

CALVIN ON BAPTISM

The Biblical and Protestant Reformed view of baptism
versus that of Papists, Anabaptists, Baptists, and Pentecostals



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CALVIN ON BAPTISM

1. John Calvin's family members and their baptisms

Calvin's parents were both baptized when infants, in the Roman Catholic Church. Their son John himself was later born of that pious mother, who had him baptized in infancy in the Church of Rome. She gave him a good church upbringing, till she died when he was three.

Luther had re-affirmed infant baptism and started the Protestant Reformation of the Church when Calvin was eight. When Calvin was twelve, his father had John receive the tonsure and start training to become a priest. He soon switched from Romish theology, and started studying law and languages.

When Calvin was sixteen, the Anabaptists revolutionarily started rioting against society and repudiated their own earlier infant baptisms in the Church by rebaptizing one another when adults. Then, when twenty, Calvin was converted from Romanism to Luther's Protestantism.

Later, Calvin wrote in the *Preface* to his *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*: "When I was as yet a very little boy, my father had destined me for the study of theology.... To this pursuit, I endeavoured faithfully to apply myself -- in obedience to the will of my father....

"Since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame.... Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness, I was immediately inflamed with...a desire to make progress therein."

Rome reacted to this, by burning many of the Anabaptists -- and even by persecuting some of the Anti-Anabaptist Protestants. Calvin wrote: "Certain wicked and lying pamphlets were circulated, stating none were treated with such cruelty but Anabaptists...who by their perverse ravings and false opinions were overthrowing not only religion but also all civil order....

"Unless I opposed them to the utmost of my ability, my silence could not be vindicated from the charge of cowardice and treachery. This was the consideration which induced me to publish my *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (when twenty-seven).... My object was first to prove that these reports were false and calumnious.... The Anabaptists began to assail us!"

Yet Calvin tenderly evangelized the Anabaptists, to bring them back to infant baptism. Thus he converted the Anabaptist Pastor Jean Stordeur and his wife Idelette and their family to Protestantism -- after which they joined Calvin's congregation until Jean Stordeur died.

When thirty-one, Calvin married that former Anabaptist widow Idelette who had earlier in her maturity last received baptism by pouring -- before she became a Protestant. John and Idelette themselves had three children, all of whom died in tenderest infancy. Only the oldest, who was then thought likely to survive, was baptized. The other two, clearly seen to be dying, were therefore deliberately left unbaptized.

These examples of baptisms and non-baptisms in Calvin's own immediate family, are most instructive. Calvin, baptized in infancy by the Church of Rome, was never rebaptized. Nor was his wife -- after formerly having been baptized by affusion with outpoured water as an adult in the name of the Trinity by the Anabaptists. Their eldest child, expected to live, was baptized in the Presbyterian Church. Their other children, seen to be dying and expected next to be seen again only in glory -- were deliberately left unbaptized. Not one member of Calvin's entire family -- neither his parents, himself, his wife or their children -- was ever submersed.

Why not? Because the antirebaptistic Calvin and his de-anabaptized wife rightly understood that Baptism is to be administered but once and for all, to anyone. They also saw that Baptism is only for the living -- and not for the dying (Romans 6:1-11). They also understood that the Visible Church everywhere is but "one body" -- with "one God and Father of all" and "one Lord" (Jesus the Son) and "one Spirit." Consequently, they were contented -- with that "one Lord; one faith; **one baptism.**" Ephesians 4:4-6.

2. Calvin on baptism in Genesis

"In the beginning, **God** (*Eloohiym* the **Father-Son-Spirit**) created.... **The Spirit**...moved **upon** (but **not under!**) the surface of **the waters**.... And God **said** (or spoke His **Word**).... God made the firmament, and divided the waters...under the firmament from **the waters...above**.... And God said: 'Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, and let them have dominion!'" Genesis 1:1-26.

Calvin commented on Genesis 1:1, that "*Eloohiym* (is) a noun of the **plural** number.... The **three Persons of the Godhead** are here noted.... The Scripture...always recalls us to **the Father and His Word and Spirit.**" Isaiah 6:3 and Matthew 28:19 and Luke 1:35 & 3:21!

In Genesis 1:2f, "they who understand...**the Eternal Spirit of God**, do rightly.... The Spirit moved...**over** the waters. 'And God **said**'.... The world had been begun by...**the Word**.... By **the Word of God**, things which were not -- came into being.... Infer the eternity of His essence!... The Apostles rightly prove the Deity of Christ from this, that since He is the Word of God -- all things have been created by Him.... The Word of God...is the Wisdom dwelling in God..., without Whom God could never be (John 1:1,3,18)!...

In Genesis 1:6f, "**clouds** (were) suspended in the **air**.... **The rain** (which is a symbol of our own baptism) is naturally produced.... God has created **the clouds**, and assigned them a region **above** us." From there up **above** where the **rain** is, we would later get refreshingly **baptized** by **sprinkling**. And **not** get **submersed** in the oceans below!

In Genesis 1:26, God said: 'Let **Us** make man!' Calvin commented: "Christians...properly contend from this testimony, that there exists **a plurality of Persons in the Godhead.**" God says He created man 'in **Our** image.' Calvin did "acknowledge indeed that there is something in man which refers to **the Father and the Son and the Spirit.**"

In Genesis 2:7, when God made man, it should be noted that **by His Holy Spirit** 'the Lord God...breathed **into** his **nostrils** the breath of life' -- **onto his forehead**, on his **skull**. There was **no submersing** of Adam's whole body under water!

Indeed, having commanded Adam to '**multiply**' even before the fall (Genesis 1:28) -- after the fall God promised to crush Satan's **skull** (on Golgotha as 'the place of the skull'). There, Christ the Second Adam would bruise his **head** -- and redeem the woman's **seed**. Genesis 3:15. There, no submersion even of Satan occurred. Yet there, Eve's **seed** would be saved.

Right after that, 'the Lord God made coats of skins, and **clothed**' our first parents (Genesis 3:21). This seems to be connected to Galatians 3:27 -- which says 'as many...as have been **baptized**..., have **put on** Christ.' The idea that our first parents would, before clothing them, have allowed their children to run around naked till they were mature -- seems quite bizarre!

So too at the time of the Great Flood, at the very first mention of the word 'covenant.' Noah's **whole family** was then **baptized**. Genesis 6:18-22 & 7:1,12,17 & 9:10.

Calvin commented: "'With you I will establish My covenant'.... Noah would be safe.... The **covenant** with him is **confirmed**.... His **family** shall be **preserved**, for **his** sake.... He is commanded to lay up...food...for his **whole family**.... One man was left who then cultivated righteousness -- for whose sake, He was propitious to **his whole family**."

Then, God Triune would 'cause it to **rain**' (Genesis 7:4,12). Thereby **baptizing** Noah's **family** (First Peter 3:20f).

Calvin commented: "The Lord...caused the **rain** to continue." That **rain** would **baptize** Noah and his **whole family**, safely inside the ark. While the **unbaptized** ungodly were all being **submersed** below them!

Commented Calvin: "Noah and his **family** safely escaped.... Peter teaches that Noah's deliverance from the universal deluge was a figure of **baptism** [First Peter 3:21].... Noah -- believing the promise of God -- gathered **himself, his wife, and his children** together....

"God, as in a matter of present concern, makes a covenant with Noah **and his family**.... He transmits His covenant to **posterity**.... The **ignorance** of the **Anabaptists** may be **refuted**, who deny that **the covenant of God is common to infants**.... God promises salvation to a **thousand generations!**"

At Genesis 17:1-14, 'the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him: "I am the Almighty God.... I will make nations of you..., and to your seed after you.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised.... And the uncircumcised shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant."

John Calvin here commented: "'I am the Almighty God.' The Hebrew noun '*El(loohiyim)* [**God Triune!**]...is here put for God.... 'You shall be a father of many **nations**' (cf. Matthew 28:19).... Those sons..., being regenerate by faith..., pass over into the stock of Abram....

"It is the evident doctrine of Paul concerning the **natural descendants of Abraham**, that they are holy branches which have **proceeded from a holy root** (Romans 11:16).... Nothing is more certain than that God made His covenant with those sons of Abraham who were naturally to be born of him....

"Liberty is at this day permitted in the administration of **baptism** (Colossians 2:11-13)... God commanded infants to be circumcised **on the eighth day**.... We are circumcised by the death of Christ..., Who expressly substitutes **baptism** for circumcision (Colossians 2:11)....

"The Lord punished bare neglect.... But if any infants were deprived by death of the tokens of salvation, He spared them. Because they had done nothing derogatory to God's covenant.

"The same reasoning is at this day in force respecting **baptism**.... To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death had not allowed to be presented for **baptism** before any neglect of parents could intervene, is a cruelty originating in superstition.... That the promise belongs to such **children**, is not in the least doubtful!"

3. Calvin on baptism in Exodus

In Exodus 4:24^f, Calvin discussed the great irregularity of the circumcision performed by the unordained and unordainable Zipporah on her tiny son. Calvin nevertheless clearly implied its validity. Sinfully, her husband the ordained Prophet Moses had neglected to perform the circumcision. So, when the Lord threatened her husband's life, she herself performed it.

'It came to pass...that the Lord met him (Moses), and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son.... So He (the Lord) let him go.' Exodus 4:24-26.

Commented Calvin: "Certainly the child was not duly [or regularly] circumcised.... Still, it is plain from the event that the ceremony -- thus rashly performed -- pleased God. For it is immediately added that 'He let him go'....

"The scourge of God ceased or was removed.... He was pacified.... Although it [the circumcision] was improper" or irregular -- but not invalid. The circumcision by Zipporah was "praepostera" (Latin) and "vicieuse" (French) -- but valid, and never to be repeated.

"Imperfect obedience...to God...is sometimes approved.... When therefore Zipporah...circumcised her son with her own hands..., God was contented. So as to cease from afflicting Moses."

Circumcision -- once performed -- is unrepeatable anyway! So too, *mutatis mutandis*, is the baptism which replaced it. Romans 4:11^f & 6:1^f and Colossians 2:11^f and Hebrews 6:1-6.

Later at the Red Sea, God would **baptize** His people and their **babies** from the **cloud above**, while they passed through the sea below 'on the **dry** ground.' Exodus 13:22 & 14:19-22 & 15:19 and First Corinthians 10:1-2. God then **drowned** the unbaptized pursuing Egyptians, by **submersing** them under the water. Exodus 14:26-28 and 15:3-5,10.

Most Baptists here seem quite oblivious of the implications of First Corinthians 10:1-2. That says: 'Brethren, I wouldn't have you ignorant as to how **all our fathers**...passed through the sea, and were **all baptized** unto (*eis*) Moses -- **in** the cloud" or **with** (*en*) the **cloud**.

Yes, our fathers were then and there **baptized** together **with all their infants** -- with water from **the cloud above**. While not them but only their **unbaptized** enemies were all totally submersed **under** the sea.

Calvin commented: "There is **no point of difference** between the Israelites and us.... The Church of God was in their midst, as in ours today. They had the **same sacraments**....

"The sacraments are tokens by which the Church of God is discerned. Paul deals first with baptism, and he teaches that **the cloud**...was...**like baptism** (Psalms 77:16-19 & 78:13). He says they 'were **baptized**'.... Anyone who will give proper attention to these things, will find...both in spiritual substance and **visible form**, the closest **agreement** between the **baptism** of the Jews and ours."

For '**the clouds poured out water**' (Psalm 77:17). 'He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through.... He made the waters (below) to stand like a heap' (Psalm 78:13). God's people, both very young and very old, all went through 'on **dry** ground' (Exodus 14:16,21f).

Calvin commented on Psalm 77:16-19: "The 'waters'...were moved.... They retired backward.... Not only the surface of the waters were agitated at the sight of God...; His power penetrated even to the deepest gulfs.... '**The clouds poured out waters**' -- or 'the waters of the clouds were **poured out**'....

"The sea...was suspended.... The **clouds** yielded to God..., having **poured forth** copious **showers**.... The miracle...wrought in **drying up the Red Sea**, is here again described....

"The Israelites...passed **dry-shod** through the midst of the Red Sea.... The people walked through the midst of the waters, in which Pharaoh and his whole army were soon after **drowned**."

In Psalm 78:13, Calvin comments: "He next comes to speak of the passage through the sea, where he repeats what was brought under our notice in the previous Psalm -- that the order of nature was reversed when the waters stopped in their course and were even raised up into solid heaps.... Paul teaches in First Corinthians 10:2, that there was a kind of **baptism** administered to the people in that **cloud**..., in their passing through the sea." Also with their **infants**!

4. Calvin on baptism in Deuteronomy

Baptists seem oblivious of Calvin's *Sermons on Deuteronomy*. At 14:23, he remarks:¹ "**The Papists...have baptism.**" **Not** -- 'the Papists **don't** have baptism!'

In Deuteronomy 23:7, God commands: 'You shall not abhor an Edomite; because he is your brother!' This, argued Calvin, means that **the baptized Romanist is our brother**. Romans 4:11-13 *cf.* Colossians 2:11-13.

Calvin argued that baptized Protestants are now closer to baptized Romanists than either of them are to unbaptized Muslims. Comparing circumcised Edomites to baptized Romanists, he insisted: "Moses says that if the Edomites would yield themselves into the [truly-Christian

alias the godly-Protestant] Church of God -- they might be received...and be incorporated thereinto altogether. For he who offered himself to be circumcised, was always received....

"Let us therefore diligently note here of the children of [the circumcised] Esau..., that if any of them would renounce his own kindred -- he would be accounted in the number of this blessed flock." Just as converted Papists should leave Romanists, and join God's Protestant People!

"Likewise at this day..., we are far nearer neighbours to **the Papists** than to the Turks or other *Paynims* [or *Heathen*]. And the reason is, because albeit they [the Papists] are estranged from the grace of God and have corrupted all religion and are so entangled in their abuses and corruptions as it is horrible to behold -- yet, notwithstanding, there remains among them some footsteps of the calling of God.

"For **they have baptism**, which is a visible sign whereby we see that God held those of His House and of His Fold. You see then, how **the Papists are as it were the Edomites**" -- **who had received circumcision, which baptism has now replaced** (*cf.* Colossians 2:11-13).

"For they [**the Romanists**] were **first called** -- and should have been partakers of the salvation which was preached to us by the Gospel. They bear yet the **mark** thereof -- as touching **baptism**. But because they have perverted the service of God -- yes, and as it were taken faith clean away, by which they should have been called to the mercy which has been brought to us [Protestants] by our Lord Jesus Christ -- it is great reason that they should be held [as baptized, because 'circumcised'] Edomites....

"Therefore let us endeavour, as much as is possible for us, **to bring them back again!**... When **the Papists come** and order themselves thus -- we are to receive them with all gentleness, by reason of the [baptismal] **brotherhood** which God has set between them and us...

"Therefore nowadays, seeing that God has showed Himself so graciously unto us [Protestants], as to make us His Church -- let us be ready to receive them [the co-baptized Romanists] who **will be reclaimed** thereunto! Yes, let us have our arms stretched out not only to them which are the children of God -- but also to such as are our kinsfolk afar off, endeavouring for all that to win and to gain them!"

In Deuteronomy 30:6, God says: 'The Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed.' Calvin there clearly declared against the Anabaptists: "The fantastical fellows of our day which would take away **the baptism of little children**, never understood the use of circumcision.... **Baptism succeeds circumcision**, as Saint Paul says in the Epistle to the Colossians (2:11-13)....

"In **baptism**..., the **water** is **poured** upon the **head** of a **little child**. It is not only to signify that, (later) being come to man's age, he must serve God.... **The infant is baptized** by the hand of another, and the hand of the Minister is as it were the hand of Jesus Christ.... When the Minister **lays** the **water** on the **child's head**, therein he represents the Person of our Lord Jesus."

In Deuteronomy 31:12*f*, God says: 'You shall gather the people together -- men, women and **children**, and your stranger who is inside your city-gates -- so that they may hear and learn and

fear the Lord your God and keep all the words of this Law.... So that...**children too**, who have not known it, may hear it and learn it.'

Calvin declared: "**As soon as our children be born**, they be carried to **baptism**. And there, God shows that His will is that they should be like His household.

"Therefore, when an **infant** is thus declared to be a member of our Lord Jesus Christ..., should he not when he comes to age of understanding endeavour to learn that he was created by God? God...has placed him in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.... Ought he not...to give himself wholly to Him and to His service?" Of course he should!

In Deuteronomy 32:2, we read: 'My doctrine shall drip like **the rain**; my speech shall distil like **the dew**.... Like the **small rain** upon the tender herb, and like **the showers**.'

Calvin comments: "God never speaks, except to render men fruitful in good works. Just as, by instilling succulency and vigour into the earth by means of rain, He makes it fertile for the production of fruit."

Calvin remarked² that "Moses...wishes that his doctrine may be like a flowing **rain**, so as to **moisten** like the **drops** that fall **on** the grass, and **shed abroad** like the **dew** which **waters** the meadows." No traces of submersion, but only of sprinkling!

On Deuteronomy 34:9, Calvin remarked: "**in the Popedom**, they have many signs.... We ourselves do see that **they have defiled Baptism**.

"True it is that **they could not utterly despatch it out of the way**.... Our Lord Jesus **Christ** has brought to pass that His **Baptism continueth still in His Church**." So that converted Romanists should never be rebaptized by Protestants!

5. Calvin on baptism in Joshua to Joel

Baptists seem oblivious too of Joshua 3:1,11,17 -- especially in the B.C. 270 Greek Septuagint translation thereof. This teaches that the ark of the covenant passed "**over** the Jordan" (*heos ton Iordaneen*), when 'they who bore the ark had come **unto** the Jordan (*epi ton Iordaneen*) and the **feet** of the priests that bore the ark were **dipped in** the brim of the water' (*ebapheesan eis to meros tou hudatos*) -- before the Israelites and their **infants** went "**into** the Jordan" (*diabainei...ton Iordaneen*), when all the Israelites passed over "on **dry** ground" (*diebeesan dia xeeras*).

Calvin comments: 'The waters were then swollen, and had overflowed.... There was therefore **no hope** that women and **children**...could be **transported to the further bank**.'

However, "the moment the **feet** of the priests were made wet, the Jordan retired.... The term '**dry**' here means that part which was not covered." Hence, no submersion -- but a passage of the people with their infants through the river 'on **dry** ground.'

Baptists also seem unaware of Second Kings 5:10-14, where Naaman was to 'go and wash in the Jordan seven times.... Then he went down, and dipped himself (*ebaptisato*) seven times.'

'Dipped' is im-mersion, **not sub**-mersion! Yet what Baptist ever baptized anyone seven times all at once -- whether submersing them backwards, forwards, straight-downwards, or even sideways?

Very significant is Joel 2:15-29. That teaches us: 'Sanctify the congregation; assembly the elders; gather the children; and those that suck the breasts!...

'Be glad, then, you children!... The Lord your God...has given you the former rain moderately; and He will cause to come down for you (together)...the former rain and the latter rain.... I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; on your sons and daughters.... I will pour out My Spirit!'

Here we learn that the congregation consists also of children and sucklings. God had given them all the former rain. He would give them all both the former and the latter rain together too -- when He would pour out His Spirit on Pentecost Sunday.

Calvin comments: "The people, in order to engage in holy services, performed those rites.... No one entered the temple without washing.... He afterwards adds: 'Bring together...the young, sucking the breasts!'... He would have the young, sucking the breasts, to be assembled.... Infants were called, together with their parents....

"The Prophet says at last, 'I will hereafter pour My Spirit on all.... He will give to you...rain.... He will make to descend on you showering rain....

"He will give you rain..., both of the first time and the later rain'.... He goes on...and shows the effects of rain. For when the earth is irrigated and satiated with sufficient moisture, it brings forth fruit rich and plentiful....

"He then added, 'Afterwards I will pour My Spirit upon all flesh'.... Procured for us by the blood of...our Lord Jesus Christ.... The gift of the Spirit...was enjoyed even by the ancients. But the Prophet promises...something greater.... This may easily be gathered from the word here used, 'pour out.'

"For *shephek* means...to pour forth in great abundance.... The gift of the Spirit was more copiously given to the Church, after the advent of Christ..., 'upon all flesh'.... God would not only endow a few with His Spirit, but the whole mass of the people....

"This prophecy must be referred to the advent of Christ.... What is here described, was not fulfilled until after Christ appeared.... The Prophet now preaches of the new restoration of the Church....

"Peter, in the second chapters of the Acts, says that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit was sent.... The Prophet mentions all flesh, without exception" -- thus, even 'those that suck the breasts' (Joel 2:16). Acts 1:5 & 2:2f & 2:16-18 & 2:38f describes that baptism!

6. Calvin on baptism in Hosea, Amos and Micah

In Hosea 4:12f, God told that Prophet: 'My people ask counsel at their stocks [alias their wooden idols].... They have gone a-whoring [away] from...their God!'

Here, Calvin applies God's term 'My people' even to the baptized Romanists -- who had 'gone...from...their God' to their wooden idols. This charge, comments Calvin, "may be brought...against the Papists. For as soon as infants are born among them, the Lord signs them with the sacred symbol of baptism. They are thus in some sense the people of God."

"We see at the same time how gross and abominable are the superstitions which prevail among them! There are none more stupid.... How shameful is this baseness -- that the Papists, who boast themselves to be the people of God, should go astray after their own mad follies...."

"Baptism, then, affords the Papists no excuse; but on the contrary, renders double their sin! For they have, by a profane audacity, contaminated what the Son of God has appointed.... There are at least some things remaining in baptism" even among Romanists. But their later "Mass is nothing like Christ's Holy Supper!"

In Hosea 6:1-11, it says: 'Come, and let us return to the Lord!... After two days, He will revive us. On the third day, He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight.... He shall come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain.... O Judah, He has set a harvest for you!'

Comments John Calvin: "This place is usually referred to Christ, as declaring that God would after two days and on the third raise up His Church.... This sense does not seem unsuitable.... The Prophet here encourages the faithful to entertain hope of salvation, because God would raise up His Only-begotten Son Whose resurrection would be the common life of the whole Church...."

"He shall come...as the rain to us -- as the late rain, a rain to the earth'.... God will...be like the rain, which irrigates the earth.... Though the Israelites had become so dry that they had no longer any vigour -- there would yet be no less virtue in God's grace than in the rain which fructifies the earth when it seems to be barren.... When at the end he adds 'a rain to the earth' -- I doubt not but that he meant seasonable rain...."

"He adds, 'Judah also has set a plantation for you'.... I am seeking to restore the scattering of My people.... The Lord says in this place, 'There was...some hope for Judah; for some form of My worship remained there.'" And, after the irrigating rain, comes the harvest!

In Amos 5:25f, God said to Israel: 'Have you offered to Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness, forty years?.... But you have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images...which you made to yourselves!'

John Calvin commented here that "baptism is a sacred and immutable testimony of the grace of God. Though it were administered by the devil -- though all who partake of it were

ungodly and polluted as to their own persons! **Baptism** ever retains its own character, and is **never contaminated** by the vices of men."

Even baptisms administered by the devil would still be valid. So how much more valid are baptisms administered by the Pope, or by the murderous and polygamous Anabaptists of Münster?

In Micah 1:1-3, God says: 'Horns of Jacob!.... You...hate the good and love the evil.... (You) eat the flesh of My people!'

Calvin comments: "We find **the Papists** boasting of the title 'Church' -- and, in a manner, with vain confidence binding God to themselves **because they have baptism**, though they have adulterated it with their superstitions. And they think that they have Christ, because they still retain the name of a 'Church.'

"Even if the Lord had promised that His dwelling would be in Rome -- we yet see how foolish and frivolous such boasting would be. For though the temple was at Jerusalem -- yet the Lord went forth thence, to punish the sins of the people -- yes, even of the chosen people."

7. Calvin on baptism in Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel

Baptists also seem oblivious of Isaiah 44:2-4. There, God tells His people: 'The Lord...formed you **from the womb**.... I will **pour** water upon him.... I **will pour** My Spirit upon your **seed**, and my blessing upon your **offspring**.... They shall **spring up!**'

As Calvin here comments: "Jehovah Himself explains what He means by 'water'.... That is, 'His Spirit'.... Ezekiel (36:25) gives the name 'water' to the Holy Spirit.... Isaiah will...call the Spirit 'water'.... By the secret moisture of His power, He quickens souls.... Isaiah gives the appellation 'water' to the sudden renewal of the Church. As if he had said that the restoration of the Church is at God's disposal, as much as when He fertilizes by **dew** or **rain**....

"Just as the herbs grow, after having been **watered** by the **rains**. It means that out of all nations, the Lord will gather His people.... The Church, so long as she is destitute of the blessing of God, withers.... When the Spirit of God has been **poured out**, she is quickened."

Baptists further seem oblivious of Isaiah 52:15. 'So shall He **sprinkle** many **nations**.' Calvin here comments: "*Naazaah* signifies 'to **sprinkle**'.... He means that the Lord will **pour out** His Word over 'many **nations**.'" Matthew 28:19. Including too the firstling of Ethiopia! Acts 8:27-38.

Baptists also seem oblivious of Isaiah 63:3. 'Blood shall be **sprinkled upon** My garments.' This is explained in Revelation 19:13, where it is stated that Christ the Word of God 'was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood' -- where the word **dipped** or **beammenon** (from *baptizein*) is equated with **sprinkled** back in Isaiah 63:3.

Baptists further seem oblivious of Daniel 4:22f & 5:21. There, the humbled and penitent Nebuchadnezzar's 'body was wet (ebaphee) with the dew of the sky, when he acknowledged that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men.' The Aramaic's *mittal* and the Greek Septuagint's *drosou* mean "lie wet under the dew-drops"; and the Aramaic's *mittal...yitstabba'* and the Septuagint's *drosou...ebaphee* mean "moistened under the dew."

As Calvin here comments: "His body was moistened by the dews." And dews do not become a deep bath into which anyone could ever be submersed -- but always fall like rain from above, and makes them wet by thus baptizing them.

In Ezekiel 16:20f, God complains to His wayward people: 'You have taken your sons and your daughters, whom you have borne to Me -- and these you have sacrificed!... You have slain My children!'

Calvin comments: "Here, God places Himself in the position of a parent.... He had adopted the people as His Own.... They were holy.... As to their being impure, it could not...abolish God's covenant.

"The same thing ought at this time to prevail in the Papacy. For we are all born under the curse. And yet God acknowledges supernaturally as His sons, all who spring from the faithful -- not only in the first or second degree, but even to a thousand generations....

"Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy, since baptism does not lose its efficacy and the adoption of God remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14....

"All their offspring were His sons.... God's treaty with the people, was a marriage. All who spring from the people, ought to be esteemed His children. God therefore calls those who were thus slain, His sons.... 'You had borne them, to Me'....

"In the Papacy, such declension has grown up through many ages.... Yet it is certain that a portion of God's covenant remains among them....

"Hence it arises that our baptism (there), does not need renewal. Because although the Devil has long reigned in the Papacy -- yet he could not altogether extinguish God's grace. Nay, a Church is among them!"

Soon after writing the above unfinished *Commentary on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Calvin died. Baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, he never ceased to work also for its reformation.

He wanted ongoing reformation for himself, when yet a Romanist -- and also after becoming a Protestant. Luke 22:31-32 & Romans 12:1-2. He also wanted ongoing reformation for Christ's Church -- whether Romish, or Protestant. Hebrews 9:10 to 10:22 & Revelation 2:1-5f to 3:19.

So there is no doubt how Calvin would have interpreted Ezekiel 36:25's words: 'I will **sprinkle** clean water **upon** you.... A new heart too will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you!'

8. Calvin on baptism in Malachi

Finally, Malachi 3:10 & 4:5 end up the Old Testament -- by saying: 'I will open for you the windows of Heavens and **pour** out a blessing for you.... I will send you **Elijah** the Prophet..., and he shall **turn**...the heart of the **children** to their fathers!'

Calvin comments: "It is the first thing as to fertility, that the Heavens should **water** the earth.... God in this place shows that the earth could not produce a single ear of corn, except the Heavens supplied moisture or **rain**.... Rain **descends**....

"The Prophet declares that prophetic teaching would be again **renewed**.... Christ Himself...said that **John the Baptizer was the Elijah** who had been promised (Matthew 11:10).... God intended to raise up John the Baptizer for the purpose of restoring His worship, as formerly He had raised up Elijah....

"And he shall turn...the heart of the children to their fathers'.... Malachi takes it for granted that there was formerly true religion in that people; that the true worship of God prevailed among them; and that they were bound together by a sacred bond.... He now recalls them to this first condition, so that **sons** might **unite** in sentiment with their fathers."

9. Calvin on baptism in John

We now come to the New Testament. There, the Pharisees asked John the Baptizer: 'Are you **Elijah**?... **Why** do you **baptize**?' (John 1:21-26).

Calvin comments: "They mention Elijah..., because they learn from...Malachi 4:5 that when the Messiah would arise -- Elijah would be.... Christ affirms that he (John) is Elijah (Matthew 11:14)." John said: 'I baptize **with** (not under!) water' -- just like Elijah!

Calvin goes on that John was not only "divinely appointed to be Christ's Minister, but that **he is the true Elijah** sent to testify to the restoration of the Church.... The very silly mistake has been made of supposing that John's baptism was different from ours!"

With the above John 1:25, compare **First Kings 18:33**! For there, heralding the later **John the Baptizer** as the **second Elijah** -- the first Elijah **poured** water on the burnt sacrifice!

John 1:28 declares: 'These things were done in Bethabara' by John. Calvin comments: "This was his ordinary place for **baptizing**.... God **opened up** a way for them **through** the midst of the water under Joshua (3:13)" -- '**on dry ground**' (Joshua 3:17)!

The next day, John baptized Jesus (John 1:29). John said: 'I came baptizing **with** water' (John 1:31) -- and **not** under the water!' Right after Jesus' baptism, John declared: 'I saw the Spirit **descending** from Heaven like a dove, and He abode **upon** Him.... He Who sent me to **baptize with** water..., said to me: "**Upon** Whom you shall see the Spirit **descending** and remaining **on** Him..., is He Who **baptizes with** the Holy Spirit!'" John 1:32f.

Calvin comments: "When He (Jesus) wished to make Himself known to the world, He began with **baptism**. He therefore received the Spirit on that occasion not so much for Himself as for His people. And the Spirit **descended** visibly, so that we may know that in Christ dwells the abundance of all gifts of which we are destitute and empty."

Also Mark 1:9 says that 'Jesus...was **baptized** by John.' And Matthew 3:13-17 adds that John 'saw the Spirit of God **descending** like a dove and coming **upon** Him.'

Calvin comments: "The Son of God...received the **same baptism** as us.... John beholds the Holy Spirit **descending upon** Christ.... He comes like a man filled with God.... The Holy Spirit **descended upon** Him.... John saw that the Spirit **descended on** Christ."

Jesus soon told Nicodemus: 'I tell you, unless a man is born of **water** and of the Spirit -- he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' John 3:5.

Calvin comments: "We sometimes hear of Christ **baptizing with** the Holy Spirit.... It is as if Christ had said that no one is a son of God until he has been renewed by **water**, and that this water is **the Spirit** Who cleanses us anew -- and Who by His power **poured upon us**, imparts to us the energy of the heavenly life."

Baptists often quote from Calvin's *Commentary on John's Gospel* 3:22. There, it says: "John and Christ administered baptism by total immersion."

However, they neglect to add that such '**im**-mersion' is not the same as **sub**-mersion! For all Reformed Presbyterian Ministers 'put in' or '**im**-merse' their fingers in water, but **never** totally **sub**-merse them under the baptismal water -- before **sprinkling** babies therewith.

Baptists also neglect to complete Calvin's above passage! For he then soon went on to say "we must not worry overmuch about the outward rite, so long as it accords with the **spiritual** truth and the Lord's institution." And '**purifying**' was done by **sprinkling**! John 3:25f.

In John 3:34, it is said that 'God does not give the Spirit by measure to Jesus.' Calvin comments: "God, the inexhaustible fount of all good, does not at all exhaust Himself when He bountifully and plentifully **pours out** His gifts.... For although He (Jesus) was given the Spirit in the highest perfection once -- yet...He (the Spirit) continually **flows**...from the Father."

In John 4:1f, we are told 'that Jesus made and baptized more Disciples than John. Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His Disciples did.'

Here Calvin comments: "Not only does Christ baptize inwardly **by** His Spirit." Jesus "deliberately abstained from [Himself giving] the outward administration of the sign while He

was in the world. In so doing, He bore witness to all ages -- that nothing is lost from the power of baptism when it is administered by a mortal man....

"But the very symbol that we receive from [our baptizing Preacher as] a mortal man, should be regarded in the same light as if Christ Himself had put forth His hand **from** Heaven and stretched it out **to** us.... The baptism administered by man, is Christ's baptism.

"It will not cease to be Christ's -- whoever the Minister may be.... This suffices to **refute the Anabaptists**, who maintain baptism is vitiated by the vice of the Minister -- and disturb the Church with this madness.

"Augustine has aptly used this argument against the Donatists." For they rebaptized their converts from the Church Universal!

10. Calvin on baptism in Matthew

In Matthew 19:13f and Mark 10:13, we read of Jesus that 'they' -- believers -- brought to Him children, so that He might **touch** them.' These 'children' -- in Luke 18:15 '**infants**' -- were 'presented to Him, **so that He might lay hands on them** and **pray**....

Jesus said...: "Permit **children** to come to Me! For of such, is **the Kingdom of Heaven!**" Mark 10:15f adds: "Truly I say to you, **whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like a child -- shall not enter into it!**" And when He had taken them in His arms, **He laid hands on them** and **blessed** them.'

Comments Calvin: "**Christ receives** not only those who...freely approach to Him, but **those who are not yet of age**.... '**Little children**' have not yet any understanding.... But when they are presented to Him, **He gently and kindly receives** them and dedicates them to the Father by a solemn act of blessing.

"We must observe the **intention** of those who present the children. For if there had not been a deep-rooted conviction in their minds that the power of **the Spirit** was at His disposal, so that He (**Jesus**) **might pour Him out on the people of God** -- it would have been unreasonable to present their children.... The 'laying on of hands'...was an ancient and well-known sign of 'blessing'....

"**The Anabaptists...refuse baptism to infants** -- because (they think) infants are incapable of understanding!... **We**, on the other hand, maintain that since **baptism** is the pledge and figure of the forgiveness of sins and likewise of adoption by God -- it **ought not to be denied to infants** whom God adopts and **washes** with the blood of His Son....

"**Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God** according to the capacity of their age, till that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees and becomes fully manifest at the proper time.... The spiritual gifts...are represented by **baptism**. It is **unreasonable** that they should be **deprived** of the outward sign.... 'For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Under this

term, he includes both 'little children' and those who resemble them.... **The Anabaptists foolishly exclude children**" -- and even **the infants of believers!**

In Matthew 28:19, Christ commissioned His Preachers to go and make all **nations** His Disciples, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit**. And what nations do not contain **also babies and children?!**

Calvin comments: "By proclaiming the Gospel everywhere, they should bring 'all nations' to the obedience of the faith.... They should seal and ratify their doctrine, by (baptism as) the sign of the Gospel....

"The Anabaptists have stormed greatly against infant baptism. But the reply is not difficult... On what condition does God adopt as children those who formerly were aliens? It cannot indeed be denied that **when He has once received them into His favour,** He continues to **bestow it on their children and their children's children....**

"That promise which was formerly given to the Jews, must now be in force towards the Gentiles -- 'I will be your God, and the God of **your seed** after you' (Genesis 17:7).... I maintain therefore that **it is not rash to administer baptism to infants,** to which God invites them when He promises that 'He will be their God'... God was clearly revealed in Three Persons.... The Father manifested Himself in the Son...and the Spirit.... Three Persons in one Essence!"

Note too Christ commands the nations to be baptized **not under** but only **"in (eis)** the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." There could be no plunging of the baptizee **under** Them, as if They were **only below** the candidate prior to his or her baptism! For the Triune God is everywhere. Thus one can be baptized only **with** or **'in'** -- but **not into** or **under** His name.

But what does *eis* actually mean? According to Liddell and Scott's authoritative and augmented 2251-page *Greek-English Lexicon*,³ the word *eis* in its "radical sense" means "'into' and then more loosely 'to.'" For "the oldest and commonest usage" -- in "*eis hala*" -- means "'into' or 'to' the sea." But never 'under' or 'underneath' (or *hupo* alias *hupokatoo*) the water!

11. Calvin on baptism in the book of Acts 1 to 8

On Pentecost Sunday, Christ **baptized** His Apostles with fire. He did so, precisely by **pouring down** His Holy Spirit from Heaven **upon** them.

"Tongues like as of fire...sat **upon** each of them.... I will **pour out** of My Spirit **upon** all flesh.... 'On My servants and on My handmaidens I will **pour out** My Spirit.... [Jesus,] having been...exalted, and having received from the Father...the Holy Ghost, has **shed forth** this....

"Then Peter said to them (the rest of the listeners there): "Repent and **be baptized**, every one of you!... **For the promise is to you -- and to your children!**" Acts 2:2f,17f,33,38f.

Cf. too John Calvin's comments on Acts 2:3,17-19,33,38f. "'It sat **upon** them'.... I take this to refer to the Spirit.... Christ...will...**baptize** us.... 'I will **pour forth**...My Spirit'

"I will **pour out**'...means...to indicate the **full** abundance of the Spirit. We must take the words 'I will **pour forth** of My Spirit'...as if He had said simply: 'I will **pour forth** My Spirit'...

"**Young** and old, men and women, are included..... 'I will **pour out**...upon **all** flesh'.... The **pouring out** signifies great abundance.... The Holy Spirit is **poured out** from Heaven.... God is prepared to **pour out**...the Spirit which He has **poured on** us.... He dealt with the grace of the Spirit, **poured out upon** all flesh....

"The Spirit was sent by Christ after He was exalted.... God deferred giving this more plentiful abundance of grace, until He had established Christ on His princely seat.... This is signified by the words '**poured out**'.... The promise was made first to the Jews and...their **children**, and finally...to the Gentiles....

"**The Papists** are in great error" in many of their doctrines anent baptism -- but not for administering still-valid baptisms as such. The Papists err in that "they restrict [the symbolic and sealing efficacy of] baptism to the time of birth and the life that went **before** -- as if the significance and power of it did not even extend [**also afterward**] to the time of death!"

For God is said to **pour out** His Spirit on Pentecost Sunday. Not just once, but fourteen times. That pouring out is **baptism!** Not once does Calvin here speak of baptism by submersion!

"The promise [of baptism] was made first to the Jews, and then **to their children**.... Finally..., it is...imparted to the Gentiles.... The addition of their children, derives from the word of the promise: 'I will be your God, and the God of your seed after you' (Genesis 17:7) -- where God reckons the children with the fathers in the grace of adoption....

"**This passage...refutes the Anabaptists, who deny baptism to the children of the faithful while they are still infants** -- as though they were not members of the Church.... This gross presumption is of no profit to them.... Circumcision bears evidence that the right of adoption was shared even by infants (Genesis 17:7-14 and Colossians 2:11-13).

Later, regarding baptism during that early apostolic period, it is said of the Samaritans that 'when they believed..., they were baptized -- both men and women. Then Simon (the sorcerer) himself...was baptized.' Acts 8:12f.

Calvin commented: "**The Anabaptists are being quite absurd in trying to prove from these verses (Acts 8:12f) that infants must be kept back from baptism.** Men and women could not have been baptized without making open confession of their faith. But they were admitted to baptism on this condition -- that **their families** were consecrated to God at the **same time**. For the covenant is in these terms -- 'I will be your God, and the God of your **seed**' (Genesis 17:7)....

"It is quite plain from Simon's example, that the grace which is figured in baptism is not conferred on all men indiscriminately when they are baptized. It is a dogma of the Papists!"

Yet, as regards Simon the sorcerer, "even though the receiving of baptism was of no use to him at that time, yet -- if conversion followed afterwards, as some conjecture -- the benefit was not terminated or wiped out. For it often happens that, after a long time, the Spirit of God is at last active -- so that the Sacraments may begin to realize their efficacy."

Shortly after the baptism of these Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by the Evangelist Philip just after reading in 'Isaiah the Prophet' that the Saviour would '**sprinkle** many nations' after being 'led like a sheep to the slaughter' (Isaiah 52:15 to 53:7 and Acts 8:27-39). The Ethiopian in the desert then 'came to a certain **water**' (*epi ti hudoor*) -- when he and his later **baptizer** were both **up** on his carriage (Acts 8:31-38).

The eunuch and his baptizer then both got **down** from the carriage, and '**both** went...to the water' (*eis to hudoor*). After the eunuch's baptism, **both** of them 'came up from of the water' (*anebeesan ek tou hudatos*) -- without the **baptizer** ever being submersed **under** the water!

Calvin here commented on Philip's baptism of the eunuch. There, the Swiss Reformer explained: "**Fanatics stupidly and wrongly attack infant baptism....**"

"The children of the godly are **born** sons of the Church, and are numbered among the members of Christ from birth.... God adopts us, on the principle that He is also the Father of our children.... Christ initiates **infants** to Himself.... The practice...is for the Minister **only to sprinkle...the head.**"

Yes, "the men of long ago" did **not submerge** but instead "**immersed** the whole body in water." Just as Presbyterian Ministers **im-merge** their fingers in water wholly, **without submersing** them -- **before baptizing** the baptizee by **sprinkling**. And even **submersionistic** Baptist **submersionists** never get themselves **sub-**mersed when baptizing baptizees. Neither did Philip. For he and the eunuch '**both** went down into the water' -- before not just the baptized eunuch but '**they** came up out of the water.'

"The Church allowed itself **freedom** from **the beginning**, to have slightly different rites. For some used to immerse three times, while others did it only once. Accordingly, there is no call for us to be too particular about things that are **not so necessary**" **Sprinkling** suffices!

12. Calvin on baptism in the book of Acts 10 to 19

Even before Peter arrived on the scene in Caesarea, that Gentile Roman Officer Cornelius was already 'a **devout** man, and one who **feared God with all his house....** He prayed to God **always.**' Indeed, even his own soldiers called him 'a just man and one that fears God.'

So, after Peter came and gave Cornelius's family even greater light, 'the Holy Spirit **fell** on **all...** On the Gentiles too the gift of the Holy Spirit **was poured out....** Peter said: "Can anyone forbid water, so that these who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we, should not be **baptized?**" And he commanded **them** to be **baptized** in the name of the Lord.' Acts 10:2,22,31,44-48.

For Peter perceived that Cornelius -- and apparently his household too -- had for quite some time been serving God, and had continually been 'fearing Him and working righteousness.' Acts 10:35.

Commenting on all this, Calvin states: "Cornelius had a church in his household..... Cornelius...established the family in the fear of God.... He is no stranger to...genuine religion....

"**Baptism** is an appendage to...spiritual grace.... The inference that ignorant men draw from this -- that **infants** must be **debarred** from **baptism** -- is **absolutely groundless....**

"**Believers' children**, who are **born** within the **Church**, are members of the family of the Kingdom of God -- **from the womb....** God has **adopted** the **children** of believers **before** they are **born.**" So Peter now went and baptized not just Cornelius, but also his whole household.

Peter soon gave a report to the other Apostles -- about this pre-baptismal faith of Cornelius's household. Acts 11:1f. Explained Peter of Cornelius: 'He had seen an angel in his house, who stood and said to him...: **'All your household shall be saved.'**" Acts 11:13-17.

Here, Calvin again clearly castigates the **Anabaptists**: "Those who are **opposing infant baptism**, are waging **war** on **God....** Those men are cruelly rejecting from the Church those whom the promise of God **adopts** into the Church.... Those whom God honours with the name of **sons** -- they deprive of the external symbol" of infant baptism!

In Acts 13:32f, Paul preached to the Jews in Pisidia. He told them: "We declare to you glad tidings, that the promise which was made to the fathers God has fulfilled...to us their children.'

Calvin here comments: "It is certain that Paul is here speaking about the **natural children...of the holy fathers....** Certain fanatics [the **Anabaptists**], who make allegories out of everything, imagine that no account is to be taken here of **descendants....** But with a fiction like that -- they are **making meaningless** the sacred covenant of God which says: 'I will be your God, and the God of your **seed.**' Genesis 17:7....

"Those who are **born children of Abraham** according to the flesh, are also to be regarded as **God's spiritual children** -- unless they cut themselves off by their own unfaithfulness. For the **branches are holy by nature**, because **they have been produced from a holy root....** Romans 11:16."

Calvin insists that "children who happen to depart this life before an opportunity of baptizing them in water -- are not excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven." For "by faith" -- God has already separated them as "His Own."

In Acts 16:13-16, the holy writer records that at Philippi 'on the sabbath...a certain woman named Lydia -- a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira -- was worshipping God.... The Lord opened her heart, so that she gave attention to the things which were spoken by Paul. Then, when she and her **household** had been **baptized**, she besought us, saying: 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord -- come into my home, and stay there!'"

Here, Calvin comments: "God had been effectively at work in Lydia. For there is no doubt that she genuinely embraced the **faith** of Christ, and gave her allegiance to Him -- **before** Paul admitted her to **baptism**.... Here, holy zeal and piety reveal themselves in the fact that she dedicates her household to God **at the same time**.... The Lord blessed her godly devotion, so that she had the members of her household obedient.... Thus Abraham, the father of the faithful, was commanded to circumcise all..., and he is commended for the care with which he organized his house."

Also to the jailor in Philippi, Paul commanded: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **you shall be saved -- and your household!**' Paul and Silas then 'spoke the Word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.' Then **he 'was baptized -- he and all his -- immediately.**' The jailor then 'rejoiced, **believing in God with all his household.**' Acts 16:31-34.

Comments Calvin: "Luke again commends the godly zeal of the keeper [of the jail], because he dedicated his whole household to God. The grace of God is also reflected in that -- because He suddenly **brought a whole family to godly unanimity.**"

Calvin concludes⁴ that "**Paedobaptism...receives such strong support from Scripture**.... Nor is there anything plausible in the objection that 'we nowhere read of even one infant having been baptized'.... They are **not expressly excluded** when mention is made of any **baptized family** (Acts 16:15,32)" *cf.* 16:33 & 18:8 and First Corinthians 1:16 & 16:15-19. So "what man of sense will argue from this that **they were not baptized?!"**

When Paul was in Corinth, his chronicler Luke wrote that 'Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord with all his household; and many of the Corinthians...believed and were **baptized.**' Acts 18:8.

There, Calvin comments: "Those who believed..., Paul also speaks of in First Corinthians chapter one [verse 14].... He says that Crispus was baptized by him" – adding: "I baptized Crispus and Gaius...and I baptized also the household of Stephanus." First Corinthians 1:14-16.

In Acts 19:1-7, Paul baptized about twelve men who claimed they had earlier received "John's baptism" -- even though they had then never even heard whether the Holy Spirit exists! After they were now 'baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and...Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.'

Was this a **rebaptism**? Calvin comments: "**The baptism of John** was a sign of repentance and remission of sins.... **There is no difference between it and our own baptism**....

"**We do not read that Christ baptized afresh** those whom came over to Him from John [see John 3:22f & 4:1f].... **We** [Protestants and Romanists] have a common baptism with the Son of God" – *viz.* that administered by John the Baptizer.

As to baptism, continued Calvin, "the question is asked whether it was right to repeat it." Calvin here comments that "**fanatical men** of our day, relying on this evidence, have tried to introduce **Anabaptism**.... **I do not subscribe to this opinion**.... **I do deny that the baptism of water was repeated!**"

The simple fact is that the above-mentioned group mentioned in Acts 19, consisted exclusively of Unitarian Heretics who even denied the existence of the Holy Spirit -- before Paul met and evangelized them. Paul certainly did **not** rebaptize them! For, unlike trinitarian Roman Catholics, they had never before been baptized in the Name of the Triune God at all. Cf. Matthew 3:11 and Mark 1:8 and Luke 3:16 and John 1:32f and Acts 19:2.

One should read Calvin's *Instructions Against the Anabaptists*. There, he states⁵ on baptism that in 'Article One' of *The Schleitheim Confession* of Sattler and his Anabaptists, "these poor fanatics [mis]cite the usage and practice of the Apostles [Acts 19:2f]....

"The Anabaptists ...think they have a passage that is precisely in their favour, in Acts 19:2f -- where (they think) it is written that Saint Paul, having discovered certain disciples who had not yet received the Holy Spirit, 'rebaptized' them.... They [the Anabaptists], owing to their ignorance, cannot accept anything other than that Saint Paul rebaptized these disciples!"

Also in his *Institutes*,⁶ Calvin argues that the Anabaptists "seem to think the weapon which they brandish irresistible, when they allege that Paul rebaptized those who had been baptized with the baptism of John. Acts 19:3,5.... I deny that they [Paul's Unitarian heretics whom he converted at Ephesus] were rebaptized....

"The Apostles" received "their baptism [from John].... Yet they were never rebaptized (either by Jesus or by anyone else)." Even if we were to be rebaptized, and even repeatedly to be re-re-re-baptized -- it would still be of no avail. For "then, so numerous being the acts of ignorance which by the mercy of God are daily corrected in us -- what rivers would suffice, for so many repeated baptisms?!"

13. Calvin on baptism in First Corinthians

Paul wrote First Corinthians 1:2 to what he called 'the Church of God which is at Corinth.' Sadly, it was deeply sinful and doctrinally defiant.

Calvin comments: "It is a dangerous temptation to think there is no Church where perfect purity is lacking.... Anyone who is obsessed by that idea, must cut himself off from everybody else and appear to himself to be the only saint in the world. Or he must set up a sect of his own along with other hypocrites.

"Why then should Paul have recognized the Church at Corinth? No doubt it was because he saw among them the teaching of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's Supper -- the marks by which the Church ought to be determined.... For while some had begun to be uncertain about the resurrection, that error had not yet permeated.... They held on to the fundamental teaching -- the One God was worshipped by them, and was invoked in the name of Christ.... The Church still continued to exist among them."

In First Corinthians 1:13-16, Paul says: 'Every one of you says: "I am of Paul!"; and "I of Apollos!" And "I of Cephas (or Peter)!"....

'Were you baptized in the name of Paul?... I baptized ...Crispus and Gaius..., and I baptized also the **household** of Stephanas.'

Calvin comments: "We enlist into the service of Him in Whose name we are baptized.... We are bound to Christ, in Whose name our baptism is consecrated.... Baptism is like a bond of mutual contract.... The Lord by that symbol receives us into His **household**...."

"What does it mean to be 'baptized in the name of Christ?'.... This way of speaking means...baptism is founded on the authority of Christ.... It rests on His power.... Christ Himself directed the Apostles to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...."

"I baptized...of you..., Crispus and Gaius.... And I **baptized** also the **household** of Stephanus'.... Paul's labour in the building of that church had been incredible.... Teachers had come after him, who had drawn Disciples...by the **sprinkling** of water."

We have already dealt with First Corinthians 10:1-2, where Paul told the Corinthians he would not have them ignorant that their fathers were all **baptized in the cloud** at the Red Sea. Calvin commented: "There is no point of difference between the Israelites and us.... They had the **same sacraments**.... Paul deals...with **baptism**.... **The cloud**...was...**like baptism**.... He says they 'were **baptized**'.... Anyone who will give proper attention to these things, will find...in...**visible form**, the closest agreement between the **baptism** of the Jews and **ours**."

Paul had earlier said in First Corinthians 1:17 -- 'I **baptized**...the **household** of Stephanas.' In 16:15-19, he adds that 'the **household** of Stephanas...is the firstfruits of Achaia' or Central Greece' -- and that 'Aquila and Priscilla salute you...with the church that is in their **household**.'

Calvin comments: "Paul...advises the Corinthians to show respect toward the **household** of Stephanas.... The members of the **household** of Stephanas were the first to embrace the Gospel."

Then Calvin adds regarding the **household** of Aquila and Priscilla: "What a wonderful thing...that the name '**church**' is applied to a single **family**!.... It is fitting that all the **families** of believers should be organized in such a way as to be so many little churches."

14. Calvin on baptism in Ephesians and Colossians

In Ephesians 4:3-6, we read: 'Keep the unity!... There is one body, and one Spirit.... One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**! One God and Father of all!' Yes, only **one baptism**!

Calvin comments: "Whenever you read this word 'one' here, understand it as emphatic! As if he said 'Christ cannot be divided; faith cannot be rent; **there are not various baptisms, but one common to all**'...."

"Faith and **baptism...ought to unite us**.... **Christian baptism is unrepeatable**.... **One baptism is common to all**.... The Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one God.... It is **one baptism, which is sanctified by the triune name**. What reply will the Arians (who denied the

deity of the Son) or Sabellians (who denied the threeness of the divine Persons) be able to make to this argument?...

"In baptism, the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is invoked.... The ordinance of **baptism proves the three Persons in one essence of God.**"

In Ephesians 5:25f, we read Paul argues that 'Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it so that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the **washing of water by the Word.**' Here Calvin comments that "the outward **symbol** to the inward and secret sanctification...is a **visible** confirmation of it. As if he had said that a pledge of that sanctification is presented to us by **baptism**....

"When Paul says that we are washed by baptism, he means that God there declares to us that we are washed.... Unless the reality or...the presentation were connected with baptism, it would be improper to say that baptism is the washing of the soul.... Some try to weaken this eulogy of baptism.... But they are wrong.... The Apostle does not say that it is the sign the cleanses.... It is God Who cleanses.... The praise for this must not be transferred to the sign." Exit, Rome!

In Colossians 2:11-13, Paul insists that uncircumcised Christian Gentiles '**have been circumcised** with the circumcision made **without hands**..., by the circumcision of Christ' -- **because** they have been 'buried with Him in **baptism**.... He has enlivened the uncircumcision of your flesh..., through faith in the operation of God.'

In the Older Testament, comments Calvin, circumcision and the passover "were sacraments of the grace of God -- as baptism and the eucharist are to us today." **Baptism** is in fact Christ Who spiritually circumcises, or "the spiritual circumcision of Christ....

"Circumcision was given to the fathers to be the figure of something (then) absent.... Outward circumcision is here compared with spiritual.... The circumcision which is made in the heart, is 'the circumcision of Christ'.... Spiritual circumcision...we obtain...through **baptism**.... There is no **practice** of circumcision, under the reign of Christ....

"Paul...mentions **baptism**. Christ, he says, accomplishes in us -- **spiritual** circumcision...by baptism. Baptism therefore is a sign of the thing exhibited, which when it was absent was figured by circumcision....

"'Buried with Christ'...means more than that we are crucified with Him.... This is done through **baptism** (as also in Romans 6:4)."

In his *Institutes*,⁷ Calvin adds: "Circumcision was a literal sign. The same view must be taken of **baptism**.... In the second chapter to the Colossians, the Apostle makes the one to be not a whit more spiritual than the other. For he says that in Christ we 'are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands' In explanation of his sentiment, he immediately adds that we are 'buried with Him in baptism'

"What do these words mean, but just that the truth and completion of **baptism** is the truth and completion of circumcision -- since they represent one [and the same] thing? For his object

is to show that **baptism** is the **same thing** to **Christians** [and their **infants**], that **circumcision** formerly was to the **Jews** [and their **infants**].... **Circumcision**...corresponds to our **baptism**, [and likewise] was intended for **infants**!"

15. Calvin on baptism in Hebrews

In Hebrews 5:12 to 6:6, the inspired holy writer **forbids rebaptism**. He says that 'the first principles of the oracles of God' embrace him who 'is **a babe**.' He should '**not lay again**...the doctrine of **baptism**.... For it is impossible for those who...have tasted of (but not swallowed!) the heavenly gift..., if they should fall away -- to renew them again unto repentance.'

Here, Calvin comments that "**the children of believers** were **baptized** as **infants**. Since they were **adopted** from the **womb**.... Repentance, which is the adjunction of baptism, could not be repeated."

In Hebrews 9:19-21, we read that 'Moses...took the blood of calves and of goats, with **water** and scarlet wool and hyssop, and **sprinkled** both the book and all the **people**.... Moreover, he **sprinkled**...the tabernacle with blood.'

Calvin comments: "We must notice the rite of **sprinkling** which he puts here upon Moses.... He adds afterwards that the tabernacle...and the very book of the Law were **sprinkled**....

"When there was a **sprinkling** of hyssop and scarlet wool (with water), there is no doubt that this represented the mystical **sprinkling** that comes by the Spirit.... Christ uses His Spirit in place of **sprinkling**, to **wash** us with His blood."

So Hebrews 10:22 continues, 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith! Having our hearts **sprinkled** from an evil conscience, and our bodies **washed** with pure **water**.'

Calvin comments: "What follows about the body **washed** with pure **water**, is taken by most people as referring to **baptism**.... It seems...the Apostle...by the word 'water' means the Spirit of God -- as Ezekiel (36:25) says: 'I will **sprinkle** clean **water** upon you.'"

16. Calvin on baptism from First Peter to Revelation

Calvin's remarks on First Peter are most instructive, specifically as regards apostolic **baptizing** by **sprinkling**. In First Peter 1:2, that Apostle "triumphantly" declares that we are 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and **sprinkling** of the blood of Jesus Christ.'

In his *Institutes*, Calvin declares:⁸ "The testimony of the Spirit...is **engraven** on our hearts by way of **seal**.... Peter says that believers are elect 'through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and **sprinkling** of the blood of Jesus Christ' (First Peter 1:2).... Our souls must be **washed** in it....

"Peter...declares that the sanctification of the Spirit avails 'unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (First Peter 1:2)... Sprinkling of the blood of Christ by the Spirit, gives us purification. Let us not think that, previous to this sprinkling, we are anything but sinners!"

Commenting on the above-mentioned apostolic verse First Peter 1:2, Calvin adds that "we a. re sprinkled by the blood of Christ.... There seems to be [here] an implied allusion to the ancient rite of sprinkling.... The sprinkling of blood was done by the hand.... The Holy Spirit sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ."

Peter soon went on to describe regenerated babies. He says we have been 'born again...as newborn babes.' First Peter 1:23 to 2:2f.

Calvin comments that "we have been born again." Thus God "requires from us a life like that of infants."

The Apostle then deals with the baptizing of the whole household of Noah. 'Christ,' he says, was 'quickened by the Spirit by Whom He went and preached to the spirits in prison. They were at a previous time disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared in which...eight souls were saved by water.

'The like figure (or antitype of this) is baptism. This also now saves us -- not by putting away the filth of the flesh, but as the answer of a good conscience toward God.... The Gospel was preached also to them that are dead, so that they might be judged.' Cf. First Peter 3:18-21 & 4:6.

This baptism of Noah's whole family occurred by the downpour of rainwater during the Great Flood. Genesis 6:18 & 7:4 & 7:12f cf. First Peter 3:15-21.

Commented Calvin: "The dead, who in the time of Noah were unbelieving (right till their dying moments)..., were drowned by the deluge.... Peter ascribes salvation only to the [undrowned!] family of Noah...within the ark....

"In the common ruin of mankind, the family of Noah alone escaped.... Our baptism is an antitype of the 'baptism' of Noah.... He was preserved, together with his small family. So today...baptism is to us an entrance into life....

"The Gospel is of no benefit to the dead, since it does not restore them to life.... Peter conceded...this objection.... He says 'so that they might be judged'.... 'Judged' here means, as often elsewhere, condemned."

Then, in the last book of the Holy Bible, the Apostle John tells us that God would make 'him who overcomes -- a pillar in the temple of God. And I will write upon him the name of my God' (Revelation 3:12).

God would 'seal the servants of our God on their foreheads' (Revelation 7:3). 'A Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand having His Father's name written on their foreheads' (Revelation 14:1).

Revelation 19:13 states that Christ 'was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood' or bebammenon (from *baptizein*). This is equated with 'sprinkled' -- back in Isaiah 63:3.

Indeed, on the New Earth, 'His name shall be on their foreheads.... And they shall reign for ever and ever!' Revelation 22:4f.

17. Baptism of infants from Clement of Rome to Augustine

Now, some Church History! For rejection of infant baptism was unknown in the Patristic Church. Infants of Christ-professing parents were baptized. Thus Clement, the *Didachee* or *The Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, and Augustine.

Paul's Philippians 4:3 associate Clement of Rome (68f A.D.) -- two years before the Roman destruction of the Jewish temple as the likeliest date for the completion of infallible Scripture -- implied the unrepeatable baptism of covenant infants. For he reflected on the doctrine of household baptism in First Peter 3:20f.

Referring to that, Clement showed⁹ how by baptism "the Lord saved" all who "entered into the ark" -- namely Noah's whole family. So Clement then pleaded: "Let us train up the young in the fear of God!... Let your children be partakers of true Christian training!"

The *Didachee* may well have been written as early as 80 A.D. It declares:¹⁰ "You shall not remove your hand from your son or from your daughter! But from their youth [alias their earliest youngness] onward, you shall teach them the fear of God [Genesis 6:18 & 8:21 and Ephesians 4:4-6 & 6:1-4]!... Concerning baptism..., baptize!"

Perhaps around 90 A.D., the *Epistle of Barnabas* explained¹¹ regarding both the Israelites and Christians that God "has circumcised both their and our heart.... Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, practised that rite -- looking forward in spirit to Jesus.... Concerning the water, it is indeed written...that they should... receive that baptism."

Abraham received the rite, and also all the infant males in his home. Genesis 17:10-14 cf. Romans 4:11 and Colossians 2:11-13. So too did we Christians and all our infants. Acts 2:38f & 10:2,45,48 & 11:14-17 & 16:15 & 16:31-33 & 18:8 and First Corinthians 1:16 & 16:15-19 etc.

Around 145 A.D., we find Hermas -- perhaps the grandson of Paul's Hermas and his household mentioned in Romans 16:14 -- writing in his work *The Shepherd of Hermas*¹² that those who are to be "baptized" need to have their ill-gotten riches "circumcised." For the baptismal "water" -- explained Hermas -- is God's "seal" of repentance.

Those "who have believed" -- continues Hermas -- are "to be baptized in the name of the Lord." This implies that especially covenantal babies too are among the faithful. For Hermas then stated that "**infants** are honourable before God, and are the first persons with Him."

Around A.D. 150, the Samaritan Christian Justin Martyr wrote¹³ in his *First Apology* that the **baptizees** "are brought by us...in the name of God the Father and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. They then receive the **washing** with **water**.... It is impossible for those who have **once been born**, to (re-)enter into **their mothers' wombs**.... At our birth we were **born**..., and were brought up."

In his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Judaist, Justin added: "Isaiah (44:1-5 & 52:15 & 63:3 [cf. Revelation 19:13]) cries out...that that very **baptism** which he announced, is...able to purify.... This is the **water** of life.... **Circumcise** the hardness of your hearts!... **Wash** therefore, and be clean now... God bids you be **washing** in this laver, and **be circumcised** with the true circumcision.... What need, then, have I of circumcision?... What need have I of that other **circumcision** -- I who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost?"

Just south of Pontus where the apostate Marcion had come from, lay the Phrygian area of central northwestern Asia Minor. That is where the heathen Montanus then resided. He was a paganistic priest practising the ecstatic Proto-Pentecostal tongues-speaking rites of a false religion devoted to the so-called 'earth-goddess' Cybele. That brand of Heathendom was characterized by repeated periodic *taurobolium*-washings with the blood of bulls.

After his own Christian baptism in the Church Universal, Montanus syncretized Cybele's religion with Christianity. That soon led to his exodus from the Church Universal, and to his establishment of his own sect -- Montanism. This then rapidly degenerated into heresy, and finally into apostasy from apostolic Christianity.

The Early Montanists were pseudopentecostalistic schismatics. Many of them ceased practising the Church Universal's rite of infant baptism. After their schismatic secession, they apparently left their own subsequently-born infants unbaptized -- while themselves purporting to baptize adults only. As the great Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff maintained: "In doctrine, Montanism...opposed infant baptism."¹⁴

Around A.D. 185, the Church Father Irenaeus¹⁵ wrote that Jesus "came to be **baptized**...when possessing the full age of a Master (Numbers 3:3 & 4:2f,35,39,43,47 and Luke 3:21-23)...., not despising or evading any condition of humanity...but sanctifying **every age** by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself.... He came to save all...who through Him are born again to God -- **infants** and children.... He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants."

In 195 A.D., the Church Father Clement of Alexandria wrote in his *Instructor*:¹⁶ "Paedagogy is **the training of children** (*paidoon agoogee*).... Jesus said: '**Permit the children** and **do not forbid them to come to Me** -- for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.... Except you be converted and become like little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!... Out of the mouths of **babes** and **sucklings**, You have perfected praise....

"Discipline (*paidagoogia*) we declare to be right guiding, **from childhood**.... Jesus placed a **little child** in the midst.... He says: 'Unless you become **like these children**, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God!'.... The band of **infants**, the new people which we are, is delicate as a child.... Who, then, is this **infant child**?.... Scripture call the infant children **lambs** (John 21:25)....

"**Being baptized**, we are illuminated.... 'I thank You, Father..., that You have hidden these things from the wise..., but have revealed them to **babes**!'.... Shepherd, with wisdom tending **lambs** of the royal flock -- your simple **children** bring!... Let us **sucklings** join to raise!"

Tertullian was born outside the covenant as a Heathen. After becoming a famous lawyer, he was converted and baptized when about forty. Five years later, as a married man, he became a Minister -- before he began to lapse from the Church toward Semi-Montanism around 200 A.D.

Yet Tertullian **did not reject** or invalidate but only wished to **delay** infant baptism. Nevertheless, his by-then-sectarian discouraging of **Paedobaptism** -- only proves that the Church Universal had before and till then been **practising** it!

Tertullian said:¹⁷ "Happy is our sacrament of water!... A viper of the 'Cainite' heresy...has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy **baptism**.... But we, **little fishes**, after the example of...Jesus Christ, are **born in water**....

"The delay of **baptism** is preferable. Principally..., in the case of **little children** (*parvuli*).... (Yet) **the Lord**" -- yes, the Lord Jesus Himself! -- "does indeed say: '**Forbid them not** to come to Me!'" Matthew 19:13-15 and Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17 *cf.* Acts 10:47 with 10:1-2. Wrote Tertullian:¹⁸ "I shall begin with **baptism**.... We are...as **new-born children**!"

There is no evidence Tertullian was ever excommunicated from the Church Universal, despite his later long-enduring sympathies with Semi-Montanism. Augustine relates¹⁹ not only that Tertullian later left Semi-Montanism -- but also that he was subsequently "reconciled to the Universal Church's congregation of Carthage."

Also after Tertullian, the baptism of infants continued. Thus the 254 A.D. Origen, the 258 A.D. Cyprian, and the 264 A.D. Dionysius the Great of Alexandria.

The 254 A.D. Origen held:²⁰ "After the **baptism** of Joshua (3:9-17)...., **the children** of Israel -- since the children of those who came out of Egypt had not received circumcision -- were circumcised by Joshua.... The Lord...takes away the reproach...on the day of Joshua's baptism, when **Joshua purified the children** (Joshua 5:2-9).

"**Infants also are by...the Church baptized.**"²¹ "You were an **infant** when you were **baptized.**"²² "**Infants are baptized.**"²³ "The Church had **from the Apostles** a tradition to **give baptism** even to **infants.**"²⁴

The 258 A.D. Cyprian wrote:²⁵ "**Infants**...should...be **baptized**.... All, whether **infants** or those who are older.... In respect of the observance of **the eighth day** in the...**circumcision** of the

flesh, a sacrament was given beforehand.... When Christ came, it was fulfilled [Genesis 17:1-14 with Colossians 2:11-13]....

"Nobody is to be hindered...from obtaining grace.... Nobody is hindered from **baptism**.... How much rather ought we to shrink from hindering an **infant**!... No one ought to be hindered from **baptism**.... [It] is more to be...observed in respect of **infants** and newly-born persons!"

Cyprian also wrote²⁶ that in Ezekiel 9:4-6, the executioners of God's wrath were commanded to "slay all -- old and young, maids and **little children** -- that had not the **mark** upon their **foreheads**." Apparently, a clear reference to the need for **infant baptism**!

Around 275 A.D., the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* decreed:²⁷ "**Baptize your infants**, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God! For He says: 'Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them!' (Matthew 19:14)

In the fourth century, the 345 A.D. Cyril of Jerusalem said:²⁸ "We are adopted into the **sonship** of Abraham.... We receive, like him, the spiritual **seal** -- being circumcised by the Holy Spirit through **baptism**."

Said the 371 A.D. Gregory Nazianzen:²⁹ "Have you an **infant** child?... Let him be **sanctified from his childhood**! From his very tenderest age, let him be consecrated by the Spirit! Do you fear the **seal**?... Hannah, even before Samuel was born (First Samuel 1:16), promised him to God, and after his birth consecrated him at once.... Give your child the Trinity!...

"Some will say in the case of those who ask for **baptism** -- what have you to say about those who are still **children**?... Are we to **baptize** them too? **Certainly**!... A proof of this is found in the **circumcision on the eighth day**, which was a sort of typical **seal** and was **conferred on children**."

In 395 A.D., Gregory of Nyssa wrote:³⁰ "For the **infant(s)**...there is a natural delight.... (They) will, if they are translated to that life beyond..., participate in that divine delight.... Oftentimes **the existence of those whose life has been a good one, operates to the advantage of their offspring**.... There are hundreds of passages testifying to this in the inspired Writings.... The early deaths of **infants**...happen for the best."

In 397 A.D., Jerome wrote³¹ to Oceanus: "The Spirit of God moved...**over** the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:2). He produced...the **infant** world -- a type of **the Christian child** that is drawn from the laver of **baptism**."

The 400 to 420f A.D. Augustine, in his work *Enchiridion*, wrote:³² "From the **infant** newly born to the old man bent with age..., there is none shut out from **baptism**.... Infants are involved in the guilt of the sins not only of the first pair, but of their own immediate parents. For that divine judgment 'I shall visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children' (Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9) -- certainly applies to them, before they come under the new covenant."

In his work *On Baptism againsts the Donatists*, Augustine added:³³ "This is the firm tradition of the universal Church, in respect of the **baptism of infants**.... No Christian will say that they are baptized to no purpose.... We can form a true conjecture of the value of the sacrament of **baptism in the case of infants**.... It was commanded Abraham that he should **circumcise every male child** (Genesis 17:9-14).... **Isaac...was circumcised on the eighth day** (Genesis 21:4).... The **seal** had been given...**when he was an infant**."

In his book *On Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism*, Augustine insisted:³⁴ "**Infants** ought to be **baptized**.... Mere **infants**...are rightly called **believers**.... They in a certain sense profess faith, by the words of their parents.... As soon as children are born, they are enlightened.... They at all events **ought gladly to receive baptism**....

"This takes place in the case of **infants**, through the sacrament of **baptism**.... Mother Church...uses for them the heart and mouth of a mother, so that they may be imbued with the sacred mysteries.... **Infants** are...to become...**baptized**....

"The Lord ...says 'Except a person be born again of water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of God' (John 3:3-5).... **Infants ought to be baptized**.... **Infants** are to be **baptized**, in order that they may be with Christ in the Kingdom of God.... Should infants die, however, even without baptism -- they will have salvation and eternal life....

"The **children** of baptized persons, are **baptized**.... Even an **infant**.... The **baptism of infants**..., the **Universal Church** with the most pious and maternal care **maintains** in constant celebration."

On Free Will, Augustine said of antipaedobaptistic sects:³⁵ "They are wont to ask also this question, 'What good to **infants** does the sacrament of Christ's **baptism** do?' **The faith of those by whom the child is offered** to be consecrated, **profits the child!**"

Also in his work *On the Rewards of Sins*, Augustine stated:³⁶ "**The regenerating Spirit is...in** those that bring the child, and in **the child that is brought**.... The **water** affords outwardly the sacrament..., and **the Spirit operates inwardly**."

Augustine said to Dardanus:³⁷ "**Infants** sanctified by the **sacrament** of Christ, **regenerated** by **the Holy Spirit**, belong in His temple.... The Spirit dwells **in baptized infants**." And also in Augustine's *African Code*, one reads:³⁸ "Whoever **denies that infants** newly from their mother's wombs **should be baptized**..., let him be **anathema!**"

18. Baptism by sprinkling from Clement of Rome to Jerome

Above, we have just scrutinized the baptism of **infants** of believers -- from the Apostles onward till Augustine in 400-420f A.D. Next, let us scrutinize the baptismal **mode** of baptism -- regardless of the age of the baptizees. The mode is described in the writings of many of those ancient Patristic Fathers -- is the mode of **pouring** or **sprinkling**.

All of the ancient Patristic Fathers, without exception, upheld first-century Christian baptism by **sprinkling**. Thus Clement of Rome, the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyprian, Gregory Thaumaturgos, the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Lactantius, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome.

All baptisms should be administered according to the received and Ancient-Trinitarian custom of triple **sprinkling**. Thus First Kings 18:31-34f and John 1:25-33 and Matthew 28:19 and *Didache* 7 and Ignatius's *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 9 and Justin Martyr's *1st Apology* 61 and Clement of Alexandria's *Who is the Rich Man* 34 & 40, and his *Stromata* V:11.

Clement of Rome spoke in 68 A.D.³⁹ apparently about baptism. He said: "The Spirit of grace" was "**poured upon**...those who...have walked among us unblameably."

Shortly after the completion of the Newer Testament, perhaps around 80f A.D., the *Didache* declares:⁴⁰ "**Concerning baptism**, this is how you must baptize.... **Baptize unto** (*eis*) the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, **with** living water (*en hudati zoonti* alias **with** running water)!.... But if you have none [no running water] -- **pour out water thrice upon the head, unto the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit!**"

In the *Epistle of Barnabas*, around 90 A.D., an Old Testament's ceremony is compared with the similar **sprinkling** of New Testament **baptism**. Speaking about the red heifer, it says:⁴¹ "What do you think this type was?... The males would **sprinkle** the people one by one.... The males who **sprinkle**, are those who preach to us the 'Good Tidings.' Isaiah 52:15f.

Around 150 A.D., Justin Martyr wrote⁴² in his *First Apology* that the **baptizees** "are brought by us where there is **water**...in the name of God the Father...and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. They then receive the **washing** with water.... This washing is called illumination...to **sprinkle** themselves."

In his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Judaist, Justin added:⁴³ "Isaiah (44:1-5 & 52:15 & 63:3 [*cf.* Revelation 19:13]) cries out...that that very **baptism** which he announced, is...able to purify.... This is the **water** of life..."

"Christ the Son of God...was proclaimed...to be the everlasting law and the everlasting covenant.... We who have approached God through Him, have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision.... We have received it through baptism!" Indeed, seemingly commenting on Hebrews 9:9f, Justin Martyr also stated:⁴⁴ "The Law was released from blame...by certain **sprinklings**...and diverse kinds of **baptisms**."

We also find baptismal sprinkling and pouring in the 185 A.D. Irenaeus. He says:⁴⁵ "Many of us...were **baptized** in Christ Jesus.... The Spirit of God as a dove **descended** upon Him.... He said: 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them.... He would **pour** Him [the Spirit] upon servants and handmaids... The Spirit...**descended** at the Day of Pentecost...(as) voluntary **rain** from above..."

"There would be dryness upon the fleece...on which...at first there had been **dew**.... As Isaiah (5:6) says: 'I will also command **the clouds**, that they **rain**'.... The **dew**, which is the Spirit of God Who descended upon the Lord, would be diffused throughout all the Earth."

We find **baptism by sprinkling** also in the 195 A.D. Clement of Alexandria. He asked⁴⁶ about Jesus: "Why was He, the perfect One, **baptized**?.... He was perfected by the washing of baptism..., and was sanctified by the **descent** of the Spirit.... The same also takes place in our case.... **Being baptized**, we are illuminated.... Nourished...with the **dewy** Spirit!"

Clement also wrote⁴⁷ of "the **dew** of the Spirit" and being "**baptized** by **tears**." Said he: "If you truly desire to see God -- take to yourself means of **purification**...like Elijah's **rain** of salvation [First Kings 17:1 & 18:33-45 cf. John 1:15-33]!... **Receive the water**! Wash, you polluted ones! Purify yourselves..., by **sprinkling** yourselves with the true **drops**!"

The 200 A.D. Tertullian too did not oppose baptism in the name of the Triune God by sprinkling. He stated:⁴⁸ "A man is tinged in water, and amid the utterance of some few words is **sprinkled**.... I may seem to have collected rather the praises of **water**, than the reasons of **baptism**....

"The Spirit of the Lord was hovering over the waters.... The primary principle of baptism...was...forenoted by the very **attitude** assumed for a **type of baptism**.... The Spirit of God...hovered **over** (the waters) from the beginning. (It) would continue to linger **over** the waters of the **baptized** (Genesis 1:2)....

"The **nations...carried water around**, and **sprinkled** it (*aspergine*)...everywhere.... They are **baptized** (*tinguntur*)... Others make the suggestion...'that the Apostles then served...**baptism** when in their little ship they were **sprinkled**."

In Deuteronomy 32:2, we read: 'My doctrine shall drip like **the rain**; my speech shall distil like **the dew**.' Tertullian here wrote⁴⁹ that "**young novices**...are only just beginning to **bedew** ..., as whelps in yet early **infancy**.... Who will grant to you...one single **sprinkling**?!"

Even in his own later **Semi-Montanistic** phase from about 200 A.D. onward, Tertullian still advocated -- and insisted upon -- one unrepeatable Triune Baptism (and indeed precisely by the mode of **sprinkling the forehead**). But subsequently, Tertullian implicitly admitted⁵⁰ that even Semi-Montanistic submersionism **lacks** "positive **Scriptural** injunction!" For it makes "a somewhat **ampler** pledge than **the Lord** has appointed in the **Gospel**..., when we are taken up (as **new-born children**)!... I shall begin with **baptism**.... Upon the **forehead** we trace the sign!"

In the third century, we find **baptism by sprinkling** in the 236 A.D. Hippolytus. We also encounter it in the 254 A.D. Origen, in the 258 A.D. Cyprian, in the 265 A.D. Gregory Thaumaturgos, and in the 275 A.D. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*.

The 236 A.D. Hippolytus wrote⁵¹ of Christ's Own baptism that "Christ the Maker of all came down like the **rain** (Hosea 6:3)...., and was baptized in the Jordan.... He **bent** His **head** to

be **baptized** by John.... When Christ the Bridegroom was **baptized**..., the Holy Spirit **descended**.... This is the water in conjunction with the Spirit by which Paradise is watered; by which the Earth is enriched.... Christ was **baptized**.... The Spirit **descended**!"

Wrote the 254 A.D. Origen:⁵² "God by Moses **carried** the people through the Red Sea.... This, Paul speaks of -- 'were **baptized in** the **cloud**' (First Corinthians 10:2)....

"John says: 'I baptize **with** water' (in the Jordan).... Bringing together all that related to the Jordan, let us look at that river. God by...Joshua (3:9-17) carried them through Jordan (**on dry ground**)."

"The coming Elijah [John the baptizer] would **baptize**." For Elijah commanded "four pots of water be **poured upon** (*epicheete*) the sacrifice."⁵³

The 258 A.D. Cyprian wrote:⁵⁴ "Those who obtain God's grace...are...legitimate **Christians**.... They are...**sprinkled** with...water.... Nor ought it to trouble anyone...to be **sprinkled or affused**....

"The...water of sprinkling has...been **sprinkled upon** him' (Numbers 19:8,12f).... **The water of sprinkling is a purification** (Numbers 19:9).... **The sprinkling...of water**, prevails.... If anyone thinks that those have gained nothing by having...been **sprinkled with the...water**, but that they are still empty and void -- let them not be deceived!... Verily, the Holy Spirit is not given by measure -- but is **poured out**...on the believer."

Cyprian also wrote⁵⁵ that in Ezekiel 9:4-6, the executioners of God's wrath were commanded to "slay all -- old and young, maids and little children -- that had **not** the **mark** upon their **foreheads**." Cyprian then applied this to **baptized Christians**, saying it signifies that none can now escape but those only who are "regenerated -- and **signed with Christ's mark**." See too Revelation 3:12 & 7:2-4 & 9:4 & 14:1 & 22:2-4.

The 265 A.D. Gregory Thaumaturgos wrote:⁵⁶ "Come and...see John the Baptizer, as he baptizes One Who needs no baptism and yet submits to the rite -- in order that He (Jesus) may bestow freely upon us the grace of baptism!... Jesus answered and said to him:... 'Lay hold of this **head**, which for this very purpose has been formed by Myself and My Father! Lay hold of this **head** of Mine!... **Baptize Me**, Who am destined to **baptize with water and with Spirit** those who believe in Me!'"

Around 275 A.D., the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* decreed:⁵⁷ "Bishop, you...shall **anoint the head** of those that are to be **baptized**.... You shall in the solemn form, name **over** them -- the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.... **Anoint** the person..., and afterward **baptize** him **with the water**!"

In the fourth century, we find a good number of records of **baptism by sprinkling**. Thus in Lactantius, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, and Jerome.

Around 315 A.D., Lactantius wrote:⁵⁸ "Save the Gentiles also, by **baptism**; that is, by the **pouring forth** of the purifying **dew**!" And around 325 A.D., Eusebius wrote⁵⁹ that even the 260 A.D. schismatic Novatus or Novatianus "received **baptism** by **affusion**."

Around 345 A.D., Cyril of Jerusalem wrote:⁶⁰ "The Spirit **seals** the soul, so that we may draw near to God, 'having our heart **sprinkled**' by the Spirit 'and our body **washed with pure water**' (Hebrews 10:22)

"Noble was he (John) who baptized **with** water! But what to Him Who baptizes **with** the Holy Spirit?...

"The Saviour baptized the Apostles **with** the Holy Spirit..., when 'suddenly there came a sound **from** Heaven like the rushing of a mighty wind.... There appeared to them cleft tongues..., and it sat **upon** each one (Acts 2:2)....

"The Lord will **wash away** the filth of His **sons** and of His **daughters** by the Spirit' (Isaiah 4:4).... 'He will **sprinkle** clean **water** **upon** you' (Ezekiel 36:25).... Christ came so that He might be **baptized**, and might sanctify baptism.... 'The sea saw Him, and **fled**; and Jordan was **driven back**' (Psalm 114:3)....

"The Spirit of the Lord is **upon** Me, because He has anointed Me' (Isaiah 61:1).... And again in Ezekiel (36:25): 'Then will I **sprinkle** clean water **upon** You."

The approximately 358 A.D. Athanasius stated⁶¹ "the Lord Himself says... 'when baptism is given -- whom the Father baptizes, him the Son baptizes..., and...he is consecrated by the Holy Spirit.'" But "there are many...heresies too.... The water which they administer, is unprofitable.... So that he who is **sprinkled** by them, is rather polluted by irreligion."

About 360 A.D., Hilary of Potiers⁶² stated that "God the Father is denoted by the Spirit of God, because our Lord Jesus Christ declared...the Spirit...was **upon** Him -- since He **anoints** Him.... The Son partakes of His nature...through the mystery of this spiritual **unction**...ratified in His **baptism**....

"It shall come to pass'..., says the Lord, 'I will **pour out**...My Spirit' (Acts 2:16f).... **This prophecy was fulfilled in...the Apostles.**"

In 374 A.D., Basil the Great wrote:⁶³ "'As many of you...as were **baptized** into Christ, have put **on** Christ' (Galatians 3:27).... Showing forth as it does the God Who gave, the Son Who received, and the Spirit Who is the **unction**....

"We have learned from Peter in the Acts (10:38), of 'Jesus...Whom God **anointed with** the Holy Spirit.' And in Isaiah (61:1), 'The Spirit of the Lord is **upon** Me, because the Lord has **anointed** Me.' And the Psalmist (45:7), 'Therefore God...has **anointed** You'.... The Spirit **pours** in the quickening power."

Said Basil to a widow **whose son he had baptized**.⁶⁴ "The art of snaring pigeons, is as follows. When the men who devote themselves to this craft have caught one..., they **smear** its wings **with** sweet oil...and let it go.... I have taken your **son** Dionysius...and **anointed** the wings of his soul **with** the sweet oil of God, and sent him to you."

In 381 A.D., Gregory Nazianzen wrote⁶⁵ that "the Law aided...**sprinklings**..., the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.... Let us then be **baptized**, so that we may win the victory! Let us partake of the cleansing waters..., more sacred than the ashes of the heifer sprinkling the unclean (Hebrews 10:19-21)!"

In 384 A.D., Ambrose wrote⁶⁶ that "Jesus...it is...Whose coming **down** was being waited for -- of Whom the Father said to John the Baptizer: '**Upon** Whom you shall see the Spirit **descending**..., this is He Who **baptizes with** the Holy Spirit' (John 1:32)....

"Solomon too says: 'Your name is **ointment poured out**' (Song 1:3).... The **ointment flows down** (Psalm 133:2).... The Prophet said: 'You shall **sprinkle** me...and I shall be cleansed; You shall wash me' (Psalm 51:7).... Moses **sprinkled** (Exodus 12:22).... You have **anointed** my **head** (Psalm 23:5)."

"Elijah placed wood upon the altar and said they should **throw water over** it (First Kings 18:33).... Elijah showed...a type of **baptism**.... The water **poured on** the sacrifice by Elijah...is said to be a **type** of Christian **baptism**" (John 1:25).⁶⁷

In 385 A.D., Gregory of Nyssa wrote⁶⁸ that "it was necessary that some means should be devised by which there might be **in the baptismal process** a kind of **affinity** and likeness between him who follows, and Him Who leads the way.... Every one...is knotted to Him..., by having...**water poured** on him.... It is the same thing for us, to be **baptized with water**....

"We in receiving baptism in imitation of our Lord and Teacher and Guide, are **not** indeed **buried**.... There are spoken **over** us the names of the Three Sacred Persons.... Those daily **sprinklings** of the Hebrews which were...to be made plain in the perfect and marvellous baptism, are near to grace....

"That marvellous sacrifice of (Elijah) the old Tishbite (First Kings 18:33f)...., what else does it do -- but prefigure in action the faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?... He thrice **poured out** the barrels (of water) **upon** the cleft wood.... Elijah clearly proclaimed to us the sacramental rite of baptism that should afterwards be instituted. For the fire was kindled by **water**, thrice **poured upon** it....

"Ezekiel (36:25-27), writing more clearly and plainly..., says: 'And I will **sprinkle** clean **water** upon you.... Moreover, John the Baptizer, illustrious in the spirit of Elijah, sanctified the Jordan.... The voice which the Father uttered from Heaven **upon** the Son at His baptism," echoed "'the voice of the Lord...**upon** the **waters**' (Psalm 29:3f).... 'He makes His...**rain** on the just (Matthew 5:44).... You did **sprinkle** us with clean **water**!'"

Gregory also wrote⁵⁹ that "a human being enters...life -- (and) draws in the air, beginning the process of living.... With no advantage over the embryo in the womb, except that he has seen the air.... Will it receive the just recompense by being...refreshed with the **dew** of blessing?"

In 397 A.D., Jerome of Bethlehem wrote⁷⁰ that in "Ezekiel 36:16 *et seq.*," the Lord God predicted, 'I will **pour out** or **sprinkle** clean water **upon** you.' That, he says, means: "I will **pour out** the clean **water** of saving **baptism**..., so that a new heart...may be given by the **pouring out** and **sprinkling** of **water**."

19. Rebaptisms forbidden from the Apostles to Augustine

There appears to be no case of either false-baptisms or attempted rebaptisms between the time of the Apostles and the 140f A.D. Marcion. And, whether either church baptisms or heretical baptisms were performed by sprinkling or by immersion -- they were never to be repeated. Neither by sprinkling, nor by immersion.

However, we now need to look at the prominent heretic and later apostate Marcion. Around 140 A.D., that rich shipowner from Pontus joined the Church Universal in Rome. There, after being influenced by the Jew-hating Syrian Gnostic and later Docetist Cerdo -- he developed a hatred of the Older Testament.

Marcion then syncretized Cerdo's Paganism with only parts of the Newer Testament -- to the exclusion of all the rest of Holy Scripture. So Marcion was then excommunicated for heresy by and from the Church Universal around 144 A.D.

Marcion then started his own rival religious movement. Paul was then the one from whom he falsely claimed to derive his doctrine. Marcion's canon of sacred writings consisted of only ten Pauline Epistles (minus the Pastorals and the Book of Hebrews), and Luke -- all very appropriately 're-edited' to suit Marcion's own teaching!

Significantly, he omitted Matthew 28:19 with its crucial trinitarian formula for the administration of Christian Baptism. Marcion taught his disciples to believe in his own new god -- beyond and above the Creator! All converts to Marcionism from the Church Universal, being deemed by Marcion previously to have lapsed from virtue, were '**rebaptized**' (*sic*) by him.⁷¹

The Marcionites, explained the later Church Father Epiphanius in his famous book *Heresies*,⁷² taught that "it is lawful to give **three baptisms**!... So, if anyone fall into sin after his first baptism, he may have a second -- and a third, if he fall a second time."

Marcion's god was not the Creator of the universe. Nor was Marcion's christ the Son of the Father Who made Heaven and Earth. Nor was Marcion's christ anointed by the Spirit of that Father and that Son.

Marcionism, then -- with its gnostic and untrinitarian 'baptism' -- was fruitless religion -- and one that through enforced celibacy would extinguish even human life itself. Whereas Christianity, with its Triune Baptism unto everlasting life, was a fruitful way to promote even

human life itself -- within marriage, and also by way of infant baptism. Naturally, the Church insisted on baptizing all converts from Marcionism never previously baptized by the Church.

A little later, the Montanists 'rebaptized' at least certain adults. Such were they who became Montanists after having already been baptized previously. Together with the rise of such Montanistic rebaptizings, other arcane practices like Proto-Pentecostal false tongues-speaking rapidly proliferated among the Montanists -- until many had slidden into non-trinitarian Hypermontanism. As Rev. Dr. Henry Percival declared:⁷³ "The Montanists...rebaptized" those "who 'apostasized' to them."

Increasingly, the Montanists denied the validity of Baptisms performed in the mainline Church Universal. Accordingly, they more and more rebaptized Church Members converted to Montanism. The reverse, however -- at least for very many decades -- was not the case. For the Church Universal strove for uniformity.

It was only when schismatics became so heretical that they no longer administered triune baptism at all, that the Church Universal pronounced such washings to be Non-Christian and apostate, and repudiated the validity of such alleged 'baptisms.' Or when apostates denied the one and only true Triune God altogether; or misidentified any of the Persons of the Trinity.

The schismatic Montanists generally remained Trinitarian, at least initially, and themselves practised triune baptism (or at least triune re-baptism). However, such was not the case with the Phrygian Ultra- or Hyper-Montanists known as the Pepuzites (or '*Pepuzeni*').⁷⁴

The Pepuzites proclaimed their own town of Pepuza the 'New Jerusalem' -- and falsely predicted the soon-return of Jesus to set up His 'Millennial Kingdom' precisely there. Meanwhile, they apparently started 'baptizing' people "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Paraclete speaking through **Montanus**" or alternatively through "**Priscilla**" (one of their 'prophetesses'). Rather than, as Christ had enjoined, baptizing people 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (alias the Ontological Trinity). Such Montanistic and Priscillian 'baptisms' -- the Church, of course, rejected!

The 195 A.D. Clement rightly regarded the non-triune 'baptisms' of anti-trinitarian sects -- as utterly invalid. He stated: "So shall you pass through the water of another' -- reckoning heretical baptism not proper and true water."⁷⁵ For such water, those heretics 'stole' from the only Creator -- the one true Triune God.

Despite the 200f A.D. Tertullian's later long-enduring sympathies with Semi-Montanism, there is no evidence he was ever excommunicated from the Church Universal. Nor is there any evidence he was ever rebaptized into Semi-Montanism. On the issue of the need for a specifically-trinitarian baptism and its unrepeatability, he never wavered.

Tertullian utterly rejected the pseudo-baptisms of Marcionism. For he regarded the Marcionites' god as a 'kidnapper' of the baptismal water which even they admitted belongs to the matter-creating 'Old Testament God' -- Whom they hated! Thus, the convert to Marcion, held Tertullian, is "'baptized' to his god -- in water which belongs to Another,"⁷⁶ the true Triune God!

Tertullian did not regard baptisms administered by schismatics who were still Trinitarians -- as invalid. Consequently, such baptism would not need to be repeated, if those thus baptized later joined the Church. Yet he clearly rejected the so-called 'baptisms' performed in apostasy -- by those who had fallen away from the Triune God.

Said he: "The Apostles had...undergone the human baptism of John.... The Lord Himself had defined **baptism to be one** -- saying to Peter, who was desirous of being washed thoroughly, 'he who has been washed once, **does not need to wash a second time**' (John 13:8-10)....

"There is to us...but **one baptism**...., according to **the Lord's Gospel** and according to the **Apostle**.... 'One God and **one baptism**' (Ephesians 4:4-6).... "Heretics, however, have no fellowship in our discipline.... They and we have not the same God.... **We enter, then, the font once. Once** are sins washed away.... **Never to be repeated!** (John 13:10). We enter, then, the font -- **once!**" For "once" -- yes, "**once** [and for all] -- are sins washed away."

Tertullian never seems to have approved the triple submersionism of Montanism or even of Semi-Montanism. Then too, there is no evidence that Tertullian ever got himself 'rebaptized' (*sic*). Nor is there evidence that he himself subsequently re-baptized anybody.

The A.D. 258 Cyprian wrote:⁷⁷ "The very **baptism of...water**...is indeed is **once received**.... (It) is **not again repeated**."

Around 275 A.D., the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* decreed:⁷⁸ "**Be contented with one baptism alone!**.... **They that attempt to baptize those already initiated, crucify the Lord afresh** (Hebrews 6:1-6)."

According to Eusebius,⁷⁹ the great 265 A.D. Dionysius of Alexandria said "those who came over from heresies, who had apostatized from the Church," were not to be received "back -- though they entreated for it." At least, not until they had publicly reported all things which they had heard.... But then he received them, **without requiring of them another baptism.**"

Around 345 A.D., Cyril of Jerusalem wrote:⁸⁰ "**We may not receive baptism twice or thrice!** Otherwise it might be said -- 'Though I have failed once, I shall set it right a second time'.... For there is 'one Lord, and one faith, and **one** baptism' (Ephesians 4:5)....

In 374 A.D., Basil the Great wrote:⁸¹ "Own the **baptism**...to be **one!** (Ephesians 4:5).... The Lord...gave us the covenant of baptism.... Whence comes...**baptizing thrice**?... Does not this come from...**meddling**?... With regard to **emerging** in **baptism**...., it is **impossible** for anyone **to be immersed three times** -- without **emerging three times!**"

In 384 A.D., Ambrose wrote⁸² that "the Apostle spoke of...those who thought that baptism was to be repeated (Hebrews 6:1-6)".... But the Apostle "teaches **one** baptism. 'One faith,' he says; 'one **baptism**' (Ephesians 4:2-5).... The **reiteration** by anyone of the sacrament **of baptism** -- is **not permitted.**"

In 397 A.D., Jerome of Bethlehem wrote⁸³ that "'the Spirit of the Lord...moved upon the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2). From which it appears that there is no baptism without the Holy Spirit....

"If **an Arian (who denies the Deity of the Son)** cannot give the Holy Spirit, he **cannot even baptize!** Because there is no baptism...without the Holy Spirit. And you, when you receive a person baptized by an Arian and afterwards invoke the Holy Spirit, ought....to baptize him! Because without the Holy Spirit, he could not be baptized.....

"Do you ask what course we must pursue? What we do, our forefathers handed down to us -- as their forefathers to them.... The Galatians had been led away (Galatians 3:1,27).... The Corinthians did not believe the resurrection (First Corinthians 15:12-29f).... Then came Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:13-23).... We do not read that any of these...were **re-baptized!**"

As regards "the Apostle John..., let us show also from his Apocalypse that...**baptism** ought to be allowed **valid**..... It is imputed...to the angel of Ephesus (Revelation 2:4), that he had forsaken his first love. In the angel of the church of Pergamum, the eating of idol-sacrifices is censured, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (2:14f).... Is there any indication of his having said: 'Let them who have been baptized in the faith of the Nicolaitans, be **rebaptized!**'?" No!

After his death in 407 A.D., Chrysostom's *Homily on Hebrews* (6:1-6) was published. There, he wrote:⁸⁴ "What is 'the doctrine of baptisms'? **Not as if there were many baptisms**, but **one only!**

"Why then did he express it ('baptisms') in the **plural**? Because he had said, '**not laying again a foundation!**'.... For **if he again baptized them**..., having been baptized at the beginning..., **they would remain perpetually incorrigible!**....

"It is not open to them to say: 'If we live slothfully, we will be **baptized again!**'... We shall be able again, by being baptized, to wash away our sins!'... For it **is impossible** for those who were once enlightened..., if they shall fall away -- to renew them again unto repentance, crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh....

"It is not possible that Christ should be **re-crucified**.... **He then that baptizes a second time, crucifies Him again!**

"But what is '**crucifying afresh**'? Crucifying over again!... If therefore it is necessary to be **baptized again** (*palin*) -- it is necessary that this same Christ should die again....

"How would He again be baptized?.... **The thing is impossible!**... (The one) who has betrayed all that was granted to him, is not worthy to be renewed again. Neither is it possible that Christ should again be crucified afresh.... There is not, then, any second laver! There is not!.... There is **no second baptism!**"

Finally, there is the great 400-420f A.D. Augustine of Hippo-Regius. In his *On the Creed*, he wrote:⁸⁵ "**Once for all**, we have washing in **baptism**.... **To heretics, we do not change their**

baptism.... If the deserter himself, being amended, begins to do duty as a soldier -- does any man dare to change his mark?"

In his *On Baptism against the Donatists*, Augustine insisted:⁸⁶ "In the case of him who had approached the sacrament in deceit, **there is no second baptism**.... John (the Baptizer)...was upheld in the spirit and power of Elijah (First Kings 18:33f.... Those who were baptized by him, **should not be baptized again**.... **Baptism ought not to be repeated**.... Neither was the baptism of John himself repeated, when the Apostle Paul commanded those who (said they) had been baptized by him -- to be baptized in Christ (Acts 19:2-5)....

"So great is the force of the sacrament of mere baptism, that though we allow that **a man who had been baptized and continues to lead an evil life** requires to be cleansed -- **we yet forbid him to be any more baptized**.... **Heretics, being already baptized with the baptism of Christ** -- although in heresy -- should **not be rebaptized** on coming to the Church.... **Those who have been baptized by them, are not rebaptized** (later by the Church)....

"Supposing you find a man within the Church who has been baptized -- though entertaining hatred towards his brother.... The Lord...says, 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses' (Matthew 6:15). Will you bid such a one, when corrected, to be **baptized afresh**? **Assuredly not!**

"So, neither should you bid the heretic (to be 'baptized afresh')!... I should have no hesitation in saying that **all men possess baptism, who have received it in any place from any sort of men**. Provided that it were consecrated in the words of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19) and received...with some degree of faith."

In *The Three Books of Augustine in Answer to the Letters of Petilian the Donatist*, Augustine said to that Donatist:⁸⁷ "**You** object that **we** have no baptism!... The form of the sacrament even within the Church, fails to profit some -- as it did no good to Simon Magus when he was baptized (Acts 8:9-23)....

"Yet that **baptism remains in them** when they depart (from the Church).... It is not restored to them, when they return (to the Church)....

"Does anyone dare to say that any baptism is false which is given and received in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?... Petilianus said: 'It will be urged against **us** that the Apostle Paul said "One Lord, one faith **one baptism!**"... Augustine replied: 'These words of yours, are arguments against yourself!....

We will not allow that anyone should be (re-)baptized, after baptism from us.... Who is there who comes to baptism free from sin -- with the single exception of Him Who came to be baptized not so that His iniquity should be purged away, but so that an example of humility might be given us?...

"You (say that you) do not baptize men who are infected (by sin). But **you rebaptize them -- so as to infect them with the fraud of your error!**... We do not receive men who are made

yours by baptism. But we destroy that error of yours, whereby they were made yours -- and we receive the baptism of Christ by which they were baptized....

"By what means is he to be cleansed, who receives baptism when the conscience of the giver is polluted?... By what means then have they been cleansed who...have been condemned? **(They) are certainly not washed again!**"

So too in Augustine's *African Code*. It says:⁸⁸ "When those in infancy **baptized by Donatists** are converted, this shall be **no impediment** to them.... **Let there be no rebaptisms!**"

20. Baptism from the Mediaeval Dark Ages till Luther

Later, toward the middle of the fifth century -- just before the Church's submersion into the Dark Ages! -- we still find **Scriptural sprinkling** in **infant baptisms** and **no rebaptisms** administered according to Cyril of Alexandria⁸⁹ and Theodoret.⁹⁰ And sprinkling is also the sole baptismal practice constantly upheld in the ancient *Armenian Liturgical Codex*.⁹¹

At that time, unitarian Vandals were fiercely persecuting trinitarian Christians in North Africa. The Vandals too professed to be Christians, yet they did not believe that Christ was God. Nor did they consent that people should be baptized in the name of the Triune God. For they were Arians.

There were seven baptized trinitarian brothers in Carthage who, on account of their Scriptural confession of holy baptism, were obliged to die the martyr's death. They were offered the friendship of the King of the Vandals and great treasures -- if only they would give up their trinitarian convictions, and submit to Arian baptism **not** according to Matthew 28:19.

But this they refused to do. With one voice they declared to the King of the Vandals: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism!" [Ephesians 4:5] By the grace of God, **baptism shall not be repeated upon us!** For according to the teaching of the Gospel, it is to be **received but once**....

"Keep you wealth and everything else you promise! For you will soon be brought to ruin. But no one will be able to take from our minds the writing [of the name of the Triune God] which the Minister of the Holy Trinity wrote thereon, when he baptized us!"

The Vandals jailed them, tortured, them, and then executed them. But many of the people saw their strong faith, and were thus themselves too strengthened in theirs.

Only from about 450 A.D. onward, did the **deformation** of sprinkling as the Biblical **mode** of baptism increasingly take root. This was the result of the influx into the Church -- of paganizing heresies in general, and of the **submersionistic** heathen 'mystery religions' in particular.

Sadly, **submersionism** then took root even in the Church. The false new theory was, that **the greater the quantity of water at baptism -- the greater was the quantity of sins that were washed away.** Enter the sacramentalistic heresy of **baptismal regenerationism!**

These deformatory tendencies included even **prebaptismal perversions**. Such were: the unnecessary delaying of baptism; the requiring of godparents or other non-parental sponsors; fasting by the candidate; the tasting of milk and honey; anointing; exorcism; exsufflations; divesting unto nakedness; and, alternatively, clothing the neophyte in white.

There were also further **deformations at the time of baptism itself**, then and thenceforth. Such included: consecration of the water; baptismal regeneration; transferring a 'kiss of peace'; immediate post-baptismal communion of the baptizee; and, finally, transubstantiationism.⁹²

Of all the above errors, the paganistic and paganizing heresy of **baptismal regeneration** was probably the most dangerous. Especially this insidious evil, particularly from the middle of the fourth century onward, increasingly promoted the rapid advance of **the further error of total submersion**. For the more water used in baptism, the more potent the baptism was deemed!

Then, outside the Church during the Middle Ages, there were also sectarian groups. Like the non-baptizing Paulicians, the infant-damning Petrobusians, and the diabolical Bogomils.

The neo-paganistic doctrines of the inherent goodness of babies and the denial of their original sin (in certain circles) -- sometimes expressed itself in a rejection of infant baptism. This was found in various heretical sects outside the Church Universal.

Thus, wildcat 'Adoptionists' now arose in Armenia. Too, drawing from Marcionism and Manichaeism -- also most of the Paulicians rejected the Christian sacraments altogether.⁹³

As Professor Dr. Edwin Yamauchi has pointed out⁹⁴ in his article *Manichaeans*: "The Paulician movement...spread in Armenia... The Paulicians came to Bulgaria...and helped to develop the Bogomils.... The latter in turn stimulated the important Manichaean-like heresy of the Cathars or Albigensians."

A group of *Cathari* in Treves rejected infant baptism. Instead..., they substituted their own rite (called the *consolamentum*) -- which also women were allowed to administer.⁹⁵

As Professor Dr. Paul Steeves indicates⁹⁶ in his article *The Paulicians and the Bogomils*, "the Paulicians...held that only the Gospel and Letters of Paul were divinely inspired. An evil deity...had inspired the rest of the New Testament -- and the Old Testament.... This evil deity was the creator and god of this world.... Physical and material...sacraments...must have come from the same evil spirit.... Bogomils began to teach that the first-born son of God was Satanael.... The Bogomils...rejected baptism and communion as Satanic rites."

In Western Europe Peter de Bruys and his 'Petrobusians' and Henry of Lausanne and his 'Henricians' practised rebaptism. They rejected infant baptism, and themselves purported to baptize as adults such whom the Church had baptized previously during infancy. Even according to the modern British Baptist Erroll Hulse -- just like the later Anabaptists, "Peter de Bruys...rejected large parts of Scripture and embraced the false doctrine of 'soul-sleep.'⁹⁷

According to the great British Scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall,⁹⁸ "the Petrobrusians -- otherwise called the 'Henricians' -- did own water-baptism, and yet denied infant-baptism.... **Peter Bruis and Henry [of Lausanne were] the two first antipaedobaptist preachers in the World.**" Yet they rejected most of the Bible, and promoted the heresy of 'soul-sleep.'

Ritualistic Rome, with her rigid heresy of baptismal regenerationism, increasingly practised baptism specifically by submersion. Yet we also encounter the protests of the Proto-Protestant Waldensians.

While rejecting Romanism's various ritualistic additions to baptism, these disciples of Peter Waldo did not repudiate the validity of any trinitarian baptisms as such. Not even when performed in the Church of Rome.

Whenever the Waldensians were unable to avail themselves of the rather scarce services of their own (mostly-itinerant) Pastors, some of them very questionably arranged for their own children to be baptized even by Romish priests -- rather than to remain unbaptized. Still others, with reluctance, even delayed for a few years those baptisms (because not necessary for salvation) -- until their own Waldensian Pastors were later available, and able to officiate.

"The Waldensians," Martin Luther rightly wrote,⁹⁹ "baptized little ones.... They proceed, then, to baptize little children."

The Waldensians' own historic adherence to infant baptism is clearly seen in their 1655 *Waldensian Confession*. There they state:¹⁰⁰ "We do agree in sound doctrine with all the Reformed Churches of France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland...and others as it is set forth by them in their Confessions."

By 1250 A.D., the Romanist Aquinas¹⁰¹ standardized baptismal regeneration as the only baptismal view. Submersionism increased. The 1284 Romish Council of Nemours limited head-sprinkling only to cases of necessity.¹⁰² Submersionism can still be seen throughout ritualistic Eastern "Orthodoxy" -- as well as in the entire Eastern rite of Romanism.

By 1377 A.D., the Pre-Reformer John Wycliffe and by 1402 A.D. the Wycliffe Jan Huss assailed the Romish Mass. But neither of them ever questioned infant baptism.

To the contrary, Wycliffe declared:¹⁰³ "On account of the words in the last chapter of Matthew [28:19], our church introduces believers who answer for the infant.... The child of a believer is carried into the church to be baptized, according to the rule of Christ." Yet "it seems hard...to assert" like the Romanists, "that this infant will be lost" if dying unbaptized! Nevertheless, "without a doubt, infants are duly baptized with water."

After some Romanists murdered Huss, his numerous followers at first received the sacraments from Romish priests who joined them. But in 1467 they effected an independent organization, under the leadership of one Michael -- formerly a Catholic priest.

The ex-priest Michael and his minority party 'United Brethren' forgot that baptism had replaced circumcision; and that re-baptism is therefore just as impossible as is re-circumcision.

So they revolutionarily went and elected by lot three priests from their number. Then those of that number were all solemnly 'rebaptized' themselves, by those three priests.

This latter act was a Neo-Donatist and catabaptistic error. Never, however, did they either abandon infant baptism as such -- nor rebaptize as adults those they deemed to have been baptized in infancy. Though indeed confused Catabaptists -- they were not antipaedobaptistic Anabaptists. Still less were they adult-submersing Baptists.

Fortunately, some of the later and better theologians of this 'minority party' within the Bohemian Brethren -- soon resiled from their catabaptistic position. It seems this 1467^f Bohemian Brethren 'minority party' had already abandoned its catabaptistic doctrines by 1504. No doubt its leaders informed the antirebaptismal Martin Luther about this, before he supported them in 1520.

In their 1504 *Bohemian Confession*, they courageously distanced themselves from the previous rebaptistic lapse of some of their own ancestors. They explained:¹⁰⁴ "It is not unknown to anyone, that we do not belong to the party of the Anabaptists.... We had already existed many years before them, and we do not defend their error-filled teachings.

"We have nothing in common with the Anabaptists...and have taken over nothing from them.... Our association has been in existence for much longer -- from before anyone ever first heard anything about the Anabaptists....

"Our ancestors were wont to rebaptize those who had been baptized by Romish priests in former years. Yet they still had an altogether different viewpoint and another purpose and an entirely other reason than the Anabaptists.

"However, even this rebaptism has been abolished completely among us.... We too used to regard the baptism administered by them (the Romish priests), as invalid and void.... They have just as much guilt toward us, as we have toward them -- in rebaptizing the baptized." For both the Romish and the Bohemian rebaptismal practices were, and are, clearly unbiblical.

Article 12 of the 1535 *Bohemian Confession* declares that "children are baptized...and dedicated to Christ...according to His words: 'Permit the children to come to Me!' (Matthew 19:14). Therefore, we baptize ours.... We do not baptize them again thereafter; and we no longer rebaptize [our converts from Romanism]....

"They [a former generation of the 'minority party' within the Bohemian Brethren] previously rebaptized those who wished to be taken up into our churches.... The Romanists violently fought against the 'Bohemians'.... In several localities the one repeated the baptism of the other. For long, they persevered in the greatest hatred....

"This kind of rebaptism existed in our churches -- until we acquired a better insight about this.... In the course of time..., through the goodness of God the light of truth illuminated our men more brightly.... After they had investigated the Scriptures more carefully, and after they had at the same time been supported by the help of several learned men -- they realized that rebaptism is not necessary....

"They then immediately discontinued and abolished it, with the approval of all. Hence, with the general agreement of our men, every repetition of baptism was abolished.... Nowhere is baptism any longer repeated among us."

Only at the advent of Luther and the Protestant Reformation was this paganizing perversion fully reversed. For it was then that Biblical baptism -- with its meaningful mode of Scriptural sprinkling -- was reformatory restored!

21. Baptism in Luther and Zwingli despite the Anabaptists and the Baptists

Three years after the Protestant Reformation of the Romish Church commenced, Luther called Pre-Reformational Romanism *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. In his famous tract by that name, he boldly declared¹⁰⁵ that "the Papacy is the kingdom of Babylon." Yet even there, he insisted, one still finds "**the sacrament of baptism....**"

"Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who according to the riches of His mercy has **preserved in His Church, His sacrament!**.... He desired that by it, little **children...might be...sanctified** in the simple faith of His Word.... **Satan...could not quench the power of baptism in little children!**"

Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ's blessing of the children in Mark 10:14f -- Luther emphasized¹⁰⁶ that **infant faith is present "before, or certainly in, the baptism....** If any baptism is certain of success, **the baptism of children is most certain...** In adults there may be deception.... But in children there can be no deception!"

Two years after Luther started the Protestant Reformation, Andreas Carlstadt began to attack the Church's doctrine of worship. But he then rapidly became increasingly fanatical, libertarian, populistic, and revolutionary. By 1521, he had become quite closely associated with the left-wing lunatic Thomas Münzer. This resulted in the rise of the so-called 'Zwickau Prophets' alias the first of the anabaptistic *Schwärmer* or swarms (of heretics).

In December 1521, the 'Zwickau Prophets' Niclas Storch, Thomas Drechsel and Marcus Stübner appeared in Wittenberg -- claiming direct divine inspiration [*cf.* Pentecostalism!]. They then went on, and preached the overturn of present conditions.

Significantly, the modern British Baptist Historian Erroll Hulse rightly calls¹⁰⁷ these first German Anabaptists "radical prophets." Explains Hulse: "The leaders of this group were Storch, Stübner and Münzer -- the latter of ill-fame, because of his...claim of 'prophecy' [or] the ability of 'inspired speech' similar to the claims of Neo-Pentecostals today.... Carlstadt, a well-known personality in town, was much influenced by the visitors. Eventually, he came to the position where he refused to administer infant baptism."

Münzer preached in a violent way. He also organized his followers into bands, ready to take up arms. He was a fierce fanatic, possessed of a demoniac spirit. When previously a Romanist, he became father-confessor in a Bernadine convent -- yet, even then, he was plagued with radical doubt as to the existence of God.

However, after he entered the circle of the three so-called 'Zwickau Prophets' -- Münzer went around preaching a radical Biblicism characterized by direct revelation in visions and dreams, the abandonment of infant baptism, the ascendancy of the Antichrist, and belief in the millennium right then to be set up by him here on Earth. He appears to have encouraged the postponement of baptism until children should be of sufficient age to understand the action.

Luther denounced Zwickau as "Babylon" (*cf.* Isaiah 48:20). He elaborated: "I see that the people are delivered up to Satan [*cf.* First Corinthians 5:5].... Anabaptists teach that if you wish to know Christ, you must...become a Nicolaitan [*cf.* the Antinomians in Revelation 2:14-15]. This is manifestly diabolical advice, which is in conflict with the First and Second Tables [of the Decalogue]."

The social ferment out of which the Peasants' War arose, had its beginning far back of the Reformation. It had been in progress for a full century before the Reformation began. Heretical ideas of many kinds had combined. The hope of the coming millennium glowed most brightly in many peasant hearts. Münzer was preaching religious revolution. The *Twelve Articles of All the Peasants* were adopted by many of the unlearned masses.

The peasants of Swabia attacked their landlords and rulers -- and plundered and destroyed castles, monasteries, and churches. Revolutionary insurrection now spread rapidly across the whole of Southwestern and Central Germany. Soon, all was in uproar. Palaces, castles, convents and libraries were all put to the torch by Münzer's Proto-Communist Anabaptists. Then they ruled from the City of Münster -- as proletarian princes!

Proclaimed Münzer:¹⁰⁸ "All things shall be common.... They shall be distributed according to each one's necessity.... Whatever prince, count or lord will not submit to this -- being forewarned, his head shall be stricken off or he shall be hanged!"

Luther then reacted to these Anabaptists. With restraint, he replied¹⁰⁹ that a true Minister "does not baptize in his own name..., but **in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.** It is thereinto that I see the baptizee baptized...or **sprinkled** with water....

"John portrays baptism so that we should not regard it only as water. For Christ, he says [First John 5:6], does not come with water alone -- as the **Anabaptists** [*Wiederteuffer*] allege.... Peter [in his First Epistle 1:2 & 3:20 and also in his Second Epistle 1:16-21] says that one is baptized and **sprinkled**....

"Peter [First Epistle 1:2 & 1:23-25] says that sprinkling means nothing else but preaching.... **The water of sprinkling**, is Holy Scripture.... Therefore such preaching and baptizing [Matthew 28:19f] is equivalent to being sprinkled with the blood of Christ Himself!...

"Concerning infant baptism.... Children are rightly baptized, and they too believe.... Such **infant baptism** devolves from the **Apostles** [Acts 2:14-39 & 16:15 & 16:33 & 18:8 and Romans 4:11 & 6:3f and First Corinthians 1:16 & 7:14 & 16:15 and Colossians 2:11-13]....

"It is obvious that infant baptism is apostolic (Acts 2:14-39). Such is clear also from Acts 16:15 (Lydia and all her baptized household) & 16:33 (the Philippian jailer and all his baptized

household) & 18:8 (Crispus and all his baptized household) and Romans 4:11 & 6:3f and First Corinthians 1:16 (Stephanus and all his baptized household) & 7:14 & 16:15."

Eight years passed after Luther started the German Protestant Reformation in 1517. And six years passed after Zwingli continued that Reformation in Switzerland in 1519. Only then did the Anabaptists there started rebaptizing -- by sprinkling or pouring water on adults previously baptized in their infancy.

Rebaptizing already-baptized Christians, thus started with the Anabaptists only after the Reformation! Rebaptizing was continued by the later Baptists, who commenced submersing from about 1640 onward.

In the years culminating in 1524, the violent and polyandrous Anabaptists had torn Germany apart. Ominously, a similar situation was now threatening to develop in Switzerland too. For the rumblings of the Peasant War in Germany soon reached the German-speaking areas also of Switzerland.

The Swiss Protestant Reformer Ulrich Zwingli -- son of a village magistrate, graduate of the University of Vienna, and Bible Student -- was rightly alarmed. The Anabaptists were radical revolutionists. Their social views -- as reflected in their demand that adult Christians get themselves rebaptized and turn society upside down -- made Luther's previous controversy even against Rome now seem peripheral.

The great Church Historian Philip Schaff has shown¹¹⁰ that "radicalism was identical with the Anabaptist movement.... The baptismal question was secondary. It [Anabaptism] involved an entire reconstruction of the Church and of the social order. It meant revolution."

Ulrich Zwingli's Switzerland now became much disturbed by the Anabaptist heresies. The Swiss Anabaptist Conrad Grebel was already in correspondence with the communist revolutionary and German Anabaptist Thomas M nzer. Grebel called him "the sincere and true proclaimer of the Gospel Thomas M nzer..., our faithful and beloved brother!"

Then Grebel added: "Your book against false faith and baptism was brought to us, and we were more fully informed and confirmed.... It rejoiced us wonderfully that we found one who was of the **same** Christian mind with us....

"On the matter of baptism, your book pleases us well, and we desire to be further instructed by you. We understand that even an adult is not to be baptized without Christ's rule of binding and loosing....

"As to the [Protestant] objection that faith is demanded of all who are to be saved -- we [Anabaptists] exclude children from this.... We do not believe that children must be baptized.... Infant baptism is a senseless, blasphemous abomination....

"You know this ten times better, and have published your protests against infant baptism.... I have already begun to reply to all...who have hitherto misleadingly and knowingly written on

baptism, and have deceived concerning the senseless blasphemous form of baptism -- as, for instance, Luther....

"Establish and teach only...unadulterated baptism!... You are better informed than a hundred of us.... You are far purer than our men here.... [Signed:] Conrad Grebel..., Felix Manz..., and seven new young Münzers against Luther!"

The Swiss Protestant Reformer Zwingli, however, declared:¹¹¹ "I leave baptism untouched... **We must practise infant baptism.**" In his letter to his colleague Vadian, Zwingli wrote: "The issue is not baptism, but revolt!"

Exclaimed Zwingli of the Anabaptists:¹¹² "Their rebaptism is a clear sign that they intend to create a new and different Church. Biblical baptism, however -- just like circumcision -- can be performed once only.... The New Testament knows only one baptism [Ephesians 4:4-6]. Neither Christ nor the holy Apostles ever repeated it -- or taught that it needed to be repeated."

Zwingli rightly saw¹¹³ that "the children of Christians are not less the children of God than their parents are, or than the children in Old Testament times were." So, seeing they "belong to God -- who will refuse them baptism?"

The Anabaptists had stubbornly rejected the baptism of covenant infants. So Zwingli now finally condemned their views -- in an open public debate with them.¹¹⁴

The Reformer Bullinger was an eye-witness at that great public debate. It took place in the Zurich Town Hall. There, the Anabaptists argued that infants cannot believe.

But Ulrich Zwingli showed that infant baptism had replaced infant circumcision (Genesis 17 cf. Colossians 2:11-13), and that also the infants of Christians are themselves 'holy' (First Corinthians 7:14). He published his arguments (five months later) in a book. That bore the very appropriate title: *On Baptism, Rebaptism, and Infant Baptism*.

Zwingli won that debate, hands down. Another disputation was held, and a third -- with the same result. As Bullinger later declared, the Anabaptists just could not answer Zwingli.¹¹⁵

Within four days of being trounced by Zwingli in the great debate, at one of their sectarian meetings the ex-priest Blaurock boldly asked his colleague Grebel to rebaptize him in the house of their colleague Manz. Blaurock then in turn rebaptized all the others present.

So, these Anabaptists started their first church by rebaptizing one another -- eight years after Luther's Protestant Reformation. As the modern submersionistic British Baptist Erroll Hulse has admitted:¹¹⁶ "The first baptism" occurred, "when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Manz.... In the course of the week following the first baptism, thirty-five were baptised by **affusion** (**pouring**) at Zollikon."

Subsequently too, Blaurock rebaptized by **sprinkling**; and Manz by **pouring**.¹¹⁷ As the famous Church Historian Richard Nitsche has shown in his great work *The History of the*

*Anabaptists in Switzerland at the Time of the Reformation:*¹¹⁸ "We hardly encounter a single formal submersion!"

The Anabaptist Manz later recounted the dramatic events among the Swiss Anabaptists. He then wrote:¹¹⁹ "Just as John baptized..., so they were poured over with water."

Manz bizarrely decreed that "infant baptism...is against the example of Christ Who...was baptized at thirty years.... Christ has given us an example.... As He has done -- so also ought we to do!"

But Manz himself died when only twenty-nine! Consequently, in getting himself (re-)baptized before his early death, Manz rejected his own inane injunction that baptism "ought" to be received precisely when thirty! For Manz did not understand it was at age thirty that Jesus was anointed to be a priest (Numbers 3:3 to 4:3,35)!

The great Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff describes¹²⁰ how, after losing their three public debates against Zwingli, "the Anabaptists...arranged processions and passed...in sackcloth...through the streets of Zurich..., abusing 'the old dragon' (Zwingli)...and exclaiming: 'Woe, woe unto Zurich!'" Thus, they caused a great uproar.

"The leaders were arrested.... A commission of ministers and magistrates was sent to them, to convert them. Twenty-four professed conversion [from their Anabaptism and their social aberrations], and were set free....

"Fourteen men and seven women were retained..., but made their escape.... Grebel, Manz and Blaurock were rearrested and **charged with communistic and revolutionary teaching.**"

According to Zwingli,¹²¹ "the Anabaptists have their wives in common." They "meet at night...for lewd practices."

Zwingli also wrote¹²² his refutation of the Anabaptist Balthazar Hübmaier's little book *Concerning the Christian Baptism of Believers*. Zwingli published too his own *Polemic against the Catabaptistic Catastrophe*. There, he showed that rebaptism amounts to recrucifying Christ [Hebrews 6:1-6].

Zwingli further published a work titled *Questions Concerning the Sacrament of Baptism*. Indeed, in his *Confession of Faith*, he declared¹²³ that "specifically the children of Christians belong without exception to the Church of God's people. The attacks of the Anabaptists have no power against this.... The Anabaptists err thoroughly, inasmuch as they refuse baptism to the children of believers -- and err in many other ways too."

Only eighty years later, the British Baptists emerged in 1609. At that time, according to the modern American Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. R.G. Torbet,¹²⁴ the British Anabaptist John Smyth **re-baptized himself** -- and was later **re-rebaptized by the Anabaptists** by way of **pouring**, just before his death in 1610. This reminds one somewhat of the earlier **Hemerobaptists**,¹²⁵ who got themselves **re-re-baptized** -- after **re-re-sinning** -- **every day of their lives!**

After this, Smyth's colleague Thomas Helwys issued a *Declaration of Faith*. There he denied that baptism "appertaineth to infants" -- before establishing the first Baptist Church in England in 1611.

The first so-called 'Reformed Baptist' congregation was formed in England only in the 1630s. But by 1638, this group has rejected sprinkling -- and descended into submersionism.

In 1639, Roger Williams was submersed by Ezekiel Hollyman -- and in turn then submersed Hollyman and ten others, thus constituting the first Baptist Church in America. But a few months afterwards, he renounced his own rebaptism, because his baptizer Hollyman had not himself been submersed when he had submersed Williams!¹²⁶

Since, the Baptists have either moved somewhat toward Calvinism, or lapsed toward Arminianism. Yet the Baptists have increased -- especially in the United States of America, where some 90% of all Baptists now live. In 1975, the Baptist Hulse told us there were then less than 34 million Baptists worldwide.¹²⁷ Today, there are perhaps 40 million of them -- as compared to well over 1,000 million other Christians -- who all baptize infants.

However, especially since the start of the twentieth century, some of the Baptists have degenerated into "jump-for-Jesus" and "tongues-speaking" trinitarian or even unitarian submersionistic Pentecostals. Which is a jump right back to the excesses of many of the Anabaptists, right after Luther and before Calvin!

22. Baptism in Calvin's extensive knowledge of the Anabaptists

The modern British Baptist Erroll Hulse, has trivialized Calvin's knowledge of baptism. For Hulse even claims: "Calvin did not have...much contact with the Anabaptists."

What!? Did Calvin not write about even the first Anabaptist M \ddot{u} nzer? Did he not have strong contact with the Anabaptist Servetus? With the Anabaptists' soul-sleep? With their *Schleitheim Articles*? With their Proto-Pentecostal Belot and Pocquet and Quintin? With the Anabaptist Pastor Jean Stordeur and his wife Idelette? And with the Anabaptist Leader Hermann of Gerbehay and Count John Bomeromenus?

Here, Hulse seems ignorant of Calvin's *Second Defence of the Sacraments*. There he states¹²⁸ his opponent was "mixing us up with the Anabaptists" like "Thomas Muntzer" (or M \ddot{u} nzer). Calvin admits that "we sometimes allow **children to die unbaptized**.... We hold that **baptism** instead of regenerating or saving them, **only seals** the **salvation** of which they were **previously partakers**.... What then did the **Anabaptists** do? What **Muntzer**?!"

Hulse seems oblivious also of the fact that the Unitarian Servetus (with whom Calvin had very much contact!) was an Anabaptist. As Calvin noted: "Servetus was both an Anabaptist and the worst of heretics."¹²⁹

Calvin also wrote:¹³⁰ "In our day have arisen certain frantic men, such as Servetus and others who by new devices have thrown everything into confusion.... The name of 'Trinity' was so

much disliked, nay detested, by Servetus -- that he charged all whom he called 'Trinitarians' with being atheists."

Calvin further observed:¹³¹ "I am unwilling to annoy the reader with the series of conceits which Servetus, not the least among the Anabaptists -- nay, the great honour of this crew -- when girding himself for battle, deemed...to be...arguments." He wrongly assumes that "infants...are unable to believe." To Servetus, all infants still "lie under condemnation."

Despite Genesis 1:1-3 & 1:26 and Psalm 33:6-9 and Matthew 28:19 *etc.*, Servetus denounced the Christian God as a dog with three heads! Sentenced to death for his blasphemy and promotion of revolution, at his trial the court disregarded Calvin's plea that Servetus not be executed by fire at the stake.

Even while Servetus was on death row, the Trinitarian Calvin visited that Anabaptist in jail -- and pleaded with him then and there to receive Christ as the eternal Son of God. But Servetus refused, and went to his death as an unrepentant and violent anabaptistic Unitarian.

Hulse also seems to be unaware of Calvin's *Psychopannychia*. He wrote it in 1534, and published it in 1542 -- against the Anabaptist doctrine¹³² of soul-sleep. That error is still taught today by certain Neo-Anabaptist groups -- by the Anabaptists' stepchildren such as the Seventh-day Adventists and the so-called Jehovah's witnesses.

"These babblers have so actively exerted themselves," wrote Calvin in the *Forward* to his book about the soul-sleep theory of the Anabaptists,¹³³ "that they have already drawn thousands into their insanity. And even the error itself has, I see, been aggravated.

"At first, some only vaguely alleged that the soul sleeps -- without defining what they wished to be understood by 'sleep.' Afterwards arose those *Psucho-ktonoi*, who '**murder** souls' -- though without inflicting a wound.

"The error of the former, indeed, was not to be borne.... The madness of the latter ought to be severely repressed....

"The evil...makes far too much progress..., gaining ground daily and eating in like a cancer. Nor does it now appear for the first time. For we read that it originated with some [Pre-Islamic] Arabs, who maintained that 'the soul dies with the body and that both rise again at the Day of Judgment.' Eusebius: *Church History* VI:36[f]....

"It lay smouldering for some ages, but has lately begun to send forth sparks -- being stirred up by some dregs of Anabaptists. These, spread abroad far and wide, have kindled torches.... Would that they were soon extinguished by that voluntary rain which the Lord hath set apart for His inheritance!... Tumults of vain opinions!... Giddy spirits disturb the peace!"

Calvin explains¹³⁴ he was "referring to the nefarious herd of Anabaptists, from whose fountain this noxious stream did...first flow.... It was...more my intention to bring all back into the right way, than to provoke them."

Thus, the Anabaptists' soul-sleep doctrine is thoroughly unbiblical. Concludes John Calvin: "I again desire all my readers...to remember that the Catabaptists -- whom, as embodying all kinds of abominations it is sufficient to have named -- are the authors of this famous dogma. Well may we suspect anything that proceeds from such a forge -- a forge which has already fabricated, and is daily fabricating, so many monsters!"

Coming now to the Anabaptist doctrine of Christ's flesh, the Protestant Reformer Calvin declares in his *Brief Instruction...Against the Errors of the Common Sect of the Anabaptists*, in his *Treatises Against the Anabaptists*:¹³⁵ "It is not good for me to close my eyes to these...gravely persistent and spiteful views, since they are so common among them. What some among them have held concerning property in common -- or that a man may have several wives, even compelling some who were content with one to take more [wives]....

"The Manichees fantasized that Jesus Christ brought a heavenly body into the womb of the virgin His mother. The Marcionites [too, gnostically] had a...delusion that He did not have a [really human or] truly substantial body.... The end of both [heresies], has been to deny that Jesus Christ was descended from human seed.... The Anabaptists in this way only stir up errors."

Continues Calvin: "The Anabaptists in general all hold that souls, being departed from the body, cease to live -- until the day of the resurrection....

"Let the Anabaptists [then] hold to the quarrel of the Sadducees their predecessors! And let them maintain it against Saint Paul!... We have reproved the error of the Anabaptists, who make believe that souls sleep as if dead and without any consciousness.... The Anabaptists' delusion concerning the sleep of souls was never advocated by anyone, save by a heretical sect."

Hulse also seems unaware of Calvin's *Brief Instruction...Against the Errors of the Common Sect of the Anabaptists*, where he gives a detailed discussion of the various heresies of Anabaptism. There, he formally refutes also the Communism of their *Schleitheim Articles*.

The First Article of the Schleithem Anabaptists declares that "baptism...ought to be administered to those who request it for themselves, not for infants as is done in the Pope's kingdom." Here, Calvin responds:¹³⁶ "Infant baptism is not a recent introduction, nor are its origins traceable to the Papal Church.... It has always been a holy ordinance observed in the Christian Church....

"They [the Anabaptists] will not accept this similitude that we acknowledge between circumcision and baptism [Colossians 2:11f etc.].... Nevertheless, God did not fail to command little children to be circumcised." Genesis 17:7f.

The Third Article of the Schleithem Anabaptists declares that "the sword [is]...outside the perfection of Christ.... [There,] the ban is the heaviest penalty -- without corporal death."¹³⁷

Magistrates are also to protect against the theft of private property (the very existence of which the Anabaptists deprecate). Observes Calvin: "The miserable fanatics have no other goal than to put everything into disorder -- to undo the commonwealth of property in such a way that whoever has the power to take anything, is welcome to it....

"I thus put in opposition to the Anabaptists -- Moses, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Joseph, Daniel, and all the kings and judges of Israel! See if they [the Anabaptists] can support their cause, by asking whether these kings were banished from the Kingdom of God -- for having had charge of the sword in this World!...

"Isaiah [60:3] certainly contradicts them -- promising that earthly kings will serve in the heavenly and spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Saint Paul also says the same (First Timothy 2:2).... He shows that the chief end of magistrates is...to ensure that God is served and honoured in their countries, and that each person leads a good and honest life.

"Thus we see with respect to this matter how false and perverse the Anabaptists' allegations are -- by which they condemn the vocation of magistrates which God has so highly approved.... For they make war against God, in wanting to revile what He has exalted....

Continues Calvin:¹³⁸ "The Anabaptists in general all hold that souls, being departed from the body, cease to live -- until the day of the resurrection.... This was the error of the Sadducees, which was expressly reproved in Scripture [Acts 23:6f]....

"Let the Anabaptists [then] hold to the quarrel of the Sadducees, their predecessors! And let them maintain it against Saint Paul" -- and even against the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Luke 16:23-28 & 20:27f.

"We have reproved the error of the Anabaptists, who make believe that souls sleep as if dead and without any consciousness.... The unfaithful person's soul, [however] -- being **departed from the body** -- is like a malefactor who has already received his sentence of condemnation and now awaits only the hour when he shall be led to the gallows for execution.... They are in extreme agony, awaiting the execution of their sentence....

"Faithful souls after death, we can say...are [not asleep but] at **rest** [Revelation 6:9-11 & 14:13]. Not because they are in a perfect state of blessedness or glory, but because they **are content with the joy and consolation that God grants them while awaiting the day of their final redemption**.... The Anabaptists' delusion concerning the sleep of souls was never advocated by anyone!"

Calvin also seems to reprehend the Quasi-Pentecostalism of the Anabaptists. This is seen in what he says about the Anabaptists Belot, Pocquet, and Quintin.

Declares the great Reformer of Geneva:¹³⁹ "I should warn all the truly faithful of their malice. For the Anabaptists cannot make their cause appear good, except by muddling everything to the extent that their entire teaching is a confused mess. For like a body without a head or arms or feet, they often use forms of speech that are absurd and outlandish."

Claims the Baptist Hulse:¹⁴⁰ "We have only Calvin's description to go by. But he mockingly caricatures Belot as 'giving himself with raised head and rolling eyes the majestic aspect of a prophet.'"

Now it is true that Calvin did describe the Anabaptist Belot as "giving himself with raised head and rolling eyes the majestic aspect of a Prophet." But Hulse omitted to mention that Belot had 'invaded' Geneva -- precisely in order to distribute tracts advocating perfectionism and denouncing the civil oath. Hulse further omitted to mention that Belot had obnoxiously and falsely accused the humble and impoverished Calvin of living in luxury.

In his own customary way, Calvin had spoken politely to Belot. However, that Anabaptist then defiantly snubbed the great Reformer.¹⁴¹

Then there was the Proto-Pentecostal Anabaptist Anthony Pocquet. Wrote John Calvin:¹⁴² "I have decided to inform the reader...by inserting here the ramblings of Monsieur Anthony Pocquet.... He begins to 'froth at the mouth' -- as Saint Jude says (verse 16)....

"He pretends to save the World from the simple and pure teaching of the Scripture. **As if** it were the wisdom of Christians to search after **new** revelations!...

"What he calls 'the natural law of growing and multiplying'; and what he adds about our having to return to that, in order to experience original innocence -- follows from the [libertine anabaptistic] doctrine of 'spiritual' marriage. *I.e.*, that each should unite with the other -- wherever it suits....

"Monsieur Anthony Pocquet...is a wolf in sheep's clothing.... His daydreams are so silly and absurd, that among sane intelligent people it is enough to have pointed them out....

"He says that medicine came into the World through the suggestion of the evil spirit.... He says we are not obligated to do God's Commandments!"

Finally, there was the Anabaptist Quintin. Explains Calvin:¹⁴³ His followers "possess a unique jargon which is understood only by their brotherhood.... The Quintinists possess an **unbelievable tongue** in which they banter, to the extent that one understands it about as little as a bird's song!"

Calvin calls these followers of the libertine Anabaptist Quintin, "loud-mouthed boasters" -- like the "scum and froth" mentioned in Second Peter 2:18 and Jude 16. "They babble....

"I remember once in a large group how Quintin...told me that I found his ideas unacceptable -- owing to a lack of understanding. To which I replied that I understood better than he -- since he knew nothing that he was saying!..."

"God created the tongue for the purpose of expressing thought, in order that we might be able to communicate with each other. Consequently, it is a perversion of God's order to pommel the air with a confused sound that cannot be understood....

"Similarly, every Christian must be warned that when he hears them garbling as they do -- he must cut them off immediately at the spigot. And say to them: 'Either speak the language that the Lord has taught us and which He uses in His Scriptures -- or go speak to the rocks and trees!'"

Yet, adds Calvin, it is before **men** that Quintinists still "speak with a doubtful tongue -- a practice that even pagans condemned." Indeed, our Lord "Jesus Christ...did not...babble unintelligently...after the example of their predecessors the Priscillianists" alias the proto-pentecostalistic Montanists! First Kings 18:26-28 *cf.* Matthew 6:7.

"This sect is certainly different from that of the Papists -- inasmuch as it is a hundred times worse and more pernicious!"

The Baptist Hulse also minimized the considerable contact Calvin had with Pastor Jean and Mrs. Idelette Stordeur -- especially when they were both still Anabaptists. After evangelizing him, Calvin converted the Anabaptist Pastor Jean Stordeur -- as well as the latter's wife Idelette -- from Anabaptism to Protestantism. Of course, neither Jean nor Idelette herself were rebaptized -- after they relinquished Anabaptism, when they became Protestants. After Jean Stordeur's death, Calvin then married his widow -- the by-then-protestantized Ex-Anabaptist Idelette.

As Calvin's successor the great Rev. Professor Theodore Beza wrote in his *Life of John Calvin*, his predecessor enjoyed great "success in bring back many Anabaptists to the right path.... In particular two. The one, Paul Volve, to whom Erasmus had dedicated his *Manual of a Christian Soldier*, and whom the church of Strassburg afterwards enjoyed as its Pastor. The other, John Storder of Liege, who afterwards died of the plague -- and whose widow Idelleta, a grave and honourable woman, Calvin married at the advice of Bucer."

Hulse also seems unaware of Calvin's role in protestantizing the Anabaptists Herman of Gerbehaye and Count John Bomeromenus. Too, Hulse seems to be unfamiliar with Calvin's several works about the Anabaptists and their doctrines. He even seems to be unaware of Calvin's references to Anabaptists like M nzer and Quintin.

Now with great patience, Calvin lovingly won over also the Anabaptist Leader Hermann of Gerbehaye. Not to speak also of Count John Bomeromenus.

For, writing to Farel on 28th February 1539 and 6th February 1540, Calvin exulted¹⁴⁴ that "Hermann has returned to church fellowship.... About free will, the divinity and humanity of Christ, regeneration, infant baptism and other points -- he was willing to be taught....

"He only hesitated as to predestination.... He entreated, however, that this might not occasion any hindrance in the way of himself and his children being received to Church communion....

"With the courtesy which the occasion called for, I received and welcomed him...and reached forth to him the hand in name of the Church. Since then, I have baptized his little daughter, who was more than two years of age....

"The Lord from time to time bestows something which refreshes us. Hermann, who disputed against us (in public) at Geneva, besought me to appoint a day for conferring with him.

"In regard to infant baptism, the human nature of Christ, and some other points, he now acknowledges that he had fallen grievously into error.... This affords good hope....

Even Hermann's companion, "Count John (Bomeromenus), has at length presented his boy -- rather big for his age -- to be baptized. I had long borne with his weakness, since he told me that he thought he had good reasons for delaying. At length, he said that he no longer cared for those [the Anabaptists] whose perverseness could by no means be worn down or subdued."

On 27th February 1540, Calvin wrote¹⁴⁵ to Farel: "Hermann has, if I am not mistaken, in good faith come to the fellowship of the Church.... He accepted instruction on the freedom of the will, the deity and humanity of Christ, rebirth, infant baptism, and other things.

"Only on the question of predestination did he hesitate.... He asked that this might not prevent his being received into the communion of the Church with his children. I received him with fitting readiness.... I gave him my hand in the name of the Church. Then I baptized his little daughter, who was over two years old....

"He is a pious man. When I admonished him to lead others to the right way, he said: 'That is the least that I can do -- to exert myself no less in building up, than I did before in tearing down!'"

23. Baptism in Calvin's *Catechism of the Church in Geneva*

As previously stated, the Anabaptists only started rebaptizing one another eight years after Luther at the Protestant Reformation re-affirmed infant baptism. Only four years after the first Anabaptist rebaptisms started, was Calvin converted from Romanism to Protestantism.

Sixteen years after that, in Calvin's *Catechism of the Church in Geneva*,¹⁴⁶ the catechizer asks the catechizee about the meaning of baptism. There, Calvin gives the recipient's answer -- as regards new members of the Church Visible: "**Baptism** is a kind of entrance into the Church...when the **water** is **poured** upon the **head**.... We receive the fruit of this cleansing, when the Holy Spirit **sprinkles** our consciences....

"We **baptize** infants.... **Infants** were not excluded from it. Deuteronomy 30:6 and Jeremiah 4:4 and Romans 4:11.... God..., in order to show Himself the Father of **infants**, was pleased that the promise of salvation should be engraven on their bodies....

"It were unbecoming to suppose that, since the advent of Christ, believers have less to confirm them -- God having intended to give us in the present day the same promise which was anciently given!... The force and...the substance of **baptism**, are common to **children**.

"To deny them the sign..., were manifest injustice. **Children** are to be **baptized**.... They are **heirs** of the **blessing** promised to **the seed of believers**."

In his *Geneva Form of Administering Baptism*, Calvin states:¹⁴⁷ "**Infants** are to be brought for **baptism**...on the Lord's Day...under the eyes of the whole congregation.... He is pleased to incorporate us into His Church by baptism."

Calvin then went on to assume the validity of Baptisms administered in the corrupted Church of Rome even over many generations. For not yet sixty generations had elapsed from the apostolic age till his own day. Nevertheless, God had promised to keep His Covenant even unto thousands of generations! Exodus 20:1-6.

Explained Calvin: "Our gracious God, not contenting Himself with having adopted us for His children and (having) received us into the communion of His Church, has been pleased to extend His goodness still farther to us -- by promising to be our God and the God of our seed to a thousand generations. Hence, though the children of believers are of the corrupt race of Adam, He [the Triune God] nevertheless accepts them in virtue of this Covenant -- and adopts them into His family....

"He was pleased from the first (in Genesis 17:12), that in His Church children should receive the sign of **circumcision** by which He then represented all that is now signified to us by **baptism**.... He adopted them for His children....

"There is no doubt that our children are heirs of the life which He has promised to us.... Paul says (First Corinthians 7:14) that God **sanctified them from their mothers' womb**....

"After the promise made...to **the child**..., the Minister baptizes it, saying: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!' The whole is said aloud...in the common tongue, in order that the people who are present...may be edified by...calling to mind the fruit and use of their own baptism" several years earlier when they too were infants.

24. Baptism in Calvin's various Reformed Confessions of Faith

In his *Brief Form of a Confession of Faith*, Calvin states¹⁴⁸ that "**baptism** (is)...to give us an **entrance** into the Church of God.... I acknowledge that the **infants of believers** ought to be received into the Church by baptism. And in this matter, I detest the ravings of the Anabaptists!"

In his *Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France*, Calvin states¹⁴⁹ that "baptism is a treasure which God has placed in His Church. All the members ought to partake of it.... We doubt not that little children born of Christians, are of this number -- since God has adopted them....

"Children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of the sacrament..., than the children of the Jews were in ancient times (Genesis 17:9-14).... Therefore we reprobate all fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized!"

Some of Calvin's reasons for the unrepeatability of baptisms performed validly within Romanism, are set out in his 1544 *Address on the Necessity of Reforming the Church*. Calvin there maintained that in the Romish Church "baptism was so disguised by superfluous additions, that **scarcely** a vestige of pure and genuine baptism could be traced."

Calvin's language here, is very precise. At least "a **vestige of pure and genuine baptism**" could, he insisted, still be traced in the Romish Church. Though "scarcely" so.

Hence, Calvin wrote: "From baptism...have we rescinded many **additions** -- which were partly useless; and partly, from their superstitious tendency, noxious." Such noxious additions included Rome's "chrism, salts, spittle and tapers." Indeed, precisely because these additions to baptism were also partly non-noxious -- they did not invalidate "the genuineness of baptism itself."¹⁵⁰

In his *Mutual Consent of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva as to the Sacraments*, Calvin states:¹⁵¹ "Augustine...wisely teaches that the elements become sacraments only when the Word is added.... Our Saviour pronounces the Apostles clean..., because of the Word which they had heard from Him -- not because of the baptism.... What can a mortal and earthly man do, by **pouring** water on the **heads** of those whom he **baptizes** -- if Christ does not pronounce from **above** that He...washes their souls by His blood and renews them by His Spirit?"

Of Calvin's three children, all of whom died during their babyhood -- only one was baptized. Calvin admits¹⁵² that "we sometimes allow **children to die unbaptized**.... We give hopes that infants may obtain salvation without baptism, because we hold that **baptism** instead of regenerating or saving them -- **only seals** the **salvation** of which they were **previously partakers**....

"Infants begotten by believers are holy and members of the Church **before** they are **baptized**.... They were members of the Church **before** baptism.... There is **nothing to prevent our applying this to infants**....

"God gives the name of sons to those to whom the inheritance of salvation has been promised in the person of their parents.... **Baptism is rightly administered** to those whom God **adopted before** they were **born**....

"Did God not transmit His grace from parents to children -- to admit newborn infants into the Church would be a mere profanation of baptism.... The promise of God...caused **holy branches** to proceed from a **holy root** (Romans 11:16)....

"The Law ordered **infants** to be **circumcised** on the **eighth day**.... That was a legitimate ingrafting into the Church of God.... Scripture declares them to have been **holy from the womb**....

"Paul teaches...**the children of believers are now holy**.... Those God has **already** set apart for Himself, are **rightly** brought for **baptism**....

"Cornelius, **before** he was **baptized** with **his household** -- **having** received the Holy Spirit...of **saints** -- justly held...place among the **children of God**.... **Fanatical men impugn Paedobaptism!**" Cf. Acts 10:1-2,24-27,33,45-48.

25. Baptism in Calvin's *Antidote to the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent*

In his *Antidote to the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent*, Calvin argues¹⁵³ that the **Romanists** at Trent "have been pleased to **exclude infants from the Kingdom** of God who have

been snatched away **before** they could be offered for **baptism**. As if nothing were meant when it is said that the children of believers are born holy (First Corinthians 7:14)!....

"God **has** adopted them into His Kingdom.... The salvation of infants is included in the promise in which God declares to believers that He will be a God to them and to their seed (Genesis 17:7)....

"They are admitted to baptism, because they are considered members of the Church. Their salvation therefore does not have its commencement in baptism..., being **already** founded on the Word."

Declared Trent: "Canon IX: That Baptism is not to be repeated, the pious are sufficiently **agreed**".... Responded Calvin: "**Amen!**..."

"The genuine rite of baptism, is simple.... But under how many and how various and discordant additions, has this simplicity been buried?..."

"All the godly complain...that in baptism [as administered in the Romish Church], more is made of the chrism; the taper; the salt; the spittle in fine -- than the washing with water in which the whole perfection of baptism consists! Our writings clearly show that the whole doctrine of baptism as taught by them, is **partly** mutilated....

"The primary view of **baptism**....(is) not only...the sprinkling of water but...the spiritual reality.... The belief and certainty of this reconciliation which is daily repeated even to the end of life, He seals to us by baptism.

"We were indeed baptized once. But there is a perpetual testimony of pardon and free propitiation in Christ."

Trent continued. In her Canon IV, it alleged: "Whosoever shall say that Baptism, which is also given by heretics in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit with the intention of doing what the Church does, is not true Baptism -- let him be *anathema!*"

Responded Calvin: "Canon IV. What the ministers intends to do, is of little consequence to us.... Let it suffice then to have been baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit -- whatever may have been the ignorance or impiety of those who administered baptism to us. Man is merely the hand. It is Christ alone Who truly and properly baptizes!"

The 9th to the 13th canons of Trent's 7th Session, relate to the unrepeatability of baptisms even when given by priests in a state of mortal sin. Calvin responded: "That **baptism is not to be repeated** -- the pious are sufficiently agreed." Trent here thought of the validity of baptisms performed even by 'lost baptizers' like Judas Iscariot. Calvin replied: "**Amen!**"

Thundered Trent: "Whosoever shall say that true and duly conferred baptism is to be repeated to him who has denied the faith of Christ among infidels -- after he turns to repentance -- let him be *anathema!*" Calvin here responded: "I not unwillingly **subscribe!**"

26. Baptism in Calvin's True Method of...Reforming the Church

In his *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church*, Calvin insisted¹⁵⁴ "the Spirit of God must...be to us both an earnest and a **seal**.... He it is...Who **sprinkles** our souls with the blood of Christ (First Peter 1:2)....

"I do not...concede...that **Paedobaptism** (or administering the initial sacrament to babies and children) had its origin in the tradition of the Church. It certainly appears to be founded on the institution of God, and **to have derived its origin from circumcision**....

"The **offspring of believers are born holy** -- because their children, while yet in the womb, before they breathe the vital air, are included in the covenant of eternal life. Nor indeed are they admitted into the [Visible] Church by baptism, on any other ground than that **they belonged to the body of Christ before they were born**....

"How could it be lawful to put [baptism as] the sacred impress of Christ -- on strangers? **Baptism** must therefore be **preceded** by the gift of **adoption**." That is then "**afterwards** ratified by baptism."

In his *Appendix to the Tract on the True Method of Giving Peace and of Reforming the Church*, Calvin states:¹⁵⁵ "**The offspring of believers are born holy**. Because **the children, while yet in the womb**, before they breathe the vital air, are included in the covenant of eternal life. Nor indeed are they admitted into the Church by baptism on any other ground, than that they **belonged to the body of Christ before they were born**.... Baptism must therefore be preceded by the gift of **adoption**, which is not the cause of...a half-salvation but gives salvation entire....

"If any one at this time keenly maintains Paedobaptism, and on strong grounds -- I am certainly in the number!... I disapprove of the absolute necessity which they [maintain who]...do not admit that a child who from sudden death has not been able to be present for baptism -- is therefore excluded from the Kingdom of God.... **The children of believers, before they were begotten, were adopted by the Lord**.... The genuine children of Abraham, even before they are born, are the heirs of eternal life....

"They may obtain salvation without baptism.... Because the promise which assigns life to them, while still in the womb, has sufficient efficacy in itself. Hence it is that Paul makes honourable mention of them as holy (First Corinthians 7:14)....

"**Paedobaptism rests** on this ground, that **God recognizes** those who are presented to Him by our ministry as **already His Own**. Whence too He anciently called all who derived their origin from Israel, **His Own** (Ezekiel 16:20f).... For the offspring **was** holy [**before** baptism], as Paul teaches (Romans 11:16)....

"**Children have need of regeneration**.... This gift comes to them by promise.... **Baptism follows** as a seal.... **John the Baptizer was sanctified from the womb** (Luke 1:15,44)." So too Jeremiah (1:1-5).

"That passage (Luke 1:15)..., I elsewhere produce...against the **Anabaptists** -- to whom I do not think he (John) belongs!... We too...were baptized by the command of Christ, Who ordered that **not saints only** or the **children of saints**, but...**all nations** should be baptized (Matthew 28:19)....

"**The children of Papists...are validly baptized....** He (Calvin's anonymous opponent) falsely imagines that I regard them as strangers, because they were neither begotten of a holy father nor born of a holy mother. They cease not to be the children of saints, though it be necessary to go farther back for their origin. God does not stop at the first degree, but diffuses the promise of life to a thousand generations (Exodus 20:5f)....

"**Infants ought to be baptized....** The **omission** of the sign (of baptism), is **not optional....** **The parent** may see the salvation which the Lord has promised in His Word, sealed and as it were engraven on the body of his child.... He may **not** seem to **neglect** the **badge** which has been given to confirm faith!"

27. Baptism in Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion

Calvin wrote in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*¹⁵⁶ that "by the name '**Church**' is designated the whole body of mankind scattered throughout the World, who profess to worship one God and Christ -- who by **baptism** are initiated into the [Christian] Faith.... In this Church, there is a very large mixture of hypocrites....

"Wherever we see the Word of God sincerely preached and heard; wherever we see the **sacraments** administered according to the institution of Christ -- there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence.... We are never to discard it so long as these remain, though it may otherwise teem with numerous faults....

"There always have been persons...imbued with a **false persuasion** of absolute holiness.... Such of old were...**the Donatists**.... Such in the present day are some of the **Anabaptists**.... They exclaim that it is impossible to tolerate the vice which everywhere stalks abroad....

"The Apostle's sentiment applies here also! Among the Corinthians it was not a few that erred.... Almost the whole body had become tainted.... There was not only corruption in manners, but also in doctrine. What course was taken by the holy Apostle..., by the organ of the heavenly Spirit -- by Whose testimony the Church stands and falls?

"Does he seek separation from them? Does he discard them from the Kingdom of Christ? Does he strike them with the thunder of a final anathema? He not only does none of these things, but he acknowledges and heralds them as a Church of Christ!...

"Lawsuits and avarice prevailed.... A crime which even the Gentiles would execrate, was openly approved.... Some held the resurrection of the dead in derision, though with it the whole Gospel must fall.... Many things were done neither decently nor in order.... There **the Church still remained -- simply because the ministration of Word and Sacrament was not rejected....**

"In ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church. So in the present day **we deny not to the [Romish] Papists those vestiges of a Church** which the Lord has allowed to remain among them....

"When the Lord had once made His covenant with the Jews, it was preserved.... Nor could circumcision be so profaned by their impure hands, as not still to be a true sign and sacrament of His covenant.... So, having deposited His covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain and England -- when these countries were oppressed by **the tyranny of Antichrist** -- He, in order that His covenant might remain inviolable, first **preserved baptism there**, as an evidence of the covenant, baptism which, consecrated by His lips -- retains its power. In spite of human depravity!...

"He did not allow Antichrist either to subvert His Church from its foundation, or to level it with the ground.... He allowed a fearful shaking and dismembering to take place, but was pleased that amid the devastation, the edifice should remain -- though half in ruins. Therefore, while we are unwilling simply to concede the name of 'Church' to the Papists -- we do not deny that there are churches among them....

"Daniel and Paul foretold that Antichrist would sit in the Temple of God. Daniel 9:27; Second Thessalonians 2:4. We regard the Roman Pontiff as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom. By placing his seat **in the Temple of God**, it is intimated that his kingdom would not be such as to destroy the name either of Christ or of His Church.

"Hence, then, it is obvious that we do not at all deny that churches remain under his tyranny -- churches, however, which by sacrilegious impiety he has profaned.... I call them 'churches' -- inasmuch as the Lord there wondrously preserves some remains of His people, though miserably torn and scattered. And inasmuch as some **symbols of the Church still remain** -- symbols especially whose efficacy neither the craft of the devil nor human depravity can destroy."

Indeed, as Calvin rightly observed, "some **symbols of the Church still remain**" in Romanism. Such as the ineradicable symbol of **trinitarian baptism!**

"**Baptism** is the initiatory sign by which we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church, so that being ingrafted into Christ we may be accounted **children** of God.... Baptism contributes to our faith.... It is His will that all who have believed, be baptized.... The only purification which baptism promises, is by means of the **sprinkling** of the blood of Christ Who is figured by **water**."

At the start of the Middle Ages, however, many delayed their baptism till the end of their lives. In that way, believing in the false theory of baptismal regeneration, many hoped to get all their many sins washed away just prior to their deaths!

Calvin, however, replied: "To this error [of 'delayed baptism']..., it was owing that some refused to be initiated by baptism until...they were drawing their last breath -- so that they might thus obtain pardon for all the past.... A preposterous precaution!...

"At whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified **once** -- for the **whole** of life.... As often as we fall, we must **recall** the remembrance of our **baptism** -- and thus fortify our minds so as to feel certain and secure....

"The gifts of the Spirit were...liberally **poured out**, after the resurrection of Christ.... The people of Israel...are described...as having been baptized **in the cloud**.... First Corinthians 10:2."

'The **children** of Israel journeyed.... As long as the cloud abode **upon** the tabernacle, they rested.' "The **cloud** was a symbol of **purification** (Numbers 9:18)."

The Anabaptists repudiated the baptism they had received at the hands of Romish priests, saying that the latter were unworthy and unable to confer true baptism. Calvin responded that what matters is that we should be baptized into **Christ**, notwithstanding any errors in him who administers the baptism.

Calvin further insisted that "a sacrament is not to be estimated by the hand of him by whom it is administered, but is to be received as from the hand of God Himself.... Its dignity neither gains nor loses by the administrator.... Among men, when a letter has been sent, if the hand and seal is recognized -- it is not of the least consequence who or what the messenger was. So it ought to be sufficient for us to recognize the hand and seal of our Lord in His sacraments -- let the administrator be who he may!"

Calvin next compared the Catabaptists of his own day with the earlier Donatists -- the 313f A.D. sectarians who rebaptized former members of the Church Universal who fell into "the error of the Donatists.... The Donatists...measured the efficacy and worth of the sacrament by the dignity of the Minister.

"Such in the present day are **our Catabaptists**, who **deny that we were duly baptized -- because we were baptized in the Papacy by wicked men and idolaters**. Hence, they furiously insist on **Anabaptism**.

"Against these absurdities, we shall be fortified sufficiently if we reflect that by baptism we were initiated not into the name of any man, but into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.... Therefore that baptism is not of man, but of God -- by whosoever it may have been administered! Be it that those who baptized us were most ignorant of God and all piety, or were despisers -- still they did not baptize us into a fellowship with their ignorance or sacrilege, but into the faith of Jesus Christ. Because the name which they invoked, was not their own but God's. Nor did they baptize into any other Name....

"Thus it did not harm the Jews, that **they were circumcised by impure and apostate priests**. **It did not nullify the symbol, so as to make it necessary to repeat it**. It was enough to return to its genuine origin.

"The objection that baptism ought to be celebrated in the assembly of the godly, does not prove that it loses its whole efficacy because it is partly defective.... We do not abolish the institution of God -- [even] though idolaters may corrupt it.

"Circumcision was anciently vitiated by many superstitions, and yet ceased not to be regarded as a symbol of grace. Nor did Josiah and Hezekiah, when they assembled out of all Israel those who had revolted from God -- call them to be circumcised anew." Nor would the execution of such a call, even have been possible!

Calvin next stated that Rebaptists sometimes "ask us what faith for several years followed our baptism -- so that they may thereby prove that our baptism was in vain, since it is not sanctified unless the word of the promise is received with faith. Our answer is -- that, being blind and unbelieving, we for a long time did not hold the promise which was given us in baptism.... Still, the promise -- as it was of God -- always remained fixed, and firm, and true....

"We acknowledge therefore that at that time, baptism profited us nothing -- since in us the offered promise, without which baptism is nothing, lay neglected.... But we do not believe that the promise itself had vanished.

"We rather reflect thus -- God in baptism promises the remission of sins, and will undoubtedly perform what He has promised to all believers. That promise was offered to us in baptism. Let us therefore embrace it in faith!

"In regard to us, indeed, it was long buried on account of unbelief. Now, therefore, let us with faith receive it!

"Therefore, when the Lord invites the Jewish people to repentance, He gives no injunction concerning another circumcision. Though (as we have said) they were circumcised by a wicked and sacrilegious hand, and had long lived in the same impiety.

"All He urges, is conversion of heart. For howsoever much the covenant might have been violated by them -- the symbol of the covenant always remained, according to the appointment of the Lord, firm and inviolable!

"Solely therefore on the condition of repentance, were they restored to the covenant which God had once made with them in circumcision. Though this which they had received at the hand of a covenant-breaking priest, they had themselves -- as much as in them lay -- polluted!....

"In the present day are our (rebaptizing) Catabaptists. They deny that we were duly baptized -- because we were baptized in the Papacy.... They furiously insist on Anabaptism.

"Against these absurdities, we shall be sufficiently fortified if we reflect that by baptism, we were initiated not into the name of any man but into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.... Therefore that baptism is not of man but of God, by whomsoever it may have been administered....

"When anyone is to be baptized..., bring him forward and present him to God!... Explain the promises which are given in baptism! Then baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and conclude with prayer and thanksgiving!... Whether the person [getting] baptized is to be immersed wholly, and that whether once or thrice -- or whether he is only to be **sprinkled** with water -- is not of the least consequence."

Occasionally, some Baptists selectively cite Calvin's *Institutes* with approval! There, they say he wrote: "It is evident that the term baptize means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the ancient Church."

Such Baptists here conveniently omit Calvin's previous sentence! That reads: "Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice; or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water -- is not of the least consequence" *etc.*

Such Baptists here also neglect to quote Calvin's original French words! They run: "*C'est une chose de nulle importance, si on baptise en plongeant du tout dans l'eau celui qui est baptisé, ou en repandant...de l'eau sur lui.*" Namely -- "it is a matter of **no importance** whether one baptizes by immersing into the water, or by...sprinkling the water onto him."

Here, Calvin's word 'immerse' (French *plongeant*) is not the same as the word 'submerge.' For to Calvin, **baptism** is best given by "sprinkling (*repandant*) the water onto (*sur*) him."

Moreover, here the word 'ancient' is neither the word 'apostolic' nor the word 'original.' Indeed, Baptists omit to add that (in the original French) -- Calvin here actually wrote "that the custom of thus entirely immersing [**not submersing!**], was anciently observed in the Church."

Undeniably, Calvin here used the French word for "ancient" (*anciennement*) -- **not** the word for "originally" (*originaiement*). So we have used the appropriate English word 'anciently' to translate Calvin's own French word *anciennement*.¹⁵⁷

That latter word here hardly means 'during apostolic times.' It far rather refers to the late-patristic period -- especially after the rise of the later damnable heresy of submersionistic baptismal regenerationism!

Calvin states: "The children of believers are not baptized in order that, though formerly aliens from the Church, they may then for the first time become children of God. But rather are [they] received into the [Visible] Church by a formal sign because, in virtue of the promise, they **previously belonged** to the body of Christ...."

"Certain (Anabaptist) frenzied spirits have raised...great disturbance in the Church. On account of Paedobaptism, I cannot avoid here...adding something to restrain their fury.... The argument by which Paedobaptism is assailed (by them), is no doubt specious...."

"The covenant which the Lord once made with Abraham, is not less applicable to Christians now.... The children..., when made heirs of that covenant..., were separated from the heathen, [and] were called a holy seed...."

"For the same reason the children of Christians, or those who have only one believing parent, are called holy (First Corinthians 7:14).... Since the Lord, immediately after the covenant was made with Abraham, ordered it to be sealed in infants by an outward sacrament -- how can it be said that Christians are not to attest it in the present day and seal it in their children?..."

"Baptism...is not less applicable to children, than to those of more advanced years.... Thus they cannot be deprived of it, without manifest fraud to the will of its divine Author.

"The assertion which they [the Anabaptists] disseminate among the common people, that a long series of years elapsed after the resurrection of Christ during which Paedobaptism was unknown -- is a shameful falsehood. Since there is no writer, however ancient, who does not trace its origin to the days of the Apostles." For Paedobaptism is both Biblical and Apostolic -- as well as the doctrine of the Early Post-Apostolic Christian Church!

"Children derive some benefit from their baptism.... They are made an object of greater interest to the other members.... Then, when they have grown up, they are thereby strongly urged to an earnest desire of serving God Who had received them as sons by the formal symbol of adoption before.... **God will take vengeance on every one who despises to impress the symbol of the covenant on his child** (Genesis 17:15), such contempt being a rejection and as it were abjuration of the offered grace....

"Some furious madmen cease not to assail this holy ordinance.... Some of those whom death hurries away in the first moments of infancy, pass into life eternal. They are certainly admitted to behold the immediate presence of God.... Why may He not, if He so pleases, irradiate (them) at present with some small beam..., before He delivers them from the prison of the flesh?...

"Since God imparted circumcision, the sign of **repentance and faith**, to infants -- it should not seem absurd that they are now made partakers of baptism.... Children are baptized for future **repentance** and **faith**.... The seed of both (already) lies hidden in them, by the secret operation of the Spirit" -- *arcana tamen Spiritus operatione utriusque semen in illis latet.*

Calvin then continues: "If those on whom the Lord has bestowed His election...depart this life before they become adults -- He, by the incomprehensible energy of His Spirit, [first] renews them in the way which He alone deems expedient."

According to Calvin, the antipaedobaptistic apostate Anabaptist "Servetus cannot show that by divine appointment several years must elapse before the new spiritual life begins. Paul's testimony is that, though lost by nature, the children of believers are holy by supernatural grace [Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14]....

"When the office of teaching was committed to the Apostles, they were not prohibited from baptizing infants [Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38f & 16:15 & 16:31-33 & 18:8 *etc.*].... The Evangelist uses the term *anthroopous* (which comprehends the whole human race without exception). He [Servetus] denies that infants are included....

"We [however] defer more to the authority of God, Who has seen it meet to consecrate infants to Himself -- in order to change in our baptism that...law which God enacted in circumcision.... These reprobate spirits, as if they were under the influence of frenzy, introduce the grossest absurdities in defence of their errors....

"(These are) the series of conceits which Servetus, not the least among the Anabaptists..., deemed when he adduced them.... How feebly (the Unitarian) Servetus has supported his friends the Anabaptists!

"No sound man...can now doubt how rashly the Church is disturbed by those who excite quarrels and disturbances because of Paedobaptism. For it is of importance to observe what Satan means by all this craft -- viz. to rob us of the singular blessing of confidence and spiritual joy.... How sweet it is to pious minds to be assured...that they are...in favour with their heavenly Father!... See how He acts towards us as a most provident Parent..., consulting and providing for our children....

"Doubtless the design of Satan in assaulting Paedobaptism with all his forces, is to keep out of view and gradually efface that attestation of divine grace which the promise itself presents to our eyes. In this way, not only would men impiously be ungrateful for the mercy of God -- but be less careful in **training their children** to piety.

"For it is no slight **stimulus** to us to **bring them up** in the **fear of God** and the observance of His Law, when we reflect that **from their birth** they have been considered and acknowledged by Him as **His children**. Therefore, if we would not maliciously obscure the kindness of God -- let us present to Him our infants, to whom He has assigned a place among His friends and family, that is, the members of the Church!...

" The **infants**...who had been initiated by **baptism** -- not then having given a confession of faith to the Church -- were....toward the end of their boyhood or on adolescence, brought forward by their parent and examined.... In the **baptism** of God..., the **forehead** is **besmeared**....

"We maintain...that in **baptism**..., the **forehead** is **sprinkled** with **water**.... They have **no need of a repetition of baptism!**" Thus Calvin's *Institutes*, throughout.

28. The conclusion of baptism in Calvin's writings

The Romish Cardinal Sadoletto absurdly insinuated that the Calvinists were essentially the same as the Anabaptists. In his reply, Calvin turned the tables. For he then demonstrated that the Anabaptists should rather be compared -- to the Romanists!

Calvin replied:¹⁵⁸ "There is similitude in appearance between the Pope and the Anabaptists! Satan never transforms himself so cunningly, as not in some measure to betray himself....

"The principal weapon with which they [Romanists and Anabaptists] **both** assail us, is the same. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency certainly is to sink and bury the [written] Word of God, so that they may make room for their own falsehoods."

Against both Anabaptists and Romanists, Calvin again insisted in 1542: "Paul teaches that the children of believers are born holy (First Corinthians 7:14).... They do not become the sons of God through baptism.

"But because in virtue of the promise they **are** heirs of adoption, therefore the Church admits them to baptism.... As in Abraham the father of the faithful, the righteousness of faith preceded circumcision -- so, in the children of the faithful in the present day, the gift of **adoption is prior to baptism.**"¹⁵⁹

The Italian Unitarian Laelius Socinus once wrote to Calvin, asking him whether 'Popish Baptism' was efficacious. The Trinitarian Calvin answered¹⁶⁰ that unlike unitarian baptism(?!), 'Popish Baptism' was valid and efficacious and should be resorted to where no other can be had. For -- unlike Unitarianism! -- Romanism, though corrupt, still retained marks of the Christian Church -- as well as a scattered number of elect persons.

In two of his other letters¹⁶¹ to the catabaptistic antitrinitarian Socinus, Calvin makes the same point. The Reformer insists that, unlike the baptisms of antitrinitarian Unitarians like Socinus, there is still in trinitarian "Rome a remnant of the Church." Consequently, "baptism there is still valid" *etc.*

Indeed, adds Calvin, "it matters not to me whether he who performs the baptism is a diabolical man -- or even the devil." For even Satan would still have to baptize us not in his own wretched name, but only in the fully trustworthy Name of the Triune God!

Calvin tenderly ministered to comfort a Christian gentleman whose child had died before having received baptism. Wrote the genius of Geneva:¹⁶² "Monsieur and dearly beloved brother! I have learned that God has within these few days visited you with a twofold affliction. First, in taking to Himself the child with which He had blessed you. And next, that some worthy brethren are scandalized, because you had not had him baptized in time....

"With regard to the child's dying without having been baptized, our worthy brethren would certainly have occasion to be scandalized at it -- had that taken place from indifference or contempt.... In your case, in point of fact, all you have to do is to declare to the brethren what were your intentions....

"If your intentions had been to reside in those parts as one of them, you could not without offending God and your neighbours have brought up your child without having it baptized. Not that those who present their children to be polluted with Popish superstitions are to be held excusable! Otherwise than that they cannot reject the visible sign of the Christian religion without at the same time marking their contempt for God. But your intention was quite different....

"You thought of conveying the child soon after its birth, along with its mother -- in order to have it baptized according to the ordinance of God.... I take it for granted that it is lawful for a Christian man to withdraw himself from the pollutions of Popery -- and also that it is not only lawful but obligatory for him to take with him his infant child, in order to offer it with purity to God and have it baptized without Popish superstition.

"Now, God has been pleased to deprive you of that blessing.... If anyone reply that your child has been deprived of baptism, which is the sign of salvation -- I answer that its condition is not the worse for that before God.... By virtue of what are our children saved, if not by that of

the saying: 'I am the God of your offspring'? But for that, they would not be capable even of being baptized!...

"We must not conclude that all the children who die without baptism, go to perdition.... Since then, on your part, there has been no contempt of the sacrament -- it brings no prejudice to the salvation of your child that it died before you had leisure or the means to have it baptized."

Again, in another letter, Calvin -- like John Knox after him -- showed his preference for Romanism above Anabaptism. For Calvin indicated he preferred the administration of infant baptism even in the Romish Church -- to its non-administration among infants of Anabaptists.

Calvin observed:¹⁶³ "We hold the ordinance of God to be too sacred to depend for its efficacy on man. Even if it were then to be that Judas or any other epicurean contemner of everything sacred is the administrator -- the spiritual nourishment...of Christ [in the Sacrament] is conferred through His hand, just as if He were...come down from Heaven!"

As Calvin wrote to Knox:¹⁶⁴ "The interruption of piety which has prevailed in Popery, has not taken away from baptism its force and efficacy.... Offspring descended from holy and pious ancestors [such as godly mothers and grandmothers], belong to the body of the Church -- though their fathers and grandfathers may have been apostates."

Here is an excerpt from Calvin's *Letter to Paule*. There, the Reformer said:¹⁶⁵ "If there is a man living under the tyranny of the Pope who, abstaining from the idolatries and pollutions which there abound, desires at the same time to offer his children purely unto God and have them baptized according to the right rule of the Gospel -- his zeal is holy and praiseworthy....

"It is...a treasure such as children are -- (when they are) granted by God." But it is shameful when, "as soon as it has been bestowed, to pollute it with the superstitions which men have mixed up with the holy ordinance of baptism!...

"It is not lawful to administer it, except in the society of professed believers. Not that it is necessary to have a public temple! But assuredly it is indispensable that there should be a certain flock assembled, forming a body constituted as a church and recognizing for its Pastor the person appointed to baptize.... It is then requisite that the child should be baptized in a society that keeps itself separate from the pollutions of Popery."

In light of everything else Calvin says about baptism elsewhere, what he said to Paule above can only mean that Protestants (and born-again Catholics) **should not** have their children baptized by Rome. It does, of course, have no bearing on the validity of those (such as Calvin himself) previously baptized by Rome. If such become Protestants (as all should), they should certainly then not be (re-)baptized by a Protestant Minister!

In his *Confession of Faith in the Name of the Reformed Churches of France*,¹⁶⁶ Calvin insisted that "since baptism is a treasure which God has placed in His Church -- all the members ought to partake of it. Now we doubt not that little children born of Christians are of this number, since God has adopted them -- as He declares.

"Indeed, we would defraud them of their right -- were we to exclude them from the sign which only ratifies the thing contained in the promise.... Children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of the sacrament of their salvation, than the children of the Jews were in ancient times -- seeing that now the manifestation must be larger and clearer than it was under the Law. Therefore, we reprobate all [Anabaptist] fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized!"

Calvin asked:¹⁶⁷ "What affinity with Luther had the Münsterians, the Anabaptists?... Did he ever lend them his support? Did he subscribe their most absurd fictions? Nay, with what vehemence did he oppose them -- in order to prevent the spreading of the contagion!..."

"Are we not, independently of baptism, cleansed by the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Spirit?... Christ is formed in us, like the *foetus* in the **womb** [cf. Psalm 22:9-10 and Second Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-15]....

"God calls suddenly away from the World many who are children not merely in age but also in faith. Yet, one spark from the Spirit is sufficient to give them a life" immortal unto all eternity, before and without being baptized! Thus Calvin.

Calvin prepared the first draft of the *French Confession*, and authored it with his pupil Antoine Chandieu. While **rejecting the Papacy**, they also taught that **those who received baptism there** -- should **not be rebaptized** when becoming **Protestants**.

For, as they argued in their *Confessio Gallicana*:¹⁶⁸ "We condemn the papal assemblies, as the pure Word of God is banished from them.... Nevertheless, as **some trace of the Church is left in the Papacy**; and the virtue and **substance of baptism remain**; and as the efficacy of baptism does not depend upon the person who administers it -- we confess that those baptized in it do **not** need a **second baptism**. But, on account of its corruption -- **we cannot present children to be baptized in it**, without incurring pollution.... **We are baptized only once!**"

Indeed, even in the year before his death, we see Calvin replying on behalf of the Pastors and Professors of Geneva -- to the National Synod of France's Reformed Church. There, in his *Reply to the French Reformed Church*, Calvin wrote:¹⁶⁹ "**Popish' Baptism is grounded upon the institution of Christ** -- because the priests, perverse as they are, and utterly corrupt -- are yet the **ordinary Ministers of that Church** in which they tyrannically demean themselves."

It is the enunciation of **the name of the Triune God** when the water is applied -- that really constitutes baptism. The **silent** submersions of unitarian Jehovah's witnesses and the **polytheistic** submersions of Mormons *etc.*, are never baptisms at all -- because the Triune God is altogether denied by them both!¹⁷⁰

However, the case is different among trinitarian Baptists and Romanists. There, all of the extra superstitions of Romish baptism and the unnecessary submersions of Baptist baptism do not vitiate it.

What about Pentecostal baptisms? Unitarian Pentecostal baptisms are invalid -- but trinitarian Pentecostal baptisms are valid, and should not be repeated. Yet here we think of those

baptisms of the trinitarian 'Apostolic Faith Mission' with its triple submersions -- and also of its formerly-hostile yet trinitarian 'Full Gospel Church of God' with its single submersions. For years, they fiercely opposed one another, and quite wrongly re-re-baptized all those they 'converted' from the other group to themselves!

Then there was the former Black African sect which sevenfoldly-submersed totally naked women in the open air. In full view of the offended public passing by. Such baptisms -- if done in the name of the Triune God -- were valid. Despite the immoral circumstances!

So then -- what was Calvin's mode of baptism? Submersion of the candidate? Hardly! For he consistently advocated immersing the fingers into the baptismal water, and **sprinkling** it **onto** the **forehead** in the name of the Triune God. Isaiah 44:3-5 and Ezekiel 36:25 and John 1:25-33 and Revelation 3:12 & 7:3 & 14:1 & 19:13 & 22:4f. So too should all consistent Christians even today!

Calvin was adamant that trinitarian baptism once administered -- whether by Anabaptist or Baptist or Pentecostalist or Protestant or Romanist -- should never be repeated. He was thoroughly convinced that not just those professing faith in Christ, but also their children, should be baptized -- even in their infancy.

As to mode, he greatly preferred sprinkling or pouring. But he regarded also immersion and even submersion as valid -- provided the name of the Triune God was called out by the baptizer during the application of the water. For it is that name which constitutes a valid baptism.

Dear reader! If a Christian -- you were chosen by **the Triune God** from all eternity, and secured after the fall of Adam, when Christ was promised to come and crush Satan's **skull**.

If like me -- you would have been conceived from a covenant parent. You would have been born nine months later. And you would then have been **baptized** on the **forehead** of your **skull**, probably during the next month.

You would also have **improved your baptism** at your subsequent conversion. And now, you would be moving on toward your arrival on the New Earth -- where you shall reign for ever, with **His triune name** always **written** on your **forehead**. Hallelujah!

ENDNOTES

- 1) Calvin, J.: *Sermons on Deuteronomy* 30:6, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1987, pp. 500 & 505 & 563f & 809f & 1055 & 1078 & 1083.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 1104 & 1245.
- 3) Liddell, H.G. and Scott, R: *Greek-English Lexicon*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973, p. 491.
- 4) Calvin, J.: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV:16:8.

- 5) Calvin, J.: *Brief Instruction for Arming All the Good Faithful Against the Errors of the Common Sect of the Anabaptists*, in his *Treatises Against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines*, Baker, Grand Rapids, ed. 1982, pp. 44f.
- 6) Calvin, J.: *Institutes*, IV:15:18.
- 7) Calvin, J.: *Ibid.*, IV:16:11 & IV:16:30.
- 8) Calvin, J.: *Ibid.*, III:1:1 & III:14:6.
- 9) First Clement: *Epistle to the Corinthians* 9:4 and 21 (cf. I Cor. 1:16 & 2:10-12 & 7:14 & 12:13) and 46:5 & 63(53):3 & 65(55)1 (cf. Acts 1:5 & 2:1-4,14-21,36-39).
- 10) *Didachee* III:9 & VII:1-3.
- 11) *Epistle of Barnabas*, 8f 11.
- 12) *The Shepherd of Hermas*, I:3:6f & III:9:29.
- 13) Justin Martyr: *First Apology*, chs. 61f; and *Dialogue with Trypho* chs. 14 & 16 & 18 & 29 & 43; *Fragments* 10 & 11; and *First Apology*, 62 & 64.
- 14) Schaff, P.: *Church History*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1968, II:417-24, and especially p. 421.
- 15) Irenaeus: *Against Heresies*, I:21:1 & II:23:4.
- 16) Clement of Alexandra.: *Paedagogue* I:5f & III:12.
- 17) Tertullian: *On Baptism*, chs. 1 & 18.
- 18) Tertullian: *The Crown*, 3.
- 19) Augustine: *On Heresies*, 6.
- 20) Origen: *Commentary on John*, Sixth Book:26.
- 21) Origen: *Homily* 8 on Leviticus 12.
- 22) Origen: *Homily* 9 on Joshua (8:33).
- 23) Origen: *Homily on Luke* 14:2 (regarding 2:22a).
- 24) Origen: *Commentary on Romans* (ch. 5).
- 25) Cyprian: *Epistle* 58(64):2-6.
- 26) Cyprian: *Epistle to Demetrianus*.
- 27) *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, VI:3:15.
- 28) Cyril of Jerusalem: *Catechetical Lectures*, V:6.
- 29) Gregory of Nazianzen: *Oration* 41:17,28.
- 30) Gregory of Nyssa: *On Infants' Early Deaths*.

- 31) Jerome, *Epistle* 69:6.
- 32) Augustine: *Enchiridion*, chs. 43 & 46.
- 33) Augustine: *On Baptism against the Donatists*, IV:23f.
- 34) Augustine: *On Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism*, I:24[19]f & I:36-40[27] & I:58[30] & II:43[27] & III:1.
- 35) Augustine: *On Free Will*, III:23.
- 36) Augustine: *De Peccatis Meritis*, 50:1:25 & 50:1:33.
- 37) Augustine: *Epistle to Dardanus*.
- 38) *African Code*, canon CX.
- 39) First Clement: *Epistle to the Corinthians* 9:4 and 21 (cf. I Cor. 1:16 & 2:10-12 & 7:14 & 12:13) and 46:5 & 63(53):3 & 65(55)1 (cf. Acts 1:5 & 2:1-4,14-21,36-39).
- 40) *Didachee*, VII:1-3.
- 41) *Epistle of Barnabas*, 8f 11.
- 42) Justin Martyr: *First Apology*, chs. 61f.
- 43) Justin Martyr: *Dialogue with Trypho*, chs. 14 & 16 & 18 & 29 & 43; *Fragments*, 10 & 11; and *First Apology*, 62 & 64.
- 44) Justin Martyr: *Op. Sp.*,1340 (in Dale's *Judaic Baptism*, Loewe Belfort, Toney Ala., 1991 ed., p. 381).
- 45) Irenaeus: *Against Heresies*, III:16:9 to 17:1-3.
- 46) Clement of Alexandria.: *Paedagogue*, I:6 & III:12.
- 47) Clement of Alexandria: *Stromata*, 1:23 & 2:649 & 4:22 & 5:11 & 6:4; *Exhortation to the Heathen*, 1:94-96 & 10:12-23,59-60 & 12:92; and *Who is the Rich Man?*, 34,40,42.
- 48) Tertullian: *On Baptism*, chs. 2,3-5,12.
- 49) Tertullian: *On Repentance*, ch. 6.
- 50) Tertullian: *Chaplet* or *De Corona* alias *The Crown*, 3 & 4.
- 51) Hippolytus: *The Discourse on the Holy Theophany*, 1 & 2 & 4 & 6 & 8.
- 52) Origen: *Commentary on John*, Sixth Book 26.
- 53) Origen.: *Hexapla* at First Kings 18:33f; rendering "pour it" as 'baptizing.' Cf. 4:24,1 and *Commentary on John* 6:13,26-28.
- 54) Cyprian: *Epistle* 75 (69):12-14, citing Num. 19:8f & 8:5f and 70:1f & 72:2,9 & 75:12f. Cf. Petavius: *Opus de Theologia Dogmatica*; and Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*, Oxford, 1844, I pp 142-160 & II p 386.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR ----->

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised their son Nigel in that faith.

In the Second World War, Dr. Lee's father was appointed as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Dr. Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., he attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his previous ministerial credentials to that denomination, and pastored congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol Tennessee. He was then the only person in the world serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society (headquartered in London) and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (headquartered in Atlanta).

Preacher, theologian, lawyer, educationist, historian, philosopher and author, Lee has produced more than 191 publications (including many books) and also more than 534 long unpublished manuscripts. In addition to an honorary LL.D., he has twenty earned degrees -- including some eleven earned doctorates* (and one honorary doctorate) awarded for dissertations in law, literature, philosophy and theology.

Dr. Lee rises early; reads God's Word in eleven languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the world some seven times; has visited around one hundred countries (several repeatedly); and has also visited every inhabited Continent. He is in demand as a promoter of doctoral students in Australia, Britain, Germany, South Africa, and the United States.

A diehard predestinarian and unreconstructed Southerner, Dr. Lee is affectionately nicknamed "General Lee" by his closest friends. In Australia, he was till his retirement in 2000 the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College.

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