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

**A Dissertation Concerning the
Baptism of Jewish Proselytes**

by John Gill

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*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 70

A DISSERTATION CONCERNING THE BAPTISM OF JEWISH PROSELYTES

CHAPTER 1

OF THE VARIOUS SORTS OF PROSELYTES AMONG THE JEWS

Intending to treat of the admission of proselytes into the Jewish church by baptism, or dipping; it may be proper to consider the different sorts of proselytes among the Jews, and which of them were thus admitted, as is said. The word “proselyte” is originally Greek, and is derived, as Philo^{f1} observes, **απο του προσεληλυθεναι**, “from coming to”, that is, from one sect or religion to another, as from heathenism to the Jewish religion; and so Suidas^{f2} says, proselytes are they **οι προσεληλυσοτες**, “who come from” the Gentiles, and live according to the laws of God; and such an one is called by the Septuagint interpreters of ^{<D129>}Exodus 12:19 ^{<340>}Isaiah 14:1 and by the Greek writers following them, **γειωρας**, which is rightly interpreted by Hesychius, such of another nation who are called proselytes to Israel; and which word comes near to the Hebrew word **רג** and nearer still to the Chaldee word **arwyg** used for a proselyte; and is, by Eusebius, interpreted **επιμικτους**^{f3}, such as were mixed with Israelites.

There were two sorts of proselytes with the Jews, some say three; a proselyte of the gate; a mercenary proselyte; and a proselyte of righteousness; the first and last are most usually observed.

I. First, One sort was called **ר[ץ רג** “a proselyte of the gate”; and in scripture, “the stranger that is in thy gates”, ^{<5421>}Deuteronomy 14:21 24:14 being a sojourner, and permitted to dwell there; hence such an one had also

the name of **bwçt rg** “a proselyte inhabitant”; see ^{<1215>}Exodus 12:15 ^{<1256>}Leviticus 25:45,47 one who was allowed to dwell among the Jews on certain conditions; and is generally distinguished from another sort, called a “proselyte of righteousness”, of whom more hereafter. Though the Jews, not always consistent with themselves, and so not in this matter, sometimes interpret “the stranger in the gate”, of a proselyte inhabitant, or a proselyte by inhabitation, and sometimes of a proselyte of righteousness. So Nachmanides ^{f4}, having explained the stranger in the gate of a proselyte inhabitant, or one who obliged himself to keep the seven precepts of Noah, according to the usual interpretation of it, observes;

“Our doctors interpret it differently, for they say, ‘thy stranger within thy gate’, simply denotes, a ‘proselyte of righteousness’.”

So that according to them, such a stranger may be taken both for the one and for the other, in different respects; but commonly the proselyte inhabitant is only understood; who in general was obliged to promise, that he would not be guilty of idolatry, or worship any idol ^{f5}; this he was to promise before three witnesses, for it is asked,

“who is Ger Toshab; that is, a proselyte allowed to dwell in Israel? (the answer is) Whoever takes upon him, in the presence of three neighbours, that he will not commit idolatry.”

It follows,

“R. Meir, and the wise men say, whoever takes upon him the seven precepts which the sons of Noah obliged themselves to observe.”

Others say,

“these do not come into the general rule of such a proselyte. Who then is one? He is a proselyte who eats what dies of itself; (or) who takes upon him to keep all the commandments in the law, except that which forbids the eating of things which die of themselves ^{f6}.”

but the usual account of such a proselyte is, that he agrees to observe the seven precepts enjoined the sons of Noah ^{f7}; six of which were given to Adam, the first man, and the seventh was added to them, and given to Noah, and are as follow ^{f8}:

- a.** Concerning idolatry; by this a son of Noah was forbid to worship the sun, moon, and stars, and images of any sort; nor might he erect a statue, nor plant a grove, nor make any image.
- b.** Concerning blaspheming the name of God. Such an one might not blaspheme, neither the proper name of God, Jehovah; nor any of his surnames, titles, and epithets.
- c.** Concerning shedding of blood, or murder, the breach of which command he was guilty of, if he slew one, though an embryo in his mother's womb; and one who pursued another, when he could have escaped from him with the loss of one of his members, etc.
- d.** Concerning uncleanness, or impure copulations; of which there were six sorts forbidden a son of Noah; as, with an own mother, with a father's wife (or stepmother), with another man's wife, with his sister by the mother's side, with a male, or with mankind, and with a beast.
- e.** Concerning rapine, or robbery and theft; of which such were guilty, whether they robbed a Gentile or an Israelite, or stole money, or men, or suppressed the wages of an hireling; and the like.
- f.** Concerning the member of a living creature, taken from it while alive, and eating it: this is the command, it is said, which was to Noah, and his sons, and of which the Jews interpret ~~<0000>~~Genesis 9:4.
- g.** Concerning judgments or punishments to be inflicted on those who broke the above laws: this command obliged them to regard the directions, judgment, and sentence of the judges appointed to see the said laws put into execution, and to punish delinquents.

Now such Gentiles, who laid themselves under obligation to observe these commands, had leave to dwell among the Israelites, though not in everyone of their cities; not in Jerusalem particularly ^{f9}; wherefore those devout men and proselytes said to dwell in Jerusalem, ~~<4005>~~Acts 2:5,10 were not proselytes of the gate, but proselytes of righteousness. Nor are such sort of proselytes now received, only while the Jews lived in their own land, and were not under the jurisdiction of another people; or as they express it, while jubilees were in use and observed ^{f10}. This sort of proselytes, though they did not enjoy the privileges the proselytes of righteousness did, yet some they had; they might worship and pray in the court of the Gentiles, though not in the temple; they might offer burnt offerings, though not other

sacrifices; their poor were fed with the poor of Israel, their sick were visited by Israelites, and their dead were buried with them^{f11}.

Such proselytes as these, as they were not obliged to circumcision, nor to other commands peculiar to the Jews; none but those before observed; so neither were they baptized, or dipped, when made proselytes, which is said of others. Maimonides^{f12} affirms of such a proselyte, that he is neither circumcised nor dipped. Bishop Kidder^{f13} is therefore mistaken in saying, that proselytes of the gate were baptized, but not circumcised.

II. Secondly, there was another sort of proselytes, which are taken notice of, at least, by some as such; who were called **μυρκς** “mercenary” ones, and are reckoned as between proselytes of the gate and Gentiles. In ~~Exodus~~ Exodus 12:44,45 a mercenary, or “hired servant”, is distinguished from a servant bought with money; he being hired only for a certain time, as for six years; and also from a foreigner, a stranger in the gate, a proselyte of the gate; and both of them are distinguished from the servant bought with money, who was circumcised, and might eat of the passover, when neither of the other might, being both uncircumcised; and therefore R. Levi Barzelonita^{f14} is thought to be mistaken when he says,

“a mercenary is a proselyte, who is circumcised, but not dipped; for so the wise men explain it:”

but if a stranger or proselyte of the gate was not circumcised, much less a mercenary, who was far below him; besides, if he was circumcised, he might eat of the passover; which is denied him: and so Ben Melech observes^{f15} of these two, the foreigner and the hired servant; they are Gentiles, and uncircumcised: and Abendana, in his notes upon him, from the Rabbins, says, the former is a proselyte inhabitant, or a proselyte of the gate, who takes upon him the seven precepts of the sons of Noah; the latter is a servant whose body is not possessed, that is, is not in the possession of his master, not being bought with his money, is only an hired servant, and so not circumcised. But perhaps Jarchi’s note will reconcile this to what Barzelonita says;

“Toshab, a foreigner, this is a proselyte inhabitant; and Shacir, or hired servant, this is a Gentile;”

but what is the meaning? are they not uncircumcised? (that is, both of them) and it is said, “No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof”: but they

are as a circumcised Arabian, and a circumcised Gabnunite, or Gabonite^{f16}, though circumcised yet not by Israelites, but by Gentiles, which gave no right to the passover. Hottinger^{f17} thinks these mercenary proselytes, and with him Leusden^{f18} seems to agree, were mechanic strangers, who left their own country, and came among the Jews for the sake of learning some mechanic art; and who, conforming to certain laws and conditions, prescribed by the Jews, were permitted to sojourn with them until they had learnt the art. There are but few writers who speak of this sort of proselytes. However, it seems agreed on all hands, that whether circumcised or not, they were not baptized, or dipped.

III. Thirdly, There was another sort of proselyte, called **qdx rg** a “proselyte of righteousness”^{f19}; see ~~(1663)~~ Deuteronomy 16:20 a stranger circumcised, and who is so called when he is circumcised; and sometimes **tyrb ʿb rg** “a proselyte, the son of the covenant”^{f20}, the same as an Israelite; see ~~(4125)~~ Acts 3:25. This sort of proselytes were the highest, and had in greatest esteem; who not only submitted to circumcision, but embraced all the laws, religion, and worship of the Jews; and were in all respects as they, and enjoyed equally all privileges and immunities, civil and religious, as they did; except being made a king, though one might if his mother was of Israel^{f21}; and being members of the great Sanhedrim, yet might be of the lesser, provided they were born of an Israelitish woman^{f22}; nay, even such have been in the great Sanhedrim, as Shemaiah and Abtalion, who were of the posterity of Sennacherib^{f23}; but their mothers being Israelites, it was lawful for them to judge, that is, in the great Sanhedrim; for one was the prince, and the other the father of that court^{f24}. So the Jews say^{f25}, the posterity of Jethro sat in Lishcat Gazith, that is, in the great Sanhedrim, which sat in that room; and for which they quote ~~(1325)~~ 1 Chronicles 2:55 yet it has been a question, whether a proselyte should be made a public minister, or president of the congregation, called **rwbx j yl ʿ**; but the common opinion was, that he might be one^{f26}: of this sort of proselytes, of whom they boast, some were persons of note for learning, or wealth, or worldly grandeur^{f27}; but without sufficient ground. Some, they own, were not sincere who became proselytes, either through fear, or to gratify some sensual lust, or for some sinister end or another. Some were called “proselytes of lions”^{f28}, who became so through fear; as the Samaritans, because of the lions sent among them, and that they might be freed from them, embraced the worship of God, though they retained also

the worship of their idols. Others were called “proselytes of dreams”; who were directed and encouraged to become proselytes by such who pretended to skill in dreams, as being omens of good things to them. Though some, in the place referred to, instead of **twml j** “dreams”, read “windows”, and render the words “proselytes of windows”, so Alting ^{f29}, meaning the windows of their eyes, who, to gratify the lust of the eyes, became proselytes; as Shechem, being taken with the sight of Dinah, submitted to circumcision for the sake of her; and others were called “proselytes of Mordecai and Esther”, who were like those who became Jews in their times, ^{<f28>} Esther 8:17 through fear of the Jews, as there expressed. Others were true and sincere proselytes, who cordially embraced the Jewish religion, and from the heart submitted to the laws and rules of it; these were called **pyrwrg pyrb** “drawn proselytes” ^{f30}, who were moved of themselves, and of their own good will, without any sinister bias, and out of real love and affection to the Jewish religion, embraced it. Compare the phrase with ^{<f34>} John 6:44. And such, they say ^{f31}, all proselytes will be in the time to come, or in the days of the Messiah; and yet sometimes they say, that then none will be received ^{f32}; and when persons propose to be proselytes, the Jews are very careful to ask many questions, in order to try whether they are sincere or not; and such as they take to be sincere they speak very highly of; they say ^{f33},

“Greater are the proselytes at this time, than the Israelites when they stood on mount Sinai; because they saw the lightning, heard the thunder, and the sound of the trumpet; but these saw and heard none of these things, and yet have taken upon them the yoke of the kingdom, and are come under the wings of the Shechinah”

though elsewhere, and in common, they speak but slightly of them, and say;

“They are as grievous to Israel as a scab in the skin, or as a razor to it ^{f34}, because they often turn back again, and seduce the Israelites, and carry them off with them; yea, they say they stop the coming of the Messiah ^{f35}.”

However, they have a saying ^{f36} which shows some regard to them;

“A proselyte, even to the tenth generation, do not despise a Syrian, or an heathen before him, he being present, or to his face; because

till that time their minds are supposed to incline towards their own people;”

and so it is said ^{f37}, the daughter of a proselyte may not be married to a priest, unless her mother is an Israelitess, even unto the tenth generation. And there is another saying ^{f38} of theirs, Do not trust a proselyte until the twenty fourth generation, that is, never; not only priests, Levites, and Israelites, but even bastards, and the Nethinim, or Gibeonites, were preferred to proselytes ^{f39}. Some of these sayings do not seem so well to agree with the words of Christ, ~~(1215)~~ Matthew 23:15 to reconcile which, it is thought ^{f40}, that while the temple was standing, the desire of making proselytes was stronger than after it was destroyed by the Romans; resenting that, they became indifferent about making proselytes, and were unconcerned about the salvation of the Gentiles, and contented themselves with receiving such only who freely came over to them. It never was deemed so honourable to be the descendants of proselytes, as of original Hebrews. Hence the apostle Paul gloried that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, both his parents being Hebrews. A Rabbi of note among the Jews, whose parents were both proselytes, or Gentiles, is called not by his proper name, Jochanan, but Ben Bag-Bag; that is, the son of a Gentile man, and the son of a Gentile woman; and for the same reason he is called in a following paragraph, Ben He-He, numerically He being the same with Bag; though it is said, these abbreviations were used from reverence to him, and a regard for him ^{f41}; and, indeed, the Jews were not to reproach and upbraid proselytes with what they and their ancestors had been, or had done; they were not to say to a proselyte, Remember thy former works; nor were they to say to the sons of proselytes, Remember the works of your fathers ^{f42}; for this is the affliction and oppression of them, as they understand it, they are cautioned against, ~~(1221)~~ Exodus 22:21 ~~(1813)~~ Leviticus 19:33 nay, they were to love them as themselves, because the Lord God loved the stranger, ~~(1834)~~ Leviticus 19:34 ~~(5108)~~ Deuteronomy 10:18 for of proselytes of righteousness they interpret these passages ^{f43}.

Now it is of this sort of proselytes, proselytes of righteousness, that it is said, they were admitted into covenant, and into the Jewish church, as the Israelites were; the males by circumcision, by **t l ybj** “baptism”, or dipping, and by sacrifice; and the females by baptism, or dipping, and by sacrifice; and it is the baptism or dipping of these proselytes, that will be inquired into, and be the subject of the following Dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THE OCCASION OF THIS DISSERTATION

I. Several learned men, and some of our own nation, whom I shall chiefly take notice of, have asserted, that it was a custom or rite used by the Jews before the times of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, to receive proselytes into their church by baptism, or dipping, as well as by circumcision; and these both adult and infants; and that John and Christ took up the rite of baptizing from thence, and practised, and directed to the practice of it, as they found it; and which, they think, accounts for the silence about infant baptism in the New Testament, it being no new nor strange practice. The writers among us of most note, who make mention of it are, Broughton, Ainsworth, Selden, Hammond, and Lightfoot; men justly esteemed for their learning and knowledge in Jewish affairs. Mr. Hugh Broughton is the first of our nation I have met with who speaks of it. He says ^{f44},

“The Babylonian Talmud, and Rambam (Maimonides) record, that in the days of David and Solomon, when many thousands of heathens became proselytes, they were admitted only by baptism, without circumcision. So now, when the New Testament was to be made for the many, that is, for all nations, baptism was not strange; neither is John an astonishment for that; but demanded whether he be Elijah or Christ, or that special prophet named in Deuteronomy.”

A little after he observes, that

“Christ from baptism used of them (the Jews) ‘without commandment, and of small authority’, authorizes a seal of entering into the rest of Christ, using the Jews’ ‘weakness’ as an allurement thither.”

Where, by the way, he makes this usage to be “without commandment”, that is, of God, and to be but of “small authority”, even from men, and a piece of “weakness” of the Jews, and yet authorized by Christ; which

seems incredible. Mr. Henry Ainsworth is the next I shall mention, who takes notice of this custom. His words are ^{f45},

“That we may the better know how they (the Jews) were wont to receive heathens into the church of Israel; I will note it from the Hebrew doctors:”

and then gives a large quotation from Maimonides; the substance of which is, that as by three things Israel entered into the covenant, by circumcision, and baptism, and sacrifice; in like manner heathen proselytes were admitted; on which he makes this remark:

“Whereupon baptism was nothing strange unto the Jews when John the Baptist began his ministry, ^{<40B>}Matthew 3:5,6 they made a question of his person that did it, but not of the thing itself, ^{<40C>}John 1:25.”

Dr. Hammond, another learned man, speaks of this same custom or rite with the Jews: he says ^{f46}, that

“proselytes born of heathen parents, and become proselytes of justice, were admitted by the Jews, not only by circumcision, (and while the temple stood) by sacrifice; but also with the ceremony or solemnity of washing, that is, ablution of the whole body, done solemnly in a river, or other such great place or receptacle of water.”

So he says, Jethro, Moses’s father-in-law, was made a proselyte in this way; and that this ceremony of initiation belonged not only to those, which being of years, came over from heathenism to the Jews’ religion, but also to their children infants, if their parents, or the consessus (the sanhedrim) under which they were, did in the behalf of their children desire it; and on condition that the children, when they came to age, should not renounce the Jewish religion; nay, he says, the native Jews themselves were thus baptized; for all which he refers to the Talmud, Tr. Repud. by which I suppose he means the tract Gittin, concerning divorces. But I have not met with anything relating thereunto in that treatise. For the same purposes it is quoted by Dr. Wall, who, I suppose, goes upon the authority of Dr. Hammond, since he acknowledges he was not so well acquainted with the books to be searched for such quotations. Now Dr. Hammond observes, that

“having said thus much of the custom among the Jews, it is now most easy to apply it to the practice of John, and after of Christ, ‘who certainly took this ceremony from them’;”

and further observes, that by this it appears, how little needful it will be to defend the baptism of Christian infants from the law of circumcising the infants among the Jews; “the foundation being far more fitly laid” in that other of Jewish baptism. Yea, in another of his works he suggests that this custom is the “true basis of infant baptism”^{f47}. The very learned Mr. Selden is more large in his quotations in various parts of his works^{f48}, from both Talmuds and other Jewish writers, concerning this rite and custom; which authorities produced by him, and others, will be given and considered hereafter. At the close of which he makes these remarks^{f49}; that the Jewish baptism was as it were a “transition” into Christianity, or however, a shadow of a transition, not to be passed over in silence; and that it should be adverted to, that the rite or sacrament of baptism, used at the beginning of Christianity, and of the gospel by John, and by the apostles, was not introduced as a “new action”, and as not before heard of, “even as a religious action”, but as well known to the Hebrews, as a rite of initiation, from the use and discipline of their ancestors, and as joined with circumcision. Dr. Lightfoot, who must be allowed to be well versed in Jewish literature, has produced the same authorities Selden has, if not more, in support of the said rite or custom, as in early use with the Jews, and exults and triumphs abundantly over the Antipaedobaptists in favour of infant baptism, on account thereof: he asserts, that

“baptism had been ‘in long and common use’ among them (the Jews) many generations before John the Baptist came; they using this for admission of proselytes into the church, and baptizing men, women, and children for that end:---hence a ready reason may be given why there is ‘so little mention’ (no mention at all) of baptizing infants in the New Testament; and that there is neither ‘plain precept’ nor ‘example’ for it, as some ordinarily plead; the reason is, because there needed none, baptizing infants having been as ‘ordinarily used’ in the church of the Jews, as ever it hath been in the Christian church:---that baptism was no strange thing when John came baptizing; but the rite was known so well by everyone, that nothing was better known what baptism was, and therefore there needed not such punctual and exact rules about the manner and object of it, as there had needed, if it had never been seen

before:----that Christ took up baptism as it was ‘in common and known use’, and ‘in ordinary and familiar practice’ among that nation; and therefore gave no rules for the manner of baptizing, nor for the age and sex of persons to be baptized, which was well enough known already, and needed no ‘rule’ to be prescribed:---- observing how very known and frequent the use of baptism was among the Jews, the reason appears very easy, why the Sanhedrim, by their messengers, inquired not of John, concerning the reason of baptism, but concerning the authority of the baptizer; not what baptism meant; but whence he had a licence so to baptize, ~~John~~ John 1:25. Hence also the reason appears why the New Testament does not ‘prescribe’, by some more ‘accurate rule’, who the persons are to be baptized:----the whole nation knew well enough that little children used to be baptized; there was no need for a precept for that, which had ever by common use prevailed ^{f50}.”

Dr. Wall, upon these authorities, has thought fit to premise an account of this Jewish baptism, to his history of infant baptism, as serving greatly the cause of it, and as throwing light upon the words of Christ and his apostles, concerning it, and the primitive practice of it; and, animated by such authorities, every puny writer, who does not know his right hand from his left in this matter, takes it up, and swaggers with it. And, indeed, scarce any will now venture in the defence of infant baptism without it. This is the last refuge and dernier resort of the Paedobaptists; and, indeed, a learned baronet ^{f51} of our nation says, he knows not of any stronger argument in proof of infant baptism than this is.

Now since so great a stress is laid upon it, and it is made a matter of such great importance, as to be a “transition” into Christianity, and to be “closely connected” with Christian baptism; that from whence it is taken, and is the “rule” to direct how to proceed, both with respect to the manner and objects of it; yea, is the “basis and foundation” of infant baptism, and the “strongest argument” in proof of it; and which makes other arguments, heretofore thought of great weight, now “unnecessary”: it is highly proper to inquire what proof can be given of such a rite and custom being in use among the Jews, before the times of John Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; and if so, what force and influence such a custom can and ought to have on the faith and practice of Christians. The proof of which will next be considered.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROOF OF THE BAPTISM OF JEWISH PROSELYTES INQUIRED INTO; WHETHER THERE IS ANY PROOF OF IT BEFORE, AT, OR QUICKLY AFTER THE TIMES OF JOHN AND CHRIST

The inquiry to be made is, whether there are writings or records before the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, or at or near those times, or in the third and fourth century from the birth of Christ, or before the Talmuds were written; which make any mention of, or refer to any such rite and custom in use among the Jews, as to admit proselytes to their religion by baptism, or dipping, along with other things. Now upon search it will be found,

I. First, That nothing of this kind appears in the writings of the Old Testament, which chiefly concern the Jewish nation. We read of many who either were, or are supposed and said to be made proselytes; as the Shechemites in Jacob's time, the multitude that came out of Egypt with the Israelites^{f52}, Jethro, Moses's father in law^{f53}, Shuah^{f54}, Tamar^{f55}, Rahab^{f56}, and Ruth^{f57}; and many in the times of Mordecai and Esther, who became Jews^{f58}, ~~1887~~ Esther 8:17 but not a word of their being admitted proselytes by baptism. Dr. Lightfoot indeed says^{f59}, that Jacob admitted the proselytes of Shechem and Syria into his religion by baptism, but offers no proof of it; the Jews^{f60} pretend, that Pharaoh's daughter was a proselytess, and the Babylonian Talmud^{f61}, quoting the passage in ~~1888~~ Exodus 2:5. "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself"; R. Jochanan says, she came down to wash herself from the idols of her father's house, and the Gloss on the place is,

"to dip on account of proselytism;"

but then the Gloss is the work of Jarchi, a writer in the twelfth century; and was it so said in the Talmud itself, it would be no sufficient proof the fact. Dr. Hammond says, that Jethro was made a proselyte this way; but produces no scripture for it; but refers to the Talmud, Tr. Repud; but there

it is not to be found, as before observed: and Schindler^{f62} asserts the same, as said by the Jews, and seems to refer to the same Tract in general, without directing to any particular place: and from him Hammond seems to have taken it upon trust, and some other writers also, without examination; since no such passage is to be found in that Tract. Pfeiffer^{f63}, in proof of it, refers to a book called Zennorena, a commentary on the law, written in Hebrew-German, in the seventeenth century, by R. Jacob Ben Isaac, a German Jew^{f64}. Indeed, in the Talmud^{f65}, Jethro is said to become a proselyte, but no mention is made in what manner he was made one; and elsewhere^{f66} explaining these words, dj yw “and Jethro rejoiced”, says Rab, he made a sharp sword to pass over his flesh; that is, according to the Gloss, he circumcised himself, and became a proselyte; but not a word of his baptism, or dipping; and so the Targum on ^{<42816>}Exodus 18:6,7 is,

“And he said to Moses, I Jethro, thy father-in-law, am come unto thee ‘to be made a proselyte’; but if thou wilt not receive me for myself, receive me for the sake of thy wife, and her two children, who are with her; and Moses went out from under the clouds of glory to meet his father-in-law, and bowing himself, kissed him, and he made him a proselyte; but nothing is said of the manner of doing it.”

Mr. Broughton also, as before quoted, says, that the Babylonian Talmud, and Rambam record, that in the days of David and Solomon, many thousands of heathens were made proselytes, and admitted by baptism only; but this instance is not to be met with in the Babylonian Talmud; yea, that expressly denies it in two different places^{f67}; and in which it is asserted that they did not receive proselytes neither in the days of David, nor in the days of Solomon; Solomon’s wife, Pharaoh’s daughter, is indeed excepted; because the reason for which they say, proselytes were not then received; namely, because they might be desirous of being made proselytes, that they might be admitted to the king’s table, could have no influence on her, since she was the daughter of a mighty king; and yet it is said^{f68} by some, that though it was Solomon’s intention to make her a proselyte, yet he was not able to do it; and she became one of his troublers; and by what is said of her, in ^{<44811>}2 Chronicles 8:11 it looks as if she did not become a proselyte; Rambam, or Maimonides, indeed, to reconcile what later writers have said, with those words of the Talmudists, have contrived a distinction between the Sanhedrim and private persons; as if proselytes, though not received in those times by the former, were by the latter. He says^{f69}, there were many

proselytes in those times who were made so before private persons, but not before the Sanhedrim; he owns the Sanhedrim did not receive them, and though they were dipped, yet not by their order, and with their consent; but he produces no passage of scripture to support this private dipping; nor do the scriptures any where speak of such numbers of proselytes in those days, and much less of their baptism; and the strangers, who in the Greek version are called proselytes, whom Solomon numbered and employed at the building of the temple, ^{<427>}2 Chronicles 2:17 at most could only be proselytes of the gate, not of righteousness, and so there can be no pretence for their admission by baptism, or dipping; nor is there anything of this kind with respect to any persons to be found in the writings of the Old Testament. There is a plain and express law for the admission of proselytes to the Jewish religion, and for what, as a qualification, to partake of the ordinances and privileges of it; particularly to eat of the passover; and that is the circumcision of them, with all their males; and on this condition, and on this only, they and theirs were admitted without any other rite annexed unto it, they were obliged unto; nor does it appear that ever any other was used; no, not this of baptism; there was but one law to the stranger or proselyte, and to the home born Israelite; see ^{<2128>}Exodus 12:48,49. There were proselytes in the times of Hezekiah, ^{<425>}2 Chronicles 30:25 who came out of the land of Israel, to eat the passover at Jerusalem, who therefore must be circumcised, according to the said law; but there is no reason to believe they were baptized. There was a law concerning the marriage of a captive woman taken in war, ^{<610>}Deuteronomy 21:10-14 previous to which she must become a proselytess; and the law enjoins various particular rites to be observed in order to it, as shaving her head, paring her nails, and putting off the raiment of her captivity; but not a word of her baptism; which one would think could never be omitted, had such a custom prevailed as early as the times of Moses and Jacob, as is pretended. There were various bathings, baptisms, or dippings incumbent on the Israelites, and so upon such proselytes who were upon an equal footing with them, and equally under obligation to obey the ceremonial law; which consisted of various washings, baptisms, or dippings, yet none of them for proselytism; but for purification from one uncleanness or another, in a ceremonial sense: these seem to be what a learned writer ^{f70} calls “aquilustria”, “lustrations by water”; which he thinks it is clear the captive Jews in Babylon observed, from having their solemn meetings by rivers, ^{<4185>}Ezekiel 3:15 ^{<4185>}Ezra 8:15,21 but it is not so clear they had their abode in such places, whether for a longer or shorter time, on account of them;

and it is still less clear what he further says, that these lustrations had a promise of grace annexed to them, were sacraments of the Old Testament, and a type of our baptism. However, though he supposes the returning Jews and proselytes were circumcised, he does not pretend they were baptized; nor does he attempt to prove proselyte baptism from hence. Among the ten families said ^{f71} by the Jews to come out of Babylon, the proselytes are one sort; but they say nothing of their baptism; see ^{<1312>} Ezra 6:21. As for those scriptures of the Old Testament the Rabbins make use of to justify this custom of theirs, they will be considered hereafter.

II. Secondly, whereas there are several books called Apocrypha, supposed to be written between the writing of the books of the Old Testament and those of the New, and are generally thought to be written by Jews, and to contain things which chiefly have respect to them; and though there is sometimes mention made in them of proselytes to the Jewish religion, yet not a syllable of any such rite or custom, as of baptism or dipping at the admission of them; particularly of Achior the Ammonite, in the times of Judith; upon her cutting off the head of Olophernes it is said, that

“he, seeing all that the God of Israel did, strongly believed in God, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was added to the house of Israel unto this day;”

that is, he and his posterity continued in the Jewish religion. Now here is mention made of his being circumcised, previous to his addition, or his being proselyted to the Jewish church; but not a word of baptism, or dipping, in order to it; see Judith 14:6 in the Apocrypha.

III. Thirdly, mention is made of proselytes in the New Testament, ^{<1235>} Matthew 23:15 ^{<4210>} Acts 2:10 6:5 13:43 but nothing is said concerning their admission, and the manner of it. Indeed, in the Ethiopic version of ^{<1235>} Matthew 23:15 the words are rendered, “They baptize one proselyte”; which seems to have respect to the custom under consideration; but then this is but a translation, and not a just one. The Ethiopic version is not only reckoned not very good, but of no great antiquity. Ernestus Gerhard says ^{f72} of the antiquity of it, he dare not affirm anything certain. And Ludolph, in his history of Ethiopia, relates ^{f73}, that he could find nothing certain concerning the author and time of this version but thinks it probable it was made at the time of the conversion of the Habessines, or a little after, but not in the times of the apostles, as some have affirmed; and in the margin, a

little after, he observes, that in an Ethiopic martyrology, St. Frumentius, called abbot of Salama, is said to be the author of it; who, according to another place in the said history ^{f74}, seems to have lived in the fourth century, in the times of Athanasius, and is thought to be the first founder of the Christian religion in Ethiopia, and the first bishop in it. Scaliger takes the Ethiopic version to be a recent one; and Deuteronomy Dieu ^{f75}, from what the author or authors of the version of the evangelist Matthew, add at the end of it, suspects that they were of the Maronites, who became subject to the pope of Rome A. D. 1182, and so this version is too late a testimony for the antiquity of such a custom; and the closing the translation of some of the epistles with desiring the prayers of Peter and others, shows what sort of persons they were who translated them, and in what times they lived. The title of the book of the Revelation in this version, is,

“The vision of John, which John was bishop of the metropolis of Constantinople, when he suffered persecution;”

by which it appears not to be ancient. Hence Dr. Owen ^{f76} calls it a “novel” endeavour of an illiterate person; and the translation of the clause itself in ~~4235~~ Matthew 23:15 is censured by Ludolphus ^{f77} as ridiculous; the word by which it is rendered being used in the Ethiopic language to convert a man to Christianity, or to make a man a Christian; which is by it absurdly attributed to the Scribes and Pharisees.

IV. Fourthly, as there are no traces of this custom in the writings before, at, or about the times of John, Christ, and his apostles; so neither are there any in those which were written in any short time after; as, not in Philo the Jew, who lived in the first century; who, though he is said by some to be ignorant of Jewish customs, yet one would think he could not be ignorant of such as were used at the admission of proselytes; since he lived at Alexandria, where it may be supposed many proselytes were, more than in Judea, and of the manner of their admission he could not but have knowledge, both then and in former times; and he makes mention of proselytes, and of them as equally partakers of the same privileges, and to be treated with the same honour and respect as home born citizens ^{f78}, and as they were admitted by Moses; but is altogether silent about this custom of baptizing, or dipping them; nor is there the least trace or hint of this custom in any Rabbinical books, said by the Jews to be written a little before, or after; such as the books of Bahir, Zohar, the Targums of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, and of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the prophets.

V. Fifthly, Josephus, the Jewish historian, lived in the same age, a little after Philo, was well versed in the affairs of the Jews, even in their religious rites and ceremonies, having been a priest among them. He not only observes, that many of the Gentiles came over to their religion ^{f79}, but even speaks of whole nations who became Jews, and that they were made so by circumcision; as of the Idumaeans, whom Hyrcanus conquered, and suffered to remain in their own land, on condition that they would be circumcised, and conform to the laws of the Jews; and who, out of love to their country, did comply with circumcision, and so became Jews ^{f80}, and of the Ituraeans, whom Aristobulus fought against, and added part of their country to Judaea, and obliged the inhabitants, if they would remain in their country, to be circumcised, and live after the laws of the Jews; and quotes Strabo, who, upon the authority of Timogenes, says, that he enlarged the country of the Jews, and made part of the country of Ituraea theirs, joining them to them by the bond of circumcision ^{f81}. By which accounts it appears, that both these people were made Jews, or were proselyted to them by circumcision; but not a word is said of their baptism, or dipping; which, according to this custom, as is said, must have been of men, women, and children, which, had it been practised, could not have been well omitted by the historian. He also speaks ^{f82} of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and of her son Izates, embracing the Jewish religion; and relates how desirous Izates was of being circumcised, that he might be a perfect Jew, without which he could not; but for a time he was dissuaded from it by his mother, and a Jew merchant, who instructed them; but afterwards, being exhorted to perfect the work by one Eleazer, who was more skilful in Jewish affairs, he submitted to circumcision: but neither Josephus nor Eleazer say a word about his baptism, or dipping; which yet, according to the pretended custom as then prevailing, was necessary, as well as circumcision, to make him a complete proselyte. Nor is any mention made of the baptism or dipping of Helena; which, had it been at this time, would not have been omitted by the historian; since it was by that only, according to this notion, that females were then made proselytes. He also speaks ^{f83} of another son of Helena, Monbaz, embracing the Jewish religion; but says nothing of his baptism.

VI. Sixthly, it may be inquired, whether or no any mention is made of this custom of receiving proselytes among the Jews by baptism, or dipping, in the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases. The most ancient ones extant are those of Jonathan Ben Uzziel of the prophets, and of Onkelos of the

Pentateuch; the one at the beginning, the other toward the end of the first century; in which nothing is met with concerning the admission of Jewish proselytes by dipping. The other paraphrases are by uncertain authors, and of an uncertain age. The Targum of the Megillot, or five books of Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, and Esther, is written by an unknown author; it is the latest of all the Targums. In that of Esther only the phrase became Jews, ^{<0817>}Esther 8:17 is rendered, became proselytes; but nothing is said of their manner of becoming such. In that of ^{<0816>}Ruth 1:16 the requisites of a proselyte are particularly observed; where Ruth is introduced, saying, that she desired to be made a proselyte; when Naomi informs her what commands the Jews were obliged to observe; as to keep the Sabbaths and festivals, and not to walk beyond two thousand cubits (on the Sabbath day); not to lodge with Gentiles; to observe the three hundred and thirteen commands; not to worship an idol, etc. to all which Ruth is made to agree; but not a syllable is said about baptism, or dipping; whereas, that, with a sacrifice along with it, before the building of the temple, and while the temple stood, and since, without it, is the only thing, according to this notion, by which females were admitted proselytes. In the Targum of Jonathan of ^{<0827>}Genesis 9:27 the sons of Japheth are said to be made and to dwell in the school of Shem. In the Jerusalem Targum, and in that of Pseudo-Jonathan, the souls that Abraham and Sarah got in Haran, ^{<0125>}Genesis 12:5 are said to be the souls who were made proselytes by them; and in the same Targum of ^{<0233>}Genesis 21:33 at Beersheba, where Abraham planted a grove, he is said to make proselytes, and teach them the way of the world, of the world to come; but nothing more is said of the way and manner in which they were made such. In the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan of ^{<0322>}Genesis 38:2 Judah is said to make the daughter of a Canaanite a proselytess, and then married her; and in the same Targum of ^{<0410>}Numbers 11:4 the mixed multitude who came with the Israelites out of Egypt, are interpreted proselytes; and no doubt but many of them were such; and Jarchi thinks the son of the Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, was a proselyte, since he was among the children of Israel, ^{<0340>}Leviticus 24:10. And Africanus affirms ^{f84}, that the Jews genealogical tables, in which an account was kept of original Jews and of proselytes; as of Achior the Ammonite, and Ruth the Moabitess, and those who came out of Egypt mixed with the Israelites; and which continued to the times of Herod, who burnt them, that his family might not be known. But to return to the Targums; in the Pseudo-Jonathan's of ^{<0286>}Exodus 18:6,7 Jethro is made to say to Moses, as before observed, that he was come to be made a

proselyte; and Moses is said to make him one; but in what manner it is not said; and so the rest before mentioned; indeed, the same Targum of ^{<0224>}Exodus 12:44 is,

“And every stranger who is sold for a servant to an Israelite, bought with money, then thou shalt circumcise him, and thou shalt ‘dip him’, and so shall he eat of it,”

the passover. Now in this Targum of ^{<0230>}Exodus 26:9 not only mention is made of the Misnah, but it abounds with Talmudic fables and traditions, and so must be written after both the Misnah and Talmud; and in the Targum of ^{<0249>}Numbers 24:19 mention is made of the city of Constantinople, which shows it to be not ancient, and that it is not the work of the true Jonathan. And besides all this, the case of the servant refers not to a proselyte, who became so of choice, but to a bought servant, who, according to the original law in ^{<0172>}Genesis 17:12,13 was obliged to be circumcised; and so, according to the Rabbinic custom, to be dipped; but then, according to these writers, baptism, or dipping for servitude, was a different thing from baptism, or dipping for proselytism; the one was on a civil, the other on a religious account; the one was repeated when a servant was made a free man, and the other never ^{f85}. The same Pseudo-Jonathan in his Targum of ^{<0213>}Deuteronomy 21:13 to the conditions required of a beautiful captive, in order to be married to an Israelite, this is added, that she should dip herself, and become a proselytess in his house; but the text has nothing of it, nor the Targum of Onkelos; nor is this custom to be met with in the paraphrases of the true Jonathan; only in this, which was written after the Talmud, and does not come within the time under consideration.

VII. Seventhly, nor is there any mention of such a custom in the Jew’s Misnah, or Book of Traditions; which is a collection of all the traditions among the Jews, which had been handed down from age to age, and were collected together from all parts, and written in a book of this name, in order to be preserved. This was written by R. Judah Hakkadosh, in the middle of the second century, A. D. 150 or as others in the beginning of the third century, reckoning the date of it one hundred and fifty years from the destruction of the temple; which brings it to the year 220 and here, if anywhere, one might expect to meet with this rite or custom; but no mention is made of it. Dr. Gale ^{f86} seems to allow it upon what Dr. Wall has transcribed from Selden, which he granted without examination. The

doctor says ^{f87}, It is not only mentioned in the Gemara, but in the text of the Misnah itself; which, as he suggests, speaks of a child becoming a proselyte by baptism, or dipping; but the passage he has from Selden ^{f88} says no such thing; which runs thus ^{f89};

“A she stranger, a captive, and a maiden, who are redeemed and become proselytes, and are made free, being ‘under’ (or, as in the following section, above) three years and one day old, are allowed the matrimonial dowry;”

that is, when they come to age, and are married; but not a word is here of their being made proselytes by baptism, or dipping; indeed, the tradition shows, that minors may be proselyted, and that a man’s sons and daughters may become proselytes with him; but there is no need to have recourse to a tradition for this; the law is express, that a stranger who desires to be a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and to eat of the passover, must be circumcised, and all his males, and then he and all his children, males and females, may be admitted to eat of it, ^{<228>}Exodus 12:48,49 only the circumcision of the males is required, but no baptism, or dipping of any. There is a passage in the Misnah ^{f90}, which perhaps some may think countenances this custom; which is this,

“A stranger who is made a proselyte, on the evening of the passover, the house of Shammai say, he ‘dips’ and eats his passover in the evening; but the house of Hillell say, he that separates from uncircumcision, is as he that separates from a grave.”

Now it should be observed,

1. That here is a division about this matter, be it what it may; Shammai, and his party, assert, that a proselyte newly made, might dip and eat his passover that evening; but Hillell, and his party, dissent, for a reason given; and the determination, in all cases, was generally according to Hillell, as it was in this; so we learn from Maimonides ^{f91}.

2. This baptism, or dipping, was not on account of proselytism, but for ceremonial uncleanness; for it goes along with cases of that kind, instanced in before. The canon begins thus,

“A mourner (who was unclean according to the ceremonial law) dips and eats his passover in the evening; but eats not of the holy

things: he that hears tidings of the death of his (friend or relation), and who gathers to him bones, dips, and eats of the holy things:”

and then it follows,

“A stranger who is made a proselyte, etc.”

3. This rule, according to Shammai, was concerning one already made a proselyte, and therefore the dipping, or baptism, he prescribes to him, in order to his eating the passover that evening, was not to make him a proselyte; but for some other reason. Wherefore,
4. This strongly makes against admission of proselytes by baptism, or dipping, at that time; for if he had been made a proselyte that way, there would have been no reason for a second dipping to qualify him for the passover.
5. The case of such an one, according to Hillell, is, that being just come out of heathenism, he was unclean, as one that touched a dead man, a bone, or a grave; and therefore could not eat of the passover that evening, but must wait seven days, until he was purified according to the law in ^{<04911>}Numbers 19:11-19.
6. After all, the view of Hillell, in putting such a person off from eating the passover the evening he became a proselyte for the reason given, was with respect to the next year, and by way of caution; fearing that should he be then in any uncleanness, which required purification, he would say, Last year I did not dip, or purify myself from any uncleanness, and yet I eat, and now I must dip and eat; not considering that the last year he was an heathen, and incapable of uncleanness, according to the law, but now he was an Israelite, and capable of it; and so it is explained in the Gemara ^{f92} and Gloss on it, and by other interpreters ^{f93}. Besides, this baptism, or dipping, was not on account of proselytism, but was common to, and obligatory upon, a circumcised Israelite, in order to eat of the passover; as is acknowledged by all. There were several in the times of the Misnic doctors, and before the Misnah was compiled, who were persons of eminence, and said to become proselytes; as Onkelos the Targumist, who, it is said, was made a proselyte in the days of Hillell and Shammai ^{f94}, hence he is called Onkelos the proselyte ^{f95}; some say ^{f96} he was a sister's son of Titus the emperor, and by whom three Roman troops, sent one after another, to take him, were made proselytes also ^{f97}; and Aquila, the author of the Greek version of the Bible, became, as is said ^{f98}, a proselyte in the

times of Adrian and so the emperor Antoninus Pius, and Ketiah, a nobleman in Caesar's court, as before observed: yea, the famous R. Akiba, a Misnic doctor, was a proselyte^{f99}; and so was R. Meir^{f100}. And of the circumcision of most of these we read; but nothing of their baptism; neither in the Misnah, nor in any other Jewish writings. Not to take notice of those very early masters of tradition Shemaia and Abtalion, before observed, who were proselytes of righteousness^{f101}; there were also women of note within this time, who became proselytes; as queen Helena^{f102}, with her two sons, of whom mention is made in the Misnah^{f103}; and Beluria, the proselytess, who had a discourse with R. Gamaliel^{f104}; and the wife of Turnus Rufus, whom R. Akiba married, after she was proselyted^{f105}. Now though female proselytes were admitted by baptism only, as is pretended, yet nothing is said of the baptism of these women. And as there is no mention of this custom in the Misnah, so neither have I observed any notice taken of it in the Rabbot, which are commentaries on the Pentateuch and five Megillot, before named; and which were written by R. Bar Nachmoni, about A. D. 300, according to Buxtorf^{f106} in one of which the text in ~~Gen~~Genesis 12:5 is commented on; "And the souls they had gotten in Haran"; which the Targums of Pseudo-Jonathan and Jerusalem, interpret of the souls they proselyted, before observed; and here it is said^{f107},

"These are the proselytes which they made:---R. Hona said,
Abraham proselyted the men, and Sarah proselyted the women;"

but not a word is said about the baptism or dipping of either. Yea, Abraham and Sarah are said to be proselytes^{f108} themselves; but it is not suggested that they were baptized. In these commentaries mention is made of the circumcision of proselytes, particularly of king Monbaz, and his brother, said to be the sons of king Ptolemy^{f109}; and of Aquila, the Greek translator^{f110}; but nothing is said of their baptism.

VIII. Eighthly, nor is this rite or custom of receiving Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, once spoken of by any of the Christian fathers of the first three or four centuries; which they could not be ignorant of, if from hence Christian baptism was taken, and especially such who were Jews, or had any connection with them, or were acquainted with them, and with their affairs, as some of them were. Barnabas was a Jew, and an apostolic man, contemporary with the apostles; there is an epistle of his still extant, in which he treats chiefly of Jewish rites, and of their being typical of evangelic things, and of their having their fulfilment in them; and

yet says not a word of this initiating baptism, which he could not have failed making mention of had he known anything of it; yea, he sets himself to find out what was beforehand said concerning the ordinance of baptism; he says ^{f111},

“Let us inquire whether the Lord has taken any care to make manifest beforehand anything concerning the water;”

that is, concerning baptism: and then he adds,

“Concerning the water, it is written to Israel, how the baptism that leads to the remission of sins, they would not; but appointed for themselves;”

meaning their superstitious worship, our Lord inveighs against; but says not a word here, nor elsewhere, of the baptism of proselytes, for which he had a fair opportunity, had he known anything of it. Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, was a Samaritan, and had knowledge of Jewish affairs; and had a dispute with Trypho the Jew, the same with Tarphon, a Jewish doctor, frequently mentioned in the Misnah; yet neither he nor Trypho say anything of this custom. In answer to a question put by Justin, what was necessary to be observed; Trypho replies ^{f112},

“To keep the Sabbath; to be circumcised; to observe the new moons; to be baptized, or dipped, whoever touches any of these things forbidden by Moses;”

meaning, that such should be baptized, or dipped, who touched a dead body, or bone, or grave, etc. but not a syllable is here of the baptism, or dipping of proselytes. And Justin himself makes mention of Jewish proselytes, and calls them circumcised proselytes ^{f113}, but not baptized; by which it seems he knew nothing of any such custom, as to baptize them; yea, he does, in effect, deny there was any such custom of baptizing any, that universally obtained among the Jews, since he speaks of a certain sect, whom he will not allow to be truly Jews, called by him Baptists ^{f114}. Whereas, if it was the practice of the whole nation to receive proselytes by baptism, or dipping, a particular sect among them, would not be stigmatized with such a name, since they must be all Baptists, both original Jews and proselytes, if they were all admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, as is affirmed. Origen, who lived in the beginning of the third century, in the city of Alexandria, where were great numbers of Jews, with

whom he was acquainted, and must know their customs, says of Heracleon, an heretic, he opposes^{f115},

“That he was not able to show that ever any prophet baptized;”

meaning, a common and ordinary one; and if none of these ever baptized, what foundation could there be for the baptism of proselytes before the times of Christ? Epiphanius, in the fourth century, was born in Palestine, lived some time in Egypt, had great knowledge of the Jews, and of their affairs; but seems to know nothing of this custom, as used neither in former nor in later times: he says^{f116}, neither had Abraham baptism, nor Isaac, nor Elias, nor Moses, not any before Noah and Enoch, nor the prophet Isaiah; nor those who were after him and he speaks of the Samaritans, that when they came over to the Jews, they were circumcised again; and gives an instance in Symmachus, who, when he became a proselyte, was circumcised again. So likewise he speaks of Theodotion being proselyted to Judaism^{f117}, and of his being circumcised; but not a word of the baptism, or dipping, of either of them. He also speaks of Antipater^{f118}, the father of Herod the king, that when he became procurator of Judaea, he was made a proselyte, and was circumcised, both he and Herod his son; but says nothing of their baptism, or dipping; so Herod is called by the Jews a proselyte^{f119}; and his reign, and that of his posterity, *μϋργη τωκλ μ* “the reign of the proselytes”^{f120}, who became so by circumcision, and that only, for ought appears. And of him, as a proselyte, but not of his baptism, speaks Jerome^{f121}; he lived in the same century, and great part of his time in Judaea, was acquainted with several Jews he had for his teachers, and with their traditions, of many of which he makes mention, but never of this of admitting proselytes by baptism, or dipping. He speaks of proselytes, and of their circumcision; and says^{f122}, that

“if strangers received by the law of the Lord, and were circumcised, and were eunuchs, as was he of the queen of Candace, they are not foreign from the salvation of God;”

but not a word of their baptism or dipping. The instances given by Dr. Wall^{f123}, from Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, and Basil, only respect either the figurative baptism of the Israelites at the Red Sea; or their baptisms and bathings by immersion, for their purification from ceremonial uncleanness; but not for proselytism. So when the same writer^{f124} quotes Arrianus, an heathen Stoic philosopher of the second century, as speaking

of του βεβαμμηγνου, “a baptized Jew”^{f125}, or one that was dipped; by whom the doctor thinks is meant one made a proselyte by baptism; no other may be designed than either a Jew who bathed his whole body, to purify himself from legal pollutions; or an Hemero-baptist, a sect of the Jews, who bathed themselves every day; or rather a Christian, as many learned men are of opinion^{f126}; since it was not unusual with heathen writers to call Christians, who were baptized, Jews; because the first Christians were Jews, and came from Judaea, into other parts of the world, and were reckoned by the heathens a sect of the Jews^{f127}, and were often confounded with them. Now since it appears there is no mention made of any such rite or custom of admitting Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, to the Jewish religion in an writings and records before the times of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; nor in any age after them, for the first three or four hundred years; or, however, before the writing of the Talmuds; it may he safely concluded there was no such custom, which had obtained in that interval of time. It remains therefore to be considered, what is the true ground and foundation of such a notion and from whence it sprung, which will be done in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROOF OF THIS CUSTOM ONLY FROM THE TALMUDS AND TALMUDICAL WRITERS

Seeing the rite of receiving proselytes by baptism, or dipping among the Jews, is nowhere mentioned in any writings before the times of John and Christ, nor in any after, nearer than the third and fourth centuries; it is next to be inquired, when and where we first hear of it; and upon inquiry it will be found, that the first mention of it, for ought as yet appears, is in the Jewish Talmuds. The testimonies from thence concerning it, and the whole evidence, as there given of it, will now be laid before the reader. There are two Talmuds, the one called Jerusalem, the other Babylonian; the one written for the Jews at Jerusalem, and in Judaea, after the destruction of the city and temple, and in the Jerusalem dialect. The other for the use of the Jews in Babylon, and in those parts, and in their style. The former is the most ancient, and therefore I shall begin with it, being finished, as generally supposed, in the year 230; but if the Misnah was not compiled till the year 220, being one hundred and fifty from the destruction of Jerusalem, there must be a longer space of time than that of ten years between the one and the other. David Nieto, lately belonging to a Jewish synagogue here in London, says ^{f128}, the Jerusalem Talmud was written near a hundred years after the Misnah; but other Jews make it later still, and make a difference of two hundred and thirty three years between the finishing of the one and the other; the one being finished in 189, and the other in 422 ^{f129}, which is much more probable; and so this Talmud was not earlier than the beginning of the fifth century; nay, sometimes they place it in the year 469, the latter end of that century ^{f130}. Scaliger places ^{f131} it in the year 370. Mr. Whiston ^{f132} in 369. And so Elias Levita ^{f133} writes, that R. Jochanan compiled it three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem; but Morinus ^{f134} will have it to be after the year 600, which is carrying it down too low. The passages I have met with in it any way relating to the case under consideration; for it will be allowed there are some; and therefore it will be owned, that Mr. Rees ^{f135} was mistaken in saying it was not pretended to be

found in it. The passages are as follow. In one place ^{f136}, a certain Rabbi is represented as saying to another,

“Wait, and we will ‘dip’ this proselytess tomorrow. R. Zera asked R. Isaac Bar Nachman, Wherefore? because of the glory of that old man, or because they do not dip a proselyte in the night. He replied to him, Why do not they dip a proselyte in the night? Abda came before R. Jose (and said), What is the meaning then of not dipping a proselyte in the night?”

And a little after, in the same column, a saying of R. Hezekiah is reported;

“A man finds an infant cast out (an exposed infant), and he dips it in the name of a servant;”

or for a servant, on account of servitude; but then dipping for servitude, and dipping for proselytism, were two different things with the Jews, as before observed; and yet this is the only clause produced by Dr. Lightfoot out of this Talmud, for the above purpose; or by any other that I have seen. However, there are others which speak of the dipping of adult proselytes; which became a matter of controversy. In another treatise, in the same Talmud ^{f137}, mention is made of a proselyte circumcised, but not dipped; (and it is added) all goes after circumcision; that is, that denominates a proselyte.

“R. Joshua says, yea, dipping stays (or retards) it; and Bar Kaphra teaches, that he who is not dipped, this is right (a true proselyte); for there is no proselyte but dips for accidents;”

that is, for accidental and nocturnal pollutions; and it seems such a dipping sufficed for proselytism. Of so little account did these Rabbins make of dipping for proselytism, who first mention it, not only make it insignificant, but as a delay of it, and what was an obstruction and hindrance of it: and further on it is said ^{f138},

“A proselytess less than three years of age and one day, she has not knowledge for dipping (or when she is dipped); and afterwards returns and is dipped for the name of the Holy One of Israel; every one is a proselytess, and she is a proselytess.”

This looks like Anabaptism, or rebaptization for want of knowledge when first dipped. And a little further still ^{f139},

“A stranger or a proselyte who has children, and says, I am circumcised, but I am not dipped; he is to be believed, and they dip him on the Sabbath.”

In another treatise ^{f140}, a mention is made of a proselyte who dipped after the illumination of the East, that is, after sunrising. These are all the places I have met with in the Jerusalem Talmud any way relating to this custom. Dr. Wall ^{f141} refers to two or three other passages in this Talmud, through mistake for the Babylonian Talmud; in which he may be excused, because, as he himself says, he was not well acquainted with these books; but he cannot be excused of inadvertency in transcribing from his authors, unless they have led him wrong.

The Babylonian Talmud is next to be considered; from whence testimonies may be brought relating to the custom under consideration. This Talmud was finished, as is usually said, about A. D. 500; according to the account of the Jews it was finished three hundred and sixteen years after the Misnah, and eighty three after the Jerusalem Talmud ^{f142}. Though Morinus thinks it did not appear until the seventh or eighth century. According to the Jewish doctors, as related in this Talmud, the Israelites, and the proselytes, were admitted into covenant in the same way and manner; and which they conclude from ~~(4155)~~ Numbers 15:15 “As ye are, so shall the stranger be, before the Lord”: on which they thus descant ^{f143}:

“As your fathers entered not into covenant but by circumcision and dipping, and acceptance of blood or sacrifice; so they (the proselytes) enter not into covenant, but by circumcision, and dipping, and through acceptance of blood,”

or sprinkling of blood, as the Gloss is; or by sacrifice, as it is sometimes expressed, which is favourably accepted of God; and without both circumcision and dipping, none were reckoned proper proselytes; this is said two or three times in one leaf ^{f144};

“A man is not a proselyte unless both circumcised and dipped.”

R. Chiyah Bar Abba went to Gabla, it is said, and he saw the daughters of Israel pregnant by proselytes, who were circumcised but not dipped; he went and told R. Jochanan, who declared their issue bastards, and not children of the law, or legitimate: about this a controversy was raised, related in the same place;

“A stranger that is circumcised and not dipped, R. Eliezer says, lo, this is a proselyte; for so we find by our fathers, that they were circumcised, but not dipped; one that is dipped, and not circumcised, R. Joshua says, lo, this is a proselyte; for so we find by our mothers (not maids, or maidservants, as Dr. Lightfoot^{f145} translates it) that they were dipped and not circumcised.”

Had the account stopped here, the decision must have been against dipping: for it is a rule with the Jews, that when R. Eliezer and R. Joshua dissent, the decision is according to R. Eliezer^{f146}, whom they often call Eliezer the Great^{f147}, and say many extravagant things of him; particularly, that if all the wise men of Israel were put into one scale, and Eliezer the son of Hyrcanus, into the other, he would weigh them all down^{f148}; yet here the wise men interpose, and say,

“He that is dipped and not circumcised, circumcised and not dipped, is no proselyte, until he is both circumcised and dipped; for R. Joshua may learn from the fathers, and R. Eliezer from the mothers.”

And so in this way they reconciled both; but R. Eliezer continued in the same sentiments, which he afterwards declared for, and affirms, that a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, *awh ayl [m rg* “he is an honourable proselyte”^{f149}; so that according to him, dipping was not necessary to one’s being a proselyte; and R. Barzelonita^{f150} says, of a sort of proselytes which have been taken notice of, he is a proselyte who is circumcised and not dipped. So that the Jews are not agreed among themselves about this point. The manner of receiving a proselyte, and dipping him, when circumcised and healed of his wound, and of the dipping of women also, is related in the same treatise of the Babylonian Talmud^{f151};

“A stranger when he comes to be made proselyte, “at this time”, they say unto him, What dost thou see, to become a proselyte? dost thou not know that the Israelites “at this time” are in distress, and in sorrowful circumstances, driven about and scattered, and are reproached, and chastisements come upon them? If he says, I know this, and I am not worthy (to be joined with them), they receive him immediately; and make known unto him some of the light, and some of the heavy commands (the particulars of which follow); if he receives them, they immediately circumcise him; and if there be anything remains, which hinders circumcision, they return and

circumcise him a second time, and when he is healed, they dip him immediately, and two disciples of the wise men stand by him, and make known to him some of the light and some of the heavy commands; then he dips, and goes up, and he is an Israelite. If a woman, the women set her in water up to her neck, and two disciples of the wise men stand by her without, and make known some of the light and some of the heavy commands.”

Maimonides ^{f152} adds,

“After that she ‘dips’ herself before them, and they turn away their faces, and go out, so that they do not see her when ‘she goes up out of the water’.”

Of a woman big with child when she is dipped they have this rule ^{f153},

“A stranger pregnant, who is made a proselytess, her child has no need of dipping, that is, for proselytism, as the Gloss; is because sufficient for it is the dipping of its mother; and a woman that is dipped as unclean, according to the doctors, that is sufficient to make her a proselytess.”

Says R. Chiyah Bar Ame,

“I will dip this heathen woman, in the name or on account of a woman;”

that is, as the Gloss is, for the dipping of uncleanness, she being a menstruous woman, and not for the dipping of proselytism. Says R. Joseph,

“I will make it right;”

that is, pronounce that she is a perfect proselytess; for though she is not dipped for proselytism, yet being dipped for uncleanness, it serves for proselytism; for a stranger or a heathen is not dipped for uncleanness ^{f154}. There are various circumstances observed in the same treatise concerning the dipping of proselytes; as the place where they are dipped;

“In a place it is said ¹⁵⁵, where a menstruous woman dips, there a proselyte and a freed servant dip;”

that is, as the Gloss is, in a quantity of forty seahs of water: the time of its being done is also signified; as that they do not dip in the night; and it is

disputed whether it should be done on the Sabbath day: three witnesses also were required to be present; and where there are three, he (the proselyte) “dips” and goes up, and lo, he is as an Israelite^{f156}. It is said^{f157},

“It happened in the house of R. Chiya Bar Rabbi, where were present R. Oschaia Bar Rabbi, and R. Oschaia Bar Chiya, that there came a proselyte before him who was circumcised, but not dipped; he said unto him, Wait here till tomorrow, and we will dip thee. Three things are to be learnt from hence. 1. That three persons are required (at the dipping of a proselyte). 2. That he is not a proselyte unless he is circumcised and dipped. 3. That they do not dip a proselyte in the night;” to which may be added, 4. That they must be three Rabbins who are promoted, that is, are famous and eminent ones, who are witnesses, as it seems these three were. There is but one instance in this Talmud, that I have met with, of the dipping of a child or a minor, made a proselyte; and a male is so called until he is thirteen years of age and one day; of such an one it is said^{f158}, “A proselyte, a little one (a minor), they dip him by the decree of the Sanhedrim;”

that is, as the Gloss is, one that has no father, and his mother brings him to the Sanhedrim, to be made a proselyte, and there are three at his dipping; and they are a father to him, and by their means he is made a proselyte. And in the same place it is observed of a stranger, whose sons and daughters are made proselytes with him, and acquiesce in what their father has done, when they are grown up, they may make it void. There is another instance of the dipping of a minor; but not for proselytism, but for eating the Trumah, or the oblation of the fruits of the earth. So a certain one says^{f159},

“I remember when I was a child, and was carried on my father’s shoulders, that they took me from school, and stripped me of my coat, and dipped me, that I might eat of the Trumah in the evening;”

but this was not a proselyte, but an Israelite, the son of a priest, who, it seems, was not qualified to eat of the oblation without dipping. This was one of their various baptisms, or dippings.

This now is the whole compass of the evidence from the Talmuds for the rite of admitting proselytes among the Jews by baptism, or dipping. I have

not omitted anything relating to it in them that has fallen under my observation. As for the quotations usually made from Maimonides, who lived in the twelfth century, in proof of this custom; whatever may be said for him as an industrious and judicious compiler of things, out of the Talmud, which he has expressed in purer language, and digested in better order; he cannot be thought to be of greater and higher authority than those writings from whence he has derived them; for his work is only a stream from the Talmudic fountain. And as for later writers; as the authors of Lebush, Schulchan Aruch, and others, they derive from him. So that the Talmuds appear to be the spring and source of what is said of this custom, and from whence the proof and evidence of it is to be fetched; but whether the reasonings, decisions, and determinations therein concerning it, can be judged a sufficient proof of it, without better testimonies, especially from the scriptures, deserves consideration.

It must not be concealed, that it is pretended there is proof of it from scripture; which I shall attend unto. The proof of the Jewish fathers entering into covenant by baptism, or dipping, is fetched from ~~(290)~~Exodus 19:10 where, two or three days before the giving of the law, the Israelites were ordered to “wash” their clothes; hence it is said in the Talmud ^{f160}, to prove that dipping was used at the entrance of the Israelites into covenant, according to which the baptism, or dipping of proselytes, is said to be;

“From whence is it (or a proof of it?) From what is written ~~(290)~~Exodus 19:10 where there is an obligation to wash clothes, there is an obligation to dip.”

And again, ~~(248)~~Exodus 24:8.

“Moses ‘took it (the blood) and sprinkled it on the people’; and there is no sprinkling without dipping.”

And in another place ^{f161},

“Sprinkling of blood (or sacrifice, by which also the Israelites, it is said, were admitted into covenant) of it, it is written, ‘And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings’, etc. But dipping, from whence is it? From what is written; ‘And Moses took half of the blood, and sprinkled it on the people’; and there is no sprinkling without dipping.”

This is the proof, which surely cannot be satisfactory to a judicious mind; dipping is inferred from sprinkling; but though the blood was sprinkled upon the people, they were not dipped into it surely; nor even into water, from what appears; and though dipping and sprinkling are sometimes used together, as in the cleansing of the leper, and in the purification of one unclean, by the touch of an unclean bone, etc. ^{<B147>} Leviticus 14:7

^{<B149>} Numbers 19:19 yet the one was not the other. From washing of clothes dipping is also inferred, without any reason; for these two, in the above places, and in others, are spoken of as two distinct acts, and are expressed by different words; and yet it is upon this single circumstance the proof depends. Now, as Dr. Owen ^{f162} observes,

“this washing of clothes served that single occasion only of showing reverence of the divine presence, at the peculiar giving of the law; nor did it belong to the stated worship of God; so that the necessity of the baptism of bodies, by a stated and solemn rite for ever, should arise from the single washing of garments, and that depending upon a reason, that would never more recur; of the observation of which no mention is made, nor any trace is extant in the whole Old Testament, and which is not confirmed by any divine command, institution, or direction, seems altogether improbable”

And he elsewhere ^{f163} says,

“From this latter temporary occasional institution (ceremonial washing at Sinai) such as they (the Jews) had many granted to them, while they were in the wilderness, before the giving of the law, the Rabbins have framed a baptism for those who enter into their synagogue; a fancy too greedily embraced by some Christian writers, who would have the holy ordinance of the church’s baptism to be derived from thence. But this “washing of their clothes”, not of their bodies, was temporary, never repeated; neither is there anything of any such baptism or washing required in any proselytes, either men or women, where the laws of their admission are strictly set down.”

And it may be further observed, that the Talmudists give this only as a proof of the admission of Israelites into covenant; whereas, the solemn admission of them into it, even of the whole body of them, men, women, and children, and also of the proselytes who were in their camp, as all the Targums and the Greek version have it, when on the plains of Moab, at

Horeb, before their entrance into the land of Canaan, ^{<15210>}Deuteronomy 29:10-12 was not by “any” of the “three” things they say the admission was, that is, by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice; of the two latter not the least hint is given, and the former was not practised while the Israelites were in the wilderness, not till Joshua had introduced them into the land of Canaan. The Jews seem to be conscious themselves that the baptism or dipping of proselytes, is no command of God; since at the circumcision of them, in the form of blessing they then use, they take no notice of it, which runs thus ^{f164}.

“Blessed art thou, O Lord God, the King of the world, who has sanctified us by his precepts, and has ‘commanded’ us ‘to circumcise proselytes’, and to fetch out of them the blood of the covenant; for if it was not for the blood of the covenant the heaven and earth would not be established; as it is said, ‘If my covenant with day and night’, etc. ^{<3825>}Jeremiah 33:25.”

Dr. Lightfoot ^{f165} carries this custom of admitting proselytes by baptism, or dipping, higher than the Jews themselves do. He ascribes the first institution and use of it to Jacob, when he was going to Bethel to worship, after the murder of the Sechemites by his sons; when, the doctor says, he chose into his family and church, some of the Shechemites and other heathens. But some learned men of the Paedobaptist persuasion, have thought the notion is indefensible, and judged it most prudent to leave it to himself to defend it, or whomsoever may choose to undertake it ^{f166}; and he himself was in doubt about the first institution of this sort of baptism; for he afterwards says,

“We acknowledge that circumcision was of divine institution; but by whom baptism, that was inseparable from it, was instituted, is doubtful.”

Certain it is, it has no foundation in what Jacob did, or ordered to be done, when he was about to go to Bethel, and worship there; previous to which he ordered his family to “put away the strange gods” that were among them, which they had brought with them from Shechem; and he likewise ordered them to be “clean”, and “change their garments”; which cleanness, whether to be understood of abstaining from their wives, as some interpret it; or of washing of their bodies, as Aben Ezra, as a purification of them from the pollutions of the slain, as the Targum paraphrases it, and after that Jarchi: and which change of garments, whether understood of the garments

of idolaters, which the sons of Jacob had taken and put on, when they stripped them; or of their own garments, defiled with the blood of the slain; or of their meaner or more sordid garments, for more pure and splendid ones. All that can be concluded from hence is, and is by the Jews concluded, that when men come before God, they should come with clean bodies, and with clean garments; as an emblem of the more inward purity of their minds, which is necessary to every religious service and act of devotion, such as Jacob and his family were now about to perform, and which the very heathens themselves had a notion of; “*Casta placent superis, pura cum veste venito*”^{f167}. But not a word is here of any covenant Jacob and his family entered into, and much less of any proselytes from Shechem and Syria being brought into it with them, by baptism, or dipping, as is pretended.

I have met with another learned man^{f168}, who carries up this custom higher still; and asserts, that Jacob did not feign out of his own brain this practice of washing the body, and of change of garments; but took it from the history of Adam, and from his example; and he supposes that Adam, at the solemn making the covenant with him, was washed in water, before he put on the garments given him of God; and that as he was the first who sacrificed, he was the first who was baptized by the command of God; and so baptism was the most ancient of all the sacred rites. But let the history of Adam be carefully read over by any man, and he will never find the least hint of this, nor observe the least shadow or appearance of it; but what is it that the imagination of man will not admit and receive, when once a loose is given to it? Pray, who baptized Adam, if he was baptized? Did God baptize him? Or did an angel baptize him? Or did Eve baptize him? Or did he baptize himself?

Since then this rite or custom of admitting into covenant, whether Israelites or proselytes, by baptism or dipping, has no foundation but in the Talmuds; and the proof of it there so miserably supported from scripture, surely it can never be thought that Christian baptism was borrowed from thence; or that it is no other which is continued in the Christian church, being taken up as it was found by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; the folly and falsehood of which will be evinced in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE REASONS WHY CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IS NOT FOUNDED ON, AND TAKEN FROM, THE PRETENDED JEWISH BAPTISM OF ISRAELITES AND PROSELYTES

Having traced the admission of the Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, to the spring head of it, the Jewish Talmuds; I shall now proceed to give reasons, why Christian baptism cannot be thought to be taken from such a custom; nor that to be a rule according to which it is to be practised.

I. First, the Talmuds are of too late a date to prove that such a custom obtained before the times of John and Christ, since they were written some centuries after those times, as has been shown; and besides, there is in them a plain chronological mark, or character, which shows that this custom took place among the Jews since they were driven out of their own land, and scattered among the nations, and suffered reproach and persecution; for among the interrogatories put to persons who came to them to be made proselytes, this question was asked^{f169},

“What dost thou see to become a proselyte? dost thou not know, or consider, that the Israelites are ‘now’ *hzh ^mzb* ‘at this time’, in sorrowful circumstances, driven about and scattered, and loaded with reproaches and afflictions? If he says, I know this; and I am not worthy (that is, to be joined to them) they receive him immediately.”

Many are the surmises and conjectures of learned men concerning the original and rise of this custom. It is scarce worth while, to take notice of the notion of Grotius^{f170}, that this custom was taken up on account of the flood, and in commemoration of the world’s being purified by it: nor of Sir John Marsham’s^{f171}, that it was taken up by the Israelites, in imitation of the Egyptian’s manner of initiating persons into the mysteries of their goddess Isis, by washing them; for which he cites Apuleius. A goodly pattern of Christian baptism this! it is much it never entered into the

thoughts of these learned men, or others, that the Jews took up this rite of dipping their proselytes, as they found it among the Medes and Persians, when they lived in their countries, and so brought it into Judaea, some hundreds of years before the coming of Christ, and his forerunner John the Baptist; since of the eighty rites the Persians used in the initiation of men into the mysteries of Mithras, their chief deity, the first and principal was baptism. They “dipped” them in a “bath”, and “signed” them in their “foreheads”, and had a sort of an “Eucharist”, an oblation of bread, as Tertullian has it, and an image of the resurrection (that is, in their baptism); promising the expiation of sins by the laver; and also had an imitation of martyrdom^{f172}. Some say^{f173}, this custom of the Jews was taken up by them out of hatred to the Samaritans, and was added to circumcision, to distinguish them from them: but if so, it is very much that Symmachus the Samaritan, when he came over to the Jews, was not only circumcised again, as he was, but also baptized, or dipped; of which Epiphanius, who gives an account of his becoming a proselyte to them, and of his being circumcised, but not of his being baptized, as before observed. Dr. Owen thinks^{f174} this custom was taken up by some Antemishnical Rabbins, in imitation of John the Baptist; which is not very probable, though more so than anything before advanced. To me it seems a clear case, that this custom was framed upon a general notion of the uncleanness of heathens, in their state of heathenism, before their embracing the Jewish religion; and therefore devised this baptism, or dipping, as a symbol of that purity, which was, or ought to be, in them, when they became Jews, of whom they might hope to gain some, they being now dispersed among the nations; and of some they boast, even of some of note: and this was first introduced when they digested the traditions of the elders into a body, or pandect of laws; and were finishing their decisions and determinations upon them, to be observed by their people in future time.

Since I wrote the preceding chapters, I have met with a quotation; for I will not conceal anything that has occurred to me in reading, relative to this custom of dipping Jewish proselytes; I say, I have met with a quotation by Maimonides^{f175}, out of a book called Siphri, an ancient commentary on Numbers and Deuteronomy, which has these words:

“As the Israelites did not enter into covenant but by three things, by circumcision, dipping, and acceptance of sacrifice; so neither proselytes likewise.”

Now if this is the ancient book of Siphri, from whence this passage is taken, as may seem, which is a book of an uncertain author and age; and is allowed to be written after the Misnah ^{f176}; yet if it is the same that is referred to in the Babylonian Talmud ^{f177}, it must be written before that was published, though it might be while it was compiling, and it may be, by some concerned in it; since the rite referred to is expressed in the same words in the one as in the other ^{f178}; and is founded upon and argued from the same passage of scripture, ^{<04515>}Numbers 15:15 and seems to be the language and reasoning of the same persons. However, “if” the passage quoted by Maimonides stands in that book, which is a book I never saw, though printed; “if”, I say, these several things can be made plain; it is indeed the earliest testimony we have of this custom; especially if the book was written before the Jerusalem Talmud, which yet is not certain: but be it as it may, it is a testimony of the same sort of persons, and of no better authority than what has been before produced, and serves to confirm, that this custom is a pure device of the Jewish doctors, and is merely “Rabbinical”; and besides, at most, it can only carry up this custom into the “fifth” century, which is too late for John Baptist and Christ to take up the ordinance from it; and on account of these testimonies not being early enough for such a purpose, the late Dr. Jennings ^{f179} has given up the argument from them, in favour of infant baptism, as insufficient. His words are,

“After all, it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in the room of proselyte baptism; but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour’s time: the earliest accounts we have of it, are in the Mishna (but in that we have none at all) and Gemara.”

And again he says,

“here wants more evidence of its being as ancient as our Saviour’s time, than I apprehend can be produced to ground an argument upon it, in relation to Christian baptism.”

II. Secondly, this custom, though observed as a religious action, yet has scarce any appearance of religion and devotion in it; but looks rather like a civil affair, it being in some cases under the cognizance and by the direction of the Sanhedrim, or court of judicature. There was no divine solemnity in the performance of it. It was not administered in the name of the God of

Israel, whom the Jews professed; nor in the name of the Messiah to come, expected by them, as was the baptism of John; nor in the name of the Three divine Persons in the Trinity, which yet the ancient Jews believed. They dipped their proselytes indeed, according to their account, **מִצְב** “in the name” of a proselyte, or as one; and a servant, “in the name” of a servant, or on account of servitude; and a free man, “in the name” of a free man; but neither of them in the name of any divine Person, or with the invocation of the name of God; so that it had no appearance of a religious solemnity in it. To which may be added, that this custom gave a licence to things the most impure and abominable, things contrary to the light of nature, and not to be named among the Gentiles, and which must make it detestable to all serious persons. According to the Jews, it dissolved all the ties of natural relations, which before subsisted among men; for according to them,

“As soon as a man is made a proselyte, a soul flies out of a (celestial) palace, and gets under the wings of the Shechinah, (or divine Majesty) which kisses it, because it is the fruit of the righteous, and sends it into the body of a proselyte, where it abides; and from that time he is called a proselyte of righteousness^{f180}; so that now he has a new soul, and is a new man, another man than he was before;”

not a better man, but, to use our Lord’s words, he is made “twofold more the child of hell”. For, according to them, all his former connections with men are broken, and all obligations to natural relations are dissolved; and he may, without any imputation of crime, be guilty of the most shocking incest, as to marry his own mother or his own sister. But hear their own words,

“When a Gentile is made a proselyte, and a servant made free, they are both as ‘a newborn babe’; and all the relations which they had when a Gentile or a servant, are no more relations to them;”

or their kindred and relation by blood is no more; as brother, sister, father, mother, and children, these are no more to be so accounted; insomuch, that,

“when one becomes a proselyte, he and they (his quondam kindred) are not guilty, by reason thereof, on account of incest, at all; so that it is according to law (the civil law of the Jews) that a Gentile may

marry his own mother, or his sister, by his mother's side (his own sister), when they become proselytes."

But though they allow it to be lawful, they have so much modesty and regard to decency, or rather to their own character, that it is added;

"But the wise men forbid this, that they (the proselytes) may not say, we are come from a greater degree of holiness to a lesser one; and what is forbidden today is free tomorrow; and so a proselyte who lies with his mother or his sister, and they are in Gentilism, it is no other than if he lay with a stranger^{f181}."

Now can any man, soberly thinking, judge that the New Testament ordinance of baptism was taken up by John and Christ from such a wretched custom, which gave licence to such shocking immorality and uncleanness; or that Christian baptism is built on such a basis as this?

III. Thirdly, to suppose that John took up the practice of baptizing as he found it among the Jews, and from a tradition and custom of theirs, greatly detracts from the character of John, his divine mission, and the credit of baptism, as administered by him; and is contrary to what the scriptures say concerning him. They represent him as the first administrator of baptism, and, for a while, the sole administrator of it; for, for what other reason do they call him the Baptist, and distinguish him by this title, if it was then a common thing, and had been usual in time past, to baptize persons? The scriptures say he was a man sent of God, and sent by him "to baptize with water", ~~John~~ John 1:6,33. But what need was there of a mission and commission to what was in common use, and had been so time out of mind? The Jews hearing of John's baptizing persons, sent messengers to him, to know who he was that took upon him to baptize; who asked, "Why baptizest thou, if thou art not that Christ, nor Elijah, nor that prophet?" As if it was a new thing; and that it was expected he should be some extraordinary person who baptized. But why should such questions be put to him, if this was in common use, and if any ordinary person, however any common doctor or Rabbi, had then, and in former times, been used to baptize persons^{f182}? The scriptures speak of John's baptism as the "counsel of God": but according to this notion, it was a device and tradition of men; and had this been the case, the Jews would not have been at a loss, nor under any difficulty, to answer the question Christ put to them, nor indeed, would he ever have put such an one; "The baptism of John, whence was it?

from heaven, or from men?” for his putting the question thus, supposes the contrary, that it was not from men, but from God: and if it was not of God, but a tradition of men, they could have readily said, “Of men”; without being confuted by him, or exposed to the people; but being thrown into a dilemma, they took the wisest way for themselves, and answered, “We cannot tell”. Dr. Wall ^{f183} says, If John had been baptizing proselytes, and not natural Jews, the Pharisees would not have wondered at it, it being so well known to them; and he suggests, that the wonder was, that natural Jews should be baptized: but why so! for according to this notion, the original natural Jews were received into covenant by baptism; they as the proselytes, and the proselytes as they; the case, according to them: was similar. But let us examine this affair, and see how the fact stands. When John first appeared baptizing, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were natural Jews, came to his baptism, and were not admitted to it, but rejected from it, as unfit and improper persons; and others of the same nation and profession, in their turn,

“rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized by John”, ~~<073>~~ Matthew 3:7 ~~<073>~~ Luke 7:30.

On the other hand, publicans, the Roman tax gatherers, of whom some indeed were Jews, others heathens, both equally odious, and therefore joined together, these “justified God”, being baptized with the baptism of John; and these “went into the kingdom of God”, into the gospel state, before the Pharisees, and embraced its doctrines, and submitted to its ordinances, ~~<073>~~ Luke 7:29 3:12 ~~<073>~~ Matthew 21:31 and even soldiers, Roman soldiers, for no other soldiers were then in Judea, were among the multitude who came to be baptized by him, to whom he gave good instructions, but did not refuse to baptize them, ~~<073>~~ Luke 3:7,14 and our Lord Jesus Christ, whose forerunner John was in his ministry and baptism, gave orders to his disciples to baptize indiscriminately persons of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, who believed in him; and who accordingly did baptize them: so that baptism, in those early times of John, Christ, and his apostles, was not confined to natural Jews; the wonder and the question upon it, as above, were not about the persons baptized, whether Jews or Gentiles, but about baptism itself, and the administrator of it, as being altogether new. The account which Josephus ^{f184}, the Jewish historian, who lived soon after the times of John, gives of him, and his baptism, agrees with the sacred scriptures; and which testimony stands not only in the common editions of that historian, but is preserved by Eusebius ^{f185}, as a

choice piece of history; in which, he not only says John was a religious and good man, but, with the scriptures, that he was surnamed the Baptist, to distinguish him from others; and that he ordered the Jews who lived righteous and godly lives to come to baptism, and such only did John admit of; and that baptizing was acceptable to God, when used not for removing some sins (by which his baptism is distinguished from Jewish baptisms, which were used to purge from sin in a ceremonial sense) but for the purity of the body, the soul being before purified by righteousness. Also he observes, with the scriptures, that multitudes flocked to him; and that Herod, fearing that by his means his subjects would be drawn into a revolt, put him to death. But why such flockings to him, if baptism had been a common thing? And what had Herod to fear from that? He might reasonably conclude, that if this was no other than what had been usually practised, the people would soon cease from following him. Nay, Josippon Ben Gorion ^{f186}; the Jew's Josephus, the historian whom they value and prefer to the true Josephus, says of that **hl ybj hç** [“he made”, instituted, and performed baptism, as if it was a new thing, founded by him; and for which later Jews express their resentment at him. One of their virulent writers says ^{f187},

“Who commanded John to institute this baptism? in what law did he find it? neither in the old nor in the new.”

Now this would not be said by the Jews, if John had taken up his baptism from a custom of theirs; nor would they speak of the ordinance of baptism in such a scandalous and blasphemous manner as they do, and in language too shocking to transcribe ^{f188}.

IV. Fourthly, the Jews will not allow that any proof of baptism can be produced out of the writings of the Old Testament, nor out of their Talmuds. Such passages in the Old Testament which speak of washing, and in which men are exhorted to “wash” and be “clean”, as ^{<2016>}Isaiah 1:16 it is said, are to be understood of men cleansing themselves from their sins, and not of plunging in water;

“To plunge a man in water, is no where written; why therefore did Jesus command such baptism,”

or dipping ^{f189}? and whereas the passage in ^{<2019>}Ezekiel 16:9 “Then washed I thee with water”, is by some interpreted of baptism; the Jew observes ^{f190} the words are not in the future tense; “I will wash thee”: but in the past

tense; “I have washed thee”; and so cannot refer to baptism. And whereas the promise in ^{f190}Ezekiel 36:25 “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness”, etc. is brought by some, I suppose he means some popish writers, as another proof of baptism the Jews replies ^{f191},

“What sin and uncleanness does baptism take away? and what sin and uncleanness are there in newborn babes? Besides, says he, you do not do so; you do not sprinkle, but you are plunged into water:”

which, by the way, shows that sprinkling was not used in baptism when this Jew wrote, which was in the twelfth century, as Wagenseil, the editor of his work, supposes. The same Jewish writer ^{f192} asks,

“If the law of Jesus, and his coming, were known to the prophets, why did not they observe his law? and why did not they ‘baptize themselves’, according to the law of Jesus?”

And he represents ^{f193} David as praying (it must be supposed, under a prophetic spirit) for those who should, in this captivity of the Jews, be forced, against their wills, to baptism, and that they might be delivered from it, ^{f194}Psalm 69:1,15 144:7. Nor does this writer take any notice of receiving proselytes by baptism; though he makes mention of receiving men proselytes ^{f194}, yet by circumcision only; and also of women proselytes, but not a word of baptism of either; and had he thought the baptism their Talmud speaks of, had any affinity with our baptism, and was the ground of it, he would not have been so gruelled with an objection of the Christians, as he was; which is put thus ^{f195},

“We baptize male and female, and hereby receive them into our religion; but you circumcise men only, and not women:”

to which he appears to be at an entire loss to answer; whereas he might have readily answered, had the case been as suggested, that we baptize women as well as men, when they are received proselytes among us. But that the Jews had no notion that Christian baptism was founded upon any prior baptism of proselytes, or others, among them, as related in their Talmud, is manifest from a disputation had between Nachmanides, a famous Jew, and one brother Paul, a Christian, in the year 1263 ^{f196}. Brother Paul affirmed, that the Talmudists believed in Jesus, that he was the Messiah, and was both God and man: the Jew replied, after observing some other things,

“How can brother Paul say so, that they believed in him; for they, and their disciples, died in our religion? and ‘why were they not baptized’, according to the command of Jesus, as brother Paul was? And I would be glad to hear,” says he, “‘how’ he learned baptism from them (the Talmudists) and ‘in what place’ (of the Talmud)? did not they teach us all our laws which we now observe? and the rites and customs they gathered together for us, as they were used when the temple was standing, from the mouths of the prophets, and from the mouth of Moses, our master, on whom be peace? and if they believed in Jesus, and in his law, they would have done as brother Paul has; does he understand their words better than they themselves?”

V. Fifthly, to say, as Dr. Lightfoot does, that Christ took baptism into his hands as he found it, that is, as practised by the Jews, is greatly to derogate from the character and authority of Christ; it makes him, who came a Teacher from God, to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, which he himself condemns. It makes that “all power in heaven and in earth”, said to be given him, in consequence of which he gave his apostles a commission to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”; I say, it makes it to dwindle into this only, a power to establish a tradition, and commandment of men long in use before he came. Again, who can believe that Christ, who so severely inveighed against the traditions of the Jews, could ever establish any one of them, and make it an ordinance of his; and particularly, should inveigh against those, respecting the baptisms, or dippings of the Jews then in use among them; and especially without excepting that of their baptism of proselytes from the rest, and without declaring it his will that it should be continued and observed; neither of which he has done.

VI. Sixthly, such a notion as this highly reflects dishonour on the ordinance of baptism; that one of the principal ordinances of the New Testament, as that is, should be founded on an human tradition, an invention of men; it must greatly weaken the authority of it, as well as disparage the wisdom of the Lawgiver; and must have a tendency to bring both the author and the ordinance into contempt. Nothing can make an ordinance a Christian ordinance, but its being instituted by Christ. If baptism is an institution of men, and received and retained from men, and

regulated according to their device, it is no Christian ordinance: and, as Witsius says^{f197},

“Whatever may be said of the antiquity of that rite (proselyte baptism, which yet with him was dubious and uncertain) there can be no divine institution of it (of baptism) before John, the forerunner of Christ, was sent of God to baptize; for to him that was expressly commanded; ‘The word of God came unto John’, ~~QRP~~ Luke 3:2 ~~QOB~~ John 1:33, etc.”

VII. Seventhly, if it was the custom of the Jews before the times of John and Christ, to receive young children as proselytes by baptism, or dipping, and this was to be as a rule according to which Christian baptism was to be practised; then most surely we should have had some instances of children being baptized by John, or by the apostles of Christ, if

“baptizing infants had been as ‘ordinarily used’ in the church of the Jews, as ever it hath been in the Christian church,”

as Dr. Lightfoot says; and yet we have not one instance of this kind; we nowhere read of any children being brought to John to be baptized, nor of any that were baptized by him; nor of any being brought to the apostles of Christ to be baptized, nor of their being baptized by them; from whence it may be concluded there was no such custom before their times; or if there was, it never was intended it should be observed by Christians in later times; or otherwise there would have been some precedents of it, directing to and encouraging such a practice: many things would follow on such a supposition, that Christian baptism is borrowed from and founded on proselyte baptism, and the latter the rule directing the practice of the former; for then,

VIII. Eighthly, Self-baptizing, or persons baptizing themselves, without making use of an administrator, might be encouraged and established; which is what the Paedobaptists charge, though wrongly, some of the first reformers of the abuses of baptism with; since it is plain, from the quotations before made, that though it is sometimes said, “they”, that is, the doctors or wise men, “baptize”, or “dip”, yet it is also said, both of men and women, that they “dipped themselves”; as of a man **I KJ** **awh** “he dipped himself”, and went up from the water; and of a woman, being placed by women in the water, **I KJ** “she dipped”, that is, herself; and so

Leo of Modena says ^{f198}, of a Jew proselyte, that after he is circumcised, and well of his sore, “he is to wash himself all over in water”, in the presence of three Rabbins, or other persons in authority, and from thenceforth he becomes as a natural Jew; and, indeed, all the Jewish baptisms, or bathings, commanded in the law, were done by persons themselves; see ^{f199} ~~f148~~ Leviticus 14:8,9 ~~f197~~ Numbers 19:7,8. And Dr. Lightfoot ^{f199} thinks that John’s baptism was so administered; he supposes, that men, women, and children came unto it; and that they standing in Jordan, were taught by John, that they were baptized into the name of the Messiah, ready to come, and into the profession of the gospel, about faith and repentance; and that “they plunged themselves into the river”, and so came out.

IX. Ninthly, if this Jewish custom is to be regarded as a rule of Christian baptism, it will tend to establish the Socinian notion, that only the first converts to Christianity in a nation, they and their children are to be baptized, but not their posterity in after ages; for so both Lightfoot and Selden, with others, say, who were sticklers for Christian baptism being taken from the custom of baptizing, or dipping Jewish proselytes, and their children; that only the children of proselytes, born before their parents became such, were baptized, or dipped; but not those born afterwards: baptism was never repeated in their posterity; the sons of proselytes, in following generations, were circumcised, but not baptized ^{f200}; and, as Dr. Jennings ^{f201} rightly observes,

“it was a maxim with the Rabbins, ‘Natus baptizati, habetur pro baptizato’.”

This

“restriction of baptism to children born before their parents’ proselytism, rests on the same authority as the custom of baptizing any children of proselytes.”

So that if the one is to be admitted, the other is also; and so the children of Christian parents are not to be baptized, only the converts from another religion; and these the first, and their then posterity, but not afterwards.

X. Tenthly, if this custom, said to be practised before the times of John and Christ, is the rule to direct us in Christian baptism, there were several circumstances attending that, which should be observed in Christian

baptism, to make it regular; it must be done before three witnesses, and these men of eminence; but who, of such a number and character were present at the baptism of the apostle Paul? ^{<4126>}Acts 22:16 9:18. Nor was it to be performed in the night; what then must be said of the baptism of the jailor, and his family? ^{<4163>}Acts 16:33 nor on a Sabbath day; nor on a feast day; yet Lydia, and her household, were baptized on a Sabbath day, ^{<4163>}Acts 16:13,15 and the three thousand Christian converts were baptized on the day of Pentecost? and which was also the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, ^{<4111>}Acts 2:1,41. Wherefore, if this Jewish custom was the rule of baptism, and from whence it was taken, and by which it should proceed; (for if in one case, why not in others?) these instances of Christian baptism were not rightly performed.

XI. Eleventhly, if the Ethiopian eunuch Philip baptized, was a proselyte, as Grotius and others say, he must be either a proselyte of the gate, a proselyte inhabitant, or a proselyte of righteousness; not the former, for he was no inhabitant in any part of Judea; but most probably he was the latter, since he was a very devout and religious man, had an high opinion of the worship of God among the Jews, and had travelled from a far country to worship at Jerusalem; and so Dr. Jennings ^{f202} justly observes, that

“he seems to be rather a proselyte of the covenant, or completely a Jew; not only from his reading the scripture, but because he had taken so long a journey to worship at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost, one of the three grand festivals; when all the Jewish males, who were able, were, according to the law, to attend the worship of God at the national altar.”

He appears to have thoroughly embraced the religion of the Jews, even their whole law, and was conversant with their sacred writings; he was reading in one of their prophets when Philip joined his chariot, and was taken up into it by him: whereas a son of Noah, as the Jews called a proselyte of the gate, might not study in the law, according to their canons ^{f203}, which they say he had nothing to do with; only with the seven precepts of Noah; and, indeed, no Gentile or uncircumcised person ^{f204}. And if the eunuch was a proselyte of righteousness, according to the pretended custom of dipping such, he must have been baptized, or dipped, when he became a proselyte; and since, according to this notion, he must have been baptized with a baptism which John and Christ took up as they found it among the Jews, and which is the basis and foundation of Christian

baptism, and the rule to direct in the performance of it, it is much he should desire baptism again! and that Philip, who is thought to be a proselyte also, ~~405~~ Acts 6:5 and must know the custom of making proselytes, should administer it to him: and if he had been baptized before, must he not then be an Anabaptist? And so the proselytes in ~~420~~ Acts 2:10 were, as Drusius and others think, proselytes of righteousness, who had embraced the Jewish religion, and were circumcised, and, according to this notion, baptized. Besides, none but proselytes of righteousness might dwell in Jerusalem; as has been observed, Chap. 1. And also proselytes of the gate were never called Jews, as these were; only proselytes of righteousness: and if any of these were among the three thousand converted and baptized by the apostles, which is not improbable, must not they be also Anabaptists? The Grecians, or Hellenists, whose widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, are thought by Beza, and others, to be widows of Jewish proselytes, and therefore it is highly probable, that their husbands had been members of the Christian church at Jerusalem, and so must have been rebaptized; and most certain it is, that Nicholas of Antioch, who was one of the seven appointed to take care of these widows, was a proselyte, and as Grotius truly thinks, a proselyte of righteousness; and so, as he must have been baptized according to this notion, when he became a proselyte, he must have been rebaptized when he became a member of the Christian church at Jerusalem, of which he most certainly was, being chosen out of it, and appointed to an office in it, ~~440~~ Acts 6:1,5.

XII. Twelfthly, it may be observed, in a quotation before made, that if a proselytess big with child was baptized, or dipped, her child needed not baptism, or dipping, the mother's baptism, or dipping, was sufficient for it: but this is not attended to by Paedobaptists; it seems, in the beginning of the fourth century, there were some of the same opinion with the Jews; but a canon in the council of Neocaesarea was made against it; which, as explained, declared that the child of such a person needed baptism, when it came to be capable of choosing for itself ^{f205}; which canon should not have been made, if this Jewish custom is to be regarded as a rule.

XIII. Lastly, As an argument "ad hominem", it may be observed, that if this custom is to be considered as a rule of Christian baptism, then sprinkling ought not to be used in it; for the baptism of Jewish proselytes, men, women, and children, was performed by dipping; as all the above quotations show. To which may be added, that one of their rules respecting

proselyte baptism is, that a proselyte must dip in such a place (or confluence of water) as a menstruous woman dips herself in ^{f206}, or which is sufficient for such an one; and that, as the Gloss is, was what held forty seahs of water; and to this agrees the account Maimonides ^{f207} gives of such a confluence of water, that it must be

“sufficient for the dipping of the whole body of a man at once; and such the wise men reckon to be a cubit square, and three cubits in depth; and this measure holds forty seahs of water.”

And he further says ^{f208},

“that wherever washing of the flesh, and washing of clothes from uncleanness, are mentioned in the law, nothing else is meant but the dipping of the whole body in a confluence of water----and that if he dips his whole body, except the top of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness:----and that all unclean persons, who are dipped in their clothes, their dipping is right, because the waters come into them (or penetrate through them) and do not divide,”

or separate; that is, the clothes do not divide, or separate between the water and their bodies, so as to hinder its coming to them; so the menstruous woman dipped herself in her clothes; and in like manner the proselyte. Let such observe this, who object to the baptism of persons with their clothes on.

Again, as an argument of the same kind, if baptism was common in all ages, foregoing the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, as is said, then it could not succeed circumcision, since it must be contemporary with it. Upon the whole, what Dr. Lightfoot ^{f209}, and others after him, have urged in favour of infant baptism from hence, is quite impertinent; that

“there was need of a plain and open prohibition, that infants and little children should not be baptized, if our Saviour would not have had them baptized; for since it was most common in all ages foregoing, that little children should be baptized, if Christ had been minded to have had that custom abolished, he would have openly forbidden it; therefore his silence, and the silence of the scripture in this matter, confirms Paedobaptism, and continues it unto all ages”

But first, it does not appear that any such custom was ever practised before the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, as to admit into the Jewish

church by baptism, proselytes, whether adult or minors. No testimony has been, and I believe none can be given of it. And, as some very learned men have truly observed ^{f210}, and as Dr. Owen ^{f211} affirms, there are not the least footsteps of any such usage among the Jews, until after the days of John the Baptist, in imitation of whom, he thinks, it was taken up by some Ante-Mishnical Rabbins; and, as he elsewhere says ^{f212},

“The institution of the rite of baptism is no where mentioned in the Old Testament; no example is extant; nor during the Jewish church, was it ever used in the admission of proselytes; no mention of it is to be met with in Philo, Josephus, nor in Jesus the son of Syrach; nor in the evangelic history.”

What testimony has been given of this custom, falls greatly short of proving it; wherefore Christ could have no concern about abolishing a custom which had not obtained in his time; nor was there any room nor reason for it, since it had never been practised, for ought appears: his silence about what never existed, can give no existence to it, nor to that which is founded on it, Paedobaptism; and which is neither warranted and confirmed by any such custom, nor by the word of God, in which there is an high silence about both. This custom of baptizing little children was so far from being common in all ages foregoing the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, that not a single instance can be given of anyone that ever was baptized; if there can, let it be produced; if not, what comes of all this bluster and harangue? With much more propriety and strength of reasoning might it be retorted; that since it is plain the children of the Jews, both male and female, did eat of the passover, which was not an human custom and tradition; but an ordinance of God, common in all ages foregoing the times of John, etc. and since, according to the hypothesis of the Paedobaptists, the Lord’s supper came in the room of the passover; for which there is much more reason in analogy, than for baptism coming in the room of circumcision; it should seem, if our Saviour would not have had children eat of the Lord’s supper, as they did of the passover, he would have openly forbidden it. A plain and open prohibition of this was more needful than a prohibition of the baptism of infants, if not his will, had there been such a custom before prevailing, as there was not; since that could only be a custom and tradition of men; and it was enough that Christ inveighed against those of the Jews in general, which obtained before, and in his time; and against their baptisms and dippings in particular. And after all, it is amazing that Christian baptism should be founded upon a tradition, of

which there is no evidence but from the Rabbins, and that very intricate, perplexed, and contradictory, and not as in being in the times referred to; upon a tradition of a set of men blinded and besotted, and enemies to Christianity, its doctrines and ordinances; and who, at other times, reckoned by these very men, who so warmly urge this custom of theirs, the most stupid, sottish, and despicable, of all men upon the face of the earth! If this is the basis of infant baptism, it is built upon the sand, and will, ere long, fall, and be no more.

I conclude this Dissertation in the words of Dr. Owen ^{f213},

“That the opinion of some learned men concerning transferring the rite of Jewish baptism, by the Lord Jesus, which, indeed, did not then exist, for the use of his disciples, is destitute of all probability.”

And after all, perhaps, the Paedobaptists will find their account better in consulting the baptism of the ancient heathens, and its rites, than that of the Jews; said ^{f214} to be in use before the times of Moses, and in ages since, and that among all nations; and being more ancient than Christian baptism, a learned writer referred to, says, it is as a sort of preamble to it. And from whom the Paedobaptists may be supplied with materials for their purpose.

FINIS

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- De Monarchia, 50:1. p. 818.
- ft2 -- In voce [προσελυτοι](#).
- ft3 -- Eccl. Hist. 50:1. c. 7.
- ft4 -- Apud Frischmuth. Dissert. de 7. Noach. Praecept. s. 20, 21.
- ft5 -- R. Nathan, Sepher Aruch, R. D. Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. & Elias Levita, Sepher Tishbi in voce [rwg](#).
- ft6 -- T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 64. 2.
- ft7 -- Philip. Aquinat. Maaric in voce [rwg](#).
- ft8 -- Maimon. Hilchot Melacim, c. 9. s. 1. &c.
- ft9 -- Maimon. Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 7. s. 14.
- ft10 -- T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 29. 1. Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. s. 6. Milah, c. 1. s. 6.
- ft11 -- Maimon. Melacim, c. 10. s. 12.
- ft12 -- Isure Biab, c. 14. s. 7.
- ft13 -- Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. p. 176.
- ft14 -- Chinnuch, p. 17.
- ft15 -- Miclol Yophi in loc.
- ft16 -- Vid. T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, c. 2. fol. 27. 1. & Edzard. not. in ib. p. 292.
- ft17 -- Thesaur. Philolog. 50:1. p. 18.
- ft18 -- Philolog. Hebrews Mixt. Dissert. 21. vid. Carpzov. not. ad Schickard. Jus Regium, p. 323.
- ft19 -- Zohar in Exodus fol. 36. 1. & in Numbers fol. 69. 4.
- ft20 -- R. Levi Ben Gersom, in ~~(1222)~~ Exodus 22:21. fol. 95. 2.
- ft21 -- Maimon. Melacim. c. 1. s. 4.
- ft22 -- Ibid. Sanhedrin, c. 2. s. 1. 9.
- ft23 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 2.
- ft24 -- Juchasin, fol. 17. 2. & 18. 1.

- ft25 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 1. & 106. 1. & Sotah, fol. 11. 1.
- ft26 -- Vid. Vitringam de Synagoga vet. par. 2. 50:3. c. 6. p. 943.
- ft27 -- As Aristotle, Meor Enayim, c. 22. fol. 91. 2. Izates and Monbaz, the sons of queen Helena, both kings, *ibid.* c. 51. fol. 161. 2. & c. 52. fol. 164. 2. 166, 167. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 26. 1. & par. 2. fol. 15. 2. Nebuzaradan, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 2. Antoninus Pius, the Roman emperor, T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 72. 1. & 74. 1. Ketiah, a prince in Caesar's court, Avodah Zarah, fol. 10. 2. Juchasin, fol. 66. 2. Nero, a general of Caesar's army, from whom sprung R. Meir, T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1. Juchasin, fol. 41. 1. & 63. 2. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 16. 1, 2. Of the circumcision of these the Jews speak, but say nothing of their baptism.
- ft28 -- R. Nehemiah in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 24. 2.
- ft29 -- Heptas Dissertat. par. 2. Diss. 7. de Proselytis, s. 20.
- ft30 -- T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 3. 2.
- ft31 -- *Ibid.* fol. 34. 1.
- ft32 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 33. 1. & 40. 2.
- ft33 -- Medrash. apud Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmud. Colossians 411.
- ft34 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2. & 109. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2.
- ft35 -- Niddah, fol. 13. 2.
- ft36 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. Jarchi in ^{<1283D>}Exodus 18:9.
- ft37 -- Misnah Bicurim, c. 1. s. 5.
- ft38 -- Yalkut in Ruth, fol. 163. 4.
- ft39 -- T. Hieros. Horaiot, fol. 48. 2.
- ft40 -- Vid. Wagenseil. not. in Sotah, p. 754.
- ft41 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. s. 22, 23. Vid. Fagium & Leusden. in *ibid.*
- ft42 -- Vid. R. David Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. [hny](#).
- ft43 -- R. Levi Ben. Gersom, in ^{<18443>}Leviticus 14:33, 34. fol. 163. 3. Ez Hechayim M. S. apud Wagenseil, not. in Sotah, p. 205.
- ft44 -- Works, p. 201, 203.
- ft45 -- Annotat. on ^{<11712>}Genesis 17:12.
- ft46 -- Annotat. in ^{<11812>}Matthew 3:1.

- ft47 -- Six Queries, p. 191, 195.
- ft48 -- De Success. ad Leg. Ebr. c. 26. de Jure Natur. et Gent. 50:2. c. 2.
- ft49 -- De Synedriis, 50:1. c. 2. p. 27, 31.
- ft50 -- Lightfoot's Works, vol. 1. Harmony and Chronicle of the New Testament, p. 9, 10, 17. Harmony of the Four Evangelists, part 1. p. 465, 466. part 2. p. 526, 527. and part 3. p. 583, 584. Vol. 2. Hor. Hebrews in ^{<40B6>}Matthew 3:6.
- ft51 -- Sir Richard Ellys, Fortuita Sacra, p. 67.
- ft52 -- Targum Jon. in ^{<0404>}Numbers 11:4.
- ft53 -- Ibid. in ^{<0286>}Exodus 18:6, 7.
- ft54 -- Ibid. in ^{<038D>}Genesis 38:2.
- ft55 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
- ft56 -- Ibid. Megillah, fol. 14. 2.
- ft57 -- Targum in ^{<0816>}Ruth 1:16.
- ft58 -- Targum in Esther.
- ft59 -- Chronicle, p. 18.
- ft60 -- Targum in ^{<1308>}1 Chronicles 4:18.
- ft61 -- F. Megillah, fol. 23. 1. Sotah, fol. 12. 1.
- ft62 -- Lexic. in voce **l bj** col. 686. vid. de Dieu, append. ad ^{<4215>}Matthew 23:15.
- ft63 -- Antiqu. Ebr. c. 1. s. 5.
- ft64 -- Wolfii Bibliothec. Hebrews p. 598.
- ft65 -- Zebachim, fol. 16. 1. vid. Shemot Rabba, s. 27. fol. 30. 2, 3.
- ft66 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.
- ft67 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 76. 1. Avodah Zara. fol. 3. 2.
- ft68 -- Yalkut Chadasha tit. de David, n. 89. Apud Beckii, not. in Targ. ^{<44B2>}2 Chronicles 8:11.
- ft69 -- Issure Biah, c. 13. s. 15.
- ft70 -- Eric. Phaletran. de ablatione Sceptr. Jud. c. 9. p. 431.
- ft71 -- Misnah, Kiddushin, c. 4. s. 1.
- ft72 -- **πεντας** Positionum ex Ling. Hebrews Chald. Syr. At. & Ethiopic Pos. 5.

- ft73 -- Hist. Ethiop. 50:3. c. 4.
- ft74 -- Ibid. 50:3. c. 2.
- ft75 -- In Append. ad Matthew p. 584.
- ft76 -- Of the divine Original, &c. of the Scriptures, p. 343. vid. Theologoumen. 50:1. c. 1. p. 4.
- ft77 -- Lexic. Ethiop. Colossians 414.
- ft78 -- De Vita Mosis, 50:1. p. 625. De Monarchia, 50:1. p. 818. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.
- ft79 -- Contra Apion. 50:2. s. 10.
- ft80 -- Antiqu. 50:13. c. 9. s. 1. So Josippon Ben Gorion, Hist. Hebrews 50:2. c. 9. & 50:4. c. 4. & 50:5. c. 23. & 50:6. c. 13.
- ft81 -- Antiqu. ib. c. 11. s. 3. so Josippon, ibid. 50:4. c. 9.
- ft82 -- Antiqu. ibid. 50:20. c. 2. s. 1. 5.
- ft83 -- Antiqu. c. 3. s. 1. These became proselytes in the times of Claudius Caesar, Ganz Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 15. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 141. 1. Of king Izates, see Tacit. Annul. 50:12. c. 13, 14.
- ft84 -- Apud Enseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:1. c. 7.
- ft85 -- Vid. Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 13. s. 11, 12, & Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c, 267. s. 9.
- ft86 -- Reflections on Wall's History of Infant Baptism, p. 327.
- ft87 -- History, Introduction, p. 49.
- ft88 -- De Synedriis, 50:1. c. 3.
- ft89 -- Misn. Cetubot. c. 1. s. 2. 4.
- ft90 -- Ib. Pesachim, c. 8. s. 8. the same in Misn. Ediot, c. 5. s. 2.
- ft91 -- Hilchot Korban Pesach, c. 6. s. 7.
- ft92 -- T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 92. 1.
- ft93 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ut supra.
- ft94 -- Meor Enayim, c. 45. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2.
- ft95 -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 99. 1. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Avodah Zarah, fol. 11. 1.
- ft96 -- Juchasin, fol. 52. 2. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 2.
- ft97 -- Avodah Zarah, ut supra.

- ft98 -- Shemot Rabba, s. 30. fol. 131. 3.
- ft99 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 28. 4. Tzemach David, ut supra, fol. 28. 1.
- ft100 -- Juchasin, fol. 41. 1. Ganz. fol. 29. 1.
- ft101 -- Juchasin, fol. 18. 1.
- ft102 -- Juchasin, fol. 141. 1.
- ft103 -- Yoma, c. 3. s. 10.
- ft104 -- Roshashanah, fol. 17. 2.
- ft105 -- T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 50. 2. & Gloss in ibid. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 1.
- ft106 -- Biblioth. Rab. p. 326.
- ft107 -- Bereshit Rabba, s. 39. fol. 35. 1.
- ft108 -- Bemidbar Rabba, s. 8. fol. 190. 4.
- ft109 -- Bereshit Rabba, s. 46. fol. 41. 3.
- ft110 -- Shemot Rabba, ut supra.
- ft111 -- Barnabae Epist. c. 9. Ed. Voss.
- ft112 -- Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 264.
- ft113 -- Dialog. ibid. p. 350, 351.
- ft114 -- Ibid. p. 307.
- ft115 -- Comment. in Joannem, p. 117.
- ft116 -- Contr. Haeres. 50:3. Haer. 70.
- ft117 -- De Mensur. et Ponder.
- ft118 -- Contr. Haeres. 50:1. Haer. 20.
- ft119 -- Juchasin, fol. 18. 1.
- ft120 -- Seder Olam Zuta, p. 111. Ed. Meyer.
- ft121 -- Comment. in Matthew 22:fol. 30. I.
- ft122 -- Comment. in Esaiam, e. 56. fol. 96. B.
- ft123 -- History ut supra, p. 47.
- ft124 -- Ibid. p. 45.
- ft125 -- Epictet. 50:2. c. 9.
- ft126 -- "Quem locum frustra quidam adducunt, ut probent Judaeos ritu baptismi uti solitos fuisse, cum apertissime de christianis loquatur

philosophus”, Oweni Theologoumen. 50:1. c. 9. p. 109. And with Dr. Owen agrees Dr. Jennings; “It is most likely,” says he, “that Arrian meant Christians, in the place alledged; because in his time many persons became proselytes to Christianity, but few or none to Judaism. -----Besides, if he had spoke of proselytes to Judaism, it is highly probable he would have mentioned their circumcision, for which the heathens derided them, rather than their baptism, which was not so very foreign to some of the heathen rites of purification.” Jewish Antiquities, vol. 1. c. 3. p. 138.

- ft127 -- See Gale’s Reflections on Wall’s History, Letter 10. p. 355-362.
- ft128 -- Metteh Dan, sive Cosri, par. 2. fol. 18. 1.
- ft129 -- Vid. Wolfii Praefat. ad Bibliothec. Hebrews p. 28.
- ft130 -- Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiquar. c. 1. s. 2. p. 3.
- ft131 -- De Emend. Temp. 50:7. p. 323.
- ft132 -- Chronolog. Tables, Cent. 19.
- ft133 -- Praefat. ad Methurgeman, fol. 2.
- ft134 -- De Sinceritate Hebrews Text. 50:2. Exer. 2. c. 2.
- ft135 -- Infant Baptism no Institution of Christ, p. 23.
- ft136 -- T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 8. 4.
- ft137 -- Kiddushin, fol. 64. 4.
- ft138 -- Ibid. fol. 65. 2.
- ft139 -- Ibid. fol. 66. 1.
- ft140 -- Eruvin, fol. 22. 1.
- ft141 -- History of Infant Baptism, Introduct. p. 44.
- ft142 -- Vid. Wolfium, ut supra.
- ft143 -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1.
- ft144 -- Yebamot, fol. 46. 1, 2. vid. Beracot, fol. 47. 2. Avodah Zarah, fol. 57. 2. & 59. 1.
- ft145 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 526. vol. 2. p. 117.
- ft146 -- Halicot Olam, p. 201.
- ft147 -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. Megillah, fol. 16. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 39. 1.
- ft148 -- Pirke Abot, c. 2. s. 8.

- ft149 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 71. 1.
- ft150 -- Chinnuch, p. 17.
- ft151 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 1, 2.
- ft152 -- Issure Biah, c. 14. s. 6.
- ft153 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 78. 1.
- ft154 -- Ibid. fol. 45. 2. & Gloss in ibid.
- ft155 -- T. Bab. Yehamot, fol. 46. 2. & Gloss in ibid.
- ft156 -- Ibid.
- ft157 -- Ibid.
- ft158 -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 11. 1.
- ft159 -- Cetubot, fol. 26. 1.
- ft160 -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1.
- ft161 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 2.
- ft162 -- Theologoumen. 50:5. Digress. 1. p. 446.
- ft163 -- On Hebrews vol. 1. Exercitat. 19. p. 272.
- ft164 -- Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 3. s. 4.
- ft165 -- Chronicle of the Old Testament, p. 18. Harmony of the Evangelists, p. 465. Hor. Hebrews in ~~ARB~~ Matthew 3:6.
- ft166 -- Pfeiffer. Antiqu. Ebr. c. 1. s. 5. "et addit; uti et ejusdem collationem; quam inter hunc proselytorum baptismum et sacramentum initiationis christianorum instituit cum magno grano salis accipiendam putamus."
- ft167 -- Tibullus, 50:2. eleg. 1.
- ft168 -- Rhenferd. Orat. de Antiqu. Baptism, p. 954. ad Calcem Oper. Philolog.
- ft169 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 1.
- ft170 -- Annot. in ~~ARB~~ Matthew 3:6.
- ft171 -- Chronic. secul. 9. p. 200.
- ft172 -- Witsii Aegyptiaca, 50:2. c. 16. s. 10. vid. Tertullian. de Praescript. Haer. c. 40.
- ft173 -- Schickard. & Mayerus, apud Pfeiffer. Antiqu. Ebr. c. 1. s. 5. vid. Selden. de Syned. 50:1. c. 3.
- ft174 -- Ut Supra & Theologoumen. p. 447.

- ft175 -- Praefat. ad Seder Kodashim.
- ft176 -- Mabo. Hagemara ad Calcem Halicot Olam, p. 223.
- ft177 -- T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 2. Beracot, fol. 47. 2.
- ft178 -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1.
- ft179 -- Jewish Antiqu. vol. 1. p. 136, 138.
- ft180 -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 69. 4. Ed. Sultzbach.
- ft181 -- Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 14. s. 11, 12. Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. Yore Dea. Hilchot Gerim, Art. 269. s. 1.
- ft182 -- "Annon plane innuunt (verba Joan. 1:25) nullum fuisse baptismi usum, et receptam fuisse opinionem inter ipsos (Judaeos), nullum debere esse, usquedum veniret Christus, vel Elias, vel propheta ille?" Knatchbul in ^{<4182>}1 Peter 3:21.
- ft183 -- Introduction to his History, p. 64. Ed. 2. 4to.
- ft184 -- Antiqu. 50:18. c. 6. s. 2.
- ft185 -- Eccl. Hist. 50:1. c. 11.
- ft186 -- Ibid. Hebrews 50:5. c. 45.
- ft187 -- Vet. Nizzachon, p. 195. Ed. Wagenseil.
- ft188 -- Vet. Nizzachon, p. 62, 64, 70, 74, 77, 150, 191, &c, vid. Maji Synops. Theolog. Jud. loc. 18. s. 2. p. 266. Edzardi not. in Avodah Zarah, c. 2. p. 266. Wagenseil. in Sotah, p. 959.
- ft189 -- Nizzachon, p. 53.
- ft190 -- Ibid, p. 74.
- ft191 -- Nizzachon, p. 192.
- ft192 -- Ibid. p. 99.
- ft193 -- Ibid. p. 193.
- ft194 -- Ibid. p. 242, 243.
- ft195 -- Ibid. p. 251.
- ft196 -- Apud Wagenseil. Tela Ignea, vol. 2. p. 25, 26.
- ft197 -- Oeconom. Foeder. 50:4. c. 16. s. 8. p. 875. Ed. 3.
- ft198 -- History of the Customs of the Jews, par. 5. c. 2.
- ft199 -- Hor. Hebrews in ^{<4186>}Matthew 3:6. vol. 2. p. 122.
- ft200 -- See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Introduct. p. 50, 55.

- ft201 -- Jewish Antiquities, ut supra, p. 135. Marg.
- ft202 -- Jewish Antiq. p. 159, 160.
- ft203 -- Maimon. Melacim. c. 10. s. 9.
- ft204 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Shaare Orah, fol. 18. 2.
- ft205 -- See Stennet against Russen, p. 103, 104.
- ft206 -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2.
- ft207 -- Hilchot Mikvaot, c. 4. s. 1. T. Bab. Eruvim, fol. 14. 2.
- ft208 -- Mikvaot, c. 1. s. 2. 7.
- ft209 -- Hor. Hebrews in ~~406~~ Matthew 3:6. vol. 2. p. 119.
- ft210 -- "Proselytorum baptismum ante Johannem extitisse nullo testimonio certe constat", Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiqu. c. 11. p. 392. ita Deylingius in ibid. p. 386.
- ft211 -- On Hebrews vol. 1. Exercitat. 19. p. 272.
- ft212 -- Theologoumen. 50:5. Digress. 1. p. 447.
- ft213 -- "Omni ideo probabilitate caret sententia ista doctorum quorundam virorum de translatione ritus baptismatis Judaici, qui revera eo tempore nullus erat, in usum discipulorum suorum per Dominum Jesum facienda", Theologoum. ibid.
- ft214 -- Sperlingius de baptismo veterum Ethnicorum, p. 116, 117, 120, 129, 210.