only τὸ Βαπτισμα Ἰωάννου, the baptism of John."

2. The Scripture saith, that Christ's baptism was to follow John's, and did not accompany it at the same time, for in Mat. iii. John saith, ἐγὼ μὲν Βαπτίζω, "I do baptize you with water, but he that comes after me," i. e. in the order of time, αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς Βαπτίσει, "he shall baptize you." And in Mark i. ἐγὼ μὲν ἔβαπτισα ὑμᾶς, "I indeed have baptized you," αὐτὸς δὲ Βαπτίσει, "but he shall baptize you;" which places plainly declare Christ's baptism did not go along with John's, but was to follow it, and that he was to baptize with the Spirit, after John's water baptism had had its full course; to wit, when he was

risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. And therefore Christ, after he was risen from the dead, and immediately before he was to ascend into heaven, though his disciples had used water baptism, or John's baptism, for above three years, yet affirms that which John had said of him, touching his baptizing with the Spirit, was not yet fulfilled, but was shortly to be fulfilled, as appears in Acts i. 4, 5. "Christ being assembled with the apostles, commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which," saith he, "you have heard of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Spirit not many days hence;" and this was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost. Whence it is evident, that Christ's baptism did not go along with John's, and make that up one entire baptism with itself, seeing it followed almost four years after, and therefore John's baptism and Christ's must needs be distinct.

3. It is evident, that Christ's baptism and John's were distinct, inasmuch as the baptism of Christ was necessary for those very persons who had before been baptized with the baptism of John; whereas, if John's baptism had been one and the same with Christ's, that only had been sufficient; but now those whom John had baptized with water, Christ was to baptize again with the Spirit, as in that place before mentioned, "I have baptized you with water, but one comes after me, who shall baptize you with the Spirit;" even you whom I have before baptized with water: and this was not a second baptism, but the first baptism of the New Testament, John's baptism being more legal than evangelical; and evangelical only insomuch, as it pointed out this baptism of Christ at hand.

Again, the Baptist himself saith, "I have need to be baptized of thee;" so that the very author, or chief minister of water baptism, stood in need of spiritual baptism, himself: Paul also, Acts xix. when he found certain disciples baptized only with the baptism of John, he baptized them again in the name of Christ, because they had not received the Spirit; and this baptism into the

name of Christ, was not the repeating of any water, but merely the gift of the Spirit; for Paul preached to them largely the doctrine of faith in Christ (for the text relates but the abstract of the thing) and laid his hands on them, and through his ministry the Holy Spirit came upon them; and this was Christ's baptism indeed, and no renewing of water at all, as the Anabaptist would fain enforce from this place.

By these things it is evident, that Christ's baptism and John's are distinct; and therefore, as what God hath joined, no man ought to put asunder, so what God hath put asunder, no man ought to join; as if the baptism of Christ were insufficient and incomplete, except we should add to it the baptism of John; which is exceedingly to eclipse the brightness of the Son of God, and to draw a veil over the greatest glory of the New Testament, which is the baptism of the Spirit.

Object. If the ordinary objection shall be offered against this, to wit, "That John's doctrine was the same with Christ's, and therefore his baptism also was the same with his."

I answer, it is most true, that John did preach Christ clearly, both in regard of his person and offices; but this was not his proper work, as he was the Baptist, but insomuch as he preached Christ in the Spirit, he belonged to the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual, as also Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and all the prophets, did in the same sense: but so far forth as he preached the doctrine, and administered the baptism of repentance, and both these not really and spiritually, but only in the letter and sign, so far he belonged to the Old Testament, rather than to the New: here was John in his proper office. I say, so far as John preached Christ spiritually, he did not that as John the Baptist, but as John a believer: and so the same John, in regard of his Baptist's office, belonged to the Old Testament; but according to the revelation which he had from the Father touching Christ, and his faith in him, and confession of him, he belonged to the New. And except we learn thus to distinguish of John's doctrine, to wit, what he preached as Baptist, and in his proper office, and what

as a believer who had the revelation of the Father, we shall never understand his baptism aright: for John's baptism was the seal of his Old Testament doctrine, and not of his New; or of his own immediate ministry, and not of Christ's; at the highest, John's ministry and baptism pointed out Christ, but neither of them were the same with Christ's.

And thus having cleared from the word, that John's baptism is distinct from Christ's, I shall proceed to speak of each of these baptisms apart by themselves, and to hold forth to others what myself have learned touching them from the same word.

And first I begin with John's baptism, as being the first in order of time.

Now the baptism of John was brought in, besides the rite and manner of the law, and so was a sign of a great change to follow: the Jews indeed had their baptisms in the law, for they washed their members, garments, vessels, &c. and by this they were cleansed from legal pollutions, but not from any sin or stain that did cleave to their consciences; but John was the author or first minister of a new and unwonted baptism, calling all men to repentance for sin, and to flee from the wrath to come, and awakening them to confession of sin and amendment of life; and also pointing out one to come, and now at hand, who should do all these things for them indeed, which neither he nor his baptism could do.

Now, touching John's baptism, I shall shew,

First. The honourableness of it in itself.

Secondly. The weakness and imperfectness of it, in reference to Christ.

Thirdly. The continuance and duration of it.

1. For the honourableness of it in itself, it appears in several passages.

First. That though the baptism of John in itself was more legal than evangelical, yet in this it did excel all the former legal baptisms, that it pointed out Christ's baptism near at hand; for as John himself was greater than all the former prophets, because he pointed out with his finger Christ the true and great prophet of the church; so his baptism was more excellent than all the

former baptisms, because it pointed out Christ's great and glorious baptism now at hand, as he saith, "I baptize you with water, but he that comes after me, shall baptize you with the Spirit."

Secondly. John's baptism was from heaven, and not from men; it had its institution from God, and was not an ordinance he took up of his own head. Luke iii. 2. It is said, that at the beginning of John's setting forth to his baptism and ministry, "That the word of God came to him in the wilderness;" that is, he was inspired, instructed and taught by a word from God himself, touching his ministry baptism, and the discovery of Christ's he was to make; and John 1. 6. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;" and verse 33. "He that sent me to baptize with water, said unto me:" he went not of his own accord, but God sent him to baptize; so that as God was the author of those inferiour baptisms of Moses, so of this more high and excellent baptism of John; and hereupon the publicans, that received John's baptism, are said to justify God; and the Pharisees and lawyers that refused it, to reject against themselves, that is, to their own harm, the counsel of God, Luke vii. 29, 30.

Thirdly. Christ himself, who was born under the law, and subject to the law, submitted himself also to the baptism of John, as the last and liveliest ceremony; Mat. iii. 13. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him; and so Christ, who had submitted himself to the circumcision of Moses, submitted himself also to the baptism of John, and as he submitted himself to all the ceremonies of Moses, not for his own sake but for ours; so also to the baptism of John. For seeing Christ was free from sin, he stood in no need of repentance, and so not of that baptism which was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin; but there the head, who was free from sin, was baptized for the body, which was full of sin, that he might "fulfil all righteousness" in his own person, agreeably to Mat. iii. 15. And this was a great honour to the baptism of John, that Christ (though in reference to our flesh more than his own) submitted himself to it.

Thus it appears, that the baptism of John was very honourable and of high account in its time, so that the very disciples of Christ took it up, and Christ himself suffered them, because John's baptism was the sign and forerunner of his, and because the time of his own baptism was not yet come; but Christ himself used it not, as John witnesses, chap. iv. 2. saying, "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples," to wit, with John's baptism, which was water baptism. For it became not the Son of God to baptize with a creature; nor the Lord of all, to use the baptism of a servant.

And thus having shewed, how honourable John's baptism was in itself, (wherein I conceive I have not done him, though a servant, the least prejudice, but have fully attributed to his office, whatever the word, or he himself, a messenger from God, attributes to it) I shall now proceed to shew, that the baptism of John, how honourable and excellent soever, is yet far beneath and below Christ's; yea, and most weak and imperfect in comparison of his.

For first, John's baptism was with the creature, with the element of water; for the creature could baptize but with the creature, that is, John with water; and so this was far beneath the baptism of Christ, which was the work of God by God, the work of the Father by the Son, and of the Son by the Spirit.

Secondly. John's baptism was *tantum exterius lavacrum*, but outward, and reached the outward man only; the baptism of water reached but the body, and it could pierce no deeper; and after all the washing of the body with water, the soul still remained as full of filth, sin, and corruption, as ever; and so it was far beneath Christ's, which reaches the soul: the baptism of John was the baptism of bodies, but the baptism of Christ the baptism of souls; and only the baptism of the Spirit reaches the Spirit, and attains to the soul, conscience and inner man, to purge and purify them.

Thirdly. The baptism of John was but a sign and ceremony, though it had more life and light in it than the signs of the law, as being nearer to Christ, and more newly revived by God; and so thought useful in its sea-

son, yet the efficacy of it, after the manner of all signs, was but weak. For,

First, It did not give the Spirit, not one drop of the Spirit; yea, some who were baptized with John's baptism, did not know the way of the Lord perfectly; that is, had no certain knowledge of Christ, the only way to God, as Apollos, Acts xviii. yea, some of them did not so much as know whether there were any Holy Ghost or no, as those twelve disciples, Acts xix. much less had received the Spirit.

Secondly. Neither did it give repentance and remission of sin (for what was the plunging of a man in cold water towards repentance and remission of sin?) but these were the works of Christ's own baptism, which is the baptism of the Spirit: for no man can repent of sin but by the presence of the righteousness of God in his heart, which is the work of that Spirit which is given in Christ's baptism; neither can any remit sin but God: our sins are never forgiven by God, till God dwells in us through Jesus Christ, by the work of the Spirit; so that repentance was given, and sin forgiven, but in hope only in John's baptism, but really and truly in Christ's, which was the real baptism of repentance and remission of sin.

Thirdly. Neither did it give entrance into the kingdom of God; for the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and no earthly or corporeal thing can give entrance into it: the baptism in the water of Jordan could deliver no man up into the kingdom of God, but the baptism in that river that makes glad the city of God, Psal. xlv. 4. in that river clear as crystal, that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb, which is the Spirit, which delivers up all that partake of it, first, into the kingdom of the Son, and after, through that into the kingdom of the Father. The baptism of John left men in that old world wherein it found them; but the baptism of Christ delivers them up into the new world, or the kingdom of God.

Now in all these regards, it appears that John's baptism did not do the work of the baptism of the New Testament; for then that only had been sufficient, and there had been no need of Christ's to come.

And thus you see that the baptism of John, as it is

distinct from Christ's, so it is far inferiour to his. And therefore great hath been the mistake of many for several ages, who have made John's baptism equal to Christ's; for what is this, but to make the servant equal to the Lord, and to sit down the creature in the throne of the only begotten of the Father? Yea, and it is the quite perverting of John's office, for John was to be a burning and shining light, to usher in Christ the true Light: he was to be a morning star to usher in Christ the Son of Righteousness, and was not to be so much clouds and darkness to obscure him; he was but to point out Christ, and depart again, and not to sit in equal glory with him, on his throne, in the New Testament. John said, "He was not worthy to bear his shoes;" and therefore they do not well who have prepared an equal crown for him with Christ, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Wherefore we must take great heed that we do not so magnify John's office as to intrench on Christ's, and to make the Son, out of the bosom of the Father, to take up the baptism of John a servant, and not to administer one entirely his own; surely this would not have been suitable to the glory of the only begotten Son of God.

The third thing I propound to speak to, touching John's baptism, is the time of its duration or continuance, and that was but very short: for John's baptism, as all the ceremonies of Moses, was but for a time; yea, this being nearer the truth and substance than they, was of less duration; as the morning star, though brighter than the rest of those heavenly lights, shines less while than they, because the hasty appearance of the sun swallows it up. And so John's baptism was of great use a little before Christ's manifestation to Israel, and continued until the time of his ascension; and then when Christ's baptism began, the shadow was to give way to the substance, and the sign to truth, and the letter to the Spirit, and the servant to the Son; so that Christ's baptism put an end to John's; fire baptism to water baptism, and Spirit baptism to creature baptism: for as all the prophets were until John, so John was until Christ; and John must no more exceed his

bounds, than Moses and the prophets theirs; but as the prophets gave up to John, so John must give up to Christ. John's temporary ministry had a temporary baptism; but the everlasting gospel (which is that word in our flesh) hath an everlasting baptism, which is the pouring out of the Spirit. So then, John being a servant and forerunner of Christ, Christ was not to take up his baptism, but John was to resign up his baptism to Christ; yea, and as a servant, to deliver up all things into his hands as Heir and Lord: and so John's water baptism was to last but till Christ's fire baptism should come in, and then the fire should lick up the water; and as Spirit baptism should increase, water baptism should decrease. So that John's baptism, or water baptism, (which is all one) belongs not to Christ's kingdom, which is a kingdom not of the letter, but of the Spirit; not of signs and shadows, but of the truth: and therefore we leave it where we found it, even without the bounds and reach of Christ's kingdom: for John's office and baptism reached unto Christ's kingdom, but hath no place in it; and to bring signs and ceremonies into the kingdom of truth, is, if rightly understood, to act against Christ glorified.

Object. But some will say, "This is strange indeed, that water baptism should have no place in the kingdom of Christ: and therefore pray stay a little, for we have many things to object against it."

Object. 1. Why, this would rob us of our Christianity.

I answer, No: for it is not water, but Spirit baptism, that makes us Christians; and water baptism hath been an unlawful blending or mixing of the church and world together; so that hitherto they could not be well distinguished from each other, to the great prejudice of the congregations of Christ.

Object. 2. But have so many ages erred, that have used water baptism?

Answ. For the errours of former ages, and their great mistakes in many of the truths of God, I have nothing to say, but that of the apostle, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Object. 3. But you are the first man, for aught we know, that ever opposed it.

Answ. One single mean man with the word, may very justly and lawfully contradict the whole world without it: truth is not to be judged by multitudes, or an unity, but by the word.

Object. 4. But Christ himself was baptized with water, and surely that perpetuates it in the church.

Answ. Christ's being baptized with water under John, no more perpetuates water baptism in the Christian church, than his being circumcised under Moses, perpetuates circumcision in the Christian church; or his submitting to other Mosaical ceremonies, perpetuates them: Christ brings no temporal or carnal thing into his everlasting or spiritual kingdom, though himself submitted to them under their several dispensations in the season of them, he being under the law as well as John.

Object. 5. But Christ justifies and commands water baptism in John iii. "Except a man be born of water, &c." And Mat. xxviii. "Teach and baptize."

Answ. I confess these are places that many have mistaken, to justify the practice of water baptism; but I shall shew you that they do indeed misunderstand them. For that first place, John iii. 5. "Except a man be born *ἐκ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" I confess many of the ancients have by water here understood material water, and have interpreted the place of external baptism, which was John's only: and hereupon divers of them have exceedingly magnified water, and ascribed to it the washing of souls, and the regeneration of Christians in some measure; they not considering in the mean time, what Christ saith in the very next verse, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit;" by which they might have learned, that outward and corporeal water can do nothing but outward and corporeal things, and can contribute nothing to the cleansing of souls and consciences from sin.

So that this place cannot be understood of corporeal water; and I could produce the testimonies of many

godly men, of good note, to this purpose, but do forbear, because I would not have our faith built upon the authorities of men; but the thing is evident from the text itself, for it saith, "Except a man be born of water," which shews the water he speaks of, must be such as is able to give a new birth, and to make a man a new, that is, a spiritual, holy, heavenly creature; and no water can do this, but the Spirit; and therefore Christ adds to water, the Spirit, by way of explication, as if he had said, "No man can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be born again of water;" but the water I speak of is no material water, but the Spirit, which is able to produce in you a heavenly nature, through which only we can have an entrance into an heavenly kingdom, seeing flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; so that the water Christ means in this place, is the Spirit. And many other places give witness to this, John iv. 10. "If thou didst know who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water:" and verse 13, 14. "Jesus said unto her, Whosoever drinks of this water (meaning the water of the well called Jacob's well) shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" and John vii. 37, 38, 39. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive.

Now by water, in all these places, is not meant material water, but the Spirit, as Christ himself explicates, and sure his testimony alone is sufficient.

But again, if in this place, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit," you will needs understand material water, why then, upon the same ground, you must needs understand that place in Matthew of material fire, where it is said, Mat. iii. 11. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; which is absurd to

very reason to think : but water and fire in each place, added to the Spirit, shew only the efficacy of the Spirit ; and so you may as well bring in the use of material fire in baptism, from the text in Matthew, as of material water from the text in John. So that this place in John, proves no authority of Christ for water baptism in his kingdom, which is the church of the New Testament.

Now the other place, Mat. xxviii. 19, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," is also of as little force as the former, to prove water baptism to be an institution of Christ. Indeed I find, that wherever men have met with the words baptism or baptize in the Scriptures, presently their thoughts have descended to material water ; they not so well considering or understanding that water which is the Spirit, which is the only water that performs all the baptism in the kingdom of God.

Now for that place, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," they understand it thus : teach them and baptize them with material water, using this form of words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father," &c. But herein they err from the mind of Christ : for by these words Christ leads his disciples from John's baptism to his own ; as if he had said, John indeed baptized with water, and ye have hitherto used his baptism, but I shall now shortly baptize you with my own baptism of the Spirit ; and from that time I would have you go teach all nations, and by the ministration of the Spirit, not baptize them, or dip them in cold water, (as John did in his own baptism, and you in his) but baptize them, or dip them into the name of God the Father, Son and Spirit ; and note, that he saith not here *Βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, in the name, but *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, into the name of the Father, &c. and by the name of God, is meant the power and virtue of God, or God himself, as Mark xvi. Christ saith, "In my name they shall cast out devils ;" that is, in my power and virtue ; so that the sense lies thus, Teach the nations, and baptize them into the name, &c. that is, by your ministry, which shall be of the Spirit, and not of the letter, you shall baptize them, or dip them, or inter-

est them, into the name of God, who is the Father, Son, and Spirit, as he hath discovered himself, in his last and most glorious discovery of himself in the gospel; you shall, I say, dip them into his name, or sprinkle his name upon them, that they may be holy, just, true, merciful, righteous, good, &c. that is, your ministry, after you have received the Spirit, shall have such efficacy that it shall clothe men with the name of God, and transform them into his very nature.

So that this place cannot be understood of water, but instead of baptizing in material water, as John, he tells them, they should baptize into the name of God, in such sort, that they that were before sinful, corrupt, and evil men, should now be taken up into the glory of the name of God. Neither can this place be understood of a form of words, which the apostles and their successors should use in baptizing, as most men have thought and taught, seeing no place of Scripture can be named, wherein the apostles, in baptizing used this form of words, saying, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit," which they had undoubtedly done, if Christ had commanded it as an absolute form. And because many will presently be ready to be enraged at this assertion, I will a little cool their heat with what Zuinglius saith of this place: "*Christus Iesus (saith he) baptismi formulam, qua uteremur, his verbis non instituit, quemadmodum theologi hactenus falso tradiderunt,*" Zuin. lib. de Bapt. p. 56. tom. 2. oper. that is, "Jesus Christ did not in these words institute a form of baptism, which we should use, as divines have hitherto falsely taught:" and he affirms it upon the same grounds I have mentioned before.

Again, if this place, "Go teach and baptize," be meant water baptism, Paul did very ill observe the command of Christ, who baptized but two or three believing families, at the most, with water baptism, and yet preached the word in a circuit from Jerusalem to Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19. through many kingdoms, countries, villages, people; but I say, Paul, though he used not water baptism, yet did punctually fulfil the command of Christ, and did teach them, and baptize them into the

name of God. So that no question there were many churches planted in Paul's time, who believed in Christ, and received the Spirit, and walked in fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another in the Father and the Son, who never were washed at all with water baptism; for Paul knew well, that no outward thing is of any account in the kingdom of God; and that as circumcision and uncircumcision were nothing, so neither water baptism, nor the want of it, were any thing, but a new creature is ALL; and if there be faith and the Spirit, they are sufficient to the kingdom of God, without any outward ceremonies whatsoever.

So that neither of these two places prove any institution of water baptism, of Christ, but that still remains John's baptism and not Christ's.

Object. 6. The last, and that which seems the strongest objection, is, that the apostles practised water baptism, not only before Christ's baptism came in, but after; and this is most evident in very many places in the acts of the apostles.

I answer. True indeed, the apostles did practise water baptism, but not from Christ but from John, whose baptism they took up, and an outward ceremony of honour and account is not easily and suddenly laid down; and hence some of the apostles used circumcision, and that after the ascension of Christ; for circumcision was an honourable ceremony used from Abraham's time, and so they could not (no not in the time of the New Testament) suddenly and abruptly leave it off; but they did use it for a time, for their sakes who were weak, well knowing that the circumcision without hands, would by degrees put an end to the circumcision made with hands. For ceremonies are best laid down, and old customs best laid aside, by the efficacy of the Spirit and power of righteousness. And so in like manner the apostles used the baptism of John, or water baptism, it having been of high account in the dawning of the day of the gospel, and for the present still continuing so; but they knew, that spirit or fire baptism, would by degrees consume water baptism, and lick up all the drops of it; for so John himself intimates, saying, "He must increase,

but I must decrease ;” that is, the truth must eat out the ceremony, and the substance the sign, and the more his ministry and baptism come in, mine shall go out ; and the ministry of the Son shall swallow up the ministry of the servant, as the sun-light doth the moon-light ; and the baptism of fire shall devour the baptism of water ; and his Spirit baptism by degrees shall put an end to my water baptism : and therefore Paul, as you have heard, after he had used this baptism twice or thrice, quite forbore it and yet planted many churches of Christ ; and so probably by degrees did other apostles too ; for they knew that Christ’s baptism included John’s, and was fully sufficient of itself without it ; and therefore we find Paul teaching in Christ’s kingdom but one baptism, and this the baptism of the Spirit, Eph. iv. from which the church of the New Testament, both Jews and Gentiles, was to take its beginning, and not from outward elements or water washing.

Wherefore seeing these things are so, the Anabaptists have extremely mistaken, who have made their water washing so essential a work of the New Testament, that they would neither hear the word, nor have Christian communion with any one that was not so washed ; yea, though they were convinced touching them, that they had received the Spirit : this, I say, hath been the great error of very many honest and well-meaning people, through misunderstanding the word, to make washing with material water so necessary a thing in spiritual worship ; yea, and more essential to the communion of saints, than the very Spirit itself ; whom I do not therefore judge, but pity.

And thus much for water baptism, which was John’s, and belonged only to that middle ministry, betwixt the prophets and Christ.

Now the other baptism I am to speak of, is Christ’s, which is Spirit or fire baptism ; and this is the one and only baptism of the New Testament, as we find Paul affirming, Eph. iv. 4, 5. where he saith, that in Christ’s kingdom there is but one body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, and one Lord, and one Faith, there is also but *ἓν Βάπτισμα* one Baptism ; and this is the bap-

tism of the Spirit, as the apostle elsewhere shews, saying, 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been made all to drink into one Spirit."

Now this Spirit baptism did not go along with John's water baptism, but followed it about four years after, as you have heard, and as appears by the forementioned place of Christ, Acts i. 5. where he tells his disciples, saying, "John verily baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." And this promise of Christ, and of the Father, was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, when the apostles being all met together, "There came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Spirit," &c. Here was the first beginning of Christ's or Spirit baptism, for it began not till after the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his sitting down on the throne of God; and John the apostle also witnesses to this, chap. vii. 39. saying, "The Spirit was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified:" but as soon as he was glorified, then did he begin to baptize with the Spirit, not the apostles only, but also the Jews and Gentiles, and all sorts of people that did believe in his name through the word of the gospel: so that then Christ's baptism began to take place, and to prevail, as you may see, Acts viii. 14, 15, 16. "When the apostles that were at Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God by the preaching of Philip, they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he was fallen on none of them, (only," saith the text, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," i. e. they had only been baptized with John's baptism, who only baptized with water, saying, that they should believe on Christ that was to come after: for John's baptism was yet usual, inasmuch as Christ's baptism was but new begun) "then did the apostles lay their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit: so that here now was the prog-

ress of Spirit baptism. And after, when Peter preached to Cornelius, and his family and friends, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, Acts x. And Peter gives this account to those of the circumcision at Jerusalem, Acts xi. 15. "And as I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning; then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit: so that Peter evidently declares, the gift of the Spirit by the ministry of the gospel, to be the baptism of Christ, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, which Christ promised at his ascension into heaven.

And this is the only baptism wherein all the church of the New Testament are to partake with Christ: I say, not the baptism of water, but of the Spirit: he and we drinking into one Spirit, and the same Spirit descending on us as did on him. The pouring out of the Spirit on the flesh of Christ, was his New Testament baptism, and it is ours too; and all our true and sound comfort and happiness lies in this, that we are baptized with the same Spirit that he was; for it would be as little spiritual comfort to be dipped in the same water with Christ, as to eat with him at the same table, or to drink with him in the same cup, or to go along with him in the same ship, as Judas did, and divers of the unbelieving Jews; but to drink with him into one Spirit, is to partake of one flesh with him, and to be one with Christ; and this is a comfort indeed, John vi. 56, 63, and xvii. 21.

Now the outward instrument of Christ's, or Spirit baptism, is not material water, but the word, as Christ shews, Mat. xxviii. where he saith, "Teach and baptize;" shewing, that teaching the word is the outward means of baptizing with the Spirit. And again, John xv. 3. "Now ye are clean through the word," not which Moses but "which I have spoken unto you," (and therefore is the gospel called the ministration of the Spirit, because it proceeds from the Spirit, and communicates the Spirit, and Christ baptizes with the Spirit, through the ministration of the Spirit, which is the preaching of the gospel) and Eph. v. 26. "Christ gave

himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, *Τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι*, with the washing of water by the word ;” that is, Christ cleanses his church by such a washing of water, as is brought about by the word and the water, with which the word washes in the Spirit ; for by the word the Spirit is given ; and the word cleanses by the Spirit, and the Spirit by the word : and therefore it is also said, 1 Cor. vii. 1. “ Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit.”

From all this it appears, that Spirit baptism is not to be performed by water, but by the word ; and no man, under the New Testament, receives the Spirit through the baptism of water, but through the ministry of the New Testament, which is the only ministration of the Spirit.

To conclude : this baptism of the Spirit, that is performed only by the word, is that baptism of which so many excellent things are spoken in the New Testament. As,

1. This baptism of the Spirit gives a new nature, and this nature is a divine nature, or the nature of God ; and hence it is said, “ Except a man be born of water and the Spirit ;” so that the baptism of the Spirit gives a new birth, and so a new nature : and again, “ That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit ;” so that the baptism of the Spirit makes us Spirit, and through the baptism of the Spirit, we become that which the Spirit itself is ; and so the true foundation of Christianity begins from faith and a new creature, and not from water washing.

2. This baptism gives a new name, not John or Thomas, &c. but as Christ saith, Rev. iii. 12. “ I will write upon him, *τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καίον*, my new name. Our own name is sin and ignorance, and pride, and injustice, and envy, and covetousness, and uncleanness, and all evil ; and this is the name which the first Adam wrote upon us ; but the name the second Adam writes on us, is righteousness, and holiness, and truth, and love, and meekness, and wisdom, and all good ; and this is the name the second Adam writes on us, or his own

new name ; for Christ himself was baptized by the Spirit into the name of God ; that is, was taken up into God and the things of God, which are himself, as into the truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, power, &c. and all the whole flesh or humanity of Christ, even all his members are baptized into the same name of God with him, and so are called by his new name ; so that this name of Christ, this new name, which is given us by God, through the baptism of the Spirit, is infinitely better than that name which is given us by parents or god-fathers in water baptism.

3. Christ's baptism translates us into a new world : " Except a man be born of that water, which is the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." No man can possibly enter into the church of the New Testament, which is the kingdom of God, but through the baptism of the Spirit ; the baptism of the Spirit makes a new creature, and this new creature enters into a new world, which is the new Jerusalem that comes down from God out of Heaven.

4. Spirit baptism enables us to the same work with Christ ; that is, to the ministry of the New Testament ; saith Christ, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach," Isa. lxi. 1. And he began his ministry from his Spirit baptism, which did immediately follow his water baptism, but was in no sort one baptism with it ; and having through the opening the heavens received the Spirit which taught him the name of God, he presently began to teach the name of God to others ; and Christ himself was not a minister of the New Testament, but through the baptism of the Spirit. Now all believers that are anointed with him in his unction, or, which is all one, are baptized with him in one baptism of Spirit, are anointed and baptized to the same ministry : for the anointing of the Spirit is the teaching of God, and they that are taught of God themselves ought also to teach others ; and the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of prophecy, and they that have received that Spirit must prophesy, as it is written, " It shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters

shall prophesy ;” which very place Peter, Acts ii. applies to the baptism of the Spirit ; so that this Spirit baptism of Christ makes all prophets that partake of it.

5. Spirit baptism makes all those one with Christ the Head, who partake of it, Gal. iii. 27. “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ ;” so that by the true baptism of the New Testament, we do actually put on Christ, and are made one with Christ : and this is not done by any water washing, but by the Spirit ; for through the gift of the Spirit only we are made one flesh with Christ, yea, through this we necessarily become one Spirit with him too, as it is said, “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit ;” so that not through water, but Spirit baptism do we put on Christ, the Spirit carrying us into Christ, and bringing Christ into us, and being one and the same Spirit in both ; and this is to be baptized into Christ.

Now this baptism that makes us one with Christ, makes us to partake both of his death and resurrection.

First. Through baptism of the Spirit we are dipt into the death of Christ, Rom. vi. 3, 4. “Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death ?” And this is, as the apostle unfolds it, verse 6. “The crucifying of the old man with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin :” and all this is done, not through any water washing, but through the gift of the Spirit ; for it is through the Spirit only, that we are able to mortify the deeds of the flesh ; and nothing but the presence of the Spirit in us is the destruction of sin ; so that the Spirit of Christ baptizes us into the death of Christ.

Secondly. Spirit baptism makes us partakers of his resurrection as well as of his death, yea, therefore do we die with him, that we may live a better life, Rom. vi. 3, 4. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism, (that is Spirit baptism) into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, (i. e. the Spirit) so should we also live in newness of life ; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his

death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Where you see that the same baptism of the Spirit, that makes us die with Christ, doth also quicken us into his resurrection, and deprives us of our own life; not that we may remain dead, but that it may communicate to us a better life than our own, even the life of Christ himself; that we that are men, may live the very life of the Son of God in our own souls and bodies, and may be quickened with him, and raised up with him, and set in heavenly places in him.

Thirdly. As Spirit baptism makes us one with Christ the Head, so with the church the body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; so that by drinking into one Spirit with the church, we become one body with it, and no other ways: I say, not by being dipt into the same water, but by receiving the same Spirit, do we become one body with the church; and it is not being of one judgment, or opinion, or form, or the like, that makes men one true church, or body of Christ, but the being of one Spirit; and there are no more of that church, which is the body of Christ, than they that are baptized with that one Spirit of Christ.

Fourthly. Spirit baptism truly washes and cleanses from sin; what water baptism doth in the sign, this doth in the truth, even cleanses from all carnal and spiritual filthiness: and no man is cleansed from sin, but by the washing of the Spirit; the pouring forth of the Spirit on all flesh, is the killing of sin in all flesh, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God; and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God; so that Spirit baptism cleanses from all sin, whatever it is, and there is no man cleansed from sin, but through this baptism.

And again, Eph. v. 26, 27. "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with

the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;" and nothing doth thus purify the church, until it be without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, and until it be perfectly holy, but the baptism of the Spirit. And therefore, though the baptism of John was administered but once, yet the baptism of Christ is a continued baptism; for as long as corruption is in the flesh, the baptism of the Spirit is in use: so that the nature and life of a Christian are under a constant and continual baptism, God every day pouring forth his Spirit upon a believer, for the purifying and sanctifying of him, and making him meet for the immediate presence of God, whither no unclean thing comes, nor the least uncleanness in any thing.

Fifthly. Spirit baptism saves; whatever in us is washed with the Spirit, is saved as well as sanctified; and how much any one hath received of the Spirit, so much is he already saved. Tit. iii. 5. "According to his mercy he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour:" where the apostle teaches us how God saves, and that is not by John's baptism, or water washing, but by the laver of regeneration, which is the renewing of the Holy Spirit, poured on us abundantly through Christ; so that he calls the baptism of the Spirit the laver of regeneration; such a laver that renews the old nature; yea, and begets a new one; so that a man through this baptism is wholly changed, not in a few good works, but in his whole nature; and from his newness of nature flows newness of life; so that he is no more as he was, but is, and lives, and loves, and thinks, and speaks, and acts, otherwise than he was wont; and this cannot be the work of water in any measure, but wholly of the Spirit; for where men are destitute of the Spirit, though washed with water a thousand times, there is no change of nature in them; but the change of nature, wrought by Spirit baptism, is so much present salvation, even in this present world. There is another Scripture witnesses the same

thing, and it is 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. "A few (that is eight souls) were saved by water, to which figure, baptism answering, doth now also save us, not that whereby the filth of the flesh is cast away, but whereby a good conscience answers well to God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" Peter having said that baptism answers to the flood, and saves the church now, as the flood did the church then; "yea," saith he, "but I mean not the outward baptism, or the washing away of the filth of the body, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" which place is difficult, but I thus conceive it; the efficacy of Christ's resurrection is the gift of the Spirit, and the Spirit of Christ in a believer, rectifies his conscience, and makes it good, so that it can return a sweet answer to God upon every word of his; for the work of the Spirit in the heart, answers every word of faith spoken from God; particularly it can say to God, I was indeed filthy and unclean throughout, but I am now washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God: and this Spirit baptism is that which saves; and not the water, which puts away the filth of the flesh only, but leaves the filth of the Spirit as much as ever.

So that, in this place, Peter puts an end to baptism in the flesh, as Paul, Rom. ii. 28, puts an end to circumcision in the flesh, saying, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God:" that is, saith Paul, in the kingdom of Christ, where all things are spiritual; circumcision in the spirit puts an end to circumcision in the flesh: and in the same kingdom of Christ, saith Peter, baptism in the spirit puts an end to baptism in the flesh; for he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise also is not of men, but of God. For under the gospel, which is the ministra-

tion of the Spirit (as ye have been oft minded) we can find nothing among all outward things, through the use and exercise whereof we may attain the cleanness and purity of righteousness in our natures; and therefore Christ hath put an end to all outward, carnal, and earthly things of the first testament, by the inward and spiritual, and heavenly things of a second and better testament: and by his own death and resurrection only, not without us, but within us, through the power and efficacy of his Spirit, all the baptism of the New Testament is fully and perfectly performed.

And thus, in all these particulars, you see the infinite excellency and glory of the Spirit baptism above water baptism, and this only is sufficient in the days of the gospel, as being the true and proper baptism of the New Testament: for as Christ himself only is sufficient to the faithful without John, though John was of use in his season to point out Christ: so the baptism of Christ only is sufficient to the faithful, without the baptism of John, though the baptism of John were of use in its season, to point out the baptism of Christ; and the Baptist himself was of this judgment, who said to Christ, "I have need to be baptized of thee;" which he means not of water baptism (for so Christ himself, as you have heard, did not baptize) but with the baptism of the Spirit; and so the Baptist himself, who was never baptized with water, neither by Christ nor the apostles, nor any body else, yet was baptized with the Spirit; and the baptism of the Spirit was sufficient for the Baptist without any water baptism; and so Christ's Spirit baptism, by the word, is sufficient for all the faithful now, without John's water baptism; for he that is truly washed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and hath the Holy Ghost in him to renew his nature, and to conform him exactly to Christ's own image, and to work him in this present world into the true similitude of heaven, and to be in him a fountain of water springing up unto everlasting life; what need hath he of cold material water to be poured on his body, under the pretence of any sign whatever, either of Moses or John, when as he hath the truth, substance, and heavenly thing itself?

Now this, it may be, may seem strange and dangerous to some of low, and fleshly, and customary religion; but let all such (if it be possible) consider, that where the substance comes, the shadow is at an end; and the ceremony where the truth comes; and the creature where God comes: and if they understand not this for the present, I hope they may understand it afterwards; for we speak not at uncertainties in this point, but what we have in some measure seen, and felt, and handled, of the word of life, that we deliver to you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit.

FINIS.