

# **BAPTISM DOES NOT REGENERATE!** **CALVINISM VERSUS ‘CHRISTENING’**



“A child **should** be presented to God, to receive **Baptism purely**, according to the institution [**of the Holy Bible**]. He is instead **defiled** [by **magical sacramentalism**] with many perverse and profane ceremonies. It is quite true that **Baptism does not on that account fail to have its virtue** as far as the **child** is concerned. Because God’s ordinances [such as Paedobaptism] are not abolished by the foolish inventions of men” such as Romish and Eastern-‘Orthodox’ baptismal regenerationism.

-- John Calvin: *A Short Treatise Setting Forth What the Faithful Man Must Do  
When He is Among Papists and He Knows the Truth of the Gospel* (1543)

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## FOREWORD

The Apostle Paul, Augustine of Hippo, and John Calvin -- all rejoiced in being saved by grace alone. Being an *issus de Calvin*, as the author Dr. Lee prefers to call himself, he never grows weary of emphasizing that man is saved solely by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dr. Lee is a man of astounding erudition and -- of much greater importance -- one who humbly and unreservedly accepts the authority and infallibility of Holy Scripture. He is one of the few Scholars of our day who has really probed the literary heritage of the great Reformer John Calvin.

This paper is no exception to the rule: solely by grace! Infant baptism is based on the Covenant of grace. Depraved man has no meritorious works. Regeneration and the seed of faith thus implanted in the heart of the smallest child, are indispensable for Baptism. But these are gifts of God!

The prior existence of faith as deserved merit, could never be proved -- not even before Baptism. That is why the *Belgic Confession* (art. 21) explains: "We do not mean that faith itself justifies us."

However, faith is indeed the implied prerequisite for all advocates of Adult Baptism alone. Indeed, the [Adult] Heathen -- who have as yet had no participation in the Covenant -- do need to profess their faith before receiving Baptism.

Professor Lee brings out in bold relief that even children of believers "while yet in the womb -- according to Calvin -- have been adopted into the Covenant of eternal life." Compare too also the *Canons of Dordt*, I:17. What a comfort for so many worried and wondering parents!

Calvin once wrote: "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." *Institutes* IV:16:32.

May this piece of painstaking research into the *Opera* of Calvin, be used by the Spirit of God to make many a seeking soul conscious of the real meaning of the grace of God!

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Note by Dr Lee: The late Rev. Professor Dr. F.J.M. Potgieter above was my teacher, and is the author of scores of Calvinistic publications. His Th.D. dissertation was on Calvin, and he was an authority especially on Calvin's view of Baptism. He taught me a great deal of what I ever learned. Here I would not be innovative. I just present Scripture and Calvinism, almost without comment.

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## **BAPTISM DOES NOT CLEANSE: CALVINISM VERSUS 'CHRISTENING'**

Not even Holy Baptism can regenerate a single sinner. That can only be effected directly by the Holy Spirit of God the Father. He it is Who cleanses us from all our sins. He does so only by virtue of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself alone -- shed for us once and for all, at Calvary.

In the words of the well-known hymn: "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus! O, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow! No other fount I know -- nothing but the blood of Jesus!"

The Spirit-filled Holy Bible repudiates both circumcisonal and baptismal regeneration. So too do the uninspired Jewish writings which appeared between the Old and the New Testaments. Thus: the *Tanna* on Genesis; the early *Talmud*; Philo; and Josephus. Similarly, so too do all extant documents of the Christian Church which arose during the first two hundred years after Calvary.

It was as late as A.D. 250 when the ritualist Cyprian perhaps unconsciously began to syncretize Christianity and Paganism. Before then, no patristic writings advocated baptismal regeneration. Indeed, even Baptism as such is but little mentioned in the earliest post-apostolic extant evidence.

It is true that the latter indeed maintains a high view of the Sacrament -- and properly so! Yet from this it is clear that faith and regeneration were often construed as preceding Baptism.

This naturally disproves baptismal regenerationism. Thus: the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Justin Martyr, Theodotus, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and even Tertullian.

Yet especially from about A.D. 250 onward -- the uninspired and syncretizing Christian Church began to backslide. Then, for many centuries, she more and more abandoned the true Covenant Theology.

Instead, for hundreds of years, she increasingly proceeded to teach the quasi-magical theory of baptismal regenerationism.

Yet even during those darkening dynasties, there were some bright and shining lights. For some of the Post-Cyprianic Church Fathers -- at least at times -- still conceded the possible existence of faith and salvation in infants, even before their Baptism. Thus: Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and now and then even Augustine. Proof of all these assertions now follows.

### **1. Intertestamental literature denies circumcisonal regenerationism**

The *Tannaim* were those Israelitic authorities who expounded the Law of God for a period of about two centuries, starting with Hillel and Shammai (who were born around 70 B.C.). Their

comments on Old Testament Scripture are called the *Tanna*.<sup>1</sup> The latter are invaluable indications of how the Old Testament was interpreted after its close (with the prophet Malachi) -- and before the beginning of the New Testament (from Matthew onward).

From these intertestamental *Tanna*, the Israelitic understanding of Holy Writ right before the birth of Jesus can be seen quite clearly. In the *Tanna* on Genesis 6:9f, it is clear that these rabbinical commentators regarded Noah's whole family -- just like Adam himself before the fall -- as already just[ified] prior to the later inception of Circumcision. Indeed, also from the *Tanna* on Genesis 17:12-14, it is clear that those born in Abraham's household were regarded as already "bought" (and thus as already in the Covenant) even before their Circumcision. Compare too Genesis 12:5; 14:14; 15:2-6; 17:24-27.

It is for this reason that all their males were to be circumcised. Not circumcising those born in the household -- or those bought with money as household servants and thus added to the homestead -- was indeed a grievous sin. Yet such was not the sin of refusing to enter into Covenant. To the contrary, it was the sin of having "broken" the Covenant already binding upon them all. Genesis 15:18; 17:10-14; Exodus 4:24-26; Joshua 5:6-11.

Now this obviously presupposes the existence of the Covenant with God's people **prior** to their circumcising (or their non-circumcising) of their own infant children of the Covenant.(cf. Hosea 6:7 with Genesis 6:18f). The later circumcising was to be done through the agency of a Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Genesis 17:23f cf. 20:7 & 21:4. So the adults' non-circumcising of their own children then, in this way constituted those adults' breach of a Covenant already there for them as well as for their children -- and already binding upon both them and their children.

The *Talmud* is a large body of Jewish teachings first written down from the second century A.D. onward. It rests, however, upon generations of **prior oral traditions** -- going back at least to the time of Ezra (*circa* 450 B.C.).<sup>2</sup>

In the *Talmud*,<sup>3</sup> prenatal and thus precircumcisional teachability -- and therefore regeneratedness -- is presupposed. For even prenatal illumination is assumed -- when unborn children were then "taught" religious lore. Cf. Psalm 139:15f; Jeremiah 1:5; Second Timothy 1:6 & 3:14-16.

Thus, a Hebrew male baby did not become a Hebrew by being circumcised. To the contrary, a Hebrew baby was circumcised as a baby -- precisely because he was already a Hebrew before his Infant Circumcision. See: Philippians 3:5 cf. Second Timothy 1:3-6. Indeed, uncircumcisable Hebrew female babies were fully Hebrewesses and later Israelitesses -- regardless of their lifelong uncircumcision. Genesis 34:1-31; Num. 27:8f & 36:2f; Luke 13:16 & 23:28f.

According to the *Talmud*,<sup>4</sup> the babies of Gentile proselytes themselves became Jews -- before their infant Circumcision. They became Jews as soon as their parents were adopted by Jewish families, or alternatively themselves professed the Jewish faith. For, declared the Talmud, "whenever one becomes a proselyte he is accounted as an infant newly born" and one day old -- and hence as one not yet circumcised only from the age of eight days onward.<sup>5</sup>

Israelitic missionaries, continued the *Talmud*,<sup>6</sup> "baptized the little young proselyte" along with



his parents. This refers to the practice of the Israelitic Infant Baptism also of the babies of proselytes -- before and during the earthly lifetime of John the Baptizer and of Jesus Himself. See: First Kings 18:30-37; Malachi 3:1f & 4:4-6; Luke 1:13-17; John 1:25-34f ; Matthew 21:25 & 23:15.

The famous antiquarian Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias lived and wrote as a confessionistic and consubstantiationistic Lutheran. Yet, explaining First Corinthians 7:14, he nevertheless rightly insisted regarding 'Proselyte Baptism': "Judaism distinguishes between [baptizable] children who are begotten and born...before conversion to Judaism and children who were begotten and born...after conversion to Judaism [without Baptism].... We conclude that the '**holiness**' of the **children** [as referred to in First Corinthians 7:14] **rests not on Baptism** -- but on their descent from a Christian father or a Christian mother."<sup>7</sup>

The Alexandrian Jew Philo who died around 40 A.D., asked and answered how fallen Eve conceived ' children of God.' Philo asked: "Who, then is the One Who sows...the things that are good?" Philo then himself answered: "It is God then Who indeed sows the seed.... He bestows His own offspring whom He has sown." Further, Philo added that Jewish babies are taught religion even "in their swaddling clothes" -- and therefore again even also before their Circumcisions.<sup>8</sup>

About half a century later, the Judaistic Sadducee and famous historian Josephus wrote his 93 A.D. autobiographical *Life* and his *Antiquities of the Jews*. Therein, looking back several decades, he told us: "I am not only sprung from a sacerdotal family.... By my mother I am of the royal blood....

I was born in the first year of the reign of Caius Caesar [37 A.D.].... Jesus, a wise man, was about this time.... He was Christ.... John that was called the Baptizer...was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to Baptism.... The washing would be acceptable to him if they made use of it **not in order to the putting away of some sins**, but for the purification of the body -- supposing still that **the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness**."<sup>9</sup>

Very clearly, all this presupposes "piety" and "righteousness" and "virtue" in candidates **before** their "Baptism." The "washing" was "**not** in order to the putting away of some sins." For John the Baptizer supposed "that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand" -- and, indeed, purified by "righteousness" (whether imputed or inherent). Thus Josephus. A stronger discounting of any theory of **baptismal** regenerationism, is scarcely imaginable.

## **2. Early-patristic literature denies baptismal regenerationism**

After Christ' s final bloodshedding on Calvary, the bloody sign of Old Testament Household (and therefore also Infant) Circumcision was replaced by the unbloody sign of New Testament Infant Baptism. Genesis 17:10-27 & Exodus 4:24-26 *cf.* Romans 4:11 to 6:3f & Colossians 2:11-13.

In the early-patristic *Epistle of Barnabas*, written perhaps around 100 A.D., the Lord is said to have declared<sup>10</sup> that "Circumcision was not of the flesh, but of the heart." So too did many of

the Christian apocryphal writings.<sup>11</sup> For example, the so-called *Gospel of Thomas*<sup>12</sup> regarded a pre-circumcisional [compare a 'pre-baptized'] "little child of seven days" -- as being among "those who enter the Kingdom." Cf. Genesis 17:12f & Second Samuel 12:18-23.

The abiding influence especially of New Testament texts, is very clearly evident in the patristic writings. As regards Baptism, this is notably the case with Romans 4:11 and Ephesians 4:5 & 4:30 and Colossians 2:11-13. Thus, the important pastoral letter known as the *Shepherd of Hermas* constantly calls Baptism specifically a "seal" of repentance.<sup>13</sup>

The 150 A.D. Samaritan Christian Justin Martyr described even unbaptized and aborted children as "immaculate."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, he claimed that some of them had been "illuminated" as "disciples -- from childhood."<sup>15</sup>

Asked Justin in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*:<sup>16</sup> "What need have I of Circumcision -- I who have been witnessed to by God? I who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost -- what need have I of that other Baptism [namely that with water]?" For "Abraham was justified -- when he was he was in uncircumcision."<sup>17</sup>

The Church Father Theodotus stated<sup>18</sup> that "Baptism...is the sign of regeneration" -- and **not** that Baptism is or effects regeneration. Indeed, he also declared that unbaptized "aborted infants share a better fate" than do unbelieving adults.<sup>19</sup>

Around 185 A.D., Irenaeus said<sup>20</sup> that Jesus "sanctified every age" of humanity. For "He came to save all...who are 'born again' to God -- infants and children and boys and youths." Irenaeus also cited Jeremiah 1:5 with approval<sup>21</sup> -- as regards prenatal (and therefore pre-baptismal) justification. He also said Jesus taught even the 'speechless infants' in Matthew 11:25-27 who "believed in Him."<sup>22</sup>

About 190 A.D., Clement of Alexandria stated that aborted embryos are led into everlasting life.<sup>23</sup> This is so, because they had already been made righteous -- before and without Baptism.<sup>24</sup>

The 200 A.D. Tertullian approvingly quoted<sup>25</sup> the prenatal and thus pre-baptismal texts Jeremiah 1:5 and Luke 1:41-46. Indeed, he declared that believers washed with the blood of Christ are justified even when not able to receive Baptism with water.<sup>26</sup>

He asked the impenitent: "Who will grant to you...one single sprinkling of any water whatever?" Yet he then remarked of those who have repented, that "we are not washed in order that we may escape from sinning; but because we have ceased, since in heart we have been bathed already."<sup>27</sup>

### **3. Pre-baptismal regeneration even in some late-patristic literature**

As we shall see below, it was the 250 A.D. sacramentalizing Catabaptist Cyprian who introduced the swiftly spreading and paganistic pollution of baptismal regenerationism into the Early Church universal. Yet resistance against it still continued, for more than a century thereafter. Indeed, many Post-Cyprianic and Pre-Augustinian theologians -- and sometimes even Augustine himself -- still continued to assert the Biblical and Pre-Cyprianic doctrine of the pre-baptismal justification of many elect infants and adults.

Thus, around 370, Nazianzus declared:<sup>28</sup> "Have you an infant child? From his very tenderest age, let him be consecrated by the Spirit! ... Hannah even before Samuel was born, promised him to God; and after his birth consecrated him at once.... You have no need of amulets or incantations....

"Some will say, in the case of those who ask for Baptism -- what have you to say about those who are still children, and conscious neither of the loss nor of the grace? 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."

His contemporary Gregory of Nyssa taught that even unbaptized covenantal babes receive blessing -- not wrath.<sup>29</sup> And around 400 A.D., even Augustine himself admitted it is only in the elect that the Sacraments accomplish what they represent.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, he also stated: "Though the Sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common."<sup>31</sup>

According to John Calvin, "by the mouth of Augustine...there is a sanctification without a visible Sacrament, and a visible Sacrament without internal sanctification."<sup>32</sup> Yet for the rest, Augustine unfortunately promoted the false theory of baptismal regenerationism -- though rebuttably so.<sup>33</sup>

### **4. Syncretistic Cyprian: the father of baptismal regenerationism**

We hardly ever agree with the late Dr. Samuel Angus, sometime Professor of New Testament and Historical Theology at St. Andrew's College, University of Sydney. He was very greatly in error -- where he attributed also New Testament Christianity to Pagan Greek roots.

Yet what Angus claimed about the Late-Patristic Church, is true. For it is undeniable that the form-ed Church soon became increasingly de-formed. This occurred especially from the (250 A.D.) time of Cyprian onward. And that continued until the Church later became re-formed -- in the days of the 1517f Protestant Re-form-ation.

Wrote Angus: "It was inevitable that [heathen] Hellenic religion should leave a deep impression upon...later Christianity..., mainly because Hellenic converts became the pillars of the Church.... In considering the history of Christian sacramentarianism..., the organization of the [Roman] Catholic Church was largely the creation of the genius of Cyprian, who was a firm believer in magic....

"In several of the [Pagan] Mystery-Religions, 'Baptism' was the means to the remission of the penalties of sin and of regeneration. Compare Tertullian's *De Bapt.* 5 & *Adv. Haer.* 40. The 'Baptism' of the *taurobolium* [alias the showering with bull's blood] was valid for twenty years."<sup>34</sup>

Unintended yet striking corroboration of the above, comes also from the camp of Traditionalistic Romanism. Thus Dr. B.V. Miller, Oscott Professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Mary's College.

According to Miller: "All competent Scholars are agreed that from the end of the third century, the Catholic theology of the Mass" -- that is, the Romish perversion of Holy Communion alias the Eucharist -- "was fixed..... It is maintained by many [*viz.* by Protestants] that this [*viz.* the Mass] is a perversion of the primitive doctrine.... The principal author of the innovation and of the change in the current of theological tradition, is said to be St. Cyprian."<sup>35</sup>

Let it never be forgotten that Cyprian, though an Early 'Catholic' Christian, was also a heterodox Catabaptist! For Cyprian deviated from mainline Christianity at that time -- with his insistence upon rebaptizing all those 'catholicized' from non-'catholic' yet trinitarian sects. This rebaptistic viewpoint was essentially magical and ritualistic.

Fortunately, it was then successfully opposed -- in the middle of the third century -- by Stephen of Rome and by Dionysius of Rome. Yet it introduced a permanent element of superstition, which later spread throughout the Early Catholic Church -- and poisoned her for many centuries.

## **5. Ritualistic baptismal regenerationism challenged by the Reformation**

The implications of this for Baptism, now unfolded. Down through the subsequent centuries, it led to the entrenched baptismal regenerationism of the Mediaeval Church. That of Scholastics like Thomas Aquinas was especially influential.

But God, in His blessed providence, then sent the Protestant Reformation. So now, we ourselves can rejoice in the famous Lutheran Schwarzerd's defence of the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*.

Wrote this same Schwarzerd or Rev. Dr. 'Melanchthon' (Professor of Greek and New Testament at the University of Wittenberg): "Here we condemn the whole rabble of Scholastic Doctors who teach that the Sacraments confer grace upon him who interposes no obstacle *ex opere operato*, without any good motion on the part of the recipient.... This impious and superstitious opinion is taught with great authority in the whole kingdom of the Pope."<sup>36</sup>

The Vatican replied to this at her historic Romish Council of Trent, in 1545f. For Trent firmly repudiated both Lutheranism and Calvinism. Indeed, it implicitly further rebuffed some of the counter-reformational claims even of that pugnacious papist -- Cardinal Cajetan himself.

Wrote the modern Romanist Dr. Murphy:<sup>37</sup> "The theologian Cajetan...expressed the opinion that in the case of infants dying in their mother's womb, the prayers of the parents could secure the

justification and salvation of the children. He thought that a blessing of the child in the womb, given in the Name of the Blessed Trinity, would secure this.

"This opinion was regarded with great disapproval by the theologians of the Council of Trent [V:1].... Though it was not actually condemned, Pope Pius V ordered that it should be expunged from the works of Cajetan.... Even St. Bonaventure seems to have nodded. For he says<sup>38</sup> that an infant would be deprived of grace if unbaptized -- unless God made it the object of some special privilege."

## **6. Modern ritualism maintains baptismal regenerationism**

The further implications of all this, even for Romanism today, are still being stated very clearly. For Murphy continued:<sup>39</sup> "If a pregnant mother dies, and the foetus is extracted, it [meaning he or she!] should be baptized -- if alive. If there is doubt as to its being alive, it should be baptized conditionally -- 'if thou art capable' *etc.*....

"A foetus baptized in the womb should be baptized conditionally after birth -- 'if thou art not baptized' *etc.* .... All abortions, at whatever period of pregnancy they may occur, should be baptized if they are alive, and should be baptized conditionally ('if capable') if there is doubt of their being alive."

Thus, modern Romanism still promotes baptismal regenerationism. Moreover, her custom of 'Conditional Baptism' also tends to perpetuate the practice of 'Re-Baptism' prohibited in Ephesians

4:4-6 and Hebrews 6:1-6 *etc.* This prohibited practice is not only totally unbiblical. It is in fact also Neo-Anabaptistic -- if not indeed also outrightly Neo-Donatistic.

In his above-mentioned *nihil obstat* book, bearing the *imprimatur* of Edm. Can. Surmont (the then Roman Catholic Vicar-General), Murphy further<sup>40</sup> explained why all humans -- whether fetuses or octogenarians -- must be baptized before they die. "We must conclude," he declared, "that infants dying in their mother's womb do not enjoy the Beatific Vision in Heaven."

Thus say the lords of the Roman Catholic Church. But the Lord of all lords insists upon the very opposite. For the Word of God assures us that infants of believing parents are sanctified even from their conception, long before they could ever be baptized. First Corinthians 7:14. Compare too: Genesis 17:5-12; Luke 1:5-7,39-45; II Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-15.

Consistent Christianity, *alias* Calvinism, teaches that Baptism is only for those sinners who are already Christians (whether infants or adults). Ritualism, however, teaches that to baptize is to christianize; and that to 'christen' is to cleanse.

May the following pages convince the reader that Baptism does not cleanse! More importantly, may they show that the blood of Jesus alone washes away all our sins. Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14f; First Peter 1:18f; First John 1:7-9; Revelation 1:5.

May all who read, clearly see that unbelievers remain unholy -- both before, during, and after being baptized! Yet may they also see that those who profess to be Christians, and their infant children, are indeed to be regarded as already holy -- even before the Baptism with which they should all be sealed!

## **7. Statement of the problem of baptismal regenerationism**

All Romanists believe Baptism itself regenerates. So too do all Eastern 'Orthodox' ritualists. So too do some Anglo-Catholics and Scoto-Catholics -- and also many 'Church of Christ' Campbellites.

Luther always admitted and Lutherans often concede the possibility of faith in covenantal infants even prior to their Baptism. Yet modern Lutherans do seem to believe that the Holy Spirit usually regenerates precisely during Baptism. Similarly, trinitarian Seventh-day Adventists and unitarian Jehovah's witnesses and polytheistic Mormons -- all attach altogether far too much importance to their submersions (of adults alone).

Zwinglians, on the other hand, generally support the Infant Baptism of children of believers. Zwingli himself did this, out of conviction, from 1525 onward. It is true that Zwingli never fully understood how Baptism (unregenerately) engrafts the baptizee into membership of Christ's Church Visible. Yet Zwingli rightly perceived that the soul is cleansed by the grace of God alone, and not by anything external whatsoever. He properly saw that Baptism itself certainly cannot wash away sin.

Like the affusive Anabaptists, also the immersionistic Baptists rightly reject Baptism as an absolute requirement for justification. Yet they wrongly believe that even the children of believers should never be baptized during infancy. 'Hardshell' Hypercalvinist Baptists sometimes deem even their own infants to be unsaved children of the devil. 'Softshell' Arminian Baptists, on the other hand, usually regard their own infants as 'safe' persons. Yet they also believe those infants might later lose that 'safeness' or salvation.

Consistent Calvinists, however -- together with Holy Scripture -- totally repudiate the Baptism of unbelievers, and of the infant children of unbelievers. They require the Baptism of adult believers -- and of the infant children of such believers. Yet they affirm that God often regenerates and gives unlosable saving faith to covenantal fetuses long before their Baptism.

This pre-baptismal faith is bestowed before such infants might be sealed. Formerly, the seal was Circumcision. Since New Testament times, it is Baptism. Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11-12; Ephesians 4:4,5,30.

Many covenant children survive fetushood, and are born alive. If they then look like continuing to live -- they should be sealed while still babies. This should be done as soon as possible and where feasible shortly after their birth. Such sealing then occurs -- during their Infant Baptism.

## **8. The saints before Abraham were justified without Circumcision**

The very first Gospel promise was made to our forebears Adam and Eve, right after their fall in the Garden of Eden. There they repented and believed the Gospel. Genesis 3:15-21 and 4:1-4. Very significantly, not just those uncircumcised adult believers but also their uncircumcised seed or descendants were and are included in that Gospel promise.

Thus also the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith*, which refers to the first passage above. It does so, where declaring that "the Visible Church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>41</sup>

For after man's fall, yet before the institution of Circumcision, it is obvious that very many were justified by God -- through saving faith alone. This was accomplished without their ever receiving any Sacrament of initiation (such as Circumcision or Baptism). Thus: Adam, Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, *etc.*<sup>42</sup>

The never-circumcised Noah "found grace" in the eyes of God. He was justified or made just. Indeed, he was then also pronounced to have been rendered just -- and therefore to be just, in the eyes of God. Then God brought Noah and his family to safety, inside the ark -- quite before the rainstorm began. Only thereafter were they all 'baptized' -- by the rainwater falling on the roof of the ark.<sup>43</sup> So the whole family was justified, before they were baptized (by way of sprinkling from above).

We might also point out that not just Noah and his family but even all the animals with him in the ark were advantaged by God's Covenant. The mere fact that those animals could not understand what was going on, did not mean that they could not be preserved. Nor, after the flood, does their ongoing inability to understand the covenantal significance of the rainbow -- cause them to forfeit the benefits of that Covenant. Genesis 6:18-22 and 9:8-17.

Abraham too was justified in full -- long before he was circumcised.<sup>44</sup> Even after the institution of Circumcision, no Israelitic women -- Israelitic by birth or by choice -- were ever circumcised.

Indeed, that was not even possible. Yet many such uncircumcisable women were justified in full -- such as Sarah, Rahab, Ruth, Elisabeth, *etc.*<sup>45</sup>

Conversely, Esau (and probably also Ishmael) -- though circumcised in childhood -- was never justified.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, David's first-born son by Bathsheba was justified before and without Circumcision -- before he then died in infancy.<sup>47</sup>

For Circumcision was only for the living -- and never for the dying. Nowhere in God's Word do we detect any desire to circumcise the dying -- whether they be dying infants or dying adults. At Calvary, Circumcision was replaced by Baptism.<sup>48</sup> So those modern Sacramentalists who scurry to baptize the dying, are far removed from the scenario of Scripture.

## **9. The circumcised Abraham and his uncircumcisable womenfolk**

Abraham had already<sup>44</sup> been justified by God -- long before both he and his entire circumcisable household were commanded to be circumcised.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, as already seen above<sup>50</sup> -- Circumcision never justified anyone.

After the institution of Circumcision, it was very disadvantageous for covenantal males to be left uncircumcised. God Himself declares to Abraham: "I will establish My Covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you in their generations..., to be a God to you, and to your seed after you.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you.... The uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, shall be cut off from his people."<sup>51</sup>

This can only mean that the male Israelite was conceived and born **within** the Covenant prior to his subsequent Circumcision, and that he himself was thus in Covenant with God from his very first coming into being embryonically. Judges 13:5-25; Psalm 139:13-14; Jeremiah 1:5; First Corinthians 7:14. Otherwise it would not be possible for the infant, through the neglect of his own parent, to have "broken" the Covenant -- if and when he was not later circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.

Moreover, the female Israelitess -- whether embryo, baby, child or adult -- was always altogether uncircumcisable. Yet she too was in Covenant with Jehovah -- even prior to her birth, and indeed throughout her earthly existence. Genesis 30:21; 34:7-16; First Samuel 1:11f; Luke 1:28-55.

So it is not Circumcision -- compare, similarly, Baptism -- which establishes the Covenant. Yet also non-circumcision -- compare, similarly, non-baptism -- is certainly one of the ways a Covenant already operative pre-circumcisionally (and/or pre-baptismally), can be broken. Genesis 17:2-14.

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* repeatedly cites from this passage. It does so to prove: that the Church consists of believers and their children;<sup>52</sup> that the Sacraments are seals of the Covenant of grace;<sup>53</sup> that there is a spiritual relation between the sacramental sign and the thing signified;<sup>54</sup> and that infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.<sup>55</sup>

The passage is also repeatedly referred to by the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism*. This is done to prove: that Sacraments were instituted by Christ in His Church;<sup>56</sup> that infants descending from either one or both parents professing faith in Christ, are to be baptized;<sup>57</sup> and further that the Sacrament of Baptism is to be administered but once and with water even to infants.<sup>58</sup>

After Abraham, all believers who then left their circumcisable infants uncircumcised (up until and at Calvary) -- thereby cut their own children off from membership in the visible community of believers. After Calvary, exactly the same is done even today by Baptist Christians who leave their own baptizable infants unbaptized. For Baptism now, like Circumcision then, is a token and Sacrament of God's Covenant of grace.



It is certainly injurious to believers (and to their children) -- to leave their infant children outside of the visible believing community. Yet even this great sin<sup>59</sup> cannot deprive those infant children of any faith in Christ they possess pre-baptismally (and keep on possessing). Hence, whether infants or adults, unbaptized believers today -- also just like uncircumcised believers before Calvary -- are nevertheless justified. Thus they are safe -- both for time and for all eternity.

#### **10. The circumcised yet still unregenerated male Shechemites**

On the instituting of Circumcision,<sup>60</sup> Calvin commented that "God threatens punishment only to despisers." This means those who shunned Infant Circumcision -- and those who today despise Infant Baptism. Yet where there was no actual despising or rejection of the Sacrament for the covenantal infant, the mere lack of Infant Circumcision (or the lack of Infant Baptism) did no harm to those infants. Some harm might, however, well devolve upon adults who despised Infant Circumcision.

Calvin stated that if any covenantal "infants were deprived by death of the tokens of salvation -- He [God] spared them.... For they had done nothing derogatory to the covenant of God. The same reasoning is at this day in force respecting Baptism.... Uncircumcision of children would do them no harm -- if they died before the eighth day. To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for Baptism -- before any neglect of parents could intervene -- is a cruelty originating in superstition."

Yet even adultly-circumcised unbelieving hypocrites -- such as the rotten and unrepentant rapist Shechem and his fellow-tribesmen the Shechemites -- remained unjustified. As the *Westminster Standards* point out, God instituted the Sacrament to put a visible difference between those that belong to the Church -- and those that belong to the rest of the world. Thus the circumcised sons of Jacob rightly told the pagan Shechem: "We cannot...give our sister to one that is uncircumcised. For that were a reproach to us." Indeed, the sons of Jacob (rightly again) still regarded Shechem and his kinfolk as unregenerates -- even after the latter got themselves circumcised.<sup>61</sup>

Calvin too called these circumcised yet unregenerate Shechemites "miserable men" or circumcised but still faithless Pagans. They were like the unregenerates among U.S. Baptists. Calvin denied that "anyone by laying aside his uncircumcision might suddenly pass over into the Church of God."

To Calvin, those circumcised Shechemites were still "foreigners" and "unbelievers." Significantly, he also added: "So also, at the present time, our Baptism separates us from the profane."<sup>62</sup>

#### **11. God threatened disobedient Moses himself; but not Moses' uncircumcised son**

Later, Moses neglected to circumcise his son Gershom. Significantly, God then threatened with death not the infant Gershom -- but his wayward father Moses. "The Lord met him, and sought

to kill him."

So, to prevent the death of her husband, Moses' unordained wife Zipporah took a sharp stone. Therewith she cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his [Moses'] feet. Then she said: 'You are surely a husband-of-blood to me!' Then He [God] let him [Moses] go. "Thus she said: 'You are a husband-of-blood!' -- because of the circumcising."<sup>63</sup>

Now the Romanists believe that all unbaptized infants are lost. However, they could hardly hold that all uncircumcised infants -- including even all Israelitic females -- were previously lost. For that would strain even their doctrine of the essential sinlessness of the Virgin Mary -- had she died, uncircumcised, when still an infant.

Yet the Romanists nevertheless love pointing to this bizarre and non-normative example of a very freakish Circumcision performed by the unordained woman Zipporah. They do so, to try and justify their own practice of permitting the 'Emergency Baptism' of dying infants. Indeed, they permit even unordained female nurses to act thus -- whether the latter profess to be Christians, or not.

However, Rome here overlooks the fact that the unquestionable validity and unrepeatability of this single and highly irregular act -- can no way be made normative as a *regula* alias a general rule. Still less can it be made to apply to the completely different case of dying infants.

Rome here also overlooks the fact that it was not the uncircumcised healthy infant Gershom but only the circumcised and threatened adult Moses that was then dying. The wrath of God was kindled not by Gershom's lack of being circumcised -- but by Moses' sinful neglect to circumcise that baby boy.

## **12. Zipporah's circumcising of her son was highly irregular**

Rev. Dr. John Calvin commented:<sup>64</sup> "Why should Zipporah have taken a sharp stone or knife, and circumcised her son -- had she not known that God was offended at his uncircumcision? ... Moses had provoked God's vengeance.... He was terrified by the approach of certain destruction.... The cause of His affliction was shewn him.... It would otherwise never have occurred to himself or his wife to circumcise the child to appease God's wrath....

"The child [Gershom] was not duly [alias *regula*-rly] circumcised.... It was improper in itself.... We must not take this as an example [to follow].... The confusion of Zipporah, and the stupor of Moses, were pardoned.... She rashly hastened to circumcise her son.... Let us then learn from hence to use reverently the Sacraments which are the seals of God's grace, lest He should severely avenge our despisal of them!"

What, though, of the Romanists' practice? Explained Calvin: "Their folly is confuted, who wish to obtain a colour for 'Baptism by women' from this passage. For they contend that if infants be in danger of death, they may properly be baptized by women -- because Zipporah circumcised her son.

"But they will themselves allow that, if a man be present, a woman could not lawfully [or regularly] administer this Sacrament. It is a perversion then to lay down a rule from a confused and hasty act."

In his *Appendix to the Tract on the True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin added<sup>65</sup> the following: "The example of Zipporah is quoted, in which some -- pleasing themselves more than they ought -- betray their own want of discernment.... First, even on their own shewing, the cases of Circumcision and of Baptism are different. For they do not say that that ancient symbol [of Circumcision] was absolutely necessary.

"Secondly, I think it is erroneously inferred...that the act of Zipporah was approved by God. Were it so -- we must [then] say that He was pleased with the worship perfunctorily paid to Him by the inhabitants of Samaria who had been transported thither from Assyria. II Kings 17. Thirdly, it was a special act, and cannot properly be drawn into a precedent....

"It betrays a want of common sense to seek a precedent in the act of Zipporah. In the presence of her husband, she circumcises her son. And who was that husband? Moses, the chief prophet of God -- than whom no greater ever arose in Israel. Let the Woman-Baptists tell me, whether they will permit a woman to baptize in presence of a Bishop [alias an Overseer]! Such a monstrosity would certainly horrify them."

### **13. Calvin's *Institutes* on the circumcising by Zipporah**

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin further stated: <sup>66</sup> "It is improper for private individuals to take upon themselves the administration of Baptism.... Christ did not give command to any men or women whatever to baptize, but to those whom He had appointed....

"The practice which has been in use...for laics to baptize in danger of death when[ever] a Minister could not be present in time, cannot...be defended on sufficient grounds.... With regard to women, it was decreed without exception in the [257 A.D.] Council of Carthage (ch. 100) that they were not to presume to baptize at all."

However, some object: 'But there is a danger that he who is sick may be deprived of the gift of regeneration -- if he decease without Baptism.' Calvin responded: "By no means. Our children, before they are born, God declares that He adopts for His Own.... Much evil has been caused by the dogma...that Baptism is necessary to salvation....

"For when the opinion prevails that all are lost who happen not to be baptized in water -- our condition becomes worse than that of God's ancient people [Genesis 17:7-12 and Second Samuel 12:12-23]. In that case, Christ will be thought to have come not to fulfil -- but to abolish -- the promises. Since the promise, which was then effectual in itself, to confer salvation before the eighth day -- would [then] not now be effectual without the help of a sign."

"Before [the 430 A.D.] Augustine's day, [it] is gathered [before 200 A.D.] first from Tertullian [*On Baptism* chapter 17]...that a woman is not permitted...to teach or baptize or...claim to herself any office of the man.... Of the same thing we have a sufficient witness in [the 400] Epiphanius,

when he upbraids Marcion with giving permission to women to baptize.... He declares it mockery to allow women to baptize, and makes no exception.... He says that it was not even permitted to the holy mother of Christ....

"The example of Zipporah, Exodus 4:25, is irrelevantly quoted.... There was something special in the case, making it unfit for a precedent.... In Baptism by women...it is [ever] plain that the rule delivered by Christ is violated [Matthew 28:19 & Hebrews 5:4].... Children who happen to depart this life before an opportunity of baptizing them in water are not excluded from the Kingdom of heaven.... Unless we admit this position, great injury is done to the Covenant of God -- as if in itself it were weak.... Its effect depends not either on Baptism or on any accessories.

"The Sacrament is afterwards added, as a kind of seal -- not to give efficacy to the promise as if in itself invalid, but merely to confirm it to us. Hence it follows that 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 received into the Church by a formal sign because, in virtue of the promise, they previously belonged to the body of Christ. Hence if, in omitting the sign, there is neither sloth nor contempt nor negligence -- we are safe from all danger."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* states that "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."<sup>67</sup> Immediately thereafter, it rightly cites <sup>68</sup> this very incident of Moses' neglecting to circumcise his infant son Gershom. Thus, it rightly concludes that "it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance."<sup>69</sup>

However, the *Confession* then immediately adds a most important *caveat* about the Sacrament of initiation. *Viz.*, "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it -- or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated."<sup>70</sup>

#### **14. Moses: fleshly Circumcision pointed to that of the heart**

Through Moses, God decreed that no uncircumcised person might partake of the Passover. This important *caveat* is twice cited in the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*. For God instituted the Sacraments precisely to put a difference between those that belong to the Church and the rest of the world, and to exhibit the benefits of Christ' s mediation to those within the Covenant of grace.<sup>71</sup>

Moses also predicted that future generations of Israelites -- circumcised indeed in flesh -- will nevertheless be uncircumcised in heart. Indeed, he told even his own backslidden contemporaries and circumcised-in-the-flesh Israelites as a whole:

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and no longer be stiffnecked!"<sup>72</sup> Thus said the Lord -- to His covenantal people who had already been circumcised in their flesh.

Clearly, they had not earlier been regenerated -- during the Infant Circumcisions of their flesh. Very important is the Circumcision of the heart, mentioned by Moses.

Calvin here commented:<sup>73</sup> "To 'circumcise the heart' is equivalent to cleansing it.... He reproves their former perverseness, when he desires them to be no more stiff-necked....

"Circumcision is, as it were, the solemn consecration -- whereby the children of Abraham were initiated unto the worship of God and true piety, and at the same time were separated from heathen nations to be His holy and peculiar people.... They were to be admitted to this elementary rite in their infancy, that by its visible sign they might learn that the defilements of the flesh and the world were to be renounced....

"God had chosen them as His people...to prove that they differed from heathen nations and that they were circumcised in spirit no less than in the flesh. For Paul declares that they alone are truly Jews who are circumcised 'inwardly' as he says, and not those who only have to boast of 'the letter' of Circumcision. Romans 2:28-29. Therefore, the Prophets frequently taunt the transgressors of the Law by calling them 'uncircumcised' -- although they bore the visible sign in their flesh."

Yet Moses assured the Israelites that there was hope for them even after future apostasy. For even then, if they would nevertheless return to the Lord, to them it was said: "God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed" *etc.*<sup>74</sup>

Here, Calvin commented<sup>75</sup> that "this promise...would be the chief advantage of their reconciliation -- that God would endow them with the Spirit of regeneration. There is a metaphor in this word 'circumcise.' For Moses alludes to the legal sign of consecration whereby they were initiated into the service of God. The expression, therefore, is equivalent to his saying -- 'God will create you spiritually to be new men'....

"Whatever God offers us in the Sacraments," then, "depends on the secret operation of His Spirit. Circumcision was then the Sacrament of repentance and renewal -- as Baptism is now to us. But 'the letter' as Paul calls it (Romans 2:27), was useless in itself -- as also now many are baptized to no profit. So far then is God from resigning the grace of His Spirit to the Sacraments -- that all their efficacy and utility is lodged in the Spirit alone.... Still, it is not His intention to restrict the Circumcision of the heart to the subsequent course of their lives as if it depended on their own will and choice to 'circumcise' themselves before God should work in them.... In fact, He regenerates by His Spirit."

### **15. The Psalmist trusted in God before he was born**

Later, David said to God: "You are He Who took me out of the womb. You made me hope [even] when I was on my mother's breasts.... You are my God -- from my mother's womb."<sup>76</sup>

Here we are told, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that David had already put his "hope" or trust or confidence in God even before he had been weaned. "I" thus hoped or confided in God -- wrote David -- even "when I was on my mother's breasts."

Nay more. David also added: "You made me hope" even before my birth. For "You are my God from my mother's womb."<sup>76</sup>

Calvin commented here<sup>77</sup> that God had caused David "to confide" in Him before he was weaned, and even before his birth. Said Calvin in the words of David to the Lord: "I was cast upon You from the womb." That is, I was left in Your hands [even from and] in the womb. 'You are my God from my mother's belly.'"

Calvin then immediately applied the above also to other believers. Said he: "We have experienced Him to be a Father from our earliest infancy." For, as far as covenantal babies are concerned, "He is said to give them confidence" or *fiducia* alias absolute assurance of faith. Indeed, "God in this manner, by His grace, anticipates little infants -- before they have, as yet, the use of reason."

Similarly, the Psalmist later declared: "You are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust, from my [tenderest] youth. By You I have been upheld -- from the womb."<sup>78</sup>

Here, Calvin commented<sup>79</sup> that the Psalmist had "trust or confidence" in God even while the Lord was "nourishing his hope" during his tenderest youth. For the Psalmist "not only celebrates the goodness of God which he had experienced from his childhood -- but also those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth."

## **16. Joel on prenatal sanctification and Circumcision of the heart**

Around B.C. 800, the prophet Joel clearly taught that even sucklings were members of God's true people of the Covenant. Said that prophet: "Sanctify the Congregation -- assemble the Elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts!" Joel 2:16.

Indeed, he also predicted that even sons and daughters would be baptized with the Holy Spirit: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" *etc.* Joel 2:28 *cf.* Acts 1:5 & 2:1-17 & 2:38-39.

Commented Dr. John Calvin on the above passage in Joel 2:16: "The Prophet...would have the young, sucking the breasts, to be assembled. Why are these brought in, as involving guilt? ... The Prophet seems to enourage...young infants to assemble together with men and women.... Children ought to have been brought together, so that those grown up and advanced in years might through them perceive what they deserved. For the wrath of God, we know, reached to the very infants....

"Since, then, God's wrath comes upon...young infants -- it is no wonder that the Lord bids all to come forth publicly and to make a confession of repentance.... It is then no wonder that in order to pacify God's wrath, the very infants are summoned with the rest. But, as I have already said, the reason is on account of their parents.

"This prophecy [Joel 2:28] must be referred to the advent of Christ. For we know that what is here described was not fulfilled until after Christ appeared in the world. And the Prophet now preaches about the new restoration of the Church.... Peter, in the second chapter of the Acts,

says that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit was sent.... The Prophet mentions all flesh without exception.... He says 'your...young men shall visions see.'"

### **17. Jeremiah on prenatal sanctification and Circumcision of the heart**

Later, the Lord said to Jeremiah: "Before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you."<sup>80</sup> Commented Calvin:<sup>81</sup> "God declares that He knew Jeremiah before He formed him in the womb.... ' Before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you' .... It is nothing strange that God declares that He had sanctified Jeremiah...in the womb."

Through Jeremiah, God said also to His wayward people: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart!"<sup>82</sup> Because 'adult' Circumcision of the heart was necessary here, this clearly implies that the previous Circumcision of their flesh -- had not regenerated them.

Commented Calvin of Jeremiah' s contemporaries:<sup>83</sup> "Circumcision was their great boast; but only before men.... Hence the prophet bids them not to value what was of no importance, but [rather] to become ' circumcised' b efore Jehovah....

"When God commanded the seed of Abraham to be circumcised (Genesis 17:10-12), it was not His object to have a small portion of skin cut off.... He had regard to something higher -- even that ' you should be circumcised in heart.'

"The prophet, in short, teaches us here what Paul has more clearly explained (Romans 2:29).... The external sign is worthless -- except accompanied by the reality within.... In the same manner, Baptism with us may be called ' the letter' -- when there is no repentance and faith.... Though God circumcises the heart..., men are to ' circumcise' themselves" -- alias to repennt after God regenerates them.

"The same is the case with Baptism. For when Paul exhorts the faithful to fear God and to lead a holy life, he refers to Baptism. It is yet certain that men do not bestow on themselves what God signifies by the sign of Baptism. But He counsels them to seek from God the grace of His Spirit, so that they might not in vain be sealed by the external rite of Baptism -- while [yet remaining very] destitute of its reality."

God then also predicted<sup>84</sup> He "will punish all the circumcised together with the uncircumcised." He mentioned Egypt together with Judah -- and grouped the latter with Edom, Ammon, Moab and "all nations uncircumcised." For "all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."

### **18. Calvin on the Circumcision of the heart in Jeremiah**

Here, Dr. John Calvin commented<sup>85</sup> "that God threatens vengeance on the Jews...because they were circumcised and still retained ' uncircumcision' .... There was a mixture which corrupted the sacredness of Circumcision and made it like the uncircumcision of the [pagan] Gentiles.... All were uncircumcised in heart; that is, all the Jews....

"The prophet...had reference to the Jews who, being degenerate, thus adulterated God's Covenant and at the same time violated Circumcision so that it differed nothing from uncircumcision.... The Jews are classed with the [pagan] Gentiles, so that he ascribes even to them 'uncircumcision'.... The Circumcision of each is vain, and is like uncircumcision....

"He names the circumcised together with the uncircumcision.... It is indeed true that the Idumeans were circumcised.... But their Circumcision was altogether a mockery, as Esau had departed from the Church of God. The Circumcision of the elect people [Israel] was in itself efficacious. But, as they had alike fallen into superstitions, they were like the uncircumcised....

"The prophet [Jeremiah]...denounces vengeance on the Jews as well as on the Egyptians, and names the circumcised with the uncircumcision. For the latter had uncircumcision; the former, Circumcision.... Thus they had blended profane and sacred things together....

"By saying that 'all nations' were uncircumcised, he doubtless includes the Israelites.... [The] Jews would have otherwise denied that they deserved to be classed with the Gentiles. But the prophet deprives them of every excuse, and says that they were but one nation, having no difference. 'All these nations,' then," he declared, "are uncircumcised'....

"He says the Jews are 'uncircumcised in heart'.... Circumcision might have been pleaded by them. Hence the prophet [Jeremiah] says that though they had the visible symbol in the flesh, they were yet uncircumcised in heart.... For God cares not for the external symbol, but regards the chief thing -- the Circumcision of the heart. It is a common thing with Moses and the prophets to call an unrenewed heart 'uncircumcision' and to say that the people are uncircumcised in heart....

"The same is the case now. When we boast of Baptism alone and are at the same time destitute of repentance and faith, our boasting is absurd and ridiculous....

"Literal Baptism avails hypocrites nothing, for they receive only the naked sign.... Therefore we must come to the Spirit of Baptism, to the thing itself. For the interior power is renovation, when our old man is crucified in us and when we rise again with Christ into newness of life." So, grace before Baptism -- must also be followed by grace after Baptism too.

## **19. Ezekiel: God says that tiny uncircumcised covenantal infants are "My children!"**

God through the prophet Ezekiel<sup>86</sup> called even the tiny and just-born Israelites -- "**My** children." So too does the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* -- where it asserts that the Visible Church consists of those that profess the true religion, together with their children.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, it certainly seems that God was calling them "**My** children" -- even before their Infant Circumcision.

As Calvin commented:<sup>88</sup> "Here God places Himself in the position of a parent -- because He had adopted the people as His own.... All their offspring were His sons, since [at least until only



later disprovable]...all who spring from the people ought to be esteemed His children....

“They are called sons of God.... So Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy -- since...the adoption of God remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14.”

Through Ezekiel God further castigated the Hebrews, because they had "brought [adult Pagans] into My sanctuary -- strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh." Yet He also predicted the later arrival of Baptism -- as the final 'full of hope' New Testament sign and seal of regeneration.<sup>89</sup>

Promised the Lord: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you.... I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh -- so that they may walk in My Statutes.... I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.... I will cleanse you. I will give even a new heart to you, and I will put a new Spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh.... For I [will] pour out My Spirit upon the house of Israel!"<sup>90</sup>

All this came to pass with the inauguration of the New Testament. This was initiated some time after the conceptions and births of John the Baptizer and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **20. Malachi predicted the coming of John the Baptizer to convert also children**

“Behold,” predicted Malachi 3:1, “I send My messenger [John the Baptizer], and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord [Jesus Christ], Whom you are seeking, shall suddenly come to His Temple [the New Testament Church] -- even the ‘Messenger of the Covenant’ Whom you delight in. Behold, He shall come!”

Commented Calvin: “‘Behold,’ he says, ‘I send My messenger’ who will ‘clear the way before My face.’ This passage ought doubtless to be understood of John the Baptist [alias the Baptizer]. For Christ Himself so explains it, than Whom no better interpreter can be found. And since John the Baptist [alias the Baptizer] was the messenger of Christ -- the beginning of the verse can be applied to no other person....

“He afterwards adds, ‘And presently shall come to His Temple the Lord Whom you seek’.... He speaks distinctly of Christ Who is afterwards called the ‘Angel’ or ‘Messenger’ of the Covenant’...

He calls Christ...**the** ‘Messenger of the Covenant.’”

Malachi continues (4:1-6): “Behold, the day that is coming shall burn them up.... But to you who fear My Name, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.... Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.... And he shall turn the hear of the fathers back to the children, and the heart of the children back to their fathers.”

Commented Rev. Dr. John Calvin: “When the Prophet then says that the ‘day would come’ -- he refers, I think, to the first coming of Christ.... There is indeed no doubt but that Malachi calls

Christ the Sun of righteousness....

“But we must observe that this is not to be confined to the Person of Christ, but extended to the Gospel. Hence Paul says ‘Awake you who keep on sleeping, and arise from darkness; and Christ shall illuminate you!’ (Eph. 5:14). Christ, then, daily illuminates us by His doctrine and His Spirit....

“A clear sun in a serene sky brings healing.... Malachi now says that there would be ‘healing in the wings’ of Christ.... The restoration of the Church would bring them joy.... The Prophet says the[y]...would ‘go forth’.... Christ Himself...said that John the Baptist [alias the Baptizer] was the Elijah who had been promised (Matt. 11:10)....

“Malachi takes it for granted...there was formerly true religion.... He now recalls them to their first condition -- so that sons might unite in sentiment with their father, and fathers also with their sons.... There have been some converted young men who have shown the right way to their fathers, and have carried light before them.” Indeed, the unborn John the Baptizer seems to have recognized Christ as his Saviour even before his own mother Elisabeth did. Luke 1:43-44.

## **21. John the Baptizer filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb**

A messenger from God brought good news to Zacharias -- the father-to-be of John the Baptizer. The messenger gave that new father a very precious assurance about his unborn son. Said the messenger: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost -- even from his mother' s womb."<sup>91</sup>

This occurred in John prenatally -- long before he could possibly have been either circumcised or baptized. Nowhere in Holy Writ are we told of him receiving Baptism. Indeed, it seems he never

did. For John later admitted to Christ: "I need to be baptized by You!"<sup>92</sup> And Scripture itself later implies<sup>93</sup> that John the Baptizer had not himself received Baptism. Yet John had still been filled with the Holy Spirit -- even before his birth, and thus totally without benefit of Baptism.

Calvin here commented<sup>94</sup> about the unborn John that "the power and grace of the Spirit would appear in him.... Even from the womb he shall excel in the gifts of the Spirit.... ' From the womb' -- means from his earliest infancy. The power of the Spirit, I acknowledge, did operate in John while he was yet in his mother' s womb.... Let us learn by this example that, from the earliest infancy to the latest old age, the operation of the Spirit in men is free."

Six months after the conception of John in the womb of his mother Elisabeth, Jesus was conceived in the womb of Elisabeth' s cousin Mary.<sup>95</sup> In an absolutely unique way, the sinless Jesus too was filled with the Holy Spirit prenatally. He, our great High Priest, was not baptized till the commencement of His priestly ministry -- when about thirty years of age.<sup>96</sup> Yet even in His human nature, He had been indwelt by the Holy Ghost ever since His conception.<sup>97</sup>

As Calvin commented of Jesus:<sup>98</sup> "He was conceived in a remarkable manner, by the power of the Holy Spirit.... The truth of His human nature is not inconsistent with His deriving peculiar

honour above all others from His divine generation -- having been conceived out[side] of the ordinary way of nature by the Holy Spirit....

"Christ, because He was conceived by a Spirit-ual power, is called 'the Holy Seed'.... Yet He contracted no defilement from a sinful nature. For the Spirit of God kept Him pure from the very commencement.... This was done not merely so that He might abound in personal holiness -- but chiefly so that He might sanctify His own people."

## **22. John the Baptizer prenatally acknowledged his Saviour Jesus**

Soon after Christ's conception, Mary was "found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." So God assured Joseph that the One Who "had been conceived" within Mary his betrothed, had been so conceived by the Holy Ghost.<sup>99</sup>

"Mary arose in those days...and saluted [her cousin] Elisabeth.... When Elisabeth [then] heard the salutation of Mary, the baby leaped up in her [Elisabeth's] womb. Then Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and she said [to Mary]...: 'As soon as the sound of your salutation echoed in my ears, the baby [John] leaped up in my womb for joy.'"<sup>100</sup>

Very clearly, the unbaptized Spirit-filled John -- three months before his own birth -- joyfully acknowledged the not-yet-baptized yet already Spirit-filled Jesus soon after His conception. Also the unbaptized Elisabeth herself "was filled with the Holy Ghost."<sup>100</sup> And the unbaptized Mary, commented Calvin,<sup>101</sup> "cherished in her heart by faith the Son of God as already conceived in her womb."

Inside Elisabeth, continued Calvin, John leaped up joyfully. For "the babe started [= was startled] -- by a secret movement of the Spirit.... Elisabeth affirms that her cousin [Mary] was 'blessed' -- on account of the blessedness of her child [Jesus].... She [Mary] is justly called 'blessed' -- on whom God bestowed the remarkable honour of bringing into the world His Own Son, through Whom she had been Spirit-ually re-new-ed." Indeed, spiritually renewed without Baptism!

## **23. Was John the Baptizer regenerated before his birth?**

The prenatally Spirit-filled John the Baptizer (Luke 1:15) thus acknowledged the prenatal Christ (Luke 1:41). In so doing, John indicated that he himself had already been regenerated -- at least a full three months before his own birth and later Circumcision which Baptism now replaces.

This is an appropriate place to deal with the important statement in John 1:12-13. We mean the statement about Christ the Son of God that "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His Name -- who were [re-]generated (*egennēthēsan*) not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

On the above word 'power' (alias authority), Calvin commented: "I take the word *exousia* here to mean an honour (*dignitatem*).... It would be better to translate it so, to refute the papist fiction

[especially of baptismal regeneration].... Implanted into Christ by faith, we attain the right of adoption as the sons of God.... They who believe, are already born of God.... By faith, we conceive the incorruptible seed by which we are born again to new and divine life....

"Faith is a part of our regeneration and entering into the Kingdom of God, [so] that He may number us among His children.... Since by this same faith we receive Christ Who sanctifies us by His Spirit, it is called the beginning of our adoption....

"When the Lord breathes faith into us" and also into our babies, continued Calvin, "He regenerates us in a hidden and secret way that is unknown to us. But when faith has been given, we grasp with a lively awareness not only the grace of adoption but also newness of life and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.... Faith receives Christ.... We begin to be the sons of God, only after we believe."

Right after John's birth, his father Zacharias prophesied that John would go out before the Lord Messiah to prepare His ways. That Messiah was 'the Dayspring from on high.' Already at His conception -- and also when soon thereafter acknowledged by the prenatal John -- that Messianic Dayspring had already dawned. The Messiah, exulted Zacharias, "has visited us -- to give light to them that sit in darkness."<sup>102</sup>

Commented Rev. Dr. John Calvin:<sup>103</sup> "The mere sight of his son, while still a child, led Zacharias to discourse in so lofty a strain respecting the grace and power of Christ before He was born.... The Holy Spirit bore testimony, while He was still in His mother's womb."

After John's birth and Infant Circumcision, "the child grew and became strong in spirit."<sup>104</sup> Here Calvin commented<sup>105</sup> that this "implies that the great and uncommon excellence of the child gave proof that there [already] dwelt in him a Heavenly Spirit [*cf.* Luke 1:15-17 & 1:41-44].... John remained unknown in the deserts...till the day on which the Lord had purposed to bring him into public view..., though he was fully aware of his calling."

## **24. The sinless Jesus was holy from His human conception onward**

Six months after John's birth, Jesus Himself was born. One week later, He -- the sinless One -- was circumcised.<sup>106</sup> Then, when Jesus was later reaching puberty, "the child grew and became strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him....

"He was twelve years old.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour -- with God and man."<sup>107</sup>

Here Calvin commented<sup>108</sup> about Christ that "the endowments of His mind grew with His age. The gifts and graces of the Spirit grew also and increased in Him. Hence we infer that this progress or advancement relates to His human nature. For the divine nature could receive no increase.

"But a question arises. From the time that He was conceived in His mother's womb -- did He

not abound in all fulness of spiritual gifts? For it appears absurd to say that the Son of God [ever did lack or] wanted anything that was necessary to perfection.

"The reply is easy.... He chose not only to grow in body, but to make progress in mind.... Christ received, in His human nature, according to His age and capacity, an increase of the free gifts of the Spirit -- so that 'out of His fullness' (John 1:16) He may pour them out upon us. For we draw grace -- out of His grace."

## **25. John the Baptizer demanded faith from others before baptizing them**

With the later commencement of the mature ministry of John the Baptizer, Circumcision now began to yield to Baptism. It is clear that when John baptized -- he did not believe that Baptism regenerated. To the contrary. He looked for evidences of the prior existence of renewal and repentance and faith in the people -- before he baptized them.

Thus John came -- "preaching in the desert of Judaea and saying, 'Repent!'"<sup>109</sup> Indeed, "John the Baptizer was in the desert, preaching a Baptism of repentance."<sup>110</sup> This was his message to all the believing people -- whether crowds, tax-collectors, or soldiers.<sup>111</sup>

"The whole region of Judaea and all the Jerusalemites went forth to him, and were baptized by him at the River Jordan -- while professing their sins."<sup>112</sup> Thus, "all the people and even the [tax collectors alias the] publicans who heeded him, having been baptized with the Baptism of John, declared God to be just."<sup>113</sup>

"Matthew," commented Calvin,<sup>114</sup> "differs from the other two Evangelists [Mark and Luke].... He relates the substance of John's doctrine as uttered by John himself.... Mark has one word more.... He says, 'he [John] came baptizing and preaching the Baptism of repentance.' But in substance, there is the most perfect agreement. For they all connect repentance with the forgiveness of sins."

As Dr. John Calvin further explained,<sup>115</sup> "the ministry of John was the very same as that which was afterwards delegated to the Apostles. For the different hands by which Baptism is administered, do not make it a different Baptism -- but sameness of doctrine proves it to be the same [Baptism]. John and the Apostles agreed in one doctrine.

"Both baptized unto repentance; both for [the] remission of sins; both in the Name of Christ from Whom repentance and remission of sins proceed.... John baptized in the Name of Him Who was to come; the Apostles in the Name of Him Who was already manifested. Luke 3:16; Acts 19:4."

Now Luke<sup>116</sup> says John came "preaching the Baptism of repentance." Here, Calvin commented<sup>117</sup> that "a Sacrament...is not a dumb ceremony exhibiting some unmeaning pomp without doctrine. But the Word of God is joined to it, and gives life to the outward ceremony. By 'the Word' -- I mean not mutterings of a magical character made by some exorcist between his teeth, but what is pronounced with a clear and distinct voice and leads to the edification of faith" -- that is, of faith already present.

Further: "We are not simply told that John 'baptized unto repentance' as if the grace of God were contained in a visible sign.... He explained, in his preaching, the advantage of Baptism.... The meaning, power and nature of that Baptism are the same as ours.... It is incorrect to say that the Baptism of John is different from the Baptism of Christ."

## **26. John the Baptizer sprinkled not just penitent adults but also their children**

Elijah and Malachi had given previews of the work of their later successor John the Baptizer alias 'John the Presbyterian' (but not of a 'John the Baptist' alias a total submerser of adults alone). Elijah himself did this, when he thrice poured out water upon his sacrifice -- just before it sprinklingly rained. First Kings 18:1,5,31-33,44f (cf. John 1:25). In Elijah's day, because of the ungodliness of the Israelites, God had withheld the rain. So, Elijah re-erected Israel's dilapidated altar "according to...the tribes of the children of Jacob" and publically poured water over it thrice. Then God sent the rain. Thus, also the **children** of the tribes got sprinkled -- as too, later, with John as the greater Elijah.

Later, Malachi had predicted that the Lord God would send a second "Elijah" -- namely as His Own "messenger." That would occur just before the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ -- "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Malachi 3:1-4 & 4:5f.

Then, the Lord Himself -- the Mediator of the Covenant -- would suddenly come to His temple (alias His true people). He would come to them as their great "Refiner" -- to "purge" and to "pour out" His blessing upon them.

He -- the Lord Jesus Christ -- would thus come after His Own announcing messenger, the Second Elijah John the Baptizer, had turned not just the heart of the fathers to the children but also turned the heart of the children back to their fathers. No wonder, then, that the Jews asked John: "Are you Elijah?" John 1:21.

## **27. Calvin on John's demand for repentance before Baptism**

Still more, continued Dr. Calvin:<sup>118</sup> "John preached 'the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3.... You will speak most correctly, therefore, if you call Baptism the Sacrament of penitence -- seeing it is given to those who aim at repentance to confirm their faith, and seal their confidence. But, lest you should think this our invention, it was generally regarded in the Early Church as an indubitable axiom. For in the short *Treatise on Faith* ...bearing the name of Augustine, it is called: 'The Sacrament of faith and repentance.'"

Indeed, Holy Scripture itself clearly states that the faithful "were baptized [while] confessing their sins."<sup>119</sup> Here, Calvin commented:<sup>120</sup> "The confession was a testimony of repentance. For, as the Lord in the Sacraments brings Himself under obligation to us..., so it is our duty on the other hand to reply to Him.... That men may come forward in a right manner to be baptized, confession of sins is demanded from them. Otherwise, the whole performance would be nothing but an idle mockery!"

Most of these texts are referred to also by the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*. There, Mark 1:4 is quoted -- to prove that Baptism is a seal of the remission of sins.<sup>121</sup> Also the somewhat similar Matthew 3:11 is cited -- to prove: that the grace exhibited in or by Baptism, depends upon the work of the Spirit;<sup>122</sup> that inward and spiritual grace is signified by Baptism;<sup>123</sup> and that Baptism is a seal of our regeneration.<sup>124</sup>

Now Holy Scripture further states: "All the people...who heeded him, having been baptized with the Baptism of John, declared God to be just."<sup>125</sup> Commented Dr. John Calvin:<sup>126</sup> "This is a very remarkable expression. Those who respectfully embrace the Son of God and assent to the doctrine which He has brought, are said to ascribe righteousness to God....

"The word 'justify' applies generally, no doubt, to everything connected with the praises of God.... Since faith 'justifies' God, it is impossible...but that unbelief must be blasphemy against Him.... It was already an evidence of their piety, that they presented themselves to be baptized."

## **28. John the Baptizer refused to baptize unbelieving Pharisees**

Calvin commented further<sup>127</sup> that John "addresses directly the Pharisees and Sadducees." Indeed, he also "at the same time addresses, through them, a warning to all not to hold out a hypocritical appearance of repentance instead of a true affection of the heart.... If John, the organ of the Holy Spirit, employed such severity of language in his opening address to those who voluntarily came to be baptized and to make a public profession of the Gospel -- how ought we now to act towards the avowed enemies of Christ...? Most certainly, if you compare the Pope and his abominable clergy with the Pharisees and Sadducees -- the mildest possible way of dealing with them will be to throw them all into one bundle."

John commanded the Pharisees: "Yield therefore fruits worthy of repentance!"<sup>128</sup> Said Calvin:<sup>129</sup> "Repentance, which is attested by words, is of no value -- unless it be proved by the conduct....

"It ought to be observed that 'good works' (Tit. 3:8) are here called 'fruits of repentance.' For 'repentance' is an inward matter which has its seat in the heart and soul, but afterwards yields its fruits in a change of life."

Yet John refused to baptize the obviously faithless (however 'religious' they were). For "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to Baptism, he said to them: 'You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bring forth fruits which evidence repentance! And don't think to tell yourselves "We have Abraham as father!"'"<sup>130</sup>

Thus the unrepentant and unbelieving "Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, against themselves -- not having been baptized by John." For they would not repent. So, then, John never baptized them. Luke 7:30. As Calvin here commented<sup>131</sup> "The scribes, in despising the Baptism of John, shut against themselves -- through their pride -- the gate of faith."

While John baptized the penitent adult members of the Covenant together with their covenantal children, he also refused to baptize the impenitent snake-like hypocrites and their brood of little snakes. Nevertheless, it was still a great sin for the Pharisees to refuse to repent -- in order to be able to receive Baptism, together with their children.

Thus the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* states that only "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."<sup>132</sup> However, this certainly excludes the children of unbelievers. For the *Confession* then rightly goes on to cite the case of the unrepentant Pharisees resisting Baptism -- to show that "it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance."<sup>133</sup>

## **29. John's Baptism of the righteous Jesus Christ our Lord**

It surely needs no demonstration that the Son of man Jesus Christ was righteous<sup>134</sup> in the eyes of God, and had faith<sup>135</sup> in Him even before John baptized Him. Indeed, as Jesus had always been uniquely sinless<sup>136</sup> -- there could be no question of Him being regenerated at any time. And thus neither during His Baptism.

"Certainly there was no baptismal regeneration -- then<sup>137</sup> Yet, He was baptized for us. Hence, through His Baptism we ourselves 'partake'<sup>138</sup> at our Baptism<sup>139</sup> -- in the very [Christ-ian] Baptism administered by John to Jesus: a Baptism which did (and does) not regenerate.

At the Baptism of the man Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him anew. This then occurred, even though that Spirit had previously indwelt Him -- ever since His conception<sup>140</sup>

He the sinless One; He the Unregeneratable; He Who Alone regenerates others -- was at His Own Baptism apparently ingrafted into the sins of His people. This He did so that they -- once regenerated by Him -- could at their Baptisms outwardly be ingrafted into their sinless Saviour's Visible Church.

As Calvin commented anent Christ's Baptism:<sup>141</sup> "This was the first time that the Spirit was seen descending upon Him. Not that before this He had been empty of the Spirit -- but now He is, as it were, consecrated with a solemn ceremony [Baptism].... When He 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."

On Christ's actual Baptism with water, Calvin commented further:<sup>142</sup> "For what purpose did the Son of God wish to be baptized? This may be learned in some measure from His answer.... He received the same Baptism with us -- in order to assure believers that they are ingrafted into His body and that they are 'buried with Him in Baptism' so that they may rise to 'newness of life.' Romans 6:4....

"Christ received Baptism...so that He might render full obedience to the Father. And the special reason was, so that He might consecrate Baptism in His Own body -- so that we might have it in common with Him....



“There was no doubt...that Christ had no need of His Baptism.... It was for the sake of others, that Baptism was asked [for by Him].... It is for the benefit of others, and not for His Own, that Christ asks to be baptized."

Right after the Baptism of Jesus, God the Father said from heaven: "This One is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased!"<sup>143</sup> This was said of Christ [the 'Anointed One'] -- the son of man, Who would now remain man everlastingly throughout all eternity future. Yet it was not at His Baptism that Christ the son of man became God's Own Son.

Indeed, ever since His conception -- long before His Baptism -- He had already been the Son of God (and hence, like Adam before the fall, also the perfectly just son of man).<sup>144</sup> Yet unlike Adam prior to his creation, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity has always been the Son of God -- unchangeably, and from all eternity past.

### **30. Jesus evangelized the circumcised but unrighteous Judeans**

Thus did Jesus Himself commence His public ministry. Soon thereafter, He evangelized an infantly-circumcised Jewish ruler who had been deputized by his co-teachers to come and talk to Jesus. For "a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus...came to Jesus...and said to him: 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God.'<sup>145</sup>

No way did Jesus thereupon suggest that this religious man had already been regenerated -- either during or since his previous Infant Circumcision. To the contrary. Jesus instead told him that Nicodemus and his fellow Pharisees -- "you" [plural] -- still needed to get regenerated. Said Jesus: "You must be born from above!"

For Jesus told the circumcised (yet still unregenerate) Nicodemus: "Unless a person be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.... Do not marvel that I told you, 'You people must be born from above!'

“The Spirit keeps on blowing wherever He wants to, and you hear His sound. But you cannot tell where He is coming from, and where He is going. So is everyone who has been born from the Spirit!"<sup>146</sup>

This passage makes no specific reference to Baptism. Here, however, the verses John 3:3 and 3:7 do both mention being born again. Indeed, the verses John 3:6 and 3:8 both further mention being born specifically of the Spirit. Yet in all four of these verses, there is no mention whatsoever even of 'water' (and still less of Baptism). Moreover, in the immediately subsequent verses,<sup>147</sup> the infallible Jesus goes on to speak (some seven times) only of belief or unbelief in Christ -- and not once of Baptism, or even of water.

However, even if one were to construe the word "water" (here mentioned solely in John 3:5) as implying specifically Baptism -- it still would not teach baptismal regeneration through the water of Baptism. For the rebirth specified, is not here stated to come from water alone -- but from water and the Spirit. Compare John's First Epistle 5:6. Indeed, even in John 3:5 itself, the

"water" -- even if it were to be taken to refer to Baptism -- would still be quite useless without "the Spirit" Who is also (there too) clearly mentioned. Furthermore, in the immediate context of this John 3:5 -- in both John 3:6 and 3:8 -- rebirth is specified as being from "the Spirit" (alone).

### **31. Water and Spirit and entry into the Visible Church**

Again, the passage John 3:3-8 is not at all speaking of admission into heaven. For heaven is still invisible even to Christians, as long as they are still living here on Earth. The verses John 3:3 and 3:5 speak only of making a visible entry into the visible Kingdom of God right here on Earth.

The latter does not mean heaven -- thus Calvin, below. Apparently, it refers to the Visible Church here on Earth -- thus the Calvinist Charles Hodge. Unlike heaven here from Earth, the Kingdom of God's Visible Church can indeed be seen. "Unless a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." That Kingdom can also be entered here on Earth. Indeed, "unless a man be born from water and from Spirit -- he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

So, even if one were to take the word "water" in John 3:5 to refer to Baptism by means of water - - which that passage does not specifically state -- it would then still not imply baptismal regeneration.

It would then only mean that, whether regenerate or not, one would then enter into the Kingdom of God (alias the Visible Church) -- by the non-regenerating action of the water and the Spirit, during Baptism involving water.

It would then simply mean that the visible Kingdom of God was already beginning to be seen there -- even in the midst of still unbaptized Pharisees like Nicodemus.<sup>148</sup> For that Kingdom at that time consisted of Christ's baptized and visible disciples -- including even that very visible indeed yet never-regenerated (and never to be regenerated) Judas Iscariot.<sup>149</sup>

Frankly, even if "born of water" were here to mean Baptism -- and "born of the Spirit" to mean regeneration -- it is very significant that the two terms are nevertheless distinguished from one another. This could then only mean that being "born of water" alias being baptized -- is not congruent to being "born of the Spirit" alias being regenerated.

Further. If "water" in John 3:5 indeed were to imply the necessity of specifically baptismal regeneration -- then all who ever lived before John started baptizing would be lost everlastingly. So too, every unbaptized believer in Christ who has ever lived since John started baptizing -- would then also be lost. Moreover, that would then be hard to reconcile with the stated fact that the loving Saviour Jesus Himself -- never even tried to baptize anybody with water.<sup>150</sup>

Once more. If Baptism were to justify, it would also be inexplicable that Paul should simply tell the Philippian jailer: ' Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!'<sup>51</sup> Instead, Paul would then have told him: ' Be baptized, and then you shall have been justified!'

To the contrary, however. The Apostle Paul, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost,

clearly declared: 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.'<sup>152</sup>

If anything, then, the above words of Jesus clearly imply that the continually renewing work of the Spirit -- can no way be restricted to whatever may or might not happen at the moment of Baptism with water. Significantly, the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*<sup>153</sup> quotes this very passage to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." It also cites this passage to show that "the efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."

Indeed, such of the elect as die in fetushood, generally die unbaptized (even in Roman Catholic hospitals). Yet they so die only after being justified without Baptism. Therefore, in their cases at least, they get justified without getting baptized at all.

### **32. Calvin stated the passage John 3:3-8 does not refer to Baptism**

Calvin himself commented:<sup>154</sup> "To 'see' the Kingdom of God, comes to the same thing as 'entering into' the Kingdom.... They are mistaken who think the Kingdom of God means heaven. It is rather the spiritual life which is begun by faith in this world, and daily increases according to the continual progress of faith. So the meaning is that no man can be gathered truly into the Church and be reckoned among the children of God -- until he has first been renewed....

"I cannot at all bring myself to believe that Christ is [here] speaking of Baptism.... He used the words 'Spirit' and 'water' to mean the same thing.... It is a frequent and common way of speaking in Scripture, when the Spirit is mentioned, to add the word 'water' or 'fire' to express His power. We sometimes hear of Christ baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire, where fire does not mean something different from the Spirit but only shows what is His power in us.... By 'water' therefore is meant simply the inward cleansing and quickening of the Holy Spirit.... When Christ at once adds the reason why we must be born again, He shows without mentioning water how the newness of life which He requires [in us], comes from the Spirit alone."

John Calvin also stated<sup>155</sup> that even if in the Nicodemus passage he were to "grant the words in question to refer to Baptism, still the necessity is not absolutely insisted on. But an external sign is added as...an accessory to newness of life as if it had been said that the entrance into the Kingdom of heaven is not open to any one, without newness of life of which Baptism is the symbol."

Calvin further<sup>156</sup> refuted those who, referring to John 3:5, allege that "a present regeneration is required in Baptism" -- and who claim that "Baptism is termed regeneration" there. "They are in error," replied Calvin, "in imagining that there is any mention of Baptism in this passage, merely because the word 'water' is used....

"Yet, were we disposed to imitate these men in their mode of cavilling, we might easily...reply to them that Baptism is prior to faith and repentance" -- or at any rate distinct therefrom. Consequently, the latter is not engineered by the former. Indeed, wherever faith precedes Baptism -- as it often unquestionably does, especially in the case of the Baptism of adults -- it is

again clear that it cannot be a fruit thereof -- whether *ex opere operato*, or *ex post facto*.

### **33. Not Jesus but only His Apostles then baptized in Judea**

Thereafter, Jesus Christ baptized in Judea -- "though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but [only] His disciples" alias His Apostles.<sup>157</sup> Precisely by not Himself baptizing, Jesus guarded against the probable *ex opere operato* 'magical consequences' that could so easily have been attributed to any Baptisms administered by Him personally. From the Late-Patristic Age onward, this was in fact done in respect of all Baptisms deemed to have been administered by Christ's apostolic successors.

The Apostle John, commented Dr. John Calvin,<sup>158</sup> "calls that which He administered by the hands of others: 'Christ's Baptism' -- to teach us that Baptism is not to be valued from the person of the Minister.... Its whole force depends on its Author in Whose Name and by Whose command it is administered....

"There is no doubt that He [our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ] deliberately abstained from the outward administration of the sign while He was in the world, so as to bear witness to all ages that nothing is lost from...Baptism when it is administered by a mortal man.... Christ baptizes inwardly by His Spirit.... This suffices to refute the Anabaptists -- who maintain that Baptism is vitiated by the vice of the Minister, and disturb the Church with this madness."

So Jesus Himself baptized -- nobody! Instead, "He began to preach and to say: 'Repent!'"<sup>159</sup> Dr. John Calvin commented<sup>160</sup> that "our Lord and John begin their preaching thus: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!' Matthew 3:2.... He urged them to acknowledge that they were sinners..., so that thus they might be induced earnestly to seek the mortification of the flesh.... He called for faith.... 'John did baptize in the desert and preach the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3.... Thus too Christ began His preaching, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand: you must repent and believe the Gospel!' Mark 1:15."

### **34. Matthew 9:2 & 18:6 clearly disprove baptismal regeneration**

Later, when Jesus was in His Own city of Nazareth, <sup>161</sup> "they brought to Him a paralytic -- lying on a bed. But Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic: 'Child, cheer up! Your sins have been forgiven you!'"

Note here that the paralytic child (*paralutikon...teknon*) did not and could not come to Jesus in his own paralyzed strength. So others brought him to the Lord Christ. "They brought to Him" the "paralytic...child" -- *prosepheron Autōi paralutikon...teknon*. Note further that the Bible here mentions not the faith of the paralytic child himself -- but the faith of those [his parents?] who brought that child to Jesus. For the Bible here speaks of "their faith" (*tēn pistin autōn*).

Note yet further that not because of the paralytic child's own faith, but because of the faith of

those who brought him -- that the sins of the paralytic child himself were thereupon forgiven him. Forgiven! Not just shall or would be forgiven -- but rather have been forgiven. For Jesus assured him: "Child, cheer up! Your sins have been forgiven you!" *Apheōntai soi hai hamartiai sou!*

Calvin's comment on the above event<sup>162</sup> -- "with regard to all believers" -- was short and sweet. "By their faith, the grace of God is extended to their children -- and their children's children -- even before they are born."

Here in Matthew 9:2, there is no reference to Baptism. Hence, there is not even the possibility of baptismal regeneration there.

Jesus Himself once placed "a little child" of the Covenant amid His adult disciples. Then He told them:<sup>163</sup> "Unless you keep on being converted and keep on becoming like little children -- you shall no way enter into the Kingdom of heaven.... Whosoever shall give offence to one of these little ones who believes in Me -- it were better for him that...he were drowned.... Permit the little children, and do not forbid them -- to come to Me! For the Kingdom of heaven -- is of such as these."

### **35. Calvin refuted the Anabaptists from Matthew 19:14**

In chiding certain Anabaptist heretics, Calvin here observed<sup>164</sup> that "Baptism being, as they hold, necessary to salvation -- they, in denying it to infants, consign them all to eternal death. Let them now consider what kind of agreement they have with the words of Christ, Who says [in respect of covenantal infants or *paidia*] that 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven.' Matthew 19:14.... In regard to the meaning of this passage, they will extract nothing from it -- until they have previously overthrown [to their own satisfaction] the doctrine which we have already established concerning the regeneration of infants."

Calvin commented further:<sup>165</sup> "To the example of little children must be referred the conversion of which He [Jesus] now speaks.... The Anabaptists....refuse Baptism to infants, because [they say] infants are incapable of understanding that Mystery which is denoted by it. 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 [those] 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.... Hence it follows that they were renewed by the Spirit, to the hope of salvation. In short, by embracing them, He [Jesus] testified that they were [already] reckoned by Christ among His flock. And if they were partakers of the spiritual gifts which are represented by Baptism -- it is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign": viz. Holy Baptism.

The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* repeatedly refer to Jesus blessing very young covenantal children. They cite this action of His, clearly to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are

regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." They also quote it -- to show that infants of one or both believing parents are themselves to be baptized.<sup>166</sup>

### **36. Christ's Great Commission precludes baptismal regeneration yet includes babies**

In Christ's Great Commission,<sup>167</sup> Jesus Himself commands His Ambassadors to go and preach -- *kēruxate* -- and then to baptize those who would believe the preached Gospel. For He enjoins those evangelizing Ambassadors -- His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments -- to "go disciple all nations" (*mathēteusate panta ta ethnē*).

This obviously means the people in those **nations** -- including that large percentage of such people which constitutes the babies and the children in all those nations. Christ's preaching Ambassadors -- His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments -- are thus to keep on baptizing them: *baptizontes autous*. Then His Ambassadors are further to "keep on teaching them" -- *didaskontes autous*.

Commented Calvin:<sup>168</sup> "The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the Gospel everywhere, they should bring all nations to the obedience of the faith and...that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the Gospel.... It is said in Mark, he that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved. By these words, Christ...by a sacred bond...connects Baptism with doctrine.... But as Christ enjoins them to teach before baptizing, and desires that none but believers shall be admitted to Baptism -- it would appear that Baptism is not properly administered unless when it is preceded by faith.

"On this pretext, the Anabaptists have stormed greatly against Infant Baptism. But the reply is not difficult.... Christ orders them [His Ministers] to convey to all nations the message of eternal salvation -- and confirms it by adding the seal of Baptism....

"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 [the aliens] into His favour -- He continues to bestow it on their children, and their children's children.... Therefore, 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."

### **37. Calvin on "he who believes and is baptized"**

Mark gives us additional information in his inspired version of Christ's Great Commission.<sup>169</sup> There, Christ is recorded to have said that "he who has started [and continues] to believe, and been baptized -- shall be saved." On the other hand, "he who does not start [nor continue] to believe -- shall be damned." Note the order: first, believe; then, be baptized!

Commented Calvin:<sup>170</sup> "Salvation is promised to believers. For, by believing in the Only-Begotten Son of God..., they are reckoned among the children of God.... Baptism is joined to [and thus comes after] the faith.... 'They who shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved.' Yet at the same time we must hold that it is not required as absolutely necessary to salvation (so that

all who have not obtained it must perish). For it is not added to faith (*fidei adjungitur*), as if it were the half of the cause of our salvation (*tanquam dimidia salutis causa*) -- but as a testimony."

"Luther" too, observed Dr. John Calvin,<sup>171</sup> "remarked with great intelligence that when Christ is represented in the Gospel of Mark as saying 'Whoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved' -- He does not repeat in the second member of the sentence 'whoever shall not be baptized shall be condemned!' For if without Baptism there is no salvation -- [then] the thief on the cross, who was admitted into the Kingdom of God without Baptism, will have to be withdrawn thence."

Summarizing the sacramental implications to believers of Christ's Great Commission as a whole, Calvin observed<sup>172</sup> that "the nature of the apostolic function is clear from the command 'You must go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!' Mark 16:15. No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world is assigned to be reduced under obedience to Christ -- so that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect His Kingdom.... When our Lord sent forth the Apostles, He gave them a Commission...to preach the Gospel and baptize those who believed.... Matthew 28:19."

### **38. The Calvinistic Westminster Standards on the Great Commission**

Also the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* refer to Matthew's version of the Great Commission. There that<sup>173</sup> is cited to prove that the Sacrament: is a seal immediately instituted by God;<sup>174</sup> that it contains a promise of benefit to worthy receivers;<sup>175</sup> and that it signifies substantially the same spiritual things as did Circumcision.<sup>176</sup>

It is also quoted there, to show: that Baptism was ordained by Jesus Christ<sup>177</sup> until the end of the world<sup>178</sup> -- and that the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.<sup>179</sup> It is further given there, to prove that Baptism involves the washing with water in the Name of the Triune God<sup>180</sup> -- and that it ought to be dispensed only by Ministers of the Gospel.<sup>181</sup>

The *Westminster Standards* further refer even to Mark's version of the Great Commission.<sup>182</sup> In those *Standards*, Mark's Gospel is quoted to prove that those who profess faith in Christ are to be baptized<sup>183</sup> -- and also to show that it should be administered by Ministers of the Gospel alone.<sup>184</sup>

### **39. Jesus baptized His Church with His Spirit at Pentecost**

On Ascension Day, Jesus reminded His Apostles that John had truly "baptized [them] with water." Yet He then added that they would also soon "be baptized with the Holy Spirit"<sup>185</sup> -- namely by Jesus Himself.<sup>186</sup>

Certainly, those Apostles had already been regenerated previously<sup>187</sup> -- and probably even before John had baptized them.<sup>188</sup> Soon, however, they would receive a further massive strengthening -

- of their already existing Christian faith.<sup>189</sup>

As Calvin stated:<sup>190</sup> "John was sent to baptize with water." This pointed to the substitutionary and sin-cleansing work which Christ, the Son of God, would execute at Calvary. "To the Son it is given to baptize with the Spirit.... It seems absurd that what was spoken in general of the grace of regeneration, should be confined to the sending of the Spirit visibly....

"It is clear enough that John professed himself the Minister of the Baptism with water -- and Christ the Author of the Baptism of the Spirit.... John ministered to them [Christ's later disciples] only the external Baptism. Yet he assures them too -- lest they should doubt, regarding the promise."

Clearly, Calvin here distinguished between regeneration on the one hand -- and both the Baptism with water and the Baptism by the Spirit on the other. For both John and Jesus gave similar assurances to their pre-baptismally regenerated disciples. They told them that, after the giving and receiving of those Baptisms with water, those believers as Jesus Christ's "wheat" would be garnered into the Storehouse (of the Visible Church) even through the agency of the Holy Ghost. See: Matthew 3:2-12; Luke 3:16-17; Acts 1:5.

On Pentecost Sunday, the twelve Apostles -- already baptized with water long beforehand -- now saw the significance of that Baptism with water being completed. For they then saw it 'confirmed' when they themselves were now "baptized" -- without water. This was when they were engrafted or "baptized" waterlessly -- "baptized" by the Spirit -- "baptized" into the new Visible Church right then being constituted.<sup>191</sup>

Even Christ's other disciples -- God's sons and daughters, His already water-baptized servants in Jerusalem -- were now waterlessly "baptized" by the Lord Jesus and with His outpoured Spirit.<sup>192</sup> Very clearly, such were already His sons and daughters alias 'children of God.' Indeed, they had also already been water-baptized -- either by John (Luke 3:3f) or by Jesus' Apostles (John 4:2) -- even before receiving the later Baptism by the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday. Thus, they had previously received Baptism with water. So they did not now receive any rebaptism-with-water.

Commented Calvin:<sup>193</sup> "There was no age that did not have its share of the grace of the Spirit.... All godly men -- from the very foundation of the world -- were endowed with the same Spirit of understanding, of righteousness and of sanctification with which the Lord today illuminates and regenerates us....

"By these words ['sons and daughters' and 'servants' *etc.*], the promise is restricted to those who worship God.... It is undeniable that it is by the Spirit that we are made servants of God. So we are not His servants, until we have received the Spirit. But it is those whom God **has** adopted into His own family, and **has** designed by His Spirit to serve Him -- whom He afterwards furnishes with new gifts."

Dr. Calvin was writing here about those who, even from the time of Adam onward, the Lord had made 'righteous' (each at his or her own appropriate time) -- **before** their later Baptism with water (if that latter was indeed ever administered to them). For all of the Pentecost Sunday



Apostles who were then baptized by the Spirit, had previously been regenerated already. This had occurred probably even before their **Pre**-Pentecost Baptism with water, and certainly long before their later Pentecost Sunday Baptism by the Spirit.

#### **40. Be baptized: for the promise is to you and to your children!**

Now this outpouring of God's Spirit on Pentecost Sunday attracted the attention even of many unconverted bystanders. Peter accordingly preached the Gospel to those witnesses. Then he told them: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ.... For the promise is to you, and to your children."

So "they that gladly received his word, were baptized."<sup>194</sup> Note once again the order: first, repent; then, be baptized!

Now here, he who would repent toward God and who would trust or believe in Jesus -- would thereby show he had been regenerated before his subsequent Baptism with water. Regeneration would here precede Baptism. Therefore it could not be its effect. For it was only after Peter's obedient listeners had received his preached word -- by believing it -- that they would be baptized.

It is only by denying that faith and repentance are fruits of regeneration by the Spirit alone, that Romanists and Romanizers can cope with the above argument. They construe such pre-baptismal faith and repentance -- as non-gracious and purely 'natural works' done before Baptism. But then, these would have been works which would still have left those faithful penitents in perdition.

This, of course, contradicts the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. For He says that whosoever believes in Him, has been justified already.<sup>195</sup>

Further. No Christian believes that all who merely listen to the Gospel being preached, are thereby justified. It is obvious that this must necessarily be preceded -- or alternatively be accompanied or succeeded -- by a sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. So then, how could the baptismal water itself justify *ex opere operato* -- without also another distinctly different action of the Holy Ghost?

For multitudes of those who are baptized -- shall nevertheless end up in perdition. But no truly regenerated person -- by the very definition of the word 'regenerated' -- could ever be lost.<sup>196</sup>

The inescapable message of Pentecost Sunday, then, is that regeneration must be quite distinct from Baptism.<sup>197</sup> This is so not just in respect of the earlier Christians, such as the Apostles.<sup>198</sup> It is also the case in respect of the three thousand they then baptized on Pentecost Sunday.<sup>199</sup>

#### **41. Calvin's baptismal comments on Acts 2:38f**

Calvin here insisted<sup>200</sup> that "we can be reconciled to God only by the intercession of the death of Christ.... Our sins cannot be purged and done away -- other than by His blood. Peter recalls us to Him -- by Name! He put Baptism...as the seal -- by which the promise of grace is fulfilled....

"This message therefore must continually be heard in the Church: 'Repent!' Mark 1:15. Not that those who desire to be accounted faithful, and have their place already within the Church, are to make a beginning in this. But they are to continue to proceed in it....

"Those who up to now have lived to the world and to the flesh, should begin to crucify the old man -- so that they may rise to newness of life.... Those who have already entered upon the course of repentance, should continually press forward towards the mark.... Baptism...is nothing else -- but a sealing of the blessing which we have through Christ....

"The Papists...confess that sins are freely forgiven in Baptism.... They mingle the grace of Christ -- with this."

To the contrary, however. "Baptism is a help for confirming and increasing our faith.... The sign will be profitable to us -- only if we seek the power and effect of it in Christ....

"Christ did not give the Apostles magic words to be used for incantation, as the Papists imagine.... The promise was made first to the Jews, and then to their children, and finally...to the Gentiles.... God reckons the children with the fathers, in the grace of adoption.

"This passage therefore sufficiently 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.... Peter spoke thus, because God adopted one nation as peculiarly His Own. And Circumcision bears evidence that the right of adoption was shared even by infants....

"God made a covenant with Abraham when he [Isaac] was not yet born -- because he [Isaac] was the seed of Abraham.... So Peter teaches that all the children of the Jews are covered by the same Covenant -- because the word continues in force which says 'I will be the God of your seed!'" See too Genesis 17:7.

John Calvin further observed<sup>201</sup> that Abraham "received the sign of Circumcision [as] a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, [while] yet being uncircumcised -- so that he might be the father of all them that believe [Romans 4:11f].... The election of God reigns freely....

"He was pleased specially to embrace the seed of Abraham with His mercy -- and for the better attestation of it, to seal it by Circumcision.... To the same effect is the declaration of Peter to the Jews: 'The promise is unto you and to your children.' Acts 2:39."

#### **42. Acts 2:38f in the Calvinistic Westminster Standards**

Also the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* repeatedly cite this passage Acts 2:38-41. They quote it in the *Westminster Confession* to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." They also employ it to demonstrate that the Visible Church consists of those that profess Christ, together with their children.<sup>202</sup> Indeed, they further quote this same passage to show that such infants are to be baptized<sup>203</sup> -- and that in His appointed time the Holy Ghost confers grace to those baptizees to whom it belongs.<sup>204</sup>

The Westminster theologians also quote this same passage in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. There, they use it to prove: that Baptism seals those who are within the Covenant of grace;<sup>205</sup> that it is not to be administered to any who are outside of the Visible Church;<sup>206</sup> that therein one's name is given up to Christ;<sup>207</sup> and that it is to be administered even to infants.<sup>208</sup>

#### **43. Acts 3: The Abrahamic Covenant predicted Christian Baptism**

Shortly after Pentecost Sunday, Peter spoke<sup>209</sup> to some still unconverted Jews. Even to them, he said: "You are the sons of the prophets and of the Covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham: 'And in your seed shall all of the families of the earth be blessed.' To you first, God -- having raised up His Servant [Jesus] -- sent Him to bless you, to turn each of you away from your iniquities."

Here, Calvin correctly commented<sup>210</sup> that "God made His Covenant with our fathers.... Therefore we who are their descendants, are included within it.... Peter....affirms that this is applicable within the Kingdom of Christ; that God's adoption extends to the children as well as the fathers....

"Thus the grace of salvation may be extended to those who are not yet born. I grant that many who are the children of the faithful according to the flesh, are counted bastards and illegitimate. Romans 9:7. Because by their unbelief, they banish themselves from the family of the holy. But this in no way prevents God from calling and admitting the seed of the godly into the fellowship."

By 'bastards' Calvin does not here mean professing unbelievers outside of the Covenant. He here means false members of the Visible Church herself. Indeed, even those spiritual 'bastards' -- conceived and born within the Covenant of grace -- are to be regarded, initially, as partaking of the grace of God. Accordingly, they are to be baptized even in tenderest infancy.

They are priorly, and also then and there, to be regarded as holy before Baptism -- and therefore to be baptized. They are then deemed to be Members of the holy family of Christ's Church. Only if, subsequently, they clearly manifest their faithlessness -- should the initial estimate about them be revised. If and when that occurs, it is -- as Calvin has stated -- only "because by their unbelief, they banish themselves from the family of the holy."

Calvin observed further<sup>211</sup> that Peter "calls them 'the children of the Covenant'.... Not widely

different from this is the other passage of the Apostle [Romans 4:11/]...in which he regards and describes Circumcision performed on infants as an attestation to the fellowship which they have with Christ.... The Lord, in the Second Commandment of His Law, engages to be gracious to the seed of His servants -- for a thousand generations."

#### **44. Acts 7: Circumcision and the faith of Abraham**

A little later Stephen, the first Christian Deacon, witnessed to the Jews about their need to believe in Jesus. Stephen told them that God had enabled "our father Abraham" to obey Him (and had therefore given him faith).<sup>212</sup> Thereafter, God further "gave him the Covenant of Circumcision.... Abraham begot Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day."<sup>213</sup>

Here Calvin noted<sup>214</sup> how Stephen "acknowledges that Circumcision is a divine Covenant.... At the same time, he shows that the Jews are in the wrong if they place the origin of their salvation in the external symbol.... Abraham was called -- and the land and redemption were promised to his seed -- before he was circumcised. It is plain enough that the glory of the whole race does not depend on Circumcision."

Now "Paul uses the same argument in the fourth chapter of Romans (4:11). For since Abraham obtained righteousness and was pleasing to God when he was uncircumcised, he infers from this that Circumcision is not the cause of righteousness....

"Circumcision was given by God to be a sign of His grace. Yet adoption preceded it, in order and in time.... God first of all promises to Abraham the things that He later confirms by Circumcision here -- so that we may realize that unless signs are preceded by the Word, they are empty and worthless.... God makes a Covenant with us in the Sacraments, [in order] to make known His love towards us.... They are not only signs of outward profession before men, but they also have the effect of confirming inward faith in the sight of God."

#### **45. Baptism did not justify Simon the sorcerer**

Philip now preached the Gospel to the Samaritans. "When they believed" his preaching, many of them "were baptized, both men and women....

"Also [the evil sorcerer] Simon himself" then professed belief in Christ. "And when he had been baptized, he continued with Philip.... Then the Apostles...laid their hands on them.... But when Simon saw..., he offered them money -- saying, 'Give me too this power, so that whosoever I lay hands on, may receive the Holy Ghost!'

"But Peter said to him, 'May your money perish with you -- because you considered that the gift of God may be purchased with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, For your heart is not right -- in the sight of God. Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours -- and pray to God that the cogitations of your heart may be forgiven you! For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.'

"Then Simon...said: 'You people must pray to the Lord for me -- that none of these things you have spoken about, may come upon me!'"<sup>215</sup> Simon had earlier professed faith -- but never possessed it!

#### **46. Calvinism on Simon the Samaritan's Baptism**

Calvin commented here:<sup>216</sup> "The fact that Baptism came after faith, is in accordance with Christ's institution with regard to strangers. Mark 16:16. For they ought to have been ingrafted into the body of the Church by faith -- before receiving the sign.

"But the Anabaptists are being quite absurd, in trying to prove from these verses -- 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 [the wicked ex-sorcerer] Simon's example, that the grace which is figured in Baptism is not conferred on all men indiscriminately when they are baptized. That is a dogma of the Papists.... They attribute a magical potency to the Sacraments -- as if they are beneficial [even] without faith.... Paul teaches that our washing is the work of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5.

"The water of Baptism is the sign of the blood of Christ. But Peter advises that it is the Spirit by Whom we are washed in the blood of Christ. First Peter 1:2.

"In Baptism, our old man is crucified -- so that we may be raised up into newness of life. Romans 6:6. But what is the source of all this -- except the sanctification of the Spirit? In short, nothing will be left to Baptism -- if it is separated from the Spirit."

Significantly, also the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Westminster Larger Catechism* both cite this case of Simon the magician. Both cite that text which states "Simon himself" professed belief in Christ -- and was then "baptized." And both also cite the subsequent post-baptismal text which states that the deeply sinful "Simon...said: 'You people must pray to the Lord for me that none of these [fearful] things you have spoken about, may come upon me!'"

The *Confession*<sup>217</sup> does so -- precisely when denying "that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated." The *Larger Catechism* does so,<sup>218</sup> to prove that "the Sacraments become effectual means [not by justifying but] of salvation [or preservation] -- not by any power in themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost." Consequently, there is no *opus operatum* in Baptism.

#### **47. The Ethiopian eunuch was justified by God before he was baptized**

On the road to Gaza, Philip met "a man of Ethiopia who...had come to Jerusalem to worship."<sup>219</sup> Soon Philip "preached Jesus to him."<sup>220</sup> This already-believing Ethiopian -- although previously a eunuch (and therefore possible uncircumcisable) -- then asked Philip: "'What hinders me to be baptized?'"

Then Philip said: 'If you believe with all your heart, you may!' And he answered and said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!" Then he commanded the chariot to stand still. So both went down toward the water, both Philip and the eunuch. Then he [Philip] baptized him."<sup>221</sup>

Here, note that the 'baptismal regeneration' theory of Romanists and Romanizers -- contradicts the actions undertaken and the assurances given by the inspired Philip. For he told the faithful eunuch that the latter could be baptized -- "if you believe." Thereupon the eunuch replied -- before his own Baptism -- "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!" Only thereafter -- only after the eunuch had professed to be a believer already -- did Philip then "baptize him."<sup>221</sup>

Now "the eunuch to whom Philip was sent," observed Calvin,<sup>222</sup> had already "been endued with some degree of faith" before meeting Philip. Were that not the case, the Ethiopian "would never have incurred the fatigue and expense of a long and difficult journey to obtain an opportunity of worship [in Jerusalem]. Acts 8:27....

"I admit," continued John Calvin, "that in some respect the...faith was not explicit." Indeed, that previously-unexplicit faith of the Ethiopian -- was akin to the unexplicit faith of Cornelius before the latter met Peter (as chronicled in Acts 10).

Calvin therefore compared the pre-baptismal faith of the Ethiopian and of Cornelius. For "it is certain that they [both] were imbued with...a slender foretaste of Christ. This should not be thought strange. For the eunuch would not have hastened from a distant country to Jerusalem -- to an unknown God."

#### **48. Calvin on the Ethiopian's pre-baptismal faith**

Calvin commented at some length on the Ethiopian's long-standing pre-baptismal faith:<sup>223</sup> "The Name of the true God was widely spread -- seeing that He had some worshippers in distant lands. This man must certainly have been practising openly a different way of worship from his own people." Yet "all over the East there were some who were worshipping the true God....

"The eunuch's coming to Jerusalem in order to worship, must not be attributed to superstition.... This pious man did not wish to neglect the practices which were prescribed to the worshippers of God. And so, his intention was not only to nourish his faith privately in the secrecy of his own heart, but also to profess it openly among men....

"His reading of the prophet [Isaiah] shows that the eunuch did not lightly worship a god whom

he conceived for himself according to his own idea -- but the God Whom he had come to know from the teaching of the Law.... [Yet] he modestly acknowledges his ignorance of the more obscure verses.....

"The eunuch is remarkably modest.... However, let us remember that the eunuch was [not] so conscious of his ignorance that he was [not also] -- for all that -- one of God's pupils.... It is evident...how passionately eager the eunuch was to learn.... The Baptism of the eunuch now follows.... For mature faith must have been in some way, already in his heart -- since he proceeds ardently to outward profession....

"Just as he had gladly embraced what he has heard about Christ -- so he now breaks out into the outward profession of his faith with pious ardour.... It is not enough for him to believe inwardly before God -- without testifying among men that he is a Christian....

"The eunuch is not admitted to Baptism without [first] professing his faith.... Those who have previously been outsiders [to the Visible Church], should not be received into the Church before they have testified that they believe in Christ.... Baptism is...the appendix of faith, and therefore subsequent in order.... Fanatics stupidly and wrongly attack Infant Baptism on this pretext....

"Those who are to be baptized, must be ingrafted into the Church [Universal and Visible] -- since Christ distinguishes only the Members of the family of the Church with this sign.... Adults are ingrafted by faith.... The children of the godly, are born sons of the Church and are from the womb numbered among the members of Christ. Because God adopts us on the principle that He is also the Father of our children....

"Christ initiates [covenantal] infants to Himself for this purpose that -- as soon as their age and ability to understand will allow -- they yield themselves to Him as disciples" alias pupils. This is done, so that having [previously] been baptized by His Spirit they may know by the discernment of faith -- His power which is represented in Baptism."

#### **49. Antisacramentarianism too disproved by the Ethiopian's Baptism**

Calvin's above comments demolish Romanism's sacramentalistic and essentially magical '*ex opere operato*' view about Baptism. Other remarks of his demolish also the 'purely-symbolic' or *nuda signa* view of those espousing antisacramentarianism. That is the theory that Baptism is just a 'mere empty sign.' In that view, the Sacrament is nothing but 'an unimportant token' which no way actually seals or increases one's already-present pre-baptismal faith.

Here, Calvin now discussed<sup>224</sup> the baptismal views of Antisacramentarians. "But Philip (they say), replied to the eunuch who asked to be baptized: 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest!' Acts 8:37. What room [declare these Antisacramentarians] is there for a confirmation of [such pre-baptismal faith by] Baptism -- when faith [pre-baptismally] fills the whole heart [already]?"

Replied Calvin: "I in my turn ask them, Do they not feel that a good part of their heart is void of

faith? Do they not perceive new additions to it, every day? There was one [Antisacramentarian] who boasted that he grew old while learning. [However,] thrice miserable...are we Christians, if we grow old without making progress -- we whose faith ought to advance through every period of life!"

The Antisacramentarians had a further objection. They protested: 'If faith is increased by means of the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given in vain.'

To this, Calvin responded: "I admit indeed that faith is the proper and entire work of the Holy Spirit.... But for the one [pre-baptismal] divine blessing which they [the Antisacramentarians] proclaim -- we [Calvinists] count three. For first, the Lord teaches and trains us by His Word [before Baptism]. Next, He confirms us by His Sacraments [during their administration]. Lastly, He illumines our mind by the light of His Holy Spirit [also after we receive them]....

"Therefore with regard to the increase and confirmation of faith -- I would remind the reader...that in assigning this office to the Sacraments -- it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them by which they can of themselves promote or strengthen faith. But because our Lord has instituted them -- for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith.

"The Sacraments duly perform their office only when accompanied by the Spirit.... A pious mind is confirmed in faith -- by means of the Sacraments.... The Sacraments do not avail one *iota* -- without the energy of the Holy Spirit.... Yet, in hearts previously taught by that Preceptor, there is nothing to prevent the Sacraments from strengthening and increasing faith."

Rightly, this passage Acts 8:36-38 is twice referred to in the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*. It is quoted there to prove that those who actually profess faith in Christ, are to be baptized. It is also cited there to show that Baptism is not to be administered to any who are outside of the Visible Church, till they so profess their Christian Faith.<sup>225</sup>

## **50. Paul believed and was justified before he was baptized**

Paul the Pharisee had been serving God from his forefathers with a pure conscience.<sup>226</sup> More particularly, however, the time came when he turned from unbelief in Christ -- toward Christ.<sup>227</sup> That was when it pleased God to call Paul by His grace -- in order to reveal His Son in him.<sup>228</sup>

Paul now came to believe in Jesus. Recognizing His Lordship, Paul asked Him: "Lord, what do You want me to do?"<sup>229</sup> In answer, the Lord Jesus then sent the new Christian Paul to the more established Christian Ananias. The latter then immediately called him: "Brother Saul" -- which indicates that he recognized Saul already to be a believer, even before his Baptism. Only after that, did the already believing Saul arise -- "and was baptized."<sup>230</sup> (See our note 288 below on Acts 22:16.)



It is therefore not at all the case that Paul's Baptism now made him into a Christian. It is far rather than the new Christian Paul -- after trusting in Christ -- then went on to receive Christian Baptism.

Commented Calvin:<sup>231</sup> "When he [Paul] asks what Christ wishes [Acts 9:6], he is acknowledging His authority and power..... Paul's heart suddenly turned from iron to flesh -- after a softness, which was not natural to it, was given to it by the Spirit."

Now Jesus "Christ subjected Paul to the instruction of a...Teacher...ordained by Christ...to be his Minister.... Christ appoints Ananias to act for Him as far as the office of teaching is concerned.... He [Ananias] will be a faithful and sincere Minister of the Gospel....

"It will be evident from what Paul says afterwards, that the task of teaching him was...committed to Ananias.... His Baptism...is subsequent in order.... The extreme fervour of his desire to learn, is apparent.... He does not hurry to get food -- until he has been baptized."

Explained Calvin:<sup>232</sup> "It will perhaps be objected, 'Why did Ananias say to Paul that he washed away his sins by Baptism (Acts 22:16) -- if sins are not washed away by the power of Baptism?'

"I answer, we are said to receive, procure and obtain whatever according to the perception of our faith is exhibited to us by the Lord -- whether He then attests it for the first time, or [whether He] gives additional confirmation to what He had previously attested. All then that Ananias meant to say, was -- 'Be baptized, Paul, so that you may be assured that your sins are forgiven you!'" Hence the words "are forgiven" -- here mean: "have been forgiven." (See too our note 288 below on Acts 22:16.)

## **51. Cornelius and family trusted in God long before their Baptisms**

Long before Peter arrived on the scene in Caesarea, the Gentile officer Cornelius<sup>233</sup> was already "a devout man, and one who feared God with all his house.... He prayed to God always." Indeed, also his own soldiers called him "a just man and one that fears God."

Peter too perceived that Cornelius had for quite some time continually been "fearing Him and working righteousness" -- *phoboumenos...kai ergazomenous dikaiosunēn*. Hence, Peter finally concluded: "'Can anyone forbid water, that these [Members of Cornelius's Household] should not be baptized?' So he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord."

Commenting on this,<sup>234</sup> Calvin stated: "Since Baptism is an appendage to the spiritual grace -- a man who receives the Spirit is at the same time fit to receive Baptism.... [Yet] the inference that ignorant men draw from this that infants must be debarred from Baptism, is absolutely groundless.

"I admit that those who are outside the Church must be instructed before the symbol of adoption is conferred on them. But I maintain that 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.... This testimony...powerfully refutes the superstition of the Papists, who bind the grace of the Spirit to the signs.... Luke [here] narrates that men who had not yet been initiated in Baptism, were already endowed with the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:1f,22,35]. He is showing that the Spirit is not shut up in [or confined to] Baptism."

So, even before meeting Peter -- as Calvin explained further<sup>235</sup> -- the Roman Officer Cornelius had already "embraced the Jewish religion" in Caesarea. He did so, apparently when then stationed in Palestine. "Nor could Cornelius...have lived so long in Judea, without becoming acquainted with the rudiments of sound doctrine."

Consequently, even before Peter met Cornelius, the latter had already become a true believer. For "his alms and prayers were acceptable to God (Acts 10:31).... This must have been the result of faith" acquired before meeting Peter and therefore also long before the Baptism of Cornelius's Household.

Calvin continued:<sup>236</sup> "Cornelius was accepted for his prayers and alms and so forth.... Acts 10:2.... It appears that he was already enlightened and regenerated.... All that he lacked, was a clear[er] revelation of the Gospel."

So Cornelius -- and apparently his family too -- was already "regenerated" prior to Acts 10:2. This was long before they all received Baptism at the command of Peter, in Acts 10:48. Thus it is obvious that Cornelius and the Members of his Household were **not regenerated by Baptism**.

## **52. Calvin's baptismal discussion of Acts chapters 10 and 11**

Discussing Acts 10:2-4, Calvin explained<sup>237</sup> that "Cornelius" had already then, pre-baptismally, been "endued with true wisdom -- in other words, with the fear of God." So "he must have been enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom."

Indeed, he "must have been sanctified by the same Spirit -- righteousness being, as the Apostle testifies, one of the most certain fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5:5."

Then, "when He was pleased to shed the light of His truth in greater effulgence on Cornelius -- He sent an angel from heaven to despatch Peter to him. Acts 10:3f." Also thereafter, even Peter himself -- before he baptized Cornelius -- already regarded him as a fellow-believer.

For Peter already saw Cornelius as one who had been reconciled with God. Indeed, Peter even then saw Cornelius as one of those "in every nation" who "keeps on fearing God"; who "keeps on working righteousness"; and who "had been accepted by Him." Acts 10:35.

Calvin concluded: "Baptism serves as our confession before men.... We have a proof of this, in Cornelius the centurion.... After he had previously been endued with the graces of the Holy Spirit, he was baptized." Here, Cornelius was "not seeking a fuller forgiveness from Baptism -- but a surer exercise of faith; nay, an argument for assurance from a pledge."

So then, Calvin believed that Cornelius already had "faith" and was clearly demonstrating an "exercise of that faith" -- before he was baptized. That pre-baptismal faith was merely given "a surer exercise" during his Baptism. The latter was a "pledge" which gave him "assurance" -- as to his own pre-baptismal faith in God.

Significantly, also the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* cites this very case of the previously unbaptized yet nevertheless righteous and faithful Household of Cornelius. To Westminster, this case shows -- about Baptism -- that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it."<sup>238</sup>

Peter soon gave a report to the other Apostles -- about this pre-baptismal faith of Cornelius's whole Household.<sup>239</sup> Explained Peter:<sup>240</sup> "John indeed baptized with water.... Inasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did to us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ -- who was I, that I could withstand God [by withholding Baptism from them]?"

Here, Calvin again castigated the Anabaptists:<sup>241</sup> "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.

### **53. The actions of Paul in Antioch-Jerusalem-Lystra condemn the Anabaptists**

Paul told the Jews in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch that God had fulfilled the promises made to the fathers. He had now fulfilled those same promises to their children. For God had raised up Jesus from the dead.<sup>242</sup>

Calvin here commented:<sup>243</sup> "It is certain that Paul is here speaking about the natural children who derived their origin from the holy fathers.... Certain fanatics [*viz.* the Anabaptists], who make allegories out of everything, imagine that no account is to be taken here of descendants -- but only of 'faith.' 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 -- unless they are polluted by their own fault. Rom. 11:16.... It is by faith that God separates His Own."

### **54. Jerusalem General Assembly vindicated the Church as the "New Israel"**

The Jerusalem General Assembly of the Christian Church refuted certain misguided and rather unestablished Christians. Formerly, the latter had come over from the sect of the Pharisees. Yet they were still saying it was needed to circumcise Gentiles who proselytized even to Christianity.<sup>244</sup> The General Assembly, however, decided that Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised -- but indeed needed to keep God's Moral Law.<sup>245</sup>

Here, John Calvin commented:<sup>246</sup> "The Gentiles were ingrafted into the people of God, without Circumcision.... The Jews had been prepared for faith, by Circumcision.... Ceremonies were given to the people of old, only in order to help their faith.... Harm is being caused to the Gentiles if more is demanded from them than God wishes....

"When He has made them equal to the holy people, and thought them worthy of the honour of adoption -- it is a shameful and absurd thing for them to be rejected.... Faith alone is enough for them -- lacking ceremonies though they may be."

### **55. The tactical circumcising of the faithful Christian Timothy**

At Lystra, Paul met the godly Timothy -- the Christian son of a Greek father (but also of a Jewish mother who had become a Christian). Paul wished Timothy to travel around with him, and to help him spread the Gospel especially among the Jews.

So Paul then circumcised Timothy. This was simply to encourage the Jews to heed the Christian testimony of Paul and Timothy. For the Jews might otherwise despise Paul for fraternizing with one they may in other ways perhaps have regarded as an uncircumcised syncretist. "Because the Jews which were in those quarters...all knew that his father was a Greek."<sup>247</sup>

Here Calvin commented:<sup>248</sup> "Luke makes it quite clear that Timothy was not circumcised because it was necessary." To the contrary, he was circumcised only "so that Paul might avoid a scandal."

"Certain learned men are confused and wandering, in this respect. For to them, Circumcision seems still to have a place among the Jews" even after they became Christians. Yet "Paul teaches that it is superfluous -- when we are buried with Christ through Baptism, Colossians 2:11-12....

"Eunice -- the mother of Timothy -- belonged to the tiny remnant" of godly Hebrews then living in Grecian cities. But, "being married" either to a Hellenist or even to a Non-Jewish Greek, "she did not dare to dedicate her children to God."

She did not dare, "at any rate, to give them the external mark of grace [or Circumcision]. And yet, she did not cease on that account to be conscientious in bringing up her son from boyhood -- in the fear of God and in the true worship."

Elsewhere -- continued Calvin -- "Paul did not wish to circumcise Titus." For he was a full-blooded Gentile Christian. Indeed, Paul himself "states that this course of action was correct. Galatians 2:3."

### **56. The Baptisms at Philippi of the Households of Lydia and the jailer**

At Philippi, we read of Lydia<sup>249</sup> that "the Lord opened" her heart. Consequently, "she attended

to the things which were spoken by Paul.... Then she was baptized, and her Household."

Dr. John Calvin commented here<sup>250</sup> that "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.... The Lord blessed her godly devotion -- so that she [also] had the members of her Household [to become] obedient....

In this matter, the important businesswoman Lydia (apparently the Manageress of her considerable Household) -- saw to it that all its Members were baptized. For, explained Calvin, "thus Abraham -- the father of the faithful -- was commanded to circumcise all his servants, along with himself.... He was commended for the care with which he organized his House [Genesis 17:24f and 18:18f].... This duty is demanded of the head of a Household."

While still in Philippi, Paul and Silas urged an anxious jailer:<sup>251</sup> "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved -- you and your Household!" So the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, straightaway.... He rejoiced, believing in God with all his Household."

Here, Calvin commented:<sup>252</sup> "Faith is not a trivial or arid opinion about unknown things, but a clear and distinct knowledge of Christ derived from the Gospel.... Instead of the fiction of 'implicit faith' (*implicitae fidei*) about which the Papists babble -- let us keep the faith that is united to the Word of God....

"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....

"The outward proclamation of faith on the part of the keeper, has already been praised. Now the inward result of faith is described.... His faith was not useless... The joy, of which Luke speaks here, is a singular blessing -- which individuals derive from their faith."

### **57. Baptized Households suggest even their infants have faith before their Baptism**

Thus we are told that in Philippi, Lydia "was baptized and her Household" -- and also that the jailer too "was baptized, he and all his..., believing in God with all his Household."<sup>253</sup> These two Household Baptisms clearly imply Infant Baptism (and therefore a presumed pre-baptismal faith even in such infants).<sup>254</sup>

As Calvin explained:<sup>255</sup> "Everyone must now see that Paedobaptism...receives such strong support from Scripture.... They [the infants] are not expressly excluded, when mention is made of any baptized Family. Acts 16:15,32. What man of sense will argue from this they were not baptized?"

For "Baptism...is not less applicable to children, than to those of more advanced years.... Benefit redounds from the observance -- both to believers who bring their children to the church to be baptized, and to the infants themselves.... The divine symbol communicated to the child --

as with the impress of a seal -- confirms the promise given."

It was similar in Corinth.<sup>256</sup> "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord -- with his whole Household. And many of the Corinthians -- hearing -- believed. And they were baptized" -- soon thereafter.

This information is very important. It relates to Crispus and his whole Household (including all his infants). It also relates to many other Corinthian Christians such as all the Members of the baptized Household of Stephanas.<sup>257</sup> However tiny some of them probably were -- they were all rebuttably regarded as believers already, even before any of them received Baptism.

### **58. The Baptism of John and the fiery believer Apollos**

Not just Paul<sup>258</sup> but also Apollos<sup>259</sup> soon became an important leader in the Corinthian Church. Earlier, Apollos the eloquent Alexandrian<sup>260</sup> had listened to Aquila and Priscilla privately explaining the way of God to him more perfectly<sup>261</sup> -- while he was in Ephesus.

Still earlier, before arriving there, Apollos was already "mighty in the Scriptures."<sup>262</sup> For formerly, he "had been catechized in the way of the Lord"; was "fervent in the Spirit"; and surely understood and acknowledged or "knew the Baptism of John."<sup>263</sup> All of this evidences that Apollos already had an adequate faith in Christ and thus was already a Christian -- even before receiving so-called 'Johannine' Baptism, and long before his arrival in Ephesus.<sup>264</sup>

[Even the Christian Disciple Barnabas was never actually called a 'Christian' -- until he arrived in Antioch. Only there were the Disciples first called 'Christians.' Yet surely, even before then, both Barnabas and all the other followers of Jesus (and many baptizees) really were Christians.]<sup>265</sup>

On Apollos, Calvin here commented:<sup>266</sup> "He understood the teaching of the Gospel.... He knew that a Redeemer has been presented to the world.... He had been instructed properly and sincerely about the grace of reconciliation." For he knew about the Baptism of John.

Explained Calvin: "John was, so to speak, an intermediary between Christ and the prophets.... He went before, lighting the way for Christ, and gave a wonderful explanation of His power. His [viz. John's] Disciples are justifiably said to have had knowledge of Christ." Thus, Andrew and others who had been baptized by John previously and who had then followed Jesus -- were never at all (re)baptized either by Christ Himself or by His Apostles.<sup>267</sup>

Calvin continued<sup>268</sup> regarding Apollos: "The statement that 'he knew the Baptism of John' deserves attention. For from this we gather what the true use of the Sacraments is -- viz. to initiate us into some particular kind of doctrine, or to establish the faith which we once embraced....

"What is this Baptism of John? Luke gathers up the whole of his ministry in this word. Not only because doctrine is bound to Baptism. But also because it [doctrine] is its [Baptism's] foundation and head -- without which it would be an empty and dead ceremony....

"Apollus is given the further commendation that he was inflamed with a holy zeal for teaching.... That man, who was not yet...completely instructed in the Gospel, preached Christ [Jesus].... Luke attributes his fervour to the Spirit.... Apollus was urged on by...the Holy Spirit" -- long before he first met Aquila and Priscilla.

### **59. Unitarians in Ephesus were regenerated just before Paul gave them Christian Baptism**

The Alexandrian Hebrew Christian Apollus had long been mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in the Spirit, and knowledgeable about the Baptism of John -- even before he arrived in Ephesus. The indications are that he had already been baptized before reaching Ephesus, but that it was there he learned the way of God more perfectly. For only thereafter are we told he showed the Jews from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Some take this as an indication that his own full conversion to Jesus Christ personally, was only post-baptismal. In that case, the Romish thesis that he was converted by Baptism -- and also the Lutheran thesis that he was converted during Baptism -- is thereby rendered more doubtful yet. Indeed, the whole context of Apollus's activities before his Baptism, practically disproves such a thesis.

After Apollus had departed from Ephesus for Corinth, some Unitarians arrived in Ephesus who had never even heard as to whether there is a Holy Spirit. Surprisingly, they later told Paul they had previously been baptized "into John's Baptism."

Romanists wrongly take this "John's Baptism" to mean the Baptism which was administered by John the Baptizer himself. They also wrongly claim that the latter Johannine Baptism was not Christian Baptism, and that all those baptized with Johannine Baptism still needed Christic Baptism.

Even if these claims were correct, they would establish quite clearly that nobody was regenerated during Johannine Baptism. The claims would then also imply the unlikelihood of anyone being regenerated during the then-somewhat-similar Christic Baptism (even if a different rite). In point of fact, however, Johannine Baptism is essentially the same as Christic Baptism. Consequently, nobody was regenerated -- during either Johannine nor Christic Baptism.

Clearly, whatever prior knowledge about John the Baptizer these twelve Unitarian Disciples might have had, they never came to faith in Christ before they met Paul in Ephesus. Before that, they had not so much as ever heard whether there is 'a holy spirit' (even though John himself had constantly spoken about the Holy Spirit while baptizing people).

Nor had they thitherto had any prior knowledge that John the Baptizer had told his people they should believe in Jesus Christ Who would come after him himself. That they had to learn, for the very first time, from Paul in Ephesus. However, "when they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus" and "Paul laid his hands upon them." Acts 19:1-6 *cf.* Luke 3:2-16.

## **60. Unitarians in Ephesus were not regenerated by or during their prior "John's Baptism"**

It is true, of course, that when Paul had arrived in Ephesus, he had found those Unitarians there - - claiming that they had received "John's Baptism." It is obvious that these men -- ignorant of the Holy Spirit, and hence also of the Christ alias the One anointed by that Spirit -- had been totally uninfluenced by the Scripture-quoting and Spirit-filled Christian preaching of the instructed Apollos either in Ephesus or elsewhere. Indeed, those Non-Trinitarians only seem to have arrived in Ephesus -- after the Trinitarian Apollos departed thence (for Corinth).<sup>269</sup>

It had been some twenty-five years since the death of that great Trinitarian, John the Baptizer. The twelve Non-Trinitarians in Ephesus had indeed made the claim to Paul that they had all been initiated "into John's Baptism." Nevertheless, they were apparently quite ignorant even about the very existence of the Holy Spirit (and perhaps even of the Lord Jesus Himself).

That seemed very surprising. For John the Baptizer himself, while baptizing people with water, had always pointed his baptizees (and prospective baptizees) away from himself -- and toward the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ). John had always told them how that Spirit-anointed One would soon Himself baptize them -- not (once or again) with water, but indeed with His Holy Spirit.<sup>270</sup>

The Unitarians in Ephesus, however, not even alleged they had received their 'Baptism' by or from John himself. They only claimed -- and that claim itself is suspect -- to have been initiated "into John's Baptism."<sup>271</sup> Indeed, they frankly admitted to Paul they had 'never even heard whether there is a holy spirit' (*sic*).<sup>272</sup>

Clearly, this Spirit-less "John's Baptism" these unitarians alleged to Paul they had received -- even if it had indeed been administered to them -- had not really been administered by John the Baptizer himself. For John had been a Spirit-filled person (even from his mother's womb). Indeed, also after growing up, John still testified about the Holy Spirit during his Spirit-filled preaching -- and also while baptizing. Hence, this 'Spirit-less' rite referred to in Acts 19:3b, was not Johannine. Indeed, it had started to be administered probably only after John's own death.

For it seems that certain Unitarians had only then started initiating people "into John's Baptism." By this, they probably meant they were initiating 'in the name of John' or perhaps even 'into the name of John' -- neither of which John himself would ever have done. Very clearly, this 'Spirit-less' rite was certainly not the Christian Baptism John himself had administered -- to those who soon thereafter became the Disciples of Jesus Himself (without then being 'rebaptized' by Jesus or by anyone).

Yet this 'Spirit-less' water-rite which the Unitarians in Ephesus claimed to have received before they met Paul -- the rite they called "John's Baptism" -- had clearly not regenerated them. For, even long thereafter, they had 'never even heard whether there is a holy spirit' (*sic*).

However, John himself had spoken quite clearly about the Holy Spirit -- both before and while



baptizing. Indeed, before administering that water-rite, he had urged his candidates to repent (or to turn to God) and to believe in the coming Christ Who would Himself baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Consequently, the Baptisms administered by John did not themselves regenerate.

Even more interesting. Although the Unitarians at Ephesus indeed claimed to have been baptized "into John's Baptism," they never claimed that the Holy Spirit had regenerated them through that water-rite. To the contrary. They readily admitted they had never even heard 'whether there is a holy spirit.' Consequently, they were then admitting that, in spite of allegedly having received "John's Baptism," they had still not yet been regenerated.

### **61. Paul explained Baptism to the unregenerate Unitarians**

Paul now explained,<sup>273</sup> to those ignorant Unitarians at Ephesus, the nature of the true Christian Baptism which John himself had indeed administered. According to Luke in the book of Acts, "then Paul said: 'John truly baptized with the Baptism of repentance, while saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who would come after him' -- that is, in Christ Jesus" the Spirit-anointed One.

"When they heard [and heeded] this, they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus." This could mean Paul was here simply saying that John himself<sup>274</sup> had indeed baptized people into the Name of the then-coming Messiah -- that is, the One Whom Paul here identifies as the Lord Jesus. Or it could mean Paul himself now baptized the Unitarians at Ephesus -- into the Name of the Lord Jesus. Either way, there is no **Re**-Baptism at Acts 19:5. For that verse says "they were baptized" -- not: 'they were re-baptized.'

The fact is, 'Johannine Baptism' is Christian Baptism. Thus, specifically on this passage, nearly all Calvinist scholars. So Calvin, Beza, the 1637 *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Lightfoot, Cocceius, Marckius, De Moor, J.H. Heidegger, J.H. van der Palm, H. Heppe, Gravemeijer, A. Kuyper Sr., *etc.*<sup>274</sup>

Now the text could mean that Paul was here informing the Unitarians at Ephesus about what John himself<sup>275</sup> had really taught. This would then show that those who had heeded John's preaching -- John's preaching that they should believe in Jesus -- were there and then baptized by John into the Name of the Lord Jesus. In that case, after explaining this to the confused men in Ephesus, all that Paul would then further have done -- after they heeded him -- was 'waterlessly' to lay his hands upon those ex-heretics.

Alternatively, the above words -- "when they heeded this, they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus" -- may instead be referring to what those just-converted Ex-Unitarians in Ephesus next did in relation to Paul. This would mean that Paul himself then proceeded to give those Ex-Unitarians *inter alia* their first-ever Triune Baptism with water.

Perhaps Paul did not then give Baptism with water to those men; on the other hand, however, it seems perhaps more likely that he did.<sup>275</sup> Yet either way, the entire passage Acts 19:1-5 cannot

properly be taken to mean that the Trinitarian Paul **re**-baptized those Ex-Unitarians after they had heeded his teaching. If Paul then indeed did baptize them with water -- that would have been the first and the only Christian Baptism those previously ignorant Unitarians had ever received.

For Paul explained to the Unitarians at Ephesus that "John truly baptized with the Baptism of repentance, while saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who would come after him

-- that is, in Christ Jesus." Whichever way the passage is understood, it cannot properly be taken to imply baptismal regeneration. Indeed, at whatever point in time that never-repeated Baptism with water took place or was to take place in respect of the approximately twelve men mentioned in Acts 19:1-7 -- it was not the same time at which their Christian faith commenced.

For any Christian Baptism with water whatsoever received by those Ex-Unitarians, would only have occurred after they had been regenerated by grace and through faith -- and apparently as a result of Paul's preaching the Gospel to them. Previously, it seems they had never truly been baptized by anybody. If they then ever received Christian Baptism at all (which indeed seems very likely) -- that could have occurred only **after** they heeded and obeyed the Gospel then preached to them by Paul.

That would then have been the first and the only Christian Baptism those previously ignorant Ex-Unitarians had ever received. More importantly, they had already been regenerated -- before they would then have received that Baptism. Indeed, they were regenerated apparently while hearing the Gospel preached to them by Paul. They were therefore not regenerated by the Christian Baptism itself, which would only be administrable to them at a somewhat different moment. Acts 19:4-5.

## **62. Calvin's explanation of the baptismal passage Acts 19:1-6**

The men concerned were about twelve in number.<sup>276</sup> In commenting,<sup>277</sup> Calvin here denied that these confused men had been influenced by Apollos. "It is not likely that so few 'Disciples' were left at Ephesus by Apollos.... They would have been instructed more correctly by him -- seeing that he himself had learnt the way of the Lord precisely.... I do not doubt that the 'brethren' whom Luke mentioned previously [Acts 18:27]...were different from these particular men" in Acts 19:1f.

Paul said: "John indeed baptized with the Baptism of repentance."<sup>278</sup> Here Calvin commented<sup>279</sup> "that the Baptism of John was a sign of repentance.... Today, there is no difference between it and our own Baptism.... It [Baptism by John] was a token and pledge of the same adoption and the same newness of life which we receive in our Baptism today. Therefore we do not read that Christ baptized afresh those who came over to Him from John.

"In addition, Christ received Baptism in His own flesh -- so that He might associate Himself with us by that visible symbol. But if that fictitious difference [between Baptism by John and our own Baptism today] be admitted -- there will vanish and be lost to us this unique favour: that we

have a common Baptism with the Son of God." And **He** -- the sinless One -- was not regenerated thereby!

Calvin continued: "It [Baptism by John] is the same Baptism" as Christian Baptism. "But now, the question is asked whether it was right to repeat it.... Fanatical men of our day, relying on this evidence [*cf.* Acts 19:3-5], have tried to introduce Anabaptism.... I deny that the Baptism of water was repeated."

Calvin also explained<sup>280</sup> that the rebaptizing Anabaptists of his own day and age "seem to think the weapon which they brandish [to be] irresistible -- when they allege that Paul rebaptized those who had been baptized 'with the Baptism of John.' Acts 19:3-5." Against that erroneous view, Calvin upheld his own correct conviction and "confession the Baptism of John was the same as ours."

Yet Calvin also clearly stated that those ignorant heretics in Ephesus "had been improperly trained" before receiving their so-called "John's Baptism." Subsequently, however, "they learned the true faith" -- from Paul.

Precisely here -- continued Calvin -- the Anabaptists maintain that it was only since the ignorant heretics "learned the true faith" from Paul, that they were "(re-)baptized into it." This was then necessary, say the Anabaptists, because the previous 'Baptism' of the ignorant heretics was in fact no Baptism -- because it occurred "without true doctrine" and should therefore "be accounted as nothing.... Hence [add the Anabaptists], we ought to be baptized anew into the true religion with which we [Protestants] are now for the first time imbued."

Thus said the Anabaptists. For they maintained that those born and baptized and raised in the heretical Church of Rome -- were never truly baptized there, at all.

### **63. Acts 19:1-5, to Calvin, teaches faith before Baptism**

This is not the place to consider the erroneous claim that Paul re-baptized some twelve ex-heretics in Ephesus. Nor is this the place to review Calvin's impressive analyses of the ineradicable validity of Christian Baptisms performed even in and by the Church of Rome.

This writer has addressed these topics abundantly -- elsewhere.<sup>281</sup> His present concern is to deal with the relevant part of Calvin's comment on 19:1-5 (but solely as regards the impossibility of baptismal regeneration).

Here, we shall merely show that to Calvin this whole passage clearly teaches faith before Baptism. In passing, however, we shall also see that -- to Calvin -- the passage clearly denies any possibility of Re-Baptism.

Declared Calvin:<sup>282</sup> "It seems to some that it was a foolish imitator of John who...had initiated them [the ignorant heretics] into vain superstition. This, it is thought, may be conjectured from the fact that they acknowledge their entire ignorance of the Holy Spirit -- an ignorance in which John never would have left his Disciples."<sup>283</sup>

Calvin went on:<sup>284</sup> "I grant that John's Baptism was a true Baptism, and one and the same with the Baptism of Christ. But I deny that they [these ignorant ex-heretics] were re-baptized [in Acts 19]."

Calvin thus strongly opposed the repetition or repetitions of Baptism with water. Especially did he oppose this practice, as if intervening ignorance or ignorances might ever justify such a repetition or series of repetitions of the water-rite. For "so numerous being the acts of ignorance which by the mercy of God are daily corrected in us," he concluded, "what rivers would suffice for so many repeated Baptisms!"

Yet further, Calvin indicated<sup>285</sup> that "the ministry of John was the very same as that which was afterwards delegated to the Apostles. For the different hands by which Baptism is administered, do not make it a different Baptism.

"But sameness of doctrine proves it to be the same.... John baptized in the Name of Him Who was to come; the Apostles in the Name of Him Who was already manifested. Luke 3:16; Acts 19:4."

Yet some misguided Late-Patristic "ancient writers...say that the one Baptism [by John] was only preparative to the other [namely the truly Christian Baptism].... Because, [the way] they read..., those who had received 'the Baptism of John' were 'again baptized' by Paul. Acts 19:3-5; Matthew 3:11. How greatly they are mistaken in this!"

The plain facts are thus as follows. Firstly: John the Baptizer, before baptizing anybody, always preached the necessity of repentance (or turning toward God) -- and the necessity of faith in the Messiah Who baptizes with His Spirit. Secondly: our Christian Baptism is the same which Christ received from John, without His ever being regenerated (either thereby or whenever). Thirdly: our own Christian Baptism too, therefore, does not regenerate us. Fourthly: like John's Baptism of sinners such as us, our own Baptism too likewise presupposes our own prior turning to God, and our own prior faith in Jesus Christ -- pre-baptismally.

In a sense, the repeated Romish sprinklings of holy water upon those already duly baptized -- come perilously close to the heresy of constantly 'rebaptizing' baptizees. As Calvin explained:<sup>286</sup> "Should any one ask them [the Romanists] where they get their holy water, they will at once answer -- 'from the Apostles!' As if I did not know who the Roman Bishop is, to whom history ascribes the invention -- and who, if he had admitted the Apostles to his council, assuredly never would have adulterated Baptism by a foreign and unseasonable symbol" such as 'holy water' (*sic*)!

John Calvin concluded: "It does not seem probable to me that the origin of that consecration is so ancient as is there recorded. For when Augustine says (*Epistle 118*) certain churches in his day rejected the formal imitation of Christ in the washing of feet lest that rite should seem to pertain to Baptism -- he intimates that there was then no kind of washing which had any resemblance to Baptism.

"Be that as it may. I will never admit that the apostolic Spirit gave rise to that daily sign by which Baptism, while brought back to remembrance, is in a manner repeated."

#### **64. Paul's sins were washed away prior to his receiving Baptism**

Later arraigned before a Non-Christian Hebrew audience,<sup>287</sup> Paul told of his former conversion to Christ -- on the road to Damascus, and before his Baptism. "Then one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews..., came to me and stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul..., why do you now keep on delaying? Having arisen, be baptized; and wash away your sins while you were calling upon the Name of the Lord!'"

The above certainly seems to evidence the washing away of Paul's sins at the time he was calling upon the Name of the Lord. Certainly that was before Ananias called him 'Brother'; and before Ananias yet subsequently baptized Paul. For Paul's "calling upon the Name of the Lord" surely implies his utilizing a God-given ability obviously received before his "calling" upon the Lord's Name thus.

That ability is one the exercising of which obviously manifests a faith in Christ already present previously. Indeed, it was only after calling Paul 'Brother' -- that Ananias further declared: "Why do you now keep on delaying? Having arisen, be baptized; and wash away your sins while you were calling upon the Name of the Lord!"<sup>288</sup> (See too our text at note 230 above on Acts 9:6-18.)

#### **65. Calvin: Paul here claimed pre-baptismal regeneration**

Here -- in addition to his previous<sup>289</sup> (anti-sacramentalistic) remarks about Paul's pre-baptismal conversion -- Calvin commented:<sup>290</sup> "What shall I do, Lord?...is the cry of a tame-d man.... It is genuine conversion to the Lord.... He was [only physically] blind -- until, presenting himself as a learner [to Ananias], he might prove the humility of his faith....

"Paul met Ananias.... Ananias warns that it was due to the gracious election of God that the truth of the Gospel is now shining in Paul.... There is no doubt that Ananias faithfully instructed Paul in the rudiments of the faith. For he would not have baptized him [Paul] -- if he [had] lacked true faith."

Now, continued Calvin, "the question is asked -- whether Baptism is the cause of our cleansing.... The blood of Christ is the one and only expiation for sins.... It was shed once [and for all] for this purpose.... The Holy Spirit is cleansing us continually, by the sprinkling of it -- through faith. The honour for this, cannot be transferred to the symbol of water -- without doing injury to Christ and the Holy Spirit.... Experience shows how prone men are to this superstition....

"It is God alone Who washes us from our sins by the blood of His Son.... We must imagine no other material cause than the blood of Christ. But...Baptism helps our faith to receive remission

of sins -- from the blood of Christ, and that alone.... On the other hand, we must be on our guard that the grace of God is not tied to the Sacraments. For the external administration of Baptism is of no value -- except when it pleases God that it should be so.

"Since Paul [already before his Baptism] had proof of the grace of God -- his sins had already been forgiven. Therefore, he was not...washed by Baptism, but obtained fresh confirmation of the grace which he had received [previously].... The Sacraments do not have any power of salvation shut up in themselves, or any effectiveness by themselves....

"Ananias clearly directs Paul away from trust in the outward element -- to[ward] Christ." Acts 9:17f. "It is well known how much the Papists differ from this example. They tie the cause of grace to their own exorcisms.... Far from being concerned to direct the wretched mass of the people to Christ -- they rather drown Christ in Baptism, and defile His sacred Name."

Yet, as Calvin anticipated,<sup>291</sup> by some it might "perhaps be objected: 'Why did Ananias say to Paul that he washed away his sins by Baptism?' Acts 22:16." Yet that is not what Ananias actually said -- as chronicled there in Acts 22:16.

As infallibly reported there, Ananias actually stated: "Brother Saul..., why do you now keep on delaying? Having arisen, be baptized! And wash away your sins while you were calling upon the Name of the Lord!"<sup>292</sup>

As Calvin himself observed:<sup>293</sup> "All then that Ananias meant to say, was -- 'Be baptized, Paul, so that you may be assured that your sins are forgiven you!'" Indeed, by "are forgiven" -- Calvin here does not mean either 'are right now being forgiven' or 'are about to be forgiven' but: 'have been forgiven.'

## **66. He is a 'Jew' who has been circumcised in his heart**

It is significant that Paul anti-sacramentalistically informed especially the Jews in Rome that their breaking the Law of God had "made your Circumcision [into] uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision [alias the uncircumcised Gentile] guards the righteousness of the Law -- shall not his uncircumcision be regarded as Circumcision? And shall not that which is by nature [not ever circumcised alias] 'uncircumcision' -- if it continues to complete the Law -- keep on judging you who by the letter and by Circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

"For not he is a Jew, who is one outwardly. Neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly. And Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit -- and not in the letter." Thus too, twice, the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*.<sup>294</sup>

Here, Calvin commented:<sup>295</sup> "The Jews thought that Circumcision was of itself sufficient for the purpose of obtaining righteousness. Arguing therefore in their own terms, Paul gives this reply that if this benefit is [to be] expected from Circumcision -- the condition is that the person who is circumcised, must prove himself to be wholly and perfectly a worshipper of God. Circumcision, therefore, requires perfection.

"The same may also be said of our Baptism. If anyone puts his trust in the water of Baptism alone and thinks that he is justified -- as though he had obtained holiness from that ordinance itself -- we must adduce the end of Baptism, in objection to this. Which is, that the Lord thereby calls us to holiness of life....

"It follows from this that the uncircumcised, provided he keeps the Law, far excels the Jew with his barren and unprofitable Circumcision -- if he [the Jew] is a transgressor of the Law.... The 'Circumcision' which constitutes a Jew, does not consist in an external sign.... People everywhere are commanded to circumcise their hearts."<sup>296</sup>

Even the Jew, circumcised in flesh, much more needed Circumcision in heart. Obviously, the two things -- though related -- were not the same. Mere Circumcision of the flesh saved nobody. Neither does Baptism merely with water, which replaces it.

Paul soon asked the question: "What is the profit of Circumcision?" He then answered: "Much, every way. First of all, that they [the circumcised Hebrews] were entrusted with the Oracles of God." But then, Paul immediately adds anent the Jews that "some were without faith."<sup>297</sup> Indeed, this clearly shows that -- certainly in their case -- there had been no circumcisional regeneration.

#### **67. Circumcision was not righteousness, but it did seal the righteousness of faith**

This is next made yet clearer -- even as regards Abraham and his descendants. Says Paul:<sup>298</sup> "Faith was reckoned unto Abraham as righteousness. How, then, was it reckoned? When he was in Circumcision -- or in uncircumcision? Not in Circumcision, but in uncircumcision.... Abraham [later] received the sign of Circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised." Abraham then received this seal of Circumcision, "so that he might become the father of all those that believe (though not circumcised) -- in order that righteousness might be imputed to them too."

In Romans 8:9, Paul soon went on to claim that "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not one of His." This clearly means that even prenatally-dying unborn children who belong to Christ, must already have had His Spirit within them. Hence this very passage is rightly cited in the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*. There, it is quoted -- to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit."<sup>299</sup>

For also infants need to be regenerated by God's Spirit. Such of God's elect as die in fetushood, are obviously regenerated before it is possible for them to be baptized. Consequently, it is clear that at least such early-dying babies are regenerated -- without being baptized. In their case at least, baptismal regeneration is obviously impossible -- and thoroughly false.

## **68. Abraham the 'father of believers' trusted in God before being circumcised**

It has been seen that Abraham was justified already -- **before** he was circumcised. Presumably, so too were his elect descendants -- nearly all of whom were circumcised in infancy. Yet some of his descendants -- such as probably Ishmael and certainly Esau -- were never regenerated.<sup>300</sup> *A fortiori*, it thus seems clear that neither Abraham himself nor any of his descendants -- whether elect or not -- was ever regenerated **during Circumcision**.

Calvin commented:<sup>301</sup> "Abraham possessed righteousness before he had Circumcision.... It did not justify.... It had a...very excellent use, *viz.* the office of sealing and as it were ratifying the righteousness of faith.... Circumcision...was [therefore] not the cause of righteousness -- although it tends to confirm the righteousness of faith already obtained in uncircumcision....

"As now in Baptism there are two parts, so formerly in Circumcision there were two parts -- which testified both to newness of life, and to the forgiveness of sins.... In the case of Abraham [his own divinely-imputed] righteousness preceded Circumcision....

"There is now no necessity for Circumcision where Baptism exists.... Circumcision does not [at all] justify.... Because Abraham was justified by faith [before Circumcision], the same argument also holds good for us. We deny, therefore, that men are justified by Baptism -- since they are justified by the same faith as that of Abraham."

Calvin further explained<sup>302</sup> that "a Sacrament consists of the Word and the external sign. By 'the Word' we ought to understand...one which, preached, makes us understand what the visible sign means.... Whence can there be so much virtue in water as to touch the body and cleanse the heart -- unless by the agency of the Word? And this, not because it is said -- but because it is believed?"

Continued Calvin: "The seals which are affixed to diplomas and other public deeds are nothing, considered in themselves.... Yet this does not prevent them from sealing and confirming, when they are appended to writings. It cannot be alleged that this comparison is a recent fiction of our own -- since Paul himself used it, terming Circumcision a seal (Romans 4:11). There he expressly maintains that the Circumcision of Abraham was not for justification, but was an attestation of the Covenant -- by the faith of which he had previously been justified.... Sacraments, therefore, are exercises which confirm our faith in the Word of God."

Calvin went on:<sup>303</sup> "Circumcision was enjoined on Abraham and his posterity.... [Circumcision once being] abrogated, the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper...were instituted.... Circumcision was a sign by which the Jews were reminded..., to confirm them in the promise made to Abraham of a Seed in Whom all the nations of the Earth would be blessed.... That saving Seed -- as we are taught by Paul, Galatians 5:6 [compare 3:16] -- was Christ, in Whom alone they trusted to recover what they had lost in Adam.

"Therefore Circumcision was to them [the elect Old Testament Israelites] what Paul says it was to Abraham -- *viz.* a sign of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11); *viz.* a seal by which they were more certainly assured that their faith, in waiting for the Lord, would be accepted by God



for righteousness.... We shall have a better opportunity elsewhere of following out the comparison between Circumcision and Baptism."

Dr. John Calvin further observed<sup>304</sup> that God "appointed Circumcision, by which symbol the Jews were taught.... They were thereby raised to the hope of eternal life. Therefore the Apostle, to prove that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were the children of Abraham, speaks in this way: 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness...so that he might be the father of all them that believe..., who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.' Romans 4:9-12....

"To the time appointed by the divine decree, he [Abraham] was the father of Circumcision. But when, as the Apostle elsewhere writes (Ephesians 2:14), the wall of partition which separated the Gentiles from the Jews was broken down -- also to them access was given to the Kingdom of God..... He [Abraham] became their father, and that without the sign of Circumcision -- its place being supplied by Baptism."

#### **69. Romans 4:11 demolishes the arguments of the Anabaptists**

The Anabaptists, concluded Dr. John Calvin,<sup>305</sup> rightly "add that Baptism is a Sacrament of penitence and faith." But then they wrongly state that "as neither of these is applicable to tender infancy, we must beware of rendering its meaning empty and vain by admitting infants to the communion of Baptism.

"But these darts are directed more against God than against us. Since the fact that Circumcision was a sign of repentance is completely established by many passages of Scripture. Jeremiah 4:4. Thus, Paul terms it a seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11.... Children are baptized for future repentance and faith.... The seed of both lies in them by the secret operation of the Spirit."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* cite Romans 4:11f. The *Westminster Confession* does so, to prove: that Sacraments are signs and seals of the Covenant of grace;<sup>306</sup> that infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized;<sup>307</sup> and that it is not so that nobody can be saved without Baptism.<sup>308</sup>

The same passage Romans 4:11 is also quoted by the *Westminster Larger Catechism*. There, it shows: that Sacraments are instituted by Christ, and that they seal all other graces;<sup>309</sup> that children of professing parents should themselves be baptized;<sup>310</sup> that all other blessings are sealed to us in Baptism;<sup>311</sup> and that Baptism seals the Covenant.<sup>312</sup>

#### **70. Even babies, stained by original sin, need regenerating**

In the next chapter -- Romans five -- Paul deals with the wretched status before God of the fallen Adam and his unregenerate descendants. Yet there, the Apostle also deals with the blessed status before God -- of Christ the unfallen Second Adam, together with that of all His adopted

children after their regeneration. Thus, at Romans 5:17, the Apostle Paul indicates that those "who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness -- shall keep on reigning in life, through the One, Jesus Christ."

Here, Dr. John Calvin rightly commented:<sup>313</sup> "It is necessary...to be a believer, in order to enjoy the righteousness of Christ. For we attain to fellowship with Him, by faith. Fellowship with Christ is communicated to infants [of believers] in a peculiar way. They have the right of adoption in the Covenant, by which they come into communion with Christ. I am referring to the children of the godly, to whom the promise of grace is directed (*piorum liberis loquor, ad quos promissio gratiae dirigitur*)."

Consequently, "it is necessary to be a believer -- in order to enjoy the righteousness of Christ." Further, "we attain to fellowship with Him -- by faith." Consequently, even infants must have faith -- in order to be able to fellowship with Christ.

Clearly, the infants of the godly are themselves among the faithful. By "adoption...they come into communion with Christ." Even "fellowship with Christ is communicated to infants" of believers. Hence, also while yet infants -- they are immediately entitled to receive Baptism -- as the sign of belonging to that fellowship of those who trust in the Saviour.

### **71. After Baptism, we may no longer continue in sin**

Paul next encourages the Christians in Rome -- who had already trusted in Christ before their Baptisms -- to keep on believing in Him even thereafter, and indeed for the rest of their lives. Rhetorically, the Apostle asks them:<sup>314</sup> "Shall we continue remaining in sin, so that grace may abound? May that never be! How shall we, who have died to sin, keep on living in it any longer?"

"Don't you know that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into His death? We have therefore been 'funeralized' together with Him, by Baptism, into death -- so that just as Christ has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too shall likewise keep on walking in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death -- we shall be too, in the likeness of His resurrection."

The 'seed of faith' was already in the seed-bed of the heart of the unbaptized Christian -- before he was planted together with Christ, through his own Baptism. Thus 'watered' -- that pre-baptismal seedlike faith then grows further. Thereafter too, it keeps on increasing yet more -- in the strong sunshine of God's ongoing grace.

In his comment,<sup>315</sup> Calvin here connected a Christian's own Baptism to his fellowship with Christ. "This fellowship of His death, is the focal centre of Baptism.... The efficacy of Christ's death appears from the moment when we are received into His grace....

"This power is not apparent in all the baptized. For Paul, because he is speaking to believers, connects the reality [grace] and the effect [faith] with the outward sign [Baptism]....

"Whatever the Lord offers by the visible symbol [Baptism], is confirmed and ratified by their faith. In short, he teaches us what the truth of Baptism is, when rightly received....

"For we never [as it were anabaptistically] have naked and empty symbols (*nuda et inania symbola*) -- except when our ingratitude and wickedness hinder the working of the divine beneficence." Nor does or could Baptism itself possibly create **pre**-baptismal incipient faith already present.

Time and again do the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* refer to this passage Romans 6:1-5f. They cite it to prove that Baptism solemnly engages its recipients to serve God.<sup>316</sup> For it seals Christians and ingrafts them<sup>317</sup> into Christ's body, and gives them an incentive to keep on walking in newness of life.<sup>318</sup> It obliges them to keep on obeying Christ;<sup>319</sup> and it seals their adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life.<sup>320</sup>

The *Westminster Standards* also cite this passage yet further. They do so, to prove that we have a post-baptismal and a life-long duty of "improving our Baptism"<sup>321</sup> -- especially in times of great temptation, and also when we witness Baptism being administered to others.<sup>322</sup>

They also quote it to urge baptized Christians to keep on drawing strength from Christ's death and resurrection. This is for the mortification of their own sin, and for the quickening of the grace they have previously received. It is also designed to encourage them to keep on walking in holiness and righteousness.<sup>323</sup>

## **72. Esau obviously not regenerated during his Circumcision**

To the "Israelites" -- Paul went on to declare<sup>324</sup> -- pertain "the adoption...and the promises." Yet not all those are 'Israel' [alias 'princes of the Triune God'] -- who are from Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children [of God]. But 'In Isaac shall your seed be called.' Thus God told Abraham. Genesis 21:12.

Paul then continued: "Rebecca also conceived, by...our father Isaac.... The [twin] children not yet having been born..., so that the purpose of God according to election might stand..., it was said to her: 'The elder shall serve the younger!'" Genesis 25:23. "Thus it has been written: 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated!'" Malachi 1:2-3.

"It is," John Calvin here remarked,<sup>325</sup> "of some importance to be descended from saints and men loved by God -- since God has promised the godly fathers mercy towards their children, even to a thousand generations [Exodus 20:6] -- particularly in the words addressed to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.... The promise was given to Abraham and to his seed [Genesis 17:4-7f], but in such a way that his inheritance does not relate to all of his descendants.... [However,] the defection of some does not prevent the Covenant from remaining firm....

"It was the will of the Lord that His Covenant should be sealed as much in Ishmael and Esau as in Isaac and Jacob.... They were not altogether estranged from Him -- unless...one disregards

the Circumcision which was communicated to them.... The Covenants belonged to them -- even though they did not believe [Romans 3:3].... Not all the children of Abraham are the children of God.... [Yet] the promise of salvation has been offered to them -- and confirmed by the symbol of Circumcision.... However, many of them reject this adoption -- by their ingratitude....

"God's blessing therefore had no reference to Ishmael.... There is also a much clearer example in Jacob and Esau.... One is rejected, and the other chosen by the Lord.... By saying 'the children being not yet born neither having done anything'..., he [viz. Paul] shows that God, in making the difference between them, could not have paid any regard to [their] works which did not yet exist....

"They were both the children of Adam, sinners by nature.... Esau deserved to be rejected. For he was by nature [or from conception] a child of wrath.... The Lord distinguishes between the sons of Isaac while they are still in their mother's womb.... God's will was to show to the younger son a peculiar favour" -- and indeed even before his Circumcision.

Calvin concluded:<sup>326</sup> "Granted that Jacob was elected for a worth to be obtained by future virtues -- to what end did Paul say that he was not yet born? ... So Esau, while as yet unpolluted by any [personally committed] crime, is hated.... Ishmael also was circumcised..., and yet we see that he was rejected. If the reason is asked, Paul assigns it. Romans 9:6.... Those only are accounted sons, who are born of the pure and legitimate seed of doctrine" -- before their Circumcision.

Clearly, there is here no question of circumcisional or baptismal regeneration! For Ishmael and Esau were not regenerated during or because of their Circumcision. They were never regenerated, at all.

### **73. Holy parental roots produce holy offshoots for Holy Baptism**

Of course, those truly regenerate from conception onward, will inevitably later produce fruit to evidence this. Later lack of fruit indeed rebuts the presumption of regeneration before birth and Baptism. Yet, until such later fruitlessness might result -- prenatal sanctification is certainly to be presumed. For a root-like faithful parent certainly sanctifies his or her branch-like offspring.

As Paul has insisted:<sup>327</sup> "If the root be holy, so are the branches.... The branches...do not bear the root, but the root [bears the branches].... The branches...stand by faith.... [Yet] some of the branches [may later] be broken off...because of unbelief."

Commented Calvin:<sup>328</sup> "Paul bids us look back upon Abraham and the patriarchs.... He concludes, therefore, that a hereditary holiness had passed from them to all their posterity.... Because a father is just, he does not immediately transfer his integrity to his son. But because the Lord sanctified Abraham to Himself on condition that his seed also be holy, and therefore bestowed holiness not only upon the person of Abraham but also upon his whole race -- Paul rightly argues from this that all the Jews have been sanctified in their father Abraham....

"Descendants have the same relationship to their parents from whom they spring, as the lump has to the first fruits, or the branches to the tree.... The Jews are sanctified in their father....

"We should never think of the rejection of the Jews -- without being struck with dread and terror. The one thing which caused their ruin, was their despising of the divine judgment.... They were not spared, though they were natural branches. What then will become of us, who are wild and alien branches -- if we become excessively insolent?"

Nevertheless, among the Old Testament Israelites, their uncircumcised baby girls were rightly regarded as children of God -- until such time as they might later prove to be unfruitful. So too were their uncircumcised baby boys (before their Circumcision when eight days old). Indeed, because Baptism has now replaced Circumcision, each tiny child of a Christian parent should similarly be regarded as a child of God even before Baptism -- until such time as he or she might later prove to be unfruitful.<sup>329</sup>

Explained Dr. John Calvin:<sup>330</sup> "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 -- until they are polluted by their own fault. Romans 11:16."

John Calvin concluded<sup>331</sup> that even "the ungodliness of one of the parents, does not prevent the children from being born holy [First Corinthians 7:14].... So Paul argues in Romans 11:16 that all Abraham's descendants are holy -- because God had concluded a Covenant of life with him. 'If the root is holy, so are the branches' -- he says.... The same Covenant of salvation which had its beginning with the seed of Abraham, is extended to us. The children of believers are exempt from the common condition of mankind.... The Lord admits them to His Church, by His Word."

Thus too the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* thrice quote Romans 11:16f. They do so, to show: that the Visible Church includes those who profess the true religion, together with their children,<sup>332</sup> that the children of believers are to be baptized;<sup>333</sup> and that visible churches are made up of visible saints and their children.<sup>334</sup>

The Apostle Paul also states<sup>335</sup> that "Jesus Christ became a Minister of the Circumcision on behalf of the truth of God -- unto the confirmation of the promises made to the fathers." The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* cite this passage to prove that God gave us the Sacraments to put a visible difference between Church Members and the rest of the World.<sup>336</sup> They also quote it to show that the benefits of Christ's mediation are sealed to those who are within the Covenant of grace.<sup>337</sup>

#### **74. Christ sent Paul not to baptize but to preach the Gospel**

In Corinth, the Christians had become contentious -- and had formed factions claiming to follow, respectively: Paul; Apollos; and Peter; *etc* . So Paul asked<sup>338</sup> those squabblers: "Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and

Gaius -- lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Beside that, I don't know whether I baptized anyone else [in Corinth]. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

Very clearly, these inspired words are not those of a baptismal regenerationist. Were baptismal regeneration true, Paul would have said precisely the opposite of what he did.

He would then have said: Christ sent me precisely to baptize, for that alone regenerates. But then, Paul could never have said (as he indeed did): "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."

Calvin commented:<sup>339</sup> "We enlist into the service -- of Him in Whose Name we are baptized. In this way, we are bound to Christ -- in Whose Name our Baptism is consecrated.... The nature of Baptism is like a bond of mutual contract. For as the Lord by that symbol receives us into His Household and adds us to His people, so we put ourselves under the obligation of faithfulness to Him.... In dealing with Baptism, God the Father...receives us by adoption into the fellowship of His sons."

Paul continued: "I thank God that I baptized none of you." Here Calvin commented: "Paul would have acted within his rights...if he had baptized a great many people. But he rejoices that it fell out differently.... A servant of the Lord has to rejoice that he has to refrain from a work otherwise good and valuable -- to prevent it becoming a means of causing harm to them."

Paul continued: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." Here John Calvin commented: "The gift of teaching [and preaching] belonged to a few; while many were allowed to baptize.... Many could be taught at one time; while Baptism [accompanied with water] could only be administered to individuals one at a time. Paul, who excelled in the ability to teach, was [here] pursuing the work which it seemed more necessary for him to do."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* also cite this passage. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* asserts<sup>340</sup> these words of Paul also imply that we should improve our Baptism. This is to be done specially by being humbled because of our sinful defilement and our walking contrary to the grace of our Baptism and our engagement to serve the Lord alone.

## **75. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but only God gave the increase**

Paul next went on to tell the faction-ridden Corinthian Christians:<sup>341</sup> "Who then is Paul, and who Apollos -- but Ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I [Paul] have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase!"

Here Paul implies it only after he himself had planted faith in their hearts, that Apollos came

along and watered them -- by baptizing them. Yet this could then only mean that the Corinthian Christians had already had the seed of faith implanted into them -- through the prior work of Preachers like Paul -- before that germinating seed was later watered, when Apollos subsequently baptized them.<sup>342</sup>

John Calvin here explained<sup>343</sup> that "doctrine and exhortation...is indicated by Paul, when he says: 'Neither is he who plants, anything; neither he who waters; but God Who keeps on giving the increase' [is everything]! First Corinthians 3:7. In like manner..., it is the proper work of God to circumcise the heart..., to renew souls so as to give efficacy to doctrine."

The above text is cited also by the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*.<sup>344</sup> There, it is regarded as authority for the proposition that "the Sacraments become effectual means [not of justification but] of salvation, not by any power in themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost."

## **76. Justified and sanctified and washed in the Name of Jesus**

Some of the Corinthian Christians had formerly committed very serious sins. Yet now they had been redeemed. As Paul remarked:<sup>345</sup> "But you got washed; but you were sanctified; but you were justified -- in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Here, it should be noted the verbs "washed" and "sanctified" and "justified" are all co-ordinated - by the thrice-repeated word "but." All these verbs are aorists -- and thus refer to the very same contemporaneous and completed experience (albeit with ongoing consequences). All the verbs are either middle or passive, implying that it is not "you" but "God" alias the Father-Son-Spirit Who was the One Who was active therein.

It is precisely the saintly "Spirit of our God" Who here "sanctified" and also contemporaneously "justified" and "washed" these Christians. Consequently, it is "by the **Spirit**" that they were truly "washed" -- and not by baptismal water (which is not even mentioned in this verse). Only very obliquely, as the altogether unstated sign and seal and symbol of all these benefits, could Baptism possibly be connected to these words "washed" and "sanctified" and "justified."

Calvin commented:<sup>346</sup> "Paul uses three expressions to convey the one idea.... These three phrases all refer therefore to the same thing.... His point is, that once they have been justified, they must not bring themselves into a new state.... Having been sanctified, they must not make themselves unclean again. Having been washed, they must not sully themselves with fresh filth....

"The metaphor is washing, for the blood of Christ is thought of as water.... Sanctification has to do with regeneration.... The blood of Christ is the cause of our cleansing.... But Christ Himself, with all His blessings, is communicated to us by the Spirit. For we receive Christ by faith; and it is by faith that His benefits are applied to us. The Author of faith, is the Spirit."

Calvin explained further:<sup>347</sup> "So long as we are without Christ..., nothing which He suffered...is of the least benefit to us.... He must become ours.... We obtain this, by faith.... The testimony

of the Spirit...is engraven on our hearts by way of seal -- and thus seals the cleansing and sacrifice of Christ....

"Paul, speaking of cleansing and purification, says, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.' First Corinthians 6:11.... The Holy Spirit is the Bond by Which Christ effectually binds us to Himself."

Calvin concluded:<sup>348</sup> "Paul declares that we are not purged and washed from our impurities by the blood of Christ until the Spirit accomplishes that cleansing in us. First Corinthians 6:11. Peter, intending to say the same thing, declares that the sanctification of the Spirit avails 'unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' First Peter 1:2."

### **77. Believing parents rebuttably generate children that are holy**

Paul goes on to discuss holy matrimony with the Corinthian Christians. He tells them that, to avoid fornication alias illicit sexual activity, every man should have his own wife -- and *vice-versa*. He calls the ability to give and to receive sexual enjoyment within marriage a *charisma* -- alias a charismatic gift. And he urges married persons not to withdraw themselves sexually from one another for long -- without mutual consent.

Paul insists that a Christian brother (*e.g.* one who had come to faith only after his marriage to an unbeliever) should not withdraw himself even from such a wife -- nor *vice-versa*. For even within also such a marriage, the God-given faith of the believing marriage partner 'sanctifies' the other partner in respect of the sex act and its possible consequences. Thus, the believing parent is God's means of making holy any child that may be conceived as a result of that intercourse. For that potential parent's faith so sanctifies or overshadows the lack of faith in his unbelieving wife or in her unbelieving husband -- that the resultant children are not unclean like the unbelieving spouse, but holy.

At the singularly miraculous conception of the sinless Jesus the Holy Spirit uniquely overshadowed Mary. This rendered her blessed -- and specifically as regards her immaculate conceiving of our sinless Saviour. Consequently, her first-born child -- her Saviour, the holy Jesus -- was altogether sinless. Luke 1:34-38 and 1:46-50. *Mutatis mutandis*, at the normal conception of an ordinary covenant child, the God-given faith of an imperfect yet sanctified husband overshadows even an unbelieving wife -- and *vice-versa*.

All descendants of the fallen Adam and Eve (with the sole exception of the God-man Jesus) -- because of the transmission to them of Adam's original sin at their very conception -- were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. Job 14:1-4f and Psalm 51:5.

This is why even Christian children are sinners, and tend to commit sin and to keep on committing it. Yet, in spite of that, Christian children of Christian parents are also to be regarded as washed in the blood of Jesus and hence cleansed and holy -- even from their conception onward. Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14.



For the blessed God-given faith of an imperfect yet sanctified parent certainly overshadows even the faithlessness of an unbelieving spouse -- especially during the marital sexual intercourse which sometimes results in the conception of children. Such children are therefore covenantal children. For children of at least one faithful parent -- though certainly not sinless -- are not faithless and unclean, but holy like the faithful parent. Such children not merely have a potential to become clean or holy at a later stage. They are already cleansed and therefore holy - even from their very conception onward.

As Paul explains:<sup>349</sup> "The woman who has a husband who does not believe, yet who is pleased to go on dwelling with her -- let her not leave him! For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the [believing] wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the [believing] husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean. But now, they are holy.... Circumcision is nothing; and [also] uncircumcision is nothing -- but the keeping of the Commandments of God" [such as the Seventh Commandment here], is everything!

No way should such children of a believing parent ever be regarded as unholy children who -- long after their Infant Baptisms -- will hopefully only some day become holy. No! These children are holy already -- from conception onward. This implies, of course, that such children qualify for Holy Baptism -- as soon as they have been born. Yet they are already holy before Baptism. For "Circumcision is nothing" -- and Baptism, *viz.* at Calvary, replaced Circumcision. Likewise, also Baptism is nothing -- as regards making anyone holy.

Covenant children, already holy -- are entitled to receive Holy Baptism -- as soon after their birth as is convenient. Genesis 17:12f and Colossians 2:11f. Because holy before Baptism -- it is clear that it cannot be Baptism itself which makes such children holy.

Yet it is not just before their Infant Baptism that these children are already holy. For they are holy also before their birth. Indeed, they are holy even from their very conception onward. Their later Baptism simply confirms that they were -- and are -- already holy.

## **78. Calvin: a holy parent rebuttably produces holy infants**

Paul, Calvin commented,<sup>350</sup> "is speaking here not about the contracting of marriage -- but about maintaining those which have already been entered into." Naturally, believers are not to get intimately involved with unbelievers -- nor to marry them. Yet if after two unbelievers marry one another, one of them becomes a Christian -- that believer is then to maintain the marriage, for as long as the unbelieving spouse is willing to do so.

Continued Calvin: "A believer can [then] live with an unbeliever, with a clear conscience. For, as far as sexual intercourse and ordinary everyday relations [within marriage] are concerned, the unbeliever is sanctified -- so that he or she does not contaminate the believer with his or her [the unbeliever's] uncleanness.

"In the meantime, this sanctification is of no personal benefit to the unbelieving partner..... The believer is not contaminated by intercourse with him or her, & the marriage itself is not profaned." Neither are the resultant children profane -- but holy.

"A question arises from that. If the faith of a Christian husband or wife sanctifies a marriage, it follows that all the marriages of unbelievers are unclean.... [Yet] it would be naive to infer from this, that marriage in their case is in the same class as fornication. Because, no matter how unclean it is to them, it [marriage as such] is nevertheless pure in itself -- seeing that it has been ordained by God....

"'Else were your children unclean.' This is an argument based on the effect. 'If your marriage was unclean -- then the children born of it would be unclean. But they are holy! Therefore, your marriage also is holy' [even when a believer's own spouse is not a believer]. Therefore, just as the ungodliness of one of the parents does not prevent the children from being born holy - - so too, it does not stand in the way of the marriage itself being undefiled....

"The children of believers are set apart from others, by a certain privilege, so that they [the former] are regarded as holy in the Church.... The fact that the Apostle ascribes a special privilege to the children of believers here, has its source in the blessing of the Covenant -- by the intervention of which the curse of nature is destroyed.... Those who were by nature unclean -- are consecrated to God by His grace....

"So Paul argues in Romans 11:16 that all Abraham's descendants are holy -- because God had concluded a Covenant of life with him. 'If the root is holy, so are the branches' -- he says. And God calls all who are descended from Israel -- His sons....

"The same Covenant of salvation which had its beginning with the seed of Abraham, is extended to us.... The children of believers are made exempt from the common condition of mankind -- in order to be set apart for the Lord....

"'Why should we keep them back from the sign [of the Covenant]? If the Lord admits them [the infant children of believers] to His Church by His Word -- why should we deny them the sign? ... 'Circumcision is nothing'.... Baptism has taken the place of the legal symbol, so that [now] it is sufficient if we are circumcised by the Spirit of Christ."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards* repeatedly cite this important passage First Corinthians 7:14. The *Westminster Confession* quotes it to prove that "the Visible Church...consists of all those throughout the World that profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>351</sup> It also refers to it, to demonstrate that "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."<sup>352</sup>

The passage is also cited in the *Westminster Larger Catechism* -- to prove that "infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing [even if secretly not possessing] faith in Christ and obedience to him, are...within the Covenant and to be baptized."<sup>353</sup> Indeed, it again refers to the passage -- in order to show that "Baptism is to be

administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants."<sup>354</sup>

### **79. All the Israelitic fathers were baptized by the cloud**

Paul soon goes on to remind those same Corinthian Christians -- together with their tiny infants - - "that all our fathers were under the cloud.... They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud."<sup>355</sup> That is to say, the faithful Israelites, including their covenantal children and even their very babes-in-arms -- were all baptized, by the cloud, during their exodus from Egypt.

Calvin commented here:<sup>356</sup> "Paul says, first of all, that 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 [in substance], to be testimonies to them of the grace of God.... 'They were all under the cloud'.... They had [in substance] been furnished with the same signs of the grace of God. For the Sacraments are tokens by which the Church of God is discerned.

"Paul deals...with Baptism, and he teaches that the cloud which protected the Israelites...was indeed like Baptism.... Anyone who will give proper attention to these things, will find nothing absurd in what Paul says. More than that, he will see both in spiritual substance and visible form -- the closest agreement between the Baptism of the Jews and ours."

Fittingly, the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* quotes this very passage First Corinthians 10:1-2. It does so, to prove that the Sacraments of the Old were "for substance the same" as those of the New Testament.<sup>357</sup>

### **80. All the Christians had been baptized and drenched**

Shortly thereafter, Paul further informs those same Corinthian Christians together with their tiny infants that "by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body.... We have all been drenched into one Spirit."<sup>358</sup>

Calvin<sup>359</sup> here commented:<sup>360</sup> "Proof of this, is provided by the effect of Baptism. Paul says: 'By Baptism we are ingrafted into the body of Christ -- so that we are bound together, joined each to the other as Members, and live the one life. Therefore he who wants to remain in the Church of Christ, must necessarily devote himself to this fellowship'.... The Baptism of believers...is efficacious through the grace of the Spirit....

"Baptism is...a symbol.... Believers actually do receive the reality with the Sacrament.... Baptism is an ingrafting [of one already deemed to be a believer] into the body of Christ [alias the Visible Church]. However, so that no one might suppose that this is effected by the outward symbol -- Paul adds that it is the work of the Holy Spirit."

Calvin further explained<sup>361</sup> what Paul means when "he says...'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' First Corinthians 12:13." Paul, maintained Calvin, linked it to "communion with Christ in the Sacraments.... As when he says 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Galatians 3:27....

"Baptism...is a sign of our confession.... We have entered into the [Visible] Church of God, so that with one consent of faith and love -- we may live in concord with all believers. This last was Paul's meaning.... First Corinthians 12:13.... Paul comprehends the whole Church...when he says that...by Baptism we are ingrafted into the body of Christ. First Corinthians 12:13. We infer that infants, whom He enumerates among His members, are to be baptized -- in order that they may not be dissevered from His body."

This text -- First Corinthians 12:13 -- is cited no less than ten times in the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*. In the *Westminster Confession*, it is quoted to show: that the true religion is professed by Baptism; that the efficacy of the Sacrament depends upon the work of the Spirit; and that it is intended for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church.<sup>362</sup>

In the *Westminster Larger Catechism* the text is cited to prove that the Visible Church is made up of those who profess the true religion, and of their children. It further demonstrates that Christ's Spirit alone gives power to the Sacrament. It is also cited: to spur Christians unto love and communion one with another; to show that the parties baptized are thereby solemnly admitted into the Visible Church; and to remind them that they have all been baptized by the same Spirit into one body.<sup>363</sup>

In the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, the same text is cited to refer to the working of the Spirit in those who by faith receive the Sacraments.<sup>364</sup> Indeed, in the *Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government* -- it is further quoted to prove that "there is one general Church Visible held forth in the New Testament."<sup>365</sup>

## **81. Even 'baptism for the dead' undermines baptismal regenerationism**

A little later, Paul assures the doubters among the Corinthian Christians that the dead shall yet be resurrected. After all, their own Baptism still kept on testifying to them that the man Jesus Christ had indeed been resurrected -- and that the same thing would one day happen to them too.<sup>366</sup> In fact, even the Mormon-like 'baptism for the dead' then being practised by certain heretics probably even in Corinth -- heterodox as it indeed was -- nevertheless rightly testified that the dead will indeed be raised.

Thus Paul assured<sup>367</sup> the weak Christians in Corinth: "If the dead do not rise, neither was Christ raised up.... But now, Christ has risen from the dead.... In Christ, all shall be made alive.... Otherwise -- what should those do, who keep on getting themselves baptized for the dead: if the dead are not raised at all? Then, why do they keep on being baptized -- for the dead? Indeed, why do we keep on running risks -- every hour?"

This passage is cited by the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*<sup>368</sup> to prove that Baptism guarantees man's future resurrection. Calvin commented:<sup>369</sup> "Is it likely that the Apostle would adduce as an argument a sacrilege by which Baptism was corrupted and turned into a completely magical abuse?"

Be that as it may, there was also another quite different yet very important situation even within the Christian Church herself. That abuse appeared as she degenerated, in the Late-Patristic Age.

Explains Dr. John Calvin: "In the early days of the Church, when people who were still unbaptized beginners in the faith had fallen ill and if they were clearly in imminent danger of death, they were [sometimes] in the habit of asking for Baptism." Sadly, Calvin went on, "superstitions afterwards infiltrated into this practice also."

This is why, added Dr. Calvin, the Later Church Fathers rightly "inveigh against those who were postponing their Baptism until death -- so that once they had been 'purified' of all their sins, they might 'come' to the judgment of God. This is indeed a stupid error -- which sprang partly from great ignorance, and partly from hypocrisy."

## **82. No circumcisonal nor baptismal regeneration in Galatians**

Paul also wrote to the Galatian Christians. Among other things, he told them he had rightly felt no compulsion to circumcise the Gentile Christian Titus.<sup>370</sup>

As Dr. John Calvin commented,<sup>371</sup> Paul here brought to the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem "a man who had not been circumcised. Yet they did not hesitate to acknowledge him as a brother.... Circumcision, being an indifferent thing, could be omitted."

*Mutatis mutandis*, so too could Baptism -- as far as being in Christ is concerned. Hence, neither the Apostle Paul nor the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem ever equated Circumcision (or Baptism) with regeneration. Consequently, neither did Calvin.

Calvin hence concluded:<sup>372</sup> "Nothing can induce him [Paul] to circumcise Titus.... Galatians 2:3.... What he had in view in firmly resisting the Circumcision of Titus, he himself testifies.... 'Because of false brethren brought in unawares, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus -- in order that they might bring us into bondage. To them, we did not for one hour subject ourselves -- so that the truth of the Gospel might continue'.... Galatians 2:2-5."

Paul next explains to the Galatian Christians that even Abraham had been justified through faith.<sup>373</sup> This had occurred before his Circumcision<sup>374</sup> -- just as also Abraham's Christian descendants were themselves justified through faith before receiving their Baptism which replaced Circumcision. As Paul reminds those Galatian Christians (both infant and adult):<sup>375</sup> "You are all the children of God -- by faith in Christ Jesus.... Many of you were baptized into

Christ. You have put on Christ.... And if you are Christ's -- then you are indeed Abraham's seed!"

Clearly, the faith in Christ of "all" Christians -- is here said to precede the Baptism of "many" of them. Such infants as have faith in Christ before their Baptism, are already in Christ before their Baptism. Consequently, Baptism itself does not regenerate them. Instead, it rather seals their pre-baptismal status as those already presumed to be holy saints. Cf. First Corinthians 7:14.

Calvin here commented:<sup>376</sup> "They are the children of God. It would not be enough to say that we have passed out of our childhood -- unless it were added that we are freemen. For age does not change the state.... The fact of their being the children of God, proves their freedom. How? By faith in Christ. For to all who believe in Him, is given the privilege of being the sons of God. Therefore it is at the same time brought to pass that we are set free by faith, when we are adopted by means of it....

"The argument that they have put on Christ because they have been baptized, seems weak. For Baptism is far from being efficacious in all.... To be a child of Abraham is...being a member of Christ.... Faith is always joined, in relation to the promise."

Rev. Dr. John Calvin concluded:<sup>377</sup> "Our faith receives from Baptism...its assuring us not only that we are ingrafted into...Christ, but so united to Christ Himself as to be partakers of all His blessings.... Hence, Paul proves us to be the sons of God from the fact that we put on Christ in Baptism.... Moses and the prophets reminded the people of the thing meant by Circumcision -- which, however, [also] infants received. To the same effect, Paul says to the Galatians 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Galatians 3:27."

This verse is also repeatedly cited by the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*. They do so to prove that Baptism: is a seal of one's ingrafting into Christ and all other graces; solemnly admits into the Visible Church; encourages one to live by faith; and is a sign and seal of regeneration even to infants.<sup>378</sup>

### **83. Galatians warned against false 'circumcisional regeneration'**

Paul goes on to warn the Galatian Christians against the *ex opere operato* heresy of the judaizing Hebrew Christian sectarians. They wanted to circumcise already-baptized Gentile Christians. However, to the latter, Paul writes: "If you get circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!"<sup>379</sup>

Calvin here commented:<sup>380</sup> "Do not our modern Papists thrust on us their own inventions, in the place of Circumcision? ... Circumcision was only a temporary ordinance of God. After the coming of Christ, this Sacrament ceased to be a divine institution because Baptism had succeeded to its place.... To show more clearly how close are the doctrine of the Papists and that which Paul opposes, it must be noted that the Sacraments (received sincerely) are not strictly the works of men but of God. In Baptism or the Lord's Supper, we do nothing. We simply come before God to receive His grace.

"Baptism, from our side, is a passive work (*respectu nostri est opus passivum*). We bring nothing to it, but faith -- which has all things laid up in Christ. But what say the Papists? They invent the *opus operatum*, by which men merit the grace of God. What is this, but to extinguish utterly the truth of the Sacrament? We retain Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because Christ wished them to be used perpetually. But we bitterly detest those ungodly absurdities [of the Papists] -- as we should do!"

So, "to" Baptism -- Calvin insists -- "we bring...faith, which has all things laid up in Christ." Here, "all things" obviously include even regeneration. Consequently, after this pre-baptismal trust in the Saviour -- a pre-baptismal trust which is itself the fruit of a rebuttably-presumed preceding regeneration -- later Baptism itself can clearly not convey the regeneration already obtained.

#### **84. Paul to the Ephesians: 'one faith' prior to 'one Baptism'**

Paul reminds also the Ephesian Christians -- that the Spirit Himself had called them unto Baptism. He clearly explains: "There is...one Spirit -- even as you have been called...; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism."<sup>381</sup>

Here, the very order seems significant. There is firstly, the Spirit Who had called them to become Christians. There is secondly, the faith which was then given to those who had been called. Then there is, thirdly, the Baptism subsequently received by those already in receipt of the faith which is presumed to have been given previously.

In a sermon on Ephesians 4:1-5, John Calvin wrote:<sup>382</sup> "St. Paul's intention here is not to separate Baptism from the Gospel, but he has rather added it as a visible mark.... If we (at first acquaintance) do not understand the unity of faith..., by Baptism...it is just as if God had printed the mark of adoption in our hearts -- to show that we are His."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism* quotes this passage. First, it shows that Christ's Sacrament of Baptism signifies and seals to those "that are within the Covenant of grace" -- the benefits of His mediation. Then, it states that the Sacraments "oblige them...to testify -- and cherish their love and communion one with another. Ephesians 4:2-5."<sup>383</sup>

Soon after making his above-mentioned statement on Baptism, the Apostle goes on to enjoin:<sup>384</sup> "Husbands, keep on loving your wives even as Christ too loved the Church and gave Himself on her behalf! So that He might keep on sanctifying her, after having cleansed her with the washing of the water by the Word."

Here, Paul reminds the Ephesians that Christ had loved His Church first -- before she ever began to reciprocate. For even at the very outset, He gave Himself for her. Only later did the Church respond, and start loving Christ in return. Indeed, she does so precisely as a result of Christ's having cleansed her once and for all -- and also because, thereafter, Christ keeps on sanctifying her -- with the washing of the water, by the Word.

Romanists (and Lutherans) maintain the Holy Spirit works pre-eminently through this water -- and that the water is precisely that of Baptism. For they believe that justifying grace has been enclosed in the baptismal water -- right after the ministerial enunciation of the words of that institution.

Paul, however, here declares that Christ has cleansed us not by the water but by the Word. For instrumentally, it is "by" the "Word" that Christ has cleansed us. Christ did so, Paul adds, not by -- but only "with" -- the washing of the water. Indeed, even this "washing of the water" -- is also quite distinct from baptismal water, which is not even mentioned here.<sup>385</sup>

Calvin himself commented<sup>386</sup> that the 'washing of the water' is "the outward symbol" which Paul now adds "to the inward and secret sanctification" which begins at the cleansing. Indeed, this 'washing of the water' is but "a visible confirmation of it [the cleansing]. As if he had said that a pledge of that sanctification is presented to us....

"Men in their perverted superstition make an idol out of the Sacrament.... When Paul says that we are washed..., we must beware of transferring to the sign or to the Minister what belongs to God alone -- that is, to imagine that the Minister is the author of the washing, or that water cleanses the pollutions of the soul which only the blood of Christ can accomplish. In short, we must beware of giving any portion of our trust to the element" of water.

"The Apostle does not say that it is the sign that cleanses, but declares that this is the work of God alone. It is God Who cleanses.... The praise for this must not be transferred to the sign, or even shared with the sign."

### **85. Cleansing with the washing of the water, yet only by the Word**

Elsewhere too<sup>387</sup> Calvin emphasized "the statement of Paul that 'Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her, so that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word.' Ephesians 5:25-26.... He did not mean to intimate that our ablution and salvation are perfected by water, or that water possesses in itself the virtue of purifying.... Nor does he mean that it is the cause of salvation.... Paul connects together the Word of life and Baptism of water. As if he had said: 'By the Gospel [or Good Word] the message of our ablution and sanctification is announced. By Baptism, this message is sealed.'"

Calvin once again<sup>388</sup> repudiated the doctrine of baptismal regeneration propounded by the Romanists. "They object that Baptism is given for the remission of sins.... This strongly supports our view. For, seeing we are born sinners, we stand in need of forgiveness and pardon from the very womb."

The latter means prenatally -- and hence prior to Baptism. "Infants receive forgiveness of sins. Therefore [after being born], they are not to be deprived of the sign" of Baptism.

Yet, continued Calvin, in a vain attempt to establish their error of baptismal regeneration -- the Romanists "adduce the passage from the Ephesians that Christ gave Himself for the Church 'so



that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word.' Ephesians 5:26. Nothing could be quoted more appropriate than this, to overthrow their error. It furnishes us with an easy proof. If, by Baptism, Christ intends to attest the ablution by which He cleanses His Church -- it would not seem equitable to deny this attestation to infants who are justly deemed part of the Church, seeing they are called heirs of the heavenly kingdom."

### **86. Calvin's Ephesian sermons insist Baptism does not justify us**

In a sermon on Ephesians 5:25-27, Calvin wrote:<sup>389</sup> "It is not without reason that St. Paul here puts down Baptism for us. Not that we are made clean by that.... When our Lord...commanded us to be baptized in His Name -- did He mean to turn away our faith from His shed blood? Did He mean that Baptism should take the place of His death and passion, to accomplish the work of our salvation? It is most certain that it was not so. For Baptism is but an accessory and an appendage to the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if it [Baptism] did not direct us there [to Christ] -- it would certainly be but a trifling ceremony....

"To use Baptism well, and according to the institution of the Son of God -- we must not set our minds on the corruptible and transitory element. For what is the water? If it stands only one day. It will become foul. And how then can it cleanse our souls for ever, and convey to us a purity that will continue after death? ... This power cannot be in the water. We must of necessity come to the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed, the water also is the sign of His blood and of His Holy Spirit. Let us note, then, that our Lord Jesus washed us when He shed His blood by which we are cleansed....

"From this exposition, we may receive a very profitable general lesson -- namely, that the true and lawful use of the Sacraments is to lead us directly to our Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, we simply make idols of them. In Popery, Baptism is like a charm -- because they think there is no salvation, except by the water.... It is a diabolical opinion that Baptism is able of itself to save us....

"In Baptism, we see the water -- but thereby we must be lifted up higher to the blood of the Son of God, assuring ourselves that it is not the water that makes us clean.... It is only a pledge of the washing that was obtained for us -- when our Lord Jesus was crucified for us.... Why are we not taught simply that in having recourse to our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall find in Him our washing and cleansing? It seems that this ought indeed to suffice us....

"If we had the minds of angels, we should no more need this outward Baptism than the angels do. But since we are earthly and it is hard for us to approach to God and the secrets of His heavenly Kingdom, it is necessary for us to be helped in this way.... What we have to learn from this passage, is that the Sacraments do not turn us away from the trust which we ought to put wholly in our Lord Jesus Christ....

"St. Paul's speaking of Baptism...is in order that we, considering the limits of our understanding, should apply to the confirming of our faith those means which are profitable for us.... It is not without cause that St. Paul joins together the Word and the washing of water.... Yet...he shows

that it is too gross a folly for men to entwine themselves in that way in signs and ceremonies and visible Sacraments and to rest in them -- whereas they should be led to God....

"St. Paul...says particularly that we have our washing testified in Baptism, under the figure of water. Yes -- but yet we must have an eye to the Word, he says. For if there were no teaching to show us that we find in our Lord Jesus Christ the things which are represented to us in Baptism -- and that it is in His Person that we have the accomplishment and assurance of them -- Baptism would certainly turn us away from God, and it would be better that it were abolished.... Therefore let us be very careful that we do not separate the Sacraments from the Word, at any time....

"What use is a seal, when it is set to a mere piece of leather -- or to a bare parchment, paper, or cloth? It would surely be to no purpose; for it ought to confirm and ratify some written document pertaining to a gift or something else.

"Thus it is with the Sacraments, when they are not joined with the Word.... St. Paul speaks of the Word that is full of instruction, and that edifies our faith.... We see how the Papists are destitute of the power of the Sacraments -- through their unbelief....

"The 'Word' that St. Paul refers to here, is not a bare sound -- but a teaching that edifies our faith.... We receive the promise that is made to us in it and apply it to our use -- in order that in Baptism the water may serve as a pledge of our spiritual washing."

Citing this statement in Ephesians 5:25f, the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* insists that "the efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered....

Notwithstanding -- by the right use of this ordinance -- the grace promised is not only offered but really exhibited, and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such...as that grace belongeth unto...in His appointed time."<sup>390</sup> In other words, Baptism is designed to strengthen the faith of the elect for the whole of their life.

Indeed, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* cites this same statement. It does so to prove, and truly so, that Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration by Christ's Spirit.<sup>391</sup>

### **87. Also the offspring of the Ephesian Christians were themselves "saints"**

In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul addresses the Ephesian Christians as "the saints" and "the faithful."<sup>392</sup> In the last chapter, he includes even their offspring as being among those faithful saints. For there, he states that also their "children" were already "in the Lord."<sup>393</sup>

There, the Apostle Paul quotes<sup>394</sup> the Fifth Commandment of God's Law of the Covenant. Then he immediately further enjoins:<sup>395</sup> "You fathers, do not keep on irritating your children; but do keep on rearing them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!"

Here, there is no injunction on Christian fathers to transfer -- nor to 'transubstantiate' -- their own 'pagan' children into Christians, by baptizing them. Instead, Paul here enjoins 'Christian fathers to keep on rearing their own Christian children in -- yes, in-side -- the Lord's nurture.'<sup>396</sup>

For such children are not Pagans who first need to be brought into the Covenant. To the contrary. Such children are themselves Christians -- needing only to be brought up in the Covenant within which they were born; nay more, within which they were conceived.

What is needed, is the clear baptismal affirmation that these covenantal infants were -- and are -- themselves Christians. What is not needed, is the myth of baptismal transubstantiability of tiny Pagans into little Romanists.

Yet still less do covenantal infants deserve the baptismal deprivation to which antipaedobaptistic Anabaptists subject Christ's little lambs. For the latter are neither still unclean nor uncleansed.

It is not so that they could not get cleansed at all -- until they begin to grow up and themselves develop an assumed ability to sin only when they reach the apocryphal 'age of accountability.' At what age would they then become accountable? With no Scripture, many Baptist say around age seven.

Conversely, yet others might argue that infants are essentially clean without regeneration, even from their very conception onward. Thus, for example, the Pelagians.

In that case, infants really would not need the blood of Christ -- nor the Baptism which depicts it -- until they themselves personally sin when they later grow into little children. Yet the latter still implies the relevance of Baptism for such tiny children -- if not even the Baptism of babies.

Still others might agree (with Calvinism) that infants, though stained at their conception with the guilt and taint of Adam's original sin -- need cleansing even in infancy. But then -- to withhold Infant Baptism from them, denies this great truth.

Yet the children of believers in fact remain in or within the Covenant -- from their conception till their birth, and beyond. Such children, in the classic words of the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, "by Baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church, distinguished from the World and them that are without." For "they are Christians and federally holy before Baptism, and therefore are they baptized." Consequently, it is as "Christians" that such covenantal infants are to be baptized. And it is still as Christians that, after Baptism, those same covenantal infants are to be raised and admonished.

Calvin himself here commented<sup>397</sup> that "kind and generous treatment keeps children in reverence of their parents and increases the readiness and cheerfulness of their obedience.... Paul goes on to say 'let them be cherished kindly!' For the word *ektrephein* ['to rear'] unquestionably conveys the idea of gentleness and friendliness."

Paul, concluded Calvin, "adds 'in the discipline and correction of the Lord'.... Keep them in the discipline of the Lord, and correct them also when they go astray!"

### **88. Philippian Christians told: "We are the Circumcision!"**

Paul also writes to the Philippian Christians. He assures them:<sup>398</sup> "We are the Circumcision, we who keep on worshipping God in the Spirit.... I was circumcised the eighth day" *etc.*

Here Calvin commented:<sup>399</sup> "We are the true seed of Abraham, and heirs of the testament which was confirmed by the sign of Circumcision.... Here someone will ask whether truth excludes the Sacraments. For the same thing might be said of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. I answer, that...Circumcision gave way to Baptism.... Believers have the true Circumcision."

It is true that God alone knows the hearts of men, and especially of unborn covenantal children. Yet, until the latter might later evidence gross waywardness -- they too should surely be treated as regenerate. For it is "believers" that "have the true Circumcision" (thus Calvin). Indeed, all such covenantal infants -- previously entitled to receive Circumcision -- were therefore to be regarded as tiny believers (until the lives of some might later evidence the contrary) even before receiving that Circumcision (and/or the Baptism which has now replaced it).

### **89. Colossian Christians "circumcised" because baptized**

Writing to the Colossians,<sup>400</sup> Paul addresses them similarly to the way in which he writes to the Ephesians. For he calls also the Colossian Christians "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." Indeed, among that number, he included even "children."

The Apostle further declares<sup>401</sup> to the Colossians that also baptized Gentile Christians "had been circumcised with a Circumcision made without hands -- with the stripping off of the body of flesh, with the Circumcision of Christ." For, he explains: "You have been funeralized together with Him in Baptism -- in which you have also been raised up through the faith of the operation of God Who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He enlivened together with Him -- having forgiven you all [your] trespasses."<sup>402</sup>

This passage teaches that Baptism has now replaced Circumcision. So, it surely implies that Infant Baptism has therefore now come in the place of Infant Circumcision. And it certainly presupposes the same Christian faith in tiny infants before their Baptism -- as it does in their adult parents.

Calvin commented here<sup>403</sup> as regards "spiritual Circumcision...that we obtain this through Baptism, so that it may be more clear that there is no practice of Circumcision under the reign of Christ. For someone might otherwise object: 'Why do you abolish Circumcision [in the flesh], on the pretext that its effect is in Christ? Was not Abraham also circumcised spiritually? And yet, this did not prevent the sign [of Circumcision in the flesh] being added to the reality.'"

Calvin answered the above by showing that "Paul anticipates such an objection -- by mentioning Baptism. Christ, he says, accomplishes in us 'spiritual Circumcision' -- not through means of that ancient sign [Circumcision in the flesh] which was in force under Moses, but by Baptism.

“Baptism, therefore,” explained Calvin, “is a sign of the thing exhibited which...was figured [or depicted] by Circumcision.... 'You were,' he says, 'dead in uncircumcision'.... But God has called you to Himself -- from Circumcision.”

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*<sup>404</sup> cites this passage Colossians 2:11-13 to prove that Baptism is a seal of regeneration. It also quotes this passage to show that grace really is exhibited therein -- and conferred by the Holy Ghost to His elect in God's appointed time. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* quotes it to establish that children of believers are to be baptized. It also cites it to show that Baptism is a seal of God's Covenant -- and that we are to improve our own Baptism life-long.<sup>405</sup>

### **90. Women should rear and keep covenantal children in the faith**

Writing to Timothy, Paul insists<sup>406</sup> that woman shall continue to be happy<sup>407</sup> or “keep on being preserved” in child-rearing.<sup>408</sup> Christian women are happy when educating or rearing children in the Christian faith. Christian women continue to be happy thus -- provided the children<sup>409</sup> under their care themselves “remain”<sup>410</sup> in faith...and holiness.”<sup>411</sup>

Of course, it is not rearing children -- whether her own or those of other people -- which justifies a woman. Merely giving infants a Christian education -- commendable though this undoubtedly is -- does not in itself remove an educator's own sins from before the face of a just and sin-hating God. Yet it certainly does “save” or “preserve” the educator from a life of meaninglessness. Indeed, it makes the educator happy.

Thus, rearing and educating children indeed keeps a godly woman eminently contented -- provided she rears or educates those [Christian] children well. Reared in that way, they themselves are then to remain in the Christian nurture imparted to them by that godly woman. See Ephesians 6:1-4.<sup>412</sup>

Dr. Calvin commented here<sup>413</sup> that “this passage is twisted to support justification by works, as the Papists do.... [However,] the Apostle is not dealing here with the cause of salvation. His words cannot and should not be used to infer the merit of works....

“The Apostle is dealing here not merely with bearing children, but with...bringing them up.... The Vulgate translates: ‘in bearing children, if they continue in faith’.... This clause was usually taken to refer to the children.”

Now Timothy's own mother had long been a “believing” (alias a ‘faithful’) Hebrew woman. So, young Timothy had himself been reared from fetushood<sup>414</sup> as a long-time pupil of the Lord Jesus Christ -- even before his birth and his yet-later Baptism/Circumcision.<sup>415</sup>

Yet, since then, the youthful Timothy had been ordained as a Minister of the Word -- and indeed as an Evangelist. So Paul strongly reminded Timothy: “Keep on being nourished up in the words of the faith...which you have kept on attaining.... Don't let anybody keep on despising your youth!”<sup>416</sup>

Now this implies that Timothy had already "been nourished" in "the faith" -- from a very early age. Indeed, this process of nourishing -- ever since then -- had continued without ceasing.

Consequently, not only was the youthful Timothy still in the faith. He had also been nourished in that faith -- ever since he, when yet an infant, first imbibed his faithful mother's milk even before his weaning and his Baptism.

In his comment,<sup>416</sup> Calvin compellingly argued that we need to "take the participle [*entrephomenos* or 'keep on being nourished'] as a passive -- as confirming what he [the Apostle Paul] has just said about Timothy's education. It is as if he [the Apostle Paul] had said [to Timothy], 'Having rightly been instructed in the faith from your infancy, and having (so to speak) sucked in sound doctrine with your mother's milk and having made till now continual progress in it -- take pains by a faithful ministry to prove that you are still the same!'

"This interpretation also brings out the root meaning of the verb [*entrephesthai* or 'to be nourished up']. Faith means here the sum of Christian teaching.... The phrase 'which you have followed' indicates his perseverance."

### **91. The faith of Timothy and his mother and grandmother**

Indeed, Paul knows that the Christian Disciple Timothy had been reared not only by a believing mother -- but, almost simultaneously, also by a believing grandmother. This is why the Apostle later encourages Timothy, when the latter had become a youth,<sup>416</sup> to keep on standing in the Christian faith in which he had been reared.

Writes the Apostle Paul to the youthful Timothy:<sup>417</sup> "I thank God...when I keep on remembering<sup>418</sup> the unfeigned faith<sup>419</sup> in you.<sup>420</sup> It has kept on dwelling<sup>421</sup> first<sup>422</sup> in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice; and, I have been persuaded,<sup>423</sup> in you too."<sup>424</sup>

The Apostle Paul would know that the "faith" he sees in Timothy, had "first" dwelt in that youth's grandmother and mother too. Indeed, that faith had kept on dwelling in both of the latter.<sup>425</sup>

Now, Paul was persuaded that this same kind of faith had kept on dwelling in Timothy too.<sup>426</sup> For the faith which Paul was now seeing in Timothy, had also previously been dwelling in the latter -- even before he had become a youth.

Indeed, Paul here seems to say he is sure<sup>427</sup> that a continuing faith in Christ kept on dwelling in Timothy too -- precisely because it first did so in his grandmother, and in his mother who had reared him from fetushood onward.<sup>428</sup> For Paul had become 'surely' and perfectly "persuaded" that an ongoing unfeigned faith in Christ had long been dwelling even in Timothy.<sup>429</sup> Therefore the Apostle Paul now told that youth: "I keep on remembering the unfeigned faith which has kept on dwelling...in you."<sup>430</sup>

Calvin commented<sup>431</sup> Paul here "commends both Timothy's faith, and that of his grandmother and mother.... When anyone made a good and brave beginning, his progress should give him courage to advance.... Examples from his own family...are stronger enticements to him to press on.

"Thus, he [Paul] sets before him [Timothy] -- his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, by whom he was reared in his infancy in such a way that he could suck in godliness along with his mother's milk.... Timothy from his boyhood...was so imbued with reverence and faith in God -- that it was a living seed which later increased and grew."

In a sermon,<sup>432</sup> Calvin explained what it means "when Saint Paul says to Timothy that 'he knows the faith [of his mother and grandmother] also dwells in him.' He is not speaking of that faith which he then had presently; nor of that faith which he had after he was called to the Gospel; but of the faith which he had even from his childhood..., wherein he had been instructed even from the beginning."

## **92. Timothy knew the Sacred Scriptures from his own fetushood onward**

Paul soon goes on<sup>433</sup> to urge Timothy: "You must continue [or 'keep on remaining']<sup>434</sup> in the things you have learned<sup>435</sup> and you have been assured of,<sup>436</sup> knowing from whom<sup>437</sup> you have learned<sup>438</sup> them. Even from fetushood,<sup>439</sup> you have known the Holy Scriptures<sup>440</sup> which are able to keep on giving you wisdom<sup>441</sup> unto salvation through faith in Christ<sup>442</sup> [Jesus]...so that the man of God may keep on remaining equipped,<sup>443</sup> having been furnished thoroughly<sup>444</sup> unto every good work."

Here it seems that the youth Timothy had long ago learned and been assured about certain things. He received that learning and assurance especially through his mother, and indeed probably even prenatally from his own fetushood onward. These things seem to have focussed on the salvation in Christ revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This, Timothy seems to have become acquainted with -- especially from his Bible-believing mother -- even before his birth.

Indeed, it further seems that Timothy already knew and was assured of that salvation in Christ -- through his own God-given faith even when still a fetus. Paul now urges the youth Timothy to keep on remaining in those things which he had been taught even when a tiny infant and thereafter.

Timothy was now a mature "man of God." Yet, in order to be able to perform every good work, he still needed to keep on remaining perfectly equipped. This perfect equipping followed precisely after Timothy had already thoroughly been furnished -- especially by His Bible-believing mother even from his own covenantal fetushood onward.

We have previously noted some of Calvin's comments on Timothy, applicable to the time when the latter was still a baby. Calvin had already commented<sup>445</sup> on the "faith in which he [Timothy] had been reared from childhood." Dr. Calvin now further commented<sup>446</sup> that Timothy had also "been accustomed from his boyhood to read the Scriptures." This "was a powerful urge to

fidelity. For this long-established habit can make a man much better prepared to meet any kind of deception.

"It was a wise care that in ancient times was taken, to make sure that those who were intended for the Ministry...should from their boyhood be instructed in the solid doctrine of godliness.... Thus, if anyone has acquired from his youth [alias his infancy] a knowledge of the Scriptures, he should count it a special blessing of God."

### **93. Does Paul in Titus 3:5 teach baptismal regeneration?**

Paul writes not only to Timothy, but also to his other helper Titus. The Apostle reminds the latter that "our Saviour...saved us not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy." This God did, "through a washing of regeneration and a renewing of the Holy Spirit Whom He poured out upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ."<sup>447</sup>

Paul here uses not the word 'justified' -- but the word "saved." Yet even the latter word "saved" -- being past tense (aorist) -- still refers to a completed act (with ongoing consequences).<sup>448</sup>

Only later,<sup>449</sup> however, does Paul go on to say that Christians had been "justified" by the Saviour -- namely "justified by His grace."<sup>450</sup> Significantly, Paul here does not say: 'justified by Baptism.'

Paul does not state that even this being "saved" -- was accomplished by a work of righteousness which we had done (such as by getting ourselves baptized). Instead, here he clearly specifies that God "saved us not by works of righteousness which we have done -- but according to His mercy."<sup>451</sup>

Christians have been saved not 'by' but only "through a washing of regeneration -- and a renewing of the Holy Spirit." Furthermore, they have been saved not through "a washing" alone -- but through "a washing" and "a renewing."<sup>452</sup> Indeed, the latter "renewing" can be accomplished even in the unborn. This proves it is accomplishable even in those incapable of receiving Baptism.<sup>453</sup>

The passage does not speak of Baptism. Yet it does speak of "a washing of regeneration and a renewing of the Holy Spirit."<sup>454</sup> The question now arises: What does this mean?

### **94. What Titus 3:5 means (and what it does not mean)**

Firstly, because these expressions are co-ordinate, there can be no "washing" without "renewing" -- nor *vice-versa*. Accordingly, even if this "washing" were to be taken to refer to Baptism -- which is not stated -- it still could not imply baptismal regeneration *ex opere operato*. For even such a latter "washing" would still need, in addition, the corresponding "renewing" of the Spirit.

Secondly, the passage does not speak of 'the washing' -- but only of "a washing."<sup>455</sup> Moreover, it speaks merely of "a washing" as such -- and not of 'a basin [in which] to wash.'<sup>456</sup> Yet the latter is what the *ex opere operato* theory of baptismal regeneration would seem to require.<sup>457</sup>



Thirdly, the passage states that God "saved us through<sup>458</sup> a washing of regeneration" *etc.* It does not state that God 'saved us by<sup>459</sup> the washing [or even by a washing] of regeneration' *etc.* Hence, 'through a washing' -- and not 'by a washing'; nor 'by the washing'; nor even 'by washing.' Yet the theory of baptismal regenerationism would instead surely seem to require one of the latter phrases.

Fourthly, the phrase does not mean we were saved by or through 'the regeneration of washing.' For here, the word "*palingenias*" alias "regeneration" is not a possessive genitive. It may well be an objective genitive -- the regeneration having washing as its result. But it can hardly be a subjective genitive (*viz.* the regeneration consisting of washing).<sup>460</sup>

Fifthly, the whole context of Titus 3:5 is one of faith.<sup>461</sup> The very word "Baptism" does not occur there. Nor is there here any *ex opere operato*, and still less any losable justification. Quite to the contrary. Paul here immediately goes on to make an important declaration. For he next says that, as a result of the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Spirit, "we have been justified through His grace -- so as to become heirs according to the confidence of everlasting life." Titus 3:7.

Sixthly, even if the "regeneration" be equated with the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" -- it could no way establish baptismal regenerationism. For then, it could only mean that the "regeneration" would then follow -- and therefore could not occur during -- that washing.<sup>462</sup>

Seventhly, the passage does not say Baptism justified us totally; nor that solely Baptism justified us; nor even that God justified us through Baptism. Instead, it says that "He saved us" -- and that it is "He" Who saved us; and not Baptism that "saved" us.

And it says He saved us *kata* or 'according to' His mercy -- and only *dia* or 'through' a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" *etc.* Consequently, Baptism is not administered in order to regenerate people.

It is dispensed because they are presumed to have been regenerated already. Indeed, they are taken to have been regenerated specifically by God's pre-baptismal mercy.

Eighthly, the passage does not mention Baptism. Yet even if it did, it would still not teach that regeneration is inseparably connected with Baptism.<sup>463</sup> Even that, indeed, would still not imply baptismal regeneration. For even if the passage were to refer to Baptism, it would then imply -- as indeed claimed by Calvinism -- that the sign of Baptism is precisely the seal of regeneration.

Lastly, we should note that the following verse (Titus 3:6) declares we have been saved "through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (*dia Iēsou Christou tou Sōtēros hēmōn*). The word "through" or *dia* is here no isolated causality. It points to the one and only cause of salvation -- faith in Christ's blood.

Hence the very next verse (Tit. 3:7) does not go on to suggest that we have been justified through Baptism. Instead, it categorically insists that we have been justified "by His grace."

## **95. Calvin's comment on this "washing of regeneration"**

Calvin here commented<sup>464</sup> that Christians have been justified indeed. However, this is 'not by works' which they performed, but by what God did. For 'He saved us.' Here, Paul "speaks of faith -- and teaches that we have already received salvation.... We are engrafted into Christ by faith....

"Salvation is not obtained in the external symbol of water.... Baptism seals to us the salvation obtained[!] by Christ.... Ungodly men are neither washed nor renewed by Baptism.... Here, Paul is addressing believers.... If we do not wish to make Holy Baptism null and void -- we must prove its power by newness of life.... We are not washed by water, but by His power.

"As Ezekiel says, 'And I will sprinkle clean water upon you -- even My Spirit.' Ezekiel 36:25f.... It is God's Spirit Who regenerates us and makes us new creatures. But -- since His grace is invisible and hidden -- a visible symbol of it is given to us in Baptism."

Paul here refers to the cleansing and washing by God's regenerating, renewing Spirit -- "which He poured out upon us." Titus 3:5-6. Calvin here commented: "In the Greek, the relative 'which' agrees with both 'washing' and 'Spirit'.... When he [Paul] speaks of the washing poured out upon us, he refers less to the sign than the thing signified wherein the reality of the sign consists.... The Spirit of regeneration is given only to those who are Members of Christ."

Calvin further explained<sup>465</sup> "the statement of Paul" about God our Saviour. Paul, according to Calvin, here means that it is "'not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy [that] He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Titus 3:5.... Paul connects together the Word of life, and Baptism with water. As if he had said: 'by the Gospel the message of our ablution and sanctification is announced; by Baptism, this message is sealed.'"

In a sermon, Calvin further stated<sup>466</sup> that Paul, "after the word 'washing' -- here adds that it is 'of regeneration' [or new birth] 'and the renewment of the Holy Ghost.' No doubt but that in this place Saint Paul had an eye to Baptism.... God is not contented only to witness to us by His Gospel that we be washed and made clean in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. But He has also given us a figure thereof, so that when we be baptized -- it is as much as if God shewed to the eye that we of ourselves bring nothing to Him but utter filthiness, and that it is His office to make us clean. That, then, is the thing which Baptism shows us....

"Howbeit, He shows us with all this, that the said washing does not consist in that visible water.... The water, then, does not have that power. Yet notwithstanding, because of our infirmity we must begin at the water, so that we may be lifted up higher. Yes, I say, we must begin at the water -- but we must not tarry at it. For the sign that is offered to our eyes, serves to

lead us to the Holy Ghost. To the end we may know -- how it is from Him that the power of Baptism proceeds. And therefore, although He use such a similitude..., yet He shows that our trust must not be tied to that [Baptism]. But we must father the whole effect and perfection of Baptism -- upon the Holy Ghost."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*<sup>467</sup> repeatedly refer to this passage Titus 3:5-7. Thus the *Westminster Confession* quotes it, to show that Baptism really exhibits grace to God's elect. Indeed, it further argues from this passage that Baptism is but once to be administered to any person. Yet it also cites it to prove that Baptism is but a sign and seal of regeneration.

Indeed, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* quotes this same statement precisely to prove that Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration by Christ's Spirit. It also cites the passage to prove that Baptism is a sign and seal of our regeneration and our ingrafting into Christ.

## **96. God sprinkled our hearts before Baptism washed our bodies**

The inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after referring to "repentance from dead works," went on to refer also to the "doctrine of Baptisms."<sup>468</sup> Here, Calvin commented:<sup>469</sup> "The children of believers were baptized as infants, since they were adopted from the womb."

Not just Baptism but also subsequent 'confirmation' cannot and does not regenerate. Explained Calvin of the latter: "This single passage is abundant evidence that the origin of this rite came from the Apostles. Afterwards, it was turned into a superstition" by the Romanists. "They have invented the fiction that it is a Sacrament by which the Spirit of regeneration is conferred. By this invention, they have mutilated Baptism" -- which itself seals faith and regeneration deemed present pre-baptismally.

However, the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews does not then go on to suggest that the water has cleansed us. Instead, he soon goes on to declare that it is the sprinkling with the blood of Christ which has cleansed us.<sup>470</sup> Thus, our heart has been cleansed internally -- by that sprinkling. Only thereafter was our body externally washed -- with pure water, symbolically.<sup>471</sup>

For the holy writer declares: "Let us keep on drawing near, with a true heart!" Indeed, let us do so "in full assurance of faith -- having had the hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and having had the body washed with pure water."<sup>471</sup>

It should not be thought the above in any way excludes Infant Faith, prior to Infant Baptism. For the holy writer never suggests 'without Baptism it is impossible to please the Lord.' Yet he indeed goes on to declare that "without faith it is impossible to please...[the Triune] God"<sup>472</sup> -- in Whose Name we are then to be baptized.

Here Dr. Calvin explained<sup>473</sup> that the mediaeval baptismal regenerationists alias "the Schoolmen..., under cover of the Spirit and grace..., hide the divine mercy.... They quote from an Apostle: 'he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'" Hebrews 11:6b.

"But," added Calvin, "they observe not what the method of seeking is" -- namely by faith alone. Indeed, this is a faith which should precede Baptism. It also precedes any human act which might merit a reward. "For without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God, must believe that He is -- and that He is the Rewarder of those who diligently keep on seeking Him." Hebrews 11:6a and 11:6b.

Dr. John Calvin then further explained:<sup>474</sup> "There is no sanctification without union with Christ.... Everything which man thinks, designs and performs -- before he is reconciled to God by faith -- is cursed. It is not only of no avail for justification, but it merits damnation! And why do we talk of this as if it were doubtful -- when it has already been proved by the testimony of an Apostle that 'without faith it is impossible to please God?'" Hebrews 11:6!

### **97. Noah was justified by faith before being baptized in the flood**

The holy writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews then immediately goes on to add: "By faith Noah, having been warned by God about things not yet seen..., prepared an ark to save his Household. By which [ark] he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." This occurred, of course, was long before the arrival of the waters of the flood -- of which latter, New Testament Baptism is the antitype or fulfilment.<sup>475</sup>

Here, the Bible itself states that even before the waters of the flood -- 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.' Genesis 6:8. Calvin commented<sup>476</sup> that "here Noah is declared to have been acceptable to God.... Whence, however, did he attain this integrity -- but from the pre-venting [or pre-ceding] grace of God! The commencement, therefore, of this favour -- was gratuitous mercy. Afterwards the Lord -- having once embraced him -- retained him...lest he should perish with the rest of the world."

Further, added Calvin:<sup>477</sup> "The Lord assigns as His reason for preserving Noah, that He knew him to be righteous" -- **before** the waters of the flood were unleashed. "Only one man was left, who then cultivated righteousness -- for whose sake He [God] was propitious to his whole Family.... He adopts them to Himself in Christ, and justifies them by His mere mercy.... He also regenerates them by His Spirit to new life and righteousness.... The waters, after they had covered the Earth for a time, would again cease." Yet Noah was justified by God; and before he encountered the waters of the flood.

The Bible declares: "By faith Noah...prepared an ark...and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Here Calvin commented:<sup>478</sup> "It was a wonderful example of virtue that, when the whole world was indulging its pleasures without care or restraint and promising itself impunity, Noah alone had regard to the vengeance of God....

"In the midst of the ruin of the whole world, he had no doubt that he would be saved.... The Apostle [Hebrews 11:7] gives the credit for this outstanding virtue, to faith.... In all ages, men were never approved by God...except by faith....

"Noah...was warned of things to come but not yet visible.... He built the ark.... By building it, he condemned the world.... He was the heir of righteousness which is by faith....

"Noah paid...respect to the Word of God.... Therefore the faith which he had in the Word of God, prepared him for obedience to God -- proof of which he afterwards gave by building the ark....

"The work of building the ark was long and laborious, [and] was hindered by the daily scoffings of unbelievers.... They insulted the holy man on every side.... The world was condemned by the ark.... Why was the ark the custodian of the safety of a single family -- except in virtue of the fact that the wrath of God spared a righteous man from perishing with the ungodly? If he had not survived, the condemnation of the world would not have been so clear....

"The last thing which the Apostle says [Heb. 11:7], we must notice in the person of Noah. Moses [Genesis 6:9] says that he was a just man.... Faith was the cause and root of this justice....

"The Apostle says [Hebrews 11:7] that this is shown by the facts.... No one ever really gives himself in obedience to God, unless he relies on the promises of His paternal loving-kindness -- and has faith that his life will be accepted by Him.... The life of no man, however holy -- when it is measured by the standard of God -- can please Him without pardon. Justice must therefore of necessity rest on faith."

This can mean only one thing. It means faith before the flood as a picture of Baptism -- and thus, faith before Baptism too.

The holy writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews soon thereafter states: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents." It then gives the reason for this: "because they saw he was a proper child."<sup>479</sup> Because they saw this -- by faith.

## **98. James and Peter: regeneration by the will of God and not by Baptism**

James<sup>480</sup> reminds his Christian brethren that it was not by Baptism but by God's own will that "He has begotten us by the Word of truth, so that we become a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. Therefore my beloved brethren," James goes on, "keep on laying aside all filthiness, and...keep on receiving the [already] engrafted Word -- which continues being able to keep on saving [namely preserving] your souls!"

Calvin here commented:<sup>481</sup> "The Scripture shows that we have been adopted by God gratuitously, before we were born.... James expresses here...that we obtain the right of adoption, because God also calls us gratuitously. Ephesians 1:4-5. Farther, we hence learn that it is the peculiar office of God spiritually to regenerate us.... The word 'begotten' means that we become new men.... God begets us even by the 'Word of truth' -- so that we may know that we cannot enter the Kingdom of God by any other door" (for example, such as by that other so-called 'door' of Baptism).

Peter the Apostle describes believers as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus."<sup>482</sup> This expression might just possibly contain an allusion to Baptism with water, as the sign and seal which points to sprinkling with Christ's blood. But in that case, the text could only mean that people are first elected by the Father and then sanctified or made holy by the Spirit -- before being moved to obey the command to be sprinkled with the waters of Baptism.

Calvin explained:<sup>483</sup> "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. By these words, he reminds us that if the shedding of His sacred blood is not to be in vain, our souls must be washed in it by the secret cleansing of the Holy Spirit.... The Holy Spirit is the bond by Whom Christ effectually binds us to Himself."

Calvin continued:<sup>484</sup> "The sanctification of the Spirit avails 'unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' First Peter 1:2.... The sprinkling of the blood of Christ by the Spirit gives us purification..., regenerated by the Spirit of God.... Not being regenerated, proves...want of faith.... It is only by faith that these blessings are obtained."

Calvin concluded:<sup>485</sup> "Peter, in saying that the believers to whom he writes are elect 'according to the foreknowledge of God' (First Peter 1:2), properly expresses that secret predestination by which God has sealed those whom He has been pleased to adopt as sons." Hence: first we are adopted as God's sons. Only thereafter are we sealed -- by the Sacraments [first] of Baptism and [later] the Lord's Supper.

### **99. Born again of incorruptible seed like newborn babies**

Peter next continues<sup>486</sup> to assure Christians of their eternal security -- by faith in Christ. It is by Him, Peter assures them, that "you keep on believing in God..., so that your faith and hope might continue being in God.... [For you Christians] have been born again, not by corruptible seed but by incorruptible, by the Word of God which keeps on living and remaining [in you], for ever.... This is the Word which by the Gospel has been preached to you. Therefore, while you continue putting off all malice..., as newborn babies you must keep on desiring the sincere milk of the Word so that you may keep on growing in Him" thereby!

Here Calvin commented<sup>487</sup> that Peter is speaking of those "who believe. For the manifestation of Christ does not refer to all indiscriminately -- but belongs only to those whom He illumines by the Gospel. We must notice the words 'who through Him [Christ] are believers in God' -- by which he expresses concisely what faith is.... Faith is our victory against the world. First John 5:4....

"Since they are new men and 'born again' of God, it behooves them to shape their lives worthily of God and of their spiritual rebirth. This seems to be connected with a verse in the next chapter [First Peter 2:2] about seeking the milk of the Word -- so that their way of living might correspond with their birth [alias their having been generated].... Peter's object is to teach us that we cannot be Christians without regeneration.... Man is...nothing but an earthly...and empty creature, unless [and until] he is born again....

"The Word is not to be sought anywhere else [such as in Baptism], but in the Gospel preached to us.... We do not know the power of eternal life, except by faith....

"It is God alone Who regenerates us.... For that purpose, He employs the ministry of men. On this account, [the Apostle] Paul glories that the Corinthians had been spiritually begotten by him. First Corinthians 4:15.... Those who water [or baptize], are nothing."<sup>488</sup>

Calvin continued:<sup>489</sup> "As we have been born again -- he [Peter] requires from us a life like that of infants.... He enumerates...the sincere milk of the Word.... What pertains to infancy, is honest simplicity.... Milk is called that 'way of living' which is suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy....

"In case anyone thinks that he [Peter] is commending an infancy that is void of understanding but full of fatuity, he meets this objection.... Milk here is...but a mode of living which has the savour of the new birth.... Peter recommends milk.... For he wishes those nourished by it, to grow."

John Calvin explained further<sup>490</sup> "that none of the elect is called away from the present life without being previously sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit of God.... The Spirit acknowledges no sanctification save that from incorruptible seed -- that is, the Word of God....

"Peter's words...comprehend...believers who had been taught by the preaching of the Gospel. First Peter 1:23. We confess, indeed, that the Word of the Lord in the only seed of spiritual regeneration. But we deny the inference that therefore the power of God cannot regenerate infants. This is as possible and easy for Him, as it is wondrous and incomprehensible to us. It were dangerous to deny that the Lord is able to furnish them with the knowledge of Himself in any way He pleases."

#### **100. Baptism does not save by washing away carnal filth**

Peter goes on to say<sup>491</sup> that the Lord Christ, Who had suffered and died, had been quickened [or resurrected] "by the Spirit in Whom He had gone and preached to the imprisoned spirits who previously disobeyed when once the patience of God had waited in the days of Noah during the preparation of the ark, into which few (that is eight) persons were safely brought -- safely brought **through** -- through **water**. And **Baptism**, the fulfilment of this, now keeps on saving [or **preserving**] us -- not [as] the laying off of the filth of the flesh, but [as] an answer of a good conscience toward God -- by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Here, it should be noted that Noah was justified not by the floodwater but by God alone -- and indeed quite before the advent of that water.<sup>492</sup> Through the waters of the flood itself, Noah was not justified (*edikaiōthē*). Through those waters, his family was merely saved or preserved (*di-esōthēsan*).<sup>493</sup> Indeed, they were saved precisely **from** those waters. Furthermore, Noah and his family were not even preserved or 'saved' **by** the water. They were saved/preserved only through the water: *di-esōthēsan di' hudatos*.

Moreover, the eight members of Noah's family were not saved or preserved by water -- but only by God. It is true God saved them through water. But He thereby also saved them from that water.

For God saved or preserved them not by means of the water. He saved them by means of -- and indeed within -- the ark. Indeed, He did so -- after He had brought them "into" it (or "*eis hēn [kibōtou]*"). He then kept on saving or preserving them there. This was while they, inside that ark, first started to pass through -- and then kept on passing "through -- the water." Di' *hudatos*.

Baptism, the corresponding fulfilment of that floodwater -- now keeps on saving us (*humas...sōzei Baptisma*). Here, Peter's passage does not say that Baptism -- the fulfilment of the floodwater -- has saved us. That would require something like *esōse hēmas*). Instead, it says that Baptism now keeps on saving us -- "*hēmas...nun sōzei*."

Peter's passage tells us how we are saved, as well as how we are not saved. It very clearly declares: not because Baptism itself washed off our carnal filth -- whether outwardly, or inwardly. Instead, it says that Baptism saves us -- precisely as an 'answer' (alias a 'profession of faith' or a 'pledge') of a good conscience toward God. Thus Oecumenius, Cocceius, Vossius, Grotius and Witsius.<sup>494</sup>

Notice too that this baptismal answer is given with a good conscience. This means a conscience which, though defiled at conception, was nevertheless subsequently cleansed -- and, indeed, so cleansed precisely before Baptism. Moreover, also the baptismal answer is not completed at the termination of the administration of the Baptism itself (*ex opere operato*). For the baptismal answer is to keep on continuing life-long. See Romans 6:1-5f. Indeed, the baptismal answer itself receives its efficacy solely "by the resurrection of Christ" -- Who alone has justified us, already.

So our Baptism keeps on saving or preserving us. It does so not by washing away filth. But it does so as our own ongoing answer to God. It is a post-catechetical answer to the questions of an enquiry. For Baptism is not just a re-quest (for virtue). It is, moreover, a conquest (over sin). It is a triumphant declaration; a glorious profession of faith; an answer in good conscience toward God -- because of the justifying resurrection of Christ for all of us Christians as a whole (and for each one of us personally).

Here, Peter's passage does not at all say that Baptism regenerates. It says neither that Baptism has regenerated us, nor that it keeps on regenerating us. It says that "Baptism, now, keeps on saving" or preserving us. It does not say that Baptism justifies. It says neither that Baptism has justified us, nor that it keeps on justifying us. Instead, it says that Baptism 'saves' or keeps on preserving us -- that is to say, it keeps on bringing us health and happiness. And it does so because the resurrected Christ justified us once and for all by grace and through faith -- when He regenerated us by His Spirit (and regardless of Baptism).



### 101. Baptism saves as an answer to God of a cleansed conscience

So Peter's passage here does not at all say that Baptism washed away or even still washes away our filthy sins. To the contrary, it says that Baptism does **not** wash away our filth -- but is instead the prayerful answer to God of our [already cleansed] "good conscience" *etc* .

This "answer" is anything but magical. Indeed, the very fact that our Baptism is a subjective "answer" or *eperōtēma* to God<sup>495</sup> -- precludes every magical possibility of any objective baptismal regeneration *ex opere operato* whatsoever.

Yet this baptismal answer to God "of a good conscience" (or *suneidēseōs agathēs*), must itself be an objective genitive. It cannot be a subjective genitive. For firstly, this "answer to God" (or *eperōtēma eis Theon*) itself **needs** an object -- because a question without content is meaningless. And secondly, only the subject, namely the baptizee -- but not the object (his good conscience) -- can be supplemented from this context.<sup>496</sup>

For how can a mere conscience (or even a mere answer) -- devoid of the person so possessing and/or so professing either -- "ask" for anything? Indeed, even if that were possible -- what would a good conscience itself be asking for?

These words "of a good conscience" (or *suneidēseōs agathēs*) stand in contradistinction to the words "of the filth of the flesh" (or *sarkos apothesis rhupon*). One who is outwardly dirty, often asks to be cleansed. So too here, one who inwardly has a good conscience which used to be dirty -- is asking to receive an even better conscience, through declaring his willingness to submit to Christ by getting himself baptized.

Thus, having been justified before Baptism -- a Christian's Baptism itself subsequently 'saves' or preserves. It thus blissfully 'keeps on guaranteeing' that the faith in Christ which a believer had before Baptism, keeps on strengthening that believer. For that pre-baptismal faith continues -- even through, and beyond, our Baptism.

Indeed, also during and after Baptism, our pre-baptismal faith keeps on giving God the answer of a good conscience. For our Baptism is our faithful and therefore also our ongoing answer to God. That answer is made from a conscience already cleansed in principle even before Baptism. It is cleansed by God's grace, and through our God-given faith and hope in Christ, because of His resurrection and ascension into heaven -- on our behalf.<sup>497</sup> Indeed, Peter then immediately goes on to declare that Christ had suffered -- "for us."<sup>498</sup>

Causally -- our regeneration is not grounded in our Baptism, but in the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>499</sup> First Peter 1:3 and 3:21. Instrumentally -- we were regenerated from the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which has germinated within us and which now keeps on remaining in us forever. First Peter 1:23. Sacramentally, this matter is subsequently sealed in Baptism -- as our answer thereto. First Peter 3:21. All this is a very different proposition to Rome's losable baptismal regenerationism.

## **102. Calvin's understanding of Baptism in First Peter 3:20f**

Calvin commented here<sup>500</sup> that "Peter ascribes salvation only to the family of Noah, and gives over to ruin all who were not within the ark.... In the common ruin of mankind, the family of Noah alone escaped.... Our Baptism is an antitype (*antitupon*) of the 'Baptism' of Noah.... Noah obtained life through death, when...he was preserved -- together with his small family....

"[Today,] almost all are introduced into the fellowship of the Church by Baptism.... The external symbol is not sufficient unless Baptism be received really and effectually.... The sign often appears inefficacious and fruitless..., through the abuse of men. But it does not take away the nature of the Sacrament.

"Let us learn, then, not to divorce the thing signified from the sign [as the Anabaptists do]. At the same time, we must beware of another evil -- such as prevails among the [Romanistic] Papists.... In not distinguishing as they ought between the thing and the sign they stop at the outward element and fix on that their hope of salvation....

"What then ought we to do?" Not to separate the sign and the thing signified! "Not put asunder what has been joined together by the Lord! We ought to embrace therein the testimony [or sign] of the remission of sin and the pledge [or seal] of our renewal. Yet we should leave to Christ and also to the Holy Spirit Each His own honour, so that no part of our salvation should be transferred to the sign.... Baptism to some is only the literal act.... We cannot [however] otherwise derive benefit from Baptism -- except by having all our thoughts fixed on the death and resurrection of Christ."

Calvin further explained<sup>501</sup> the meaning of Peter's statement "that 'Baptism also doth now save us.' First Peter 3:21. For he did not mean to intimate that our ablution and salvation are perfected by water. Or that water possesses in itself the virtue of purifying, regenerating and renewing. Nor does he mean that it is the cause of salvation. But only that knowledge and certainty of such gifts [of salvation] are perceived in [or by] this Sacrament....

"Peter immediately subjoins that Baptism is 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God' -- which is of [or by or from out of] faith. Nay, the only purification which Baptism promises -- is by means of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ which is figured [or depicted] by water from the resemblance to cleansing and washing. Who, then, can say that we are cleansed by that water -- which [however] certainly attests that the blood of Christ is our true and only laver?!

"So...we cannot have a better argument to refute the hallucination of those [the Romanists] who ascribe the whole [cleansing] to the virtue of water -- than we derive from the very meaning of Baptism. It leads us away as well from the visible element [of water] which is presented to our eye..., so that it may fix our minds on Christ alone."

Continued Calvin:<sup>502</sup> "By calling Baptism an 'answer of a good conscience' -- Peter here means 'tranquillity of mind.' When persuaded of the grace of Christ we with boldness present

ourselves before God -- as believers, we request Baptism." With approval, Calvin here<sup>503</sup> cited even Augustine:<sup>504</sup> "This is the Word of faith which we preach -- by which Word doubtless Baptism also is consecrated."

In conclusion, from this very Petrine passage Calvin refuted both Anabaptists and Romanists all in one fell swoop. Argued the Reformer:<sup>505</sup> "Moses and the prophets reminded the people of the thing meant by Circumcision which, however, infants received.... In adults, the receiving of the sign ought to follow the understanding of its meaning. Yet, as will shortly be explained, a different rule must be followed with children.

"No other conclusion can be drawn from a passage in Peter, on which they [*viz.* the Anabaptists] strongly found [or founder]. He says that Baptism is 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' First Peter 3:21. From this, they [the Anabaptists] contend that nothing is left for Paedobaptism" alias the baptizing of infants.

"But the delusion which misleads them, is that they would **always** have the thing [signified] to precede the sign in the order of time.... The truth of Circumcision consisted in the same answer of a good conscience. But if the truth [alias the thing signified] must necessarily [always] have preceded -- infants would never have been circumcised by the command of God."

Hence the Circumcision of the heart -- which may either precede or succeed the Circumcision of the flesh -- is clearly not congruent therewith. Indeed, the answer given even by an adult convert before being circumcised in the Old Testament or before being baptized in New Testament times -- is quite useless unless that circumcisee or baptizee thereafter keeps on giving the same answer for the rest of his life. Equally, also Infant Circumcision was and Infant Baptism is useless -- unless that infant circumcisee or baptizee thereafter keeps on giving the same answer from time to time particularly for the rest of his earthly life.

"But He Himself," concluded John Calvin of the Holy Spirit, "showing that the answer of a good conscience forms the truth of Circumcision -- and at the same time commanding infants to be circumcised -- plainly intimates that in their case, Circumcision had reference [also] to the future. Therefore, nothing more of present effect is to be required in Paedobaptism than to confirm and sanction [lifelong] the Covenant which the Lord has [already] made with them" before Baptism.

### **103. First Peter 3:20f in the Calvinistic Westminster Standards**

Now the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* cites<sup>506</sup> this passage First Peter 3:21 to prove that the efficacy of a Sacrament does not depend upon the piety or intention of him that administers it. And the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism* quotes it<sup>507</sup> to establish: that the Sacrament was instituted by Christ's Spirit; that inward and spiritual grace is thereby signified; and that blessings are sealed to us in that Sacrament.

The same text, First Peter 3:21, is also cited by the Calvinistic *Westminster Standards*<sup>508</sup> to show that "the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation" or preservation and not of

justification. Indeed, even that preservation or salvation is there said to occur -- "not by any power in [either of the two Sacraments] themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost."

#### **104. Noah preached God's righteousness before the baptismal flood**

In his Second Epistle, Peter goes on to say<sup>509</sup> that God "did not spare the old world." God did, however, at that time -- "save [or preserve] Noah, the eighth person, a Preacher of righteousness."

It was only thereafter, that God "brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Here again, it is clear neither Baptism nor the flood made Noah righteous. For he was already a "Preacher of righteousness" -- and hence also himself a righteous man -- when he preached to the ungodly precisely before the flood. Furthermore, to the extent to which that flood's rain itself ' baptized' Noah and his family inside the ark -- it was then 'baptismally' sealing a man who had already been made righteous.

As Calvin commented:<sup>510</sup> "After God had submerged the human race, He founded as it were a new world over again.... He [Peter] calls Noah ' a Preacher of righteousness' .... He [Noah] tried to bring a degenerate world to a sound state of mind.... He did so, not only by teaching and exhortations to holiness -- but by his constant and anxious toil for a hundred and twenty years in building the ark."

The "Apostle' s purpose," Calvin concluded about Peter in his Second Epistle, "is to place before our very eyes the wrath of God against the wicked." God does this, precisely "so as to encourage us in imitation of the saints." And such ' saints' are sanctified people -- like the elect members of Noah' s family already regenerate before the flood.

#### **105. First John on regeneration also in tenderest infancy**

In his First Epistle, the Apostle John insists:<sup>511</sup> "Whosoever has been [re]generated by God, does not keep on committing sin. For His seed keeps on remaining in him: and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been [re]generated by God."

This can only mean that if one has been regenerated before birth or in tenderest infancy, before Infant Baptism -- God' s seed, the seed of faith, is thereby sown in one' s heart (where it starts to grow forthwith). Such, as the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* rightly states, is indeed the case of all elect infants dying in infancy.<sup>512</sup> Consequently, regeneration and faith often precede Baptism. They are no way fruits thereof, as baptismal regenerationists so wrongly assert.

John Calvin here observed:<sup>513</sup> "The hearts of believers are so effectually governed from above, that they follow with undeviating affection. ' Whosoever has been born from God, does not keep on committing sin. For His seed remains in him.' First John 3:9."

Calvin then explained<sup>514</sup> what John means when he "says that 'Whosoever has been born from God, does not keep on committing sin; for His seed keeps on remaining in him.' First John 3:9. He elsewhere gives the reason, 'This is the victory that keeps on overcoming the world: even our faith!' First John 5:4." For John himself soon adds<sup>515</sup> that "whatsoever has been [re]generated by God, keeps on overcoming the world. And this is the victory which has overcome the world: our faith!"

On this latter passage, Calvin further commented<sup>516</sup> that "all who are begotten by God, overcome the world.... Now he [John] also expresses the way to overcome... He places the victory over the whole world in faith" -- and not in being baptized.

John then immediately adds<sup>517</sup> that "the Son of God...Jesus Christ came by water and blood. Not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit Who keeps on bearing witness.... For there are three that keep on bearing record on earth -- the Spirit, and the water, and the blood."

Calvin commented here<sup>518</sup> that "how He came by water, may be queried. It is improbable that it refers to Baptism.... Christ's side was a fountain of blood and water -- so that believers might know that the true cleansings, of which the ancient Baptisms were figures, is in Him; and that they might also know that then was fulfilled what all the sprinklings of blood formerly promised."

Yet John Calvin also explained<sup>519</sup> "that so long as we are without Christ and separated from Him, nothing which He suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us.... He must become ours.... We obtain this, by faith.... As there are said to be Three Witnesses in heaven (the Father, the Word, and the Spirit) -- so there are also three on the earth (namely water, blood and Spirit).

"It is not without cause that the testimony of the Spirit is twice mentioned -- a testimony which is engraven on our hearts by way of seal." Note too the outward sign of Baptism which confirms that inward testimony of the Spirit in the heart of the believers.

John concludes his argument:<sup>520</sup> "He who has the Son, has life. But he who does not have the Son of God, does not have life." This obviously applies even to spiritual life before regenerative birth, and therefore also before Baptism.

#### **106. Calvin's further comments on regeneration in First John**

As Calvin here commented:<sup>521</sup> "God placed life in Christ alone.... He excludes from the hope of life all who do not seek it in Christ. We know what it is to have Christ. For He is possessed by faith. So He deprives of life all who are outside the body of Christ." The latter, as the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* rightly states, consists only of those who profess faith in Christ -- together with their children (both born and not yet born).<sup>522</sup>

Calvin went on<sup>523</sup> to refer to the case of "Cornelius, whom Luke said was accepted by God.... Acts 10:2.... The seed of faith does not come up on the very first day.... But God has hidden" it within the heart of His own, nonetheless. And "God has hidden [or secret] and wonderful ways of acting [or working]."

Thus, God had secreted the inconspicuous seed of faith in the heart of Cornelius -- even before Peter met (and baptized) him. Similarly, God sows and hides the seed of faith in the hearts of many little children of believers -- even before their very birth.

Calvin then explained:<sup>524</sup> "It is true, as John says, that there is no life without the Son of God. First John 5:12.... Those who have no part in Christ, whoever they be, whatever they do or devise, are hastening on -- during their whole career -- to destruction and the judgment of eternal death."

Finally, in refuting the Romanists, Calvin discussed<sup>525</sup> "good works called 'moral'.... Thereby [claim the Romanists] men are rendered agreeable to God before they are ingrafted into Christ."

Said Calvin: "As if Scripture spoke falsely, when it says: 'he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life!' First John 5:12.... Is there no meaning in its being said that 'whatsoever is not of faith, is sin?' Rom. 14:23. Or can good fruit be produced by a bad tree?!"

Yet infants of believers are not the fruit of bad trees. To the contrary, they are holy little branches -- proceeding from holy roots. Romans 11:16.

So, as the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* rightly declares,<sup>526</sup> "elect infants -- dying in infancy -- are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit.... John 3:3 -- 'Jesus answered... 'Except a man [alias a person]<sup>527</sup> be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God'.... [Yet,] First John 5:12 -- 'he that hath the Son, hath life.'"

### **107. Christ's Book of Revelation to John contradicts baptismal regeneration**

In the last book of the Bible, John declares<sup>528</sup> about Christian believers: "Jesus Christ...loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Very clearly, it is the Saviour's blood which washes away sins -- not the waters of Baptism.

This text, Revelation 1:5, is cited in the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism*.<sup>529</sup> It is quoted there, in order to prove that Baptism is a sign and seal of remission of sins by the blood of Christ.

John then explains<sup>530</sup> that the Spirit of God the Father promises to give all who are overcomers -- a white stone with a new name written on it. Christ's Spirit also promises to write the Name of God upon them.<sup>531</sup> For they are to be sealed in the Name of the Trinity. Matthew 28:19. John also explains<sup>532</sup> that "the seal of the living God" (apparently **Baptism**) is the sign whereby "the servants of our God are sealed on their foreheads."

Without doubt, this sign is intended even for the infants of such adults as profess faith in Christ. Such infants are themselves to be regarded as being among the faithful. For how could the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed persons mentioned there -- the sum total of all twelve of the various tribes of Israel<sup>533</sup> -- be **devoid of infants**?

It should be noticed in Revelation 7:2-4 that those who received the seal of the living God upon their foreheads, are called "**the servants of our God**" even **before** they were sealed upon their foreheads.

It should also be noted that Calvinists like Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. have not hesitated to identify this sealing specifically with Baptism.

Kuyper stated: "The chief aspect of **Baptism** is that it is **the seal of the living God** unto incorporation in the **Covenant of Grace**.... God indeed has just such a seal. **Revelation 7:2**.... This seal is **stamped upon the elect**...who receive knowledge of the truth and are **baptized**." See his *On the Sacraments* (in *Dictations on Dogmatics*, IV, Kok, Kampen, 2nd ed., pp. 127f & 134f).

Anti-Calvinistic Arminians, who derive everything from man's free will, maintain that faith first begins where a person expresses it. Calvinists, however, say that the work of God can already take root -- while one is yet within one's mother's womb. Hence, a work of God may commence -- and should (rebuttably) be presumed to have commenced -- within covenant children even prenatally.

This is why Dr. Calvin presumes the 'seed of faith' already to be within such children. The same presumption is made also by Calvinists like Peter Martyr, Ursinus, Trelcatius, Polanus, Walaeus, Voetius, Mastricht, Alting, Wendelin, Turretin, Heidegger, De Moor, and the Kuypers *etc.*<sup>534</sup> For, as John goes on to point out, it is not just Jesus Christ Himself -- holy from His conception onward -- Who was conceived within a godly woman and brought forth for His bride (alias the Church of God).<sup>535</sup> In a somewhat different sense, the same is also true of "the remainder of her seed who keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."<sup>536</sup> Indeed, those remnants of her seed are (as it were) Christ's younger brothers and sisters. They are His subordinate fellow-members of His Own Church.

Even in glory, the Visible Church is regarded as a holy city. Indeed, there it is seen to be the New Jerusalem or the bride of the Lamb.<sup>537</sup> So John went on to declare<sup>538</sup> that "there shall in no way enter into it anything that defiles, nor whosoever keeps on working abomination or keeps on telling a lie. But [only] those who have been written in the Lamb's book of life."

Precisely at this very point, Dr. Calvin searchingly asked:<sup>539</sup> "How are infants regenerated...? We answer -- that the work of God, though beyond the reach of our capacity, is not therefore null.... If they [infants] are born sinners..., they must either remain unaccepted and hated by God -- or be justified. And why do we ask more -- when the Judge Himself publicly declares that 'except a man [alias a person] be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God?' John 3:3....

"Infants who are to be saved -- and that some are saved at this age, is certain -- must without question be previously regenerated by the Lord.... They bring innate corruption with them from their mother's womb. They must be purified, before they can be admitted into the Kingdom of God -- into which shall not enter anything that defiles. Revelation 21:27."

John's last description -- is that of the eschatological destination in glory of the "pure river of water of life." It irrigates the grove of fruitful trees of life -- on the renewed earth. The Lamb Himself shall be there. "And His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face. And **His Name** shall be **on their foreheads**."<sup>540</sup>

Yet it is only His servants who there and then have the Christ-ian Name impressed upon their foreheads. Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Luke 1:59-64 and Revelation 7:3 & 22:3-4. These are they who will first have trusted in Him -- before following and serving Him. They will have done this -- before being permanently impressed with God's Triune Name -- unto the final goal of their Christian Baptism, *viz.* of doing everything lifelong and forever only to the glory of that Triune God.

The great Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. referred to this in his famous work *From the Decrees of Dordt* (II:440-43f & 509f). He explained: "This idea of understanding the Sacraments as a **seal**, is taken from Scripture itself. In Romans 4:11 we read the following of the Patriarch Abraham: 'He received the sign of Circumcision as a **seal** of the righteousness of faith.... In the Sacrament of **Holy Baptism** [*cf.* Colossians 2:11-13], we are dealing with a sign that **seals**.... Whenever one **thinks** about this deeply, one then also realizes how it can be said in **Revelation 7:2** that even God the King has such a **seal**.... And **Revelation [22:4 and also] 22:10** mentions **sealing**."

Now in Revelation 7:2-9, **not just adults** but indeed **every** Member of **all** of the **Church** alias the **Tribes** of the **New Israel** are **sealed** upon their **foreheads** -- and hence **also the infant children of God's Covenant**. In Revelation 19:13 (*cf.* Isaiah 52:15 & 63:2f), Jesus Christ is portrayed as clothed with a vesture **baptized** or **sprinkled** with blood. And at the very end of the Holy Bible, in Revelation 22:3f & 22:10, one reads that all **of whatever age** who get to glory, have **on their foreheads** the **seal** "of God and of the Lamb" -- namely **the Name of the Triune God**. *Cf.* too Matthew 28:19-20 and Ephesians 4:4-6. Calvin's Calvinism indeed!

### **108. Calvin said Sacraments strengthen faith already present**

In the 1536 edition of his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin drew a parallel between circumcised yet backslidden Old Testament Israelites on the one hand -- and baptized yet heretical Romanists on the other. Calvin acknowledged the many errors of Romanism. Yet he seemed also to assume that early-dying infants conceived of Christ-professing Romish parents, should still be treated as God's covenantal people.

By this is meant infants who die before being baptized, or at any rate before being raised in that tarnished and syncretizing yet by no means pagan communion. Such children should be presumed



just as regenerate as were early-dying Israelites during Old Testament times of gross backslidings among the adult Hebrews.

Thus Calvin declared:<sup>541</sup> "In ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church.... The covenant of the Lord continued [among the religiously deformed in Israel]....

"Nor could Circumcision be so profaned by their impure hands, as not still to be a true sign and Sacrament of His Covenant. Hence the children who were born to them the Lord called His Own (Ezekiel 16:20).... By special blessing, they...belonged to Him."

Calvin also defined<sup>542</sup> "what a Sacrament is." He declared that "it is an external sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences His promises of goodwill toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith -- and [by which] we in our turn testify our piety towards Him.... We may also define [it] more briefly by calling it a testimony of the divine favour toward us, confirmed by an external sign with a corresponding attestation of our faith toward Him." Very clearly, this definition surely presupposes faith -- before Circumcision (formerly) and Baptism (currently) -- also in respect of Covenant Infants themselves

Calvin continued:<sup>543</sup> "From the definition which we have given, we perceive that there never is a Sacrament without an antecedent promise -- the Sacrament being added as a kind of appendix with the view of confirming and sealing the promise and giving a better attestation or rather in a manner confirming it.... It [a Sacrament] does not so much confirm His Word, as establish us in the faith of it.... As our faith is slender and weak..., Sacraments therefore are exercises which confirm our faith in the Word of God."

Calvin also referred "Galatians 3:27" and "First Corinthians 12:13" especially to Baptism. For there, he explained<sup>544</sup> that "however the ungodly and hypocrites may by their perverseness either suppress or obscure or impede the effect of divine grace in the Sacraments -- that does not prevent them [the Sacraments], where and whenever God is so pleased, from giving a true evidence of communion with Christ.... The Sacraments are truly termed evidences of divine grace, and as it were seals of the goodwill which He entertains toward us. They -- by sealing it to us -- sustain, nourish, confirm and increase our faith."

The great Genevan added<sup>545</sup> that "the Lord...confirms us by His Sacraments.... He illumines our mind by the light of His Holy Spirit and opens up an entrance into our hearts for His...Sacraments which would otherwise only...fall upon our sight, but by no means affect us inwardly.... With regard to the increase and confirmation of faith..., in assigning this office to the Sacraments -- it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them..., but because our Lord instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith....

"A pious mind is confirmed in faith by means of the Sacraments.... The Sacraments do not avail one *iota*, without the energy of the Holy Spirit.... Yet in hearts previously taught by that Preceptor, there is nothing to prevent the Sacraments from strengthening and increasing faith" already present.

"The Sacraments," explained Calvin,<sup>546</sup> "are confirmations of our faith.... The Lord...spiritually nourishes our faith by means of the Sacraments.... Neither ought our confidence to be fixed on the Sacraments, nor ought the glory of God to be transferred to them. But, passing beyond them all -- our faith and confession should rise to Him.... Ancient writers intended...to intimate that Sacraments are the signs of sacred and spiritual things...[so] that they may contribute to our faith in God.... [Sacramental] mysteries would be frigid..., were they not helps to faith."

### **109. Sacramentalism is just as wrong as anti-sacramentarianism**

John Calvin repudiated both the Zwinglian as well as the Romish view of Baptism. Having just distanced himself from reactionary anti-sacramentarianism ('Baptism is **merely** a sign') -- Calvin next<sup>547</sup> repudiated the mechanical sacramentalism of "others who ascribe to the Sacraments a kind of secret virtue which is nowhere [in Scripture] said to have been implanted in them by God....

"That the Sacraments...justify and convey grace..., is plainly from the devil. For first, in promising a righteousness without faith, it drives souls headlong on destruction. Secondly, in deriving a cause of righteousness from the Sacraments -- it entangles miserable minds....

"What is a Sacrament received without faith -- but most certain destruction to the Church? For, seeing that nothing is to be expected beyond the promise, and the promise no less denounces wrath to the unbeliever than offers grace to the believer -- it is an error to suppose that anything more is conferred by the Sacraments than is offered by the Word of God and obtained by true faith.

"From this another thing follows, viz. that assurance of salvation does not depend on participation in the Sacraments as if justification consisted in it. This, which is treasured up in Christ alone..., may be completely enjoyed without this seal. So it is true, as Augustine declares, that there may be invisible sanctification without a visible sign."

Calvin thoroughly approved<sup>548</sup> of "the distinction...repeatedly made by Augustine -- between the Sacrament [as such], and the matter of the Sacrament.... When speaking of the Jews, he [namely Augustine] says: 'Though the Sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common'....

"They are effectual in regard to us...when that which is offered there is received by us in true faith.... We must not suppose that there is some latent virtue inherent in the Sacraments by which they in themselves confer the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

"Things which were done to assist and establish their faith, were also Sacraments.... They are testimonies of grace and salvation from the Lord. So in regard to us, they are marks of profession by which we openly swear by the Name of God -- binding ourselves to be faithful to Him.... Sacraments are ceremonies by which God is pleased to train His people first to...strengthen faith within, and secondly to testify our religion to men."

### **110. Baptismal regenerationism is thoroughly false**

Coming now to the Sacrament specifically of Baptism, Calvin explained<sup>549</sup> that it is "given us by God primarily to strengthen our faith in Him" or to "be conducive to our faith in Him" -- also so that "it may serve the purpose of a confession among men.... Baptism contributes to our faith" -- but does not originate it. For it is "a sign and evidence of our purification..., a kind of sealed instrument by which He assures us that all our sins are...covered and effaced."<sup>550</sup>

Calvin continued:<sup>551</sup> "We could find no better argument to refute the error of those who ascribe everything to the water -- than by a reminder of what is the meaning of Baptism which withdraws us...from the visible element...to make us rely wholly upon Jesus Christ." So Baptism was not instituted to wash away sins at all, but instead to point to Christ -- Whose blood alone washes away all sins (past, present, and future).

Explained Calvin:<sup>552</sup> "Nor is it to be supposed that Baptism is bestowed only with reference to the past.... To this error in [only post-apostolic] ancient times, it was owing that some refused to be initiated by Baptism -- until their life was in extreme danger and they were drawing their last breath, so that they might thus obtain 'pardon' for all the past.

"Against this preposterous precaution, ancient Overseers frequently inveigh in their writings.... We are baptized...for the whole of life. Therefore, as often as we fall, we must recall to remembrance our Baptism.... It is not abolished by subsequent sins."

Calvin went on:<sup>553</sup> "Those who receive Baptism with true faith, truly feel the efficacy of Christ's death in the mortification of their flesh -- and the efficacy of His resurrection in the quickening of the Spirit.... Our faith receives advantage from Baptism.... It is now clear how false the doctrine is which some long ago taught, and others still persist in -- that by Baptism we are exempted and set free from original sin."

To the contrary -- continued Calvin -- even after their Baptism, unregenerate "infants bring their condemnation with them from their mother's womb." Yet "believers become assured by Baptism that this condemnation is entirely withdrawn from them, since...the Lord by this sign promises that a full and entire remission has been made for them already before their Baptism."

"Here," Calvin went on,<sup>554</sup> "we say nothing more than the Apostle Paul expounds most clearly in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.... All who are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, are at the same time regenerated by the Spirit.... We have an earnest [or pledge] of this regeneration in Baptism.... Baptism serves as our confession before men, inasmuch as it is a mark by which we openly declare that we wish to be ranked among the people of God; by...which, in short, we publicly assert our faith."

### **111. Baptism is given to strengthen faith already present**

Faith precedes baptism. Calvin said:<sup>555</sup> "Our children, before they are born, God declares that He adopts for His own -- when He promises that He will be a God to us, and to our seed after us. In this promise, their salvation is included.... How much evil has been caused by the dogma, ill expounded, that Baptism is necessary to salvation.... For when the opinion prevails that all are lost who happen not to be baptized in water -- our condition becomes worse than that of God's ancient people.

"As if His grace were more restrained, than under the Law! In that case, Christ will be thought to have come not to fulfil but to abolish the promises. Since the promise which was then effectual in itself to confer salvation before the eighth day [Genesis 17:7-12 with Second Samuel 12-23], would not now be effectual -- without the help of a sign" such as Baptism. Acts 2:38f and Colossians 2:11f.

Calvin further insisted (in the 1559 edition of his *Institutes*)<sup>556</sup> that "children who happen to depart this life before an opportunity of baptizing them in water, are not excluded from the Kingdom of heaven.... Unless we admit this position, great injury is done to the Covenant of God, as if [it] in itself were weak -- whereas its effect depends not either on Baptism or on any accessories. The Sacrament is afterwards added as a kind of seal -- not to give efficacy to the promise as if in itself invalid, but merely to confirm it to us....

"Hence it follows that 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 received into the Church by formal sign because in virtue of the promise they previously belonged to the body of Christ (*quia promissionis beneficio iam ante ad Christi corpus pertinebant*).

"Hence, if, in omitting the sign, there is neither sloth nor contempt nor negligence -- we are safe from all danger.... The better course, therefore, is to pay such respect to the ordinance of God -- as not to seek the Sacraments in any other quarter than where the Lord has deposited them. When we cannot receive them from the Church, the grace of God is not so inseparably annexed to them that we cannot obtain it by faith according to His Word."

In the 1536 edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin stated:<sup>557</sup> "The children have faith, in common with the adults. But nobody should take this in the sense as if I wish to say that faith always begins from one's mother's womb (*a matris utero semper inchoari fide*m). For the Lord sometimes calls adults too -- sometimes earlier, and sometimes later.... All of God's elect enter into everlasting life by faith -- at whatever time of life they may be removed from this prison of destruction."

In the 1539 edition, he added that he "would not wish to claim, anent the children, that they are endowed with the same faith as we (*eadem esse fide praeditos quam nos experimur*). In the 1550 edition, he added further: "or that they possess a 'faith knowledge' equal to that of ours (*aut omnino habere 'notitiam fidei' similem*). Nevertheless, Dr. John Calvin insisted throughout that early-dying elect infants do have faith in Christ -- faint and **embryonic** as that faith indeed may be.

## **112. The Covenant with Abraham proves Infant Baptism**

Calvin further referred to the ancient promise made to Abraham and all His spiritual descendants:

'I will establish My Covenant between Myself and you, and your seed after you in their generations, as an everlasting Covenant -- to be a God unto you and to your seed after you....

"This is My Covenant which you people shall keep, between Me and you people and your seed after you. Every male among you shall be circumcised.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you; every male in your generations.' Genesis 17:7-12.

The great Genevan here observed<sup>558</sup> that "prior to the institution of Baptism, the people of God had Circumcision in its stead.... When the Lord enjoins Abraham to observe Circumcision, Genesis 17:10, He premises that He would be a God unto him -- and to his seed.... These words include the promise of eternal life -- as our Saviour employs it to prove the immortality and resurrection of believers. 'God,' says He, 'is not the God of the dead but of the living.' Matthew 22:32....

"We have therefore a spiritual promise given to the fathers in Circumcision, similiar to that which is given to us in Baptism.... It figured to them both the forgiveness of sins, and the mortification of the flesh.... The thing depicted, is one and the same -- namely regeneration.... Hence it is incontrovertible that Baptism has been substituted for Circumcision, and performs the same office.

"Baptism is properly administered to infants, as a thing due to them. The Lord did not anciently bestow Circumcision upon them, without [first] making them [*viz.* those who are elect] -- partakers of all the things signified by Circumcision....

"The Covenant remains firm and fixed.... It is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day, than to the children of the Jews under the Old Testament.... They are partakers of the thing signified. How can they be denied the sign? ... If they obtain the reality -- how can they be refused the figure?"

For "the Covenant which the Lord once made with Abraham, is not less applicable to Christians now -- than it was anciently to the Jewish people.... The children of the Jews...were made heirs of that Covenant.... They 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' and, by the testimony of the Apostle, differ from the impure seed of idolaters." First Corinthians 7:14, compare Ezra 9:2 and Nehemiah 9:2.

"Our Saviour, in ordering little [covenantal] children to be brought to Him, adds the reason -- 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven'.... If it is right that children should be brought to Christ -- why should they not be admitted to Baptism, the symbol of our communion and fellowship with Christ? If the Kingdom of heaven is theirs -- why should they be denied the sign?"

### **113. Calvin refuted the Anabaptist views against Paedobaptism**

Speaking of Anabaptists, Calvin added:<sup>559</sup> "The assertion they 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 [extant early-patristic] writer, however ancient, who does not [when writing about Paedobaptism] trace its origin to the days of the Apostles....

"It remains briefly to indicate what benefit redounds from the observance both to believers who bring their children to the church to be baptized, and to the infants themselves.... No one may despise the ordinance.... Any one who would think of ridiculing [Infant] Baptism under this pretence, would also ridicule the divine ordinance of [Infant] Circumcision....

"The divine symbol communicated to the child, as with the impress of a seal, [thus] confirms the promise.... I am not moved by the objection that the promise [itself] ought to be sufficient to confirm the salvation of our children [even without their Baptism]. It has seemed otherwise to God.... Let those, then, who embrace the promise of mercy to their children -- consider it as their duty to offer them to the Church, to be sealed with the symbol of mercy, and [to] animate themselves to surer confidence on seeing with the bodily eye the Covenant of the Lord engraven on the bodies of their children....

"Children [themselves] derive some benefit from their Baptism.... When they have grown up, they are thereby strongly urged to an earnest desire of serving God -- Who has received them as 'sons'...before, from non-age."

Dr. John Calvin continued:<sup>560</sup> "We have no doubt that in distinguishing the children of God from bastards and foreigners, that the election of God reigns freely.... Paul declares that the Jews were sanctified by their parents." See Romans 11:16.

"He elsewhere says that the children of Christians derive sanctification from their parents." First Corinthians 7:14. "God is so good generous to His people, that He is pleased as a mark of His favour to extend their privileges to the children [generated or conceived by and] born to them."

Calvin next refuted<sup>561</sup> the Anabaptists' objection that 'spiritual regeneration is not applicable to earliest infancy.' For 'how' -- they ask -- 'are infants regenerated?'

Here John Calvin replied: "We answer that the work of God -- though beyond the reach of our capacities [fully to understand it] -- is not therefore null" in infants. For such "infants who are to be saved -- and that some are saved at this age is certain -- must, without question, previously be regenerated by the Lord....

"The Judge [Jesus Christ] Himself publicly declares that 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' John 3:3.... God gave, in the case of John the Baptist whom He sanctified from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15), a proof of what He might do in others [Luke 1:41-44]....

“The child, not yet born, would be filled with the Holy Spirit [compare Luke 1:15 & 1:41f].... Instead of attempting to give a law to God, let us hold that He sanctifies whom He pleases in the way in which He sanctified John -- seeing that His power is not impaired.”

Continued Calvin:<sup>562</sup> "Christ was sanctified from earliest infancy [from His conception onward], so that He might sanctify His elect in Himself at any age.... He was conceived by the Holy Spirit so that, completely pervaded with His holiness in the flesh which He assumed, He might transfuse it [His holiness] into us.... In Christ...we have a proof that the age of infancy is not incapable of receiving sanctification (*infantiae aetatem non usque adeo a sanctificatione abhorrere*)....

"None of the elect is called away from the present life without previously being sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit of God.... We deny...the power of God cannot regenerate infants.

“This is as...easy for Him to do -- as it is wondrous and incomprehensible to us. It were dangerous to deny that the Lord is able to furnish them with the knowledge of Himself in any way He pleases.”

The Anabaptists, however, 'deem it very absurd to attribute any knowledge of God to infants.' But Calvin replied<sup>563</sup> that covenantal infants "are said now to receive some part of that grace of which they are to have the full measure shortly after[wards].... 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. Those, therefore, whom the Lord is to illumine with the full brightness of His light -- why may He not, if He so please, irradiate at present with some small beam...before He delivers them from the prison of the flesh" or lets them die in infancy and then takes their souls to glory?

#### **114. Infant Circumcision foreshadowed Infant Baptism**

Calvin continued:<sup>564</sup> "Circumcision was a sign of repentance.... Jeremiah 4:4.... Thus, Paul terms it a seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11.... God ordered Circumcision to be performed on the bodies of infants [Genesis 17:10f].... Since God imputed Circumcision, [which was] the sign of repentance and faith, [even] to infants -- it should not seem absurd that they are now made partakers of Baptism."

Thus, the Christian believers' infant "children are baptized for...[ongoing] repentance and faith. Though these are not yet formed in them [fully], yet the seed of both lies hidden in them by the secret operation of the Spirit" -- *arcana tamen Spiritus operatione utriusque semen in illis latet*. "Still, even regenerated babies understand all of this only in a babylike way, and certainly not with the adult comprehension they will later attain.

Now Anabaptists rightly argue that Baptism 'is not to be given to any but those who are capable of such feelings' of 'regeneration and renewing.' Titus 3:5. But then, explained Calvin, "neither ought Circumcision, which is designated 'regeneration', to be conferred on any but the regenerate [Colossians 2:11-13]....

"They [namely the Anabaptists] always remain caught in this dilemma. The command of God to circumcise infants was either legitimate and exempt from cavil, or deserved reprehension. If there was nothing incompetent...in it, no absurdity can be shown in the observance of Paedobaptism."

Calvin went on:<sup>565</sup> "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, renews them in the way which He alone deems expedient.... We are born sinners.... We stand in need of forgiveness and pardon from the very womb.... God does not preclude this age from the hope of mercy, but rather gives assurance of it. Why should we deprive it [this 'age' of unborn infancy 'from the very womb'] of the sign -- which is much inferior to the reality?"

For "infants receive forgiveness of sins. Therefore, they are not to be deprived of the sign.... By Baptism, Christ intends to attest the ablution by which He cleanses His Church. It would seem inequitable to deny this attestation to infants, who are justly deemed part of the Church -- seeing they are called heirs of the heavenly Kingdom [Matthew 19:13f].... Infants whom He enumerates among His Members, are to be baptized."

Calvin continued:<sup>566</sup> "The Lord, when He chose Abraham..., after his faith in the promise made him partaker of the Sacrament [of Circumcision].... The infant [Isaac] born to him..., is included in the promise by hereditary right from his mother's womb.... The children of believers...are partakers of the Covenant.... There is no reason why they should be denied the sign, [simply] because they are unable to swear to its stipulations....

"The Lord sometimes declares that the children born to the Israelites are begotten and born to Him. Ezekiel 16:20f & 23:37. For He undoubtedly gives the place of 'sons' to the children of those to whose seed He has promised that He will be a Father.... Children deriving their origin from Christians -- as they are immediately on their birth [and indeed even from their generation onward] received by God as heirs of the Covenant -- are also to be admitted to Baptism."

### **115. Even prenatal babies and infants all need to be born again**

Continued Calvin:<sup>567</sup> "No man, until renewed...by the Spirit, can enter the Kingdom of God. This moreover plainly explodes the fiction of those who consign all the unbaptized to eternal death.... What will they make of a youth who, after being imbued duly and properly with the rudiments of piety, while waiting for the day of Baptism, is unexpectedly carried off by sudden death? The promise of our Lord is clear, 'he who hears My Word and believes in Him Who sent Me, has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but has passed from death to life.' John 5:24. We nowhere read of His having condemned him who was not yet baptized."

"We must not deem Baptism so necessary as to suppose that each who has lost the opportunity of obtaining it, has forthwith perished.... Moreover, Baptism being, as they [the sacramentalistic antipaedobaptists] hold, necessary to salvation -- they, in denying it to infants, consign them all to eternal death. Let them now consider what kind of agreement they have with the words of



Christ, Who says that 'of such [infants] is the Kingdom of heaven!' Matthew 19:14.... We have already established the doctrine concerning the regeneration of infants."

Calvin concluded:<sup>568</sup> "It is certain that infants are blessed by Him [Matthew 19:13-15 *cf.* 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15f]. It follows that they are freed from death.... I admit that all the posterity of Adam, born of the flesh, bear their condemnation with them from the womb. I hold that this is no obstacle to the immediate application of the divine remedy.

"Servetus [the antipaedobaptistic and anabaptistic Unitarian] cannot show, by divine appointment, that 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]....

"Who can infer...that Baptism is to be denied to infants whom...the Lord consecrated to Himself by gratuitous adoption? ... By Baptism, they are admitted into the fold of Christ [*viz.* the Visible Church].... Who will presume...to give the law to God and say that He may not ingraft infants into Christ by some...secret method?... From non-age...God takes His Own methods of regenerating....

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 [and especially the Ten Commandments], when we reflect that from their birth they have been considered and acknowledged by Him as His children."

#### **116. Calvin disproves the rejection of Infant Baptism by Servetus**

Calvin's defence of his own baptismal views against those of the anti-trinitarian antipaedobaptistic Unitarian Servetus, are full of instruction. Declared Calvin:<sup>569</sup> "Servetus, not the least among the Anabaptists..., [rightly] maintains that...all who believe not in the Son, remain in death -- [and that] the wrath of God keeps on abiding on them. John 3:36." But Servetus then wrongly assumes that "infants...are unable to believe, [and] lie under condemnation."

Replied Calvin: "Seeing it is certain that [covenantal] infants are blessed by Him [Christ], it follows that they are freed from death.... While I admit that all the posterity of Adam, born of the flesh, bear their condemnation with them in the womb -- I hold that this is no obstacle to the immediate application of the divine remedy.

"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 [from their conception onward, as implied in First Corinthians 7:14].... Servetus afterwards adds that no man becomes our brother, unless by the spirit of adoption -- which is only conferred by the hearing of faith."

Answered Calvin: "Who will presume from this, to give [or prescribe] the law to God and say that He may not ingraft infants into Christ by some other secret method? He [Servetus] objects that Cornelius was baptized after receiving the Holy Spirit.... He objects that infants cannot be regarded as new men.... But what I [Calvin] have said again and again, I now repeat.... From non-age...God takes His own methods of regenerating."

In several letters to Servetus, Calvin made even more pertinent remarks. "We acknowledge no use of Baptism -- as long as this promise is not received by faith.... Yet one receives the promise not just for oneself, but likewise for one's children."<sup>570</sup> "We say that Christ extends His hand to the children of holy parents as soon as they are born or conceived ('*simul ac nascitur* ') -- in order to liberate them from the general guilt of sin."<sup>571</sup> "The children whom God gathers from this life, are without doubt regenerated by the secret working of the Spirit."<sup>572</sup> For -- as John Calvin pointed out in his work entitled *Refutation of the Errors of Michael Servetus* (the antitrinitarian Anabaptist) -- the Spirit of God can indeed work in children to justify them. "We sense that the Kingdom of God starts in men" alias human beings, explained Calvin,<sup>573</sup> "when they are regenerated. For we indeed say they are 'regenerated' when they are illuminated through faith in Christ, when their hearts are reformed in obedience to God and summarily when the image of God is restored in them."

"If one may here reason after the manner of Servetus," continued Calvin,<sup>574</sup> "would there not be a plausible complaint against God?" Viz., "that He is cruel Who -- [though] gratuitously condoning the crimes of His [adult] enemies -- had [then] not rescued from death His own most innocent images [namely covenantal infants]?"

However, Calvin himself then responded: "Whomsoever Christ blesses, He exempts from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God.... [Covenantal] infants, it is known, were blessed by Him (Mark 10:16). Therefore, they are exempt from the wrath of God."

### **117. Calvin's Catechisms on Baptism**

In his 1537 *Instruction in Faith*, Calvin presented the essence of his 1536 *Institutes* in popular form. There, he wrote to [infantly-baptized] older Christians -- especially to prepare them for their first communion service (but not before their teenage).

Said Dr. John Calvin:<sup>575</sup> "Baptism has been given to us by God -- first to help our faith in Him, and secondly [to help] our profession of faith before men.... Baptism serves likewise as our acknowledgment of faith in the sight of men.... We rightly baptize our children, since they are already participants in the eternal Covenant through which the Lord promises that He will be the God not only of us but also of our posterity." Genesis 17:1-14.

In 1541, the Little and General Councils in Geneva decreed *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* for the Reformed Church in that city. There, by order of Calvin and others, they resolved<sup>576</sup> that "Baptism is not to take place except at the hour of preaching, and it shall be administered solely by the Ministers....

"The names of the children, together with the names of their parents, are to be recorded. If any illegitimate child is found, the magistracy is to be informed. Strangers are not to be accepted as godparents, but only Christian persons who are also Members of our own communion -- since others are not capable of promising the Church to instruct the children as they should." Furthermore, according to the original draft, the baptismal font was to be near the pulpit -- so that the Sacrament alias "the Mystery and use of Baptism" might better be recited so as to be audible to all present.<sup>577</sup>

In his 1541 *Geneva Catechism*, Calvin stated<sup>578</sup> that "the effect follow[s] the use of the Sacraments..., when we receive them by faith." He also says that "the water" of Baptism is "by no means" a "washing of the souls." Indeed, he further wrote: that "the legitimate use of Baptism" requires that "we baptize infants"; that "the administration...of Baptism...is confined to...the Minister"; and that "the Minister ought...not to give it to every one who is clearly unworthy of receiving it..., because it cannot be done without insulting and profaning the Sacrament."

Significantly, this *Geneva Catechism* -- "Calvin's Catechism" -- was later approved by the Church of Scotland, and joined to the latter's *Book of Common Order*. See Crespin's (1606) *Catechism or Manner to Teach Children the Christian Religion*. The sub-title further describes this work as a Catechism: "Wherein the Minister Demandeth the Question and the Child Maketh Answer." This Catechism is then said to have been: "Made by the Excellent Doctor and Pastor in Christ's Church, John Calvin."<sup>579</sup>

### **118. Baptism in Calvin's *Liturgical Forms***

In 1542, among his *Liturgical Forms*, we find Calvin<sup>580</sup> having adapted -- from the order for public worship used at Strassburg -- his *Form of Administering the Sacrament Composed for the Use of the Church of Geneva*. There, he insisted: "It is particularly necessary to know that infants are to be brought for Baptism...on the Lord's Day at the time of catechizing..., so that...it may be performed in the presence and under the eyes of the whole Congregation...."

"Our Lord demonstrates in what poverty and wretchedness we are all born [or conceived], by telling us that we must be born again.... Our nature needs to be renewed, in order to gain admission to the Kingdom of God. It [Baptism] is a sign that is altogether perverted" -- whenever conferred on all and sundry.

"By this, then, He admonishes us to humble ourselves.... Our gracious God, not contenting Himself with having adopted us for His children and with 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.... He adopted them for His children...."

"The Lord Jesus Christ came down to earth not to diminish the grace of God His Father, but to extend the Covenant of salvation.... There is no doubt that our children are heirs of the life which He has promised to us...."

"Hence St. Paul says (First Corinthians 7:14) that God sanctifies them from their mothers' womb, to distinguish them from the children of Pagans and Unbelievers. For this reason, our Lord Jesus Christ received the children that were brought to Him" by believing parents -- "by declaring that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them." Indeed, right before the administration of the Infant Baptism, Calvin would ask the parents who professed their own Christianity -- for long after "to be careful to instruct it [the child] in all this doctrine, and generally in all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures *etc.*"

Apparently also in 1542, in his *Brief Form of a Confession of Faith*, Calvin further declared that "the Sacraments...would be useless to us -- did not the Holy Spirit render them efficacious as instruments." Indeed, "since the promise of adoption reaches even to the posterity of believers -- I acknowledge that the infants of believers ought to be received into the [Visible] Church by Baptism.... In this matter, I detest the ravings of the Anabaptists."

### **119. Calvin's *Antidote to the Romish Articles of Paris***

Still in 1542, we find Calvin publishing his *Antidote to the 'Articles Agreed Upon by the [Romish] Faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris'*.<sup>581</sup> The latter had drawn up a set of 'Articles' -- defining what it held to be the Roman Catholic beliefs. It had prescribed them as binding -- upon lecturers and students alike.

Article I had held: 'We must believe...that to all, even to infants, Baptism is necessary for salvation, and that by means of it the grace of the Holy Spirit is given.' Thus, fearing the damnation of all unbaptized infants, this very first Article implicitly re-authorized that even unordained women may baptize apparently-dying infants. This was purportedly in order to 'regenerate' them -- lest they should die unbaptized.

Calvin's immediate reply was very witty. There, we find him publishing these Romish 'Articles' one by one. After each of these thus-reprinted Articles, Calvin next supplied his own sarcastic (Quasi-Romish) 'proof' for the specific Romish Article momentarily under consideration. Then he added his own candid and more positive exposition -- in counter-argument.

As his sarcastic Quasi-Romish 'proof' for Article I, ostensibly advocating baptismal regeneration, the great Genevan genius quipped: "Because otherwise, there would be no efficacy in the Baptism given by women, which is founded expressly on the belief that Baptism is one of the essentials of salvation."

Still quipping sarcastically, Calvin then went on to point out that Roman Catholic theologians alias teachers or "doctors still debate...whether an infant [in danger] at the point of death (*in periculo mortis*) -- if water is not at hand -- ought to be plunged into a well [and so drowned], rather than commended to God.... Whereas if Baptism is not essential to salvation [as consistent Protestants allege], that act would be a murder -- deserving of death.... There are also other questions...as to whether, in a case of necessity, it be not true Baptism to spit in the face. All these questions would be not only superfluous but foolish also -- did we not hold the principle."

More seriously, Calvin then candidly observed in his own counter-argument (headed 'Antidote to Article I') how "Paul teaches that the children of believers are born holy. First Corinthians 7:14. And indeed, Baptism would not at all be suitable to them, if their salvation were not already included in this promise: 'I will be a God to them, and to your seed after you.'" Genesis 17:7.

"For they [the children of believers] do not become the sons of God through Baptism. But because, in virtue of the promise, they are heirs of adoption -- the Church therefore admits them to Baptism." Significantly, added Calvin, we never read that the great saint "John [the Baptizer] was baptized -- though he was the Minister of Baptism to others." Yet nonetheless, he was indeed justified -- even without Baptism.

Calvin concluded: "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. According to the words of the promise: 'I will be a God to your seed.' Genesis 17:7."

### **120. No indiscriminate Baptisms of all applicants (by whomsoever)**

Although the above clearly establishes the rightness of baptizing the infants of believers, it should not be taken to imply that Calvin would have the children of believers baptized at any price. For the very next year -- in October 1543 -- he wrote<sup>582</sup> to the ecclesiastical officers in Mompelgard that if a political potentate or a prince wishes to enforce 'Baptism by women' -- they were to oppose it, even unto blood.

Nor were such Baptisms in any way necessary. For elect "infants may obtain salvation without Baptism," explained Calvin. "We hold that Baptism, instead of regenerating or saving them, only seals the salvation of which they were previously partakers."

Indeed, of Calvin's three children, he deliberately allowed two to die unbaptized. This was because they were perceiving to be dying shortly after their births. The third, which looked like surviving, died quite soon after receiving Infant Baptism. But by all accounts, Calvin rightly expected to meet all three of his own covenantal children later in heaven. Second Samuel 12:14-23 Cf. Genesis 17.

In Calvin's 1544 *Brief Instruction Against the Anabaptists*, he combatted<sup>583</sup> the view that the matter signified must always fully precede the sign. He explained: "It is to dispute against God, to wish that the truth always goes ahead of the sign."

Nevertheless, he added: "It is sufficient that any faith whatever follows -- at least in part." Yet those words "at least in part" -- '*pour le moins en partie*' -- presuppose the probability of a 'small faith' also in the child of the Covenant, already established as a fruit of the regeneration of that baby even prior to his or her Infant Baptism.<sup>584</sup>

Calvin's 1545 Latin-language *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, is also very important in this regard. There,<sup>585</sup> he had the Catechumen answer his Catechizer: "Baptism is a kind of entrance into the Church."

Here, the words "the Church" mean the Visible Church -- and not the Church Invisible alias the Kingdom of God. That is obvious -- from subsequent statements in the *Catechism*. For then the Catechizer soon thereafter was to ask: "Do you think that the water is a washing of the soul?"

To this, the Catechumen was then to reply "By no means! For it were impious to snatch away this honour from the blood of Christ, which was shed in order to wipe away all our stains and render us pure and unpolluted in the sight of God. First Peter 1:19; First John 1:7. And we receive the fruit of this cleansing, when the Holy Spirit sprinkles our consciences with that sacred blood. Of this, we have a seal -- in the Sacrament."

### **121. Calvin's Ministerial Register anent Baptism**

In 1546, the above is fleshed out in the *Register of the Ministers of the Church in Geneva*. There, according to the presbyterial decree (of Calvin<sup>586</sup> and others), it was decided that "Baptism shall only be administered "at the same time as the sermon.

"The Ministers, moreover, shall admonish the people to link it with the Catechism. The children to be baptized, shall be brought in when...the sermon begins. Their fathers shall be present." For those fathers or parents, being Communicant Members, would then and there need to promise publically to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4.

Here, very clearly, it is seen that Calvin was determined to eradicate -- from among Protestants -- the last remnants of Romish superstition concerning any real need for godparents at Baptisms. Indeed, he here also emphasized that there can, for Protestants, never be an 'emergency' need of Baptism -- such as by midwives or nursemaids in respect of a dealing with an ailing baby right before death.

Rome had made the use of godparents very fashionable. Consequently, this had become regarded as highly desirable -- if not a necessity -- at Infant Baptisms performed in the Romish Church. Often these 'godparents' were themselves but unknowledgeable children -- such as the baby's own older yet still immature nephew or niece.

Rome had also decreed that even nursemaids working for Romish parents -- even if Mohammedan or Pagan maidservants -- should be told to perform 'emergency baptisms' on the unbaptized infants of their mistresses, if the babies suddenly seemed to be dying before a priest could be summoned. For those babies were not to be permitted to die unbaptized and -- according to Rome -- thereby miss out on going to heaven.

So Calvin here rejected all godparents -- except where knowledgeable and mature communicant members of the Protestant Church who could be expected and required to execute what they would be promising. And Calvin here also moved against all baptismal administrations by ex-romanistic midwives and nursemaids -- who, in their remnantal superstitiousness, might perhaps be tempted themselves to baptize unbaptized ailing babies (or even adults).

Hence Calvin continued:<sup>586</sup> "No godparent shall be accepted as sponsor for a child -- unless...at least fifteen years old; of the same confession with us; and has been duly instructed." Further: "If midwives usurp the office of baptizing, they shall be reprimanded or punished according to the seriousness of the offence...under penalty of being placed for three days on bread and water and a fine of three sou's [alias fifteen centimes]. And all who consent to it and do not report it, shall be subject to the same penalty."

All such superstitious 'emergency baptisms' (*sic*) need to be discouraged as strongly as possible. For, as Calvin further pointed out,<sup>587</sup> salvation does not depend upon the Baptism of a person. Baptism does not confer upon infants the power of becoming sons and heirs of God. Because the infants of believers are already in that position before their Baptism, the grace of adoption is sealed by their Baptism. Otherwise, the Anabaptists would be right -- to deny such infants this Sacrament."

## **122. The baptismal views of Rome's Council of Trent**

In 1545-47, Rome enacted some very important decrees during the first seven sessions of her great Ecclesiastical Council in its meeting at Trent. There, it resolved:<sup>588</sup> "Whosoever...denies that this merit of Christ Jesus is applied to infants as well as adults by the Sacrament of Baptism duly conferred after the form of the [Roman Catholic] Church -- let him be *anathema* " alias accursed! "Whosoever denies that the guilt of original sin is remitted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in Baptism..., let him be *anathema*!"

Further:<sup>589</sup> "Unless they were born again in Christ, they would never be justified.... Justification of the ungodly...is a translation from out of that state in which man the son of the first Adam is born, and into a state of grace.... Which translation, since the Gospel was promulgated, cannot be effected without the bath of regeneration or the wish for it (*sine lavacro regenerationis aut ejus voto*). As it is written, 'Unless a man be born again,' &c."

Trent thus held that the Sacrament of Baptism comes to "the damned" -- and "totally expunges" the guilt of all pre-baptismal sin. Baptism itself accordingly "translates" a man from the state of death, into spiritual life, "by its own working" -- *ex opere operato*.

"The causes of justification, are these. The final cause is the glory of God and Christ.... The efficient cause is a merciful God Who freely washes and sanctifies.... The instrumental cause is the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the Sacrament of faith, without which justification is never obtained....

"Whosoever shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy forgiving sins by Christ, or that this trust is the only thing by which we are justified -- let him be *anathema* .... Whosoever shall say that a man, once justified, cannot sin any more or lose grace...unless it be by the special privilege of God as the Church holds concerning the blessed Virgin -- let him be *anathema*!"

Yet more:<sup>590</sup> "Whosoever shall say that the [seven Romish] Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary to salvation...and that without them or a wish for them, men by faith alone obtain the grace of justification, though all [Sacraments] are not necessary for each [person] -- let him be *anathema*!"

Whosoever shall say that these Sacraments were instituted for the sake of nourishing faith alone - - let him be *anathema*!

"Whosoever shall say that in the three Sacraments -- namely Baptism, Confirmation and Orders - - there is not impressed on the soul a character, *i.e.* some spiritual and indelible sign owing to which they cannot be repeated -- let him be *anathema*!" Thus decreed the Church of Rome at Trent.

### **123. Calvin's general demolition of Rome's Tridentine baptismal views**

In Calvin's 1547 *Antidote to Trent* -- published in 1551 -- he roundly declared<sup>591</sup> that these Tridentine Romanists had "been pleased to exclude from the Kingdom of God infants who have been snatched away before they could be offered for Baptism." Objected the Reformer: "As if nothing were meant when it is said [in Holy Scripture] that the children of believers are born holy! I Cor. 7:14.

"Nay," continued Calvin, "on what ground do we [Paedobaptist Protestants] admit them [the children of believers] to Baptism -- unless that they **are** the heirs of promise? For did not the promise of life apply to them -- it would be a profanation of Baptism to give it to them." (*Nisi iam antea ad eos pertineret vitae promissio, baptismum profanaret quisquis daret*). "God **has** adopted them into His Kingdom. How great injustice is done to His promise, as if it were not of itself sufficient for their salvation....

"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. In this way, He declared that those deriving descent from Abraham were born to Him. Genesis 17:7. In virtue of this promise, they are admitted to Baptism because they are considered Members of the Church. Their salvation therefore has not its commencement in Baptism -- but, being already founded on the Word, is sealed by Baptism."

"I neither can nor ought to let pass the very great [Romish] absurdity of calling Baptism alone the 'instrumental' cause [of justification].... Baptism is the Sacrament of faith.... It [Baptism] is nothing else than an appendage of the Gospel. They [the Romanists] therefore act preposterously in assigning it the first place.... Whosoever, postponing the Gospel, enumerates Baptism among the causes of salvation -- by so doing gives proof that he knows not what Baptism is."



#### **124. Trent's Seventh Session on Baptism -- and Calvin's Antidote**

The 1546 Seventh Session was Trent's most important, on Baptism. There, the Romanists declared:<sup>592</sup> "Whosoever shall say that Baptism is free, *i.e.*, not necessary to salvation -- let him be *anathema*!"

In 1547, Calvin responded:<sup>593</sup> "We acknowledge that the Sacraments are intended not only to maintain but [also] to increase faith" already present. "But these horned gentry" or mitred gentlemen of the cloth at Trent "mean something else. For they pretend that the Sacraments have a magical power which is efficacious -- without faith.

"This error destroys the relation which the Scriptures uniformly establish between the Sacraments and faith.... The Sacraments are nothing but instrumental causes of [non-regeneratingly] bestowing grace upon us -- and are beneficial and produce their effect only when they are subservient to faith....

"No sound Christian makes all men equal in the administration of Word and Sacraments. Not only because all things ought to be done in the Church decently and in order [First Corinthians 14:40]. But also because, by the special command of Christ, Ministers are ordained for that purpose [Matthew 28:16-19].

Therefore, as a special call is required -- no man who is not called, may take the honour upon himself [Heb. 5:4]. Moreover: where" -- either in Scripture or in Early History -- "do they [the Romanists] find the office of baptizing enjoined on women, as they [the Romanists] permit them to do?"

Continued Calvin:<sup>594</sup> "There is a twofold grace in Baptism" -- both (1) before it, and (2) during its administration. In the pre-baptismal grace, "both remission of sins and 'regeneration' are offered to us" -- namely by grace alone, and through faith alone. During the later administration of Baptism, these benefits are sealed.

As to pre-baptismal grace -- explained Calvin -- "we teach that full remission is made [at regeneration], but that regeneration is only begun, and goes on making progress during the whole of life." Accordingly, "sin really remains in us." For it "is not instantly in one day extinguished by Baptism" -- as Rome wrongly teaches in its false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism.

As to the baptismal "grace" -- regeneration, already (rebuttably) presumed to exist in the baptizee (pre-baptismally) -- is signified and sealed. Precisely for this reason, regeneration is no way effected or engineered by Baptism itself.

Rightly does the Calvinist Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof remark<sup>595</sup> that Calvin used the term 'regeneration' to comprehend not only the first (pre-baptismal) inception of everlasting life in Christ. Calvin also used the same term to refer as well to the subsequent manifestations of that grace -- since Baptism, and throughout the rest of our earthly life.

## **125. Syncretism between Romanism and Pseudo-Protestantism anent Baptism**

By the 1540s, Germany was strongly divided into Romish and Protestant factions. Already in 1541, four German Romish theologians (Eck, Gropper, Pflug and Helling) had met together in Regensburg with four conciliatory 'Protestants' (*sic*). The latter were: the antinomian Agricola, who had fallen away from Lutheranism; Bucer the Ex-Lutheran Zwinglian; the overly moderate Melancthon; and the unstable Protestant Pistorius (who later lapsed back into Romanism). All together, this consortium had then drawn up the *Colloquy of Ratisbon*.<sup>596</sup>

By 1546-47, Emperor Charles V of Germany -- above all else desirous of preserving the unity of his factionalized country -- had issued the *Interim Declaration of Religion*.<sup>597</sup> This was apparently little more than an expanded version<sup>598</sup> of the 1541 *Ratisbon Colloquy*.

Yet the *Interim* was very appropriately so named. For the Romish Emperor Charles desired it to maintain the *status quo* in his land -- but only until Rome would be able to 're-absorb' the Protestants. Meantime, the *Council of Trent* investigated possible reforms<sup>599</sup> -- and in 1563 finally completed that work.<sup>600</sup>

Fortunately for Germany and for Protestantism, the Romish Charles was defeated militarily by Protestant princes in 1555. At that time, the Peace of Augsburg was established -- guaranteeing freedom to Lutherans in all the Lutheran areas of Germany.<sup>601</sup>

The *Interim*, then, was by and large little else than "an undisguised transcript of Popery." It made only two concessions of any real substance to Protestants. Firstly, it allowed married Protestant Ministers (who had been Romish priests previously) to retain their wives. Secondly, it conceded to the laity communion in both kinds (at the Lord's Supper).<sup>602</sup> Further than that, the *Interim* was Romish to the core.

Hence, this re-romanizing *Interim Declaration of Religion* was nothing other than slightly adulterated Romanism. No doubt for this very reason, we find Calvin rightly calling it: the *Adultero-German Interim*.<sup>603</sup> For he shrewdly saw through it as a deceptive attempt by the Romish Emperor Charles V to lure German Protestants back into a re-united 'Holy Roman Empire.'

Nowhere was the re-romanizing intent of the *Interim* more glaring, than in respect of its doctrine on Baptism. The few citations from it immediately below, will demonstrate the truth of this claim.

There, it boldly declared<sup>604</sup> that "as it is necessary to man for salvation, that he be regenerated into a new creature -- seeing that otherwise he is by nature a child of wrath -- Christ Himself instituted the Sacrament of Baptism to be the laver of that Regeneration, which is not less necessary to the new and spiritual life than carnal nativity is to the natural life.... This Sacrament therefore washes, sanctifies, justifies us....

"In regard to the office of Baptism -- though it belongs chiefly to Priests -- yet a layman may rightly and usefully baptize in case of necessity.... Let the Ancient Ceremonies used in the Sacrament of Baptism all be retained -- viz. Exorcism, Renunciation, Profession of Faith, Chrism, &c! For they tend to figure and shew forth the efficacy of this Sacrament."

### **126. Calvin attacked the 'Adultero-German Interim' on Baptism**

Calvin immediately wrote against this *Interim Declaration of Religion*. Then, in 1547, he published that refutation -- under the title '*The Adultero-German Interim: to which is added 'The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and of Reforming the Church.'*'<sup>605</sup>

In this tract of his, *The True Method of Reforming the Church* (short title), Calvin was forthright from the very outset. For there he declared<sup>606</sup> "I am not here debating with Turks and Jews, who would wish the name of Christ utterly extinguished; nor with grosser Papists, who demand from us an open abjuration of true doctrine.

"But [I am...debating here] with the contrivers of a kind of specious pacification who leave us a half-Christ -- but in such a manner that there is no part of His doctrine which they do not obscure or bespatter with some stain of falsehood. And this artifice for deforming piety, they send forth -- so help them! -- under the name of **reformation**."

Then, going on specifically to refer to Infant Baptism, Calvin here declared<sup>607</sup> that "Paedobaptism had...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" -- *antequam vitalem spiritum hauriant, cooptati tamen sunt in foedus vitae aeternae*.

"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. He who admits any others to Baptism, profanes it.... How could it be lawful to put [Baptism as] the sacred impress of Christ - - on strangers? Baptism must therefore be preceded by adoption, which is not the cause merely of a partial salvation -- but bestows salvation entire, and is afterwards ratified by Baptism....

"Error usually springs from error. The office of baptizing, which Christ committed to the Ministers of the Church alone, they [the Romanists and the Romanizers] delegate...to silly women....

"When discussing the form of Baptism, they postpone the explanation of the doctrine" of the Sacrament (*explicatio Mysterii*). Regarding the words magically, they postpone the doctrine.

They do so, "as if it were of little moment -- and insist on the bare pronounciation of the words (*pronuntiatio verborum*). As if Christ, when He ordered His Apostles to baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, had dictated some kind of magical charm" or song (*magicum carmen*).

But No! Christ "rather meant summarily to indicate whence the whole efficacy of Baptism

flows -- in Whose Name and by Whose order it is administered; on what faith it depends; and to what end it ought to be referred."

### **127. Calvin's baptismal Appendix against syncretism**

The first two of the latter three paragraphs were repeated by Calvin almost *verbatim* -- at the outset of his approximately 1548 *Appendix*. This is often called, in its own right: *Appendix to the Tract on 'The True Method of Reforming the Church'.*

Calvin wrote this *Appendix* to refute the sacramentalistic censure of himself -- that had been made by an anonymous printer. The latter had misprinted the German edition of Calvin's original document (*The True Method of Reforming the Church*). That printer had done so, it would seem, under the influence of another. Many suspect that other influence to have come from a prominent and fanatically Anti-Calvinistic Ultra-Lutheran, such as either Flaccius Illyricus or Joachim Westphal. At any rate, the document seriously misrepresented Calvin's own views regarding the sanctification of infants -- and anent Baptism by women.<sup>608</sup>

The anonymous printer, remarked Calvin, had "corrupted and mutilated" the "German copy" or edition of Calvin's 1547 tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*. So now, almost a year later, Calvin was issuing his *Appendix* to that tract -- in order to present his true views on these matters especially to the German public.

In his *Appendix*, after repeating most of the above-mentioned three paragraphs of his tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin further went on<sup>609</sup> to insist: "If any one at this time maintains Paedobaptism keenly, and on strong grounds, I am certainly in the number.... [Yet] I disapprove of the absolute necessity which they [the Romanists and the Ultra-Lutherans] urge too strongly, and do not admit that a child who from sudden death has not been able to be presented for Baptism -- is therefore excluded from the Kingdom of God."

"The children of believers, before they were begotten, were adopted (by the Lord) -- when He said: 'I will be your God and the God of your seed.' Genesis 17:7. That in this promise the Baptism of infants is included, is absolutely certain.... The genuine children of Abraham even before they were born, are the heirs of eternal life. Since the promise of God places them in the same position....

"I maintain that they [covenantal infants] 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 intimating that they are separated from the common race of mankind by virtue of the Covenant."

Now "Paedobaptism" or the Baptism of infants, continued Calvin,<sup>610</sup> "rests on this ground -- that God recognizes those who are presented to Him by our ministry [when baptizing them], as already His Own.... He anciently called all who derived their origin from Israel, His own

[Ezekiel 16:20-21]. And justly! For the offspring was holy, as Paul teaches. Romans 11:16 [cf. too I Cor. 7:14]....

"Believers beget their children not by the Spirit, but [by] the flesh. The natural condition of all, therefore, is in this alike -- that they are obnoxious...." That is to say, they are subject not only "to sin" but also to "eternal death." However, "the special privilege which the Apostle attributes to the children of believers, flows from the Covenant. By the supervening of this, the curse of nature is destroyed.... Those who were by nature unholy, are consecrated to God by grace....

"I then infer that [even covenantal] children have need of regeneration. But I maintain that this gift comes to them by promise, and that Baptism follows as a seal.... John the Baptizer was sanctified from the womb....

"Christ...ordered that not saints only or the children of saints, but that all nations should be baptized" -- and what nation can ever exist, without its own infant children? Exodus 12:37 and First Corinthians 10:2. Yet "I say that Baptism is profaned -- if we admit aliens....to it, without distinction....

"Those who were formerly aliens, are ingrafted into the Church. This Paul teaches. Romans 11:20.... Aliens are indeed called to Baptism by the Voice of Christ, but are adopted previously into the Family....

"Thus Abraham [himself] was of the household [of the faithful] -- before he received the sign of Circumcision. In regard to the young, as God comprehends them also under the Covenant, they are no longer reputed aliens -- but are heirs of grace, as we learn from Peter's discourse [Acts 2:38f]....

"The infant [of a believer] is included in the Covenant by hereditary right -- even from its mother's womb.... If the children of believers, without the help of understanding, are partakers of the Covenant -- there is no reason why they should be kept from the sign [just] because they cannot swear to the stipulations of the Covenant. But he who is an infidel, being descended of wicked parents, is regarded as an alien from the communion of the Covenant -- until he is united to God by faith."

### **128. Are 'Emergency Baptisms' by nursemaids proper and praiseworthy?**

Throughout this *Appendix to the True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin was refuting this sacramentalistic anonymous printer. For the latter had misprinted the German edition of Calvin's tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*. There, the printer had even made it appear that Calvin himself favoured 'Emergency Baptism' by nursemaids!

Wrote Calvin of the printer:<sup>611</sup> "He asks whether Baptism is to be denied to a Jew or a Turk, if they request it. Here, everybody sees under what gross hallucination he labours -- in assuming that those are [still] aliens, to whom He [God] assigns faith." For unbaptized Jews and Turks

who request Baptism, thereby show that they have already embraced the Christian faith even before their Baptism.

"When I say that Baptism is profaned if it is bestowed on 'aliens'" -- Calvin continued -- by 'aliens'

"I mean...not those...who, dead in themselves, seek life in Him [Christ].... By 'aliens' are to be understood not all [those] who have been[!] alienated from God by sin -- but those whom He still[!] keeps from His Kingdom. Our ministry [of baptizing] does not extend to them....

"Such are all those to whom Baptism is not destined by the command of God." This anonymous printer who, unlike Calvin, himself favoured 'Emergency Baptisms' -- observed Calvin -- "never considers what distinction there is between the children of Christians and Turks" (alias the infants of Moslems).

Calvin continued:<sup>612</sup> "From the same source [viz. the anonymous printer], flows the delirious dream of making women administer Baptism -- in what he calls 'a case of necessity'.... This opinion, rashly conceived under the darkness of the Papacy, has so prevailed -- that there are many from whose minds it can scarcely be eradicated....

"All admit that the right and office of baptizing, is not ordinarily competent to a woman.... I am not unaware that the pretended necessity is wont to be inferred from the words of Christ: 'Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' John 3:5.

"Led away in old time by a similar error, they [the pre-reformational Ritualists] gave the bread and cup of the Eucharist to infants. Because it is written 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you!' John 6:53. But in the present day, even the Papists -- blind though they be -- do not stumble at this stone! [Only the Eastern-Orthodox then did and still do, together with modern Quasi-'Protestant' Paedocommunionists.]

"I know not how it happened that they placed the absolute necessity in Baptism -- though this is absurd. And that, while they admit of some modification in the case of adults, they shew themselves indeed inexorable only to infants. They grant that a man of adult age may be saved without Baptism -- provided he has a wish for it. Why then should not the pious vows of parents exempt a new-born infant from punishment?"

Calvin continued:<sup>613</sup> "We are agreed that infants [of believers] ought to be baptized, and that the omission of the sign is not optional.... I verily admit that all die in Adam, and that infants no less than adults need the redemption of Christ.... Only I think Augustine mistaken when, in fixing the danger, he cuts off the hope of life from [unbaptized] infants whom the Lord declares to be His Own -- and to whom Baptism would not be competent if they were not already called to the fellowship of the Church by the promise of God."

In Infant Baptism, however, "the parent may see the salvation which the Lord has promised in His Word -- sealed and...engraven on the body of his child.... He may not be seen to neglect the badge which has been given to confirm faith..., so that the child may bear the ensign of Christians [even] unto the grave....

Calvin next discussed -- critically -- the view of Augustine anent Baptism by laymen. Said the Reformer:<sup>614</sup> "We may also conjecture, from what he says,<sup>615</sup> that Baptism by women was altogether unknown in that age" around 400 A.D.

"He [Augustine] says 'If a layman, compelled by necessity, shall have given Baptism -- I know not if any one can say piously that it is to be repeated. If it is done without any necessity compelling, it is the usurpation of another's office. If there is urgent necessity, it is no fault -- or a venial one.'"

### **129. Calvin's critique of Augustine's doctrine of 'Emergency Baptisms'**

Next followed Calvin's critique of the above statement of Augustine. Calvin explained that Augustine "certainly ought rather to have raised the question with regard to women -- had any such example then existed. As he is in doubt with regard to men only -- everybody must see that [Baptism by] women never occurred to him.... The thing was altogether unheard of. He still remains undecided as to men, and dares not wholly excuse them of 'venial sin.'"

In other words, according to Augustine, it is somewhat sinful for unordained men -- even in 'emergencies' -- to administer Baptisms. Nevertheless, such Baptisms were valid -- and were thus not be repeated later. For -- and Calvin here agreed with Augustine -- "I know not if any one can piously say that it is to be repeated."

Indeed, the very unrepeatability of Circumcision -- and even of the highly irregular and totally unauthorized Circumcision performed by Moses' own wife Zipporah -- would tend to endorse this perception. Exodus 4:24-26, compare the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 28:5n-7s.

Continued Calvin:<sup>616</sup> "But clearly, all doubt is removed by a decree of the Council of Carthage [in 257 A.D.] -- in which, without exception, women are prohibited from administering Baptism.... [Even before then, the *circa* 195f A.D.] Tertullian says 'it is not permitted to a woman to speak in the Church, nor to baptize, nor to serve or offer [the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper] -- lest she should claim for herself any function of the man, not to say of the Presbyter'....

"Nor ought we to omit what is found [around 400 A.D.] in Epiphanius who, in the first book of his *Against Heresies*, upbraids Marcion with giving women licence to baptize, and counts it among the absurd mockeries of which he says his [Marcion's] sect was full. And, in the second book -- speaking of the [Montanistic] Phrygians and Priscillians -- he [Epiphanius] ridicules their madness in making Bishops of women....

"No 'necessity' is excepted by Epiphanius.... He calls it 'mockery' to permit women to baptize.... This corruption is condemned by him as not excusable under any pretext. In the third book, when he says that the thing was not even permitted to the holy mother of Christ, and adds no restriction -- who sees not that Baptism by women is absolutely disapproved by him?

"In short, it is the height of impudence here to pretend the support of antiquity -- when it plainly appears that this abuse was not established without a barbarous confusion throughout Christendom.... The words of Christ [specifically to His (eleven) Apostles and their Ministerial Associates] are clear:

'Go and teach all nations, and baptize them!' [Matthew 28:16-19].

"He certainly appointed them both Preachers of the Gospel and Ministers of Baptism. If, as the Apostle testifies [Hebrews 5:4], no man duly takes honour upon himself in the Church unless he who is called as was Aaron -- I hold that whosoever baptizes without a lawful call, rashly intrudes into another's office....

"In the Baptism by women -- what certainty can there be, while a rule delivered by Christ is violated? For that office of the Gospel, which He assigns to Ministers -- women [then] seize to themselves.... Tell me whether it be lawful for men [or any other human beings] to put asunder, what the Lord joins [together].... Two things were conjoined by Christ -- the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of Baptism. Let [not] the mouth of women then be opened contrary to the distinct prohibition of the Spirit -- if we would permit them to do another thing which is a [con]sequence from it!"

### **130. Non-Lutheran Calvinists 'de-zwinglianized' the Swiss churches**

Probably early in 1548, we find Calvin from Geneva writing to the Zurich Reformer Bullinger about the new *Confession of Faith* the two of them were then drawing up -- to try and unite the Swiss Reformed Churches. Declared Calvin:<sup>617</sup> "Children do not receive the Spirit of regeneration at the same moment as they are baptized." To the contrary, covenantal children usually receive that "Spirit of regeneration" before their own Infant Baptism.

In November 1548, the first draft of that new Confession -- the *Tigurine Consensus* [alias the 'Agreement of Zurich'] -- was ready. Here, we find an attempt by Calvin [and Bullinger] to unite both branches of the Swiss Reformed Church -- Calvinist and Zwinglian -- in a common doctrine of the Sacraments.

The *Consensus* was constantly improved. Ultimately, it was embraced by all of the Swiss Reformed Churches -- in Zurich, Geneva, Basle, Biel (Bienne), Berne, Coire, Milhausen, Neuchatel, St. Gall, Schaffhausen, and the Grisons.

Thus the Swiss Reformed Congregations -- never Lutheran -- were now 'de-zwinglianized' and thoroughly 'calvin-ized.' The Lutherans in general, however, were displeased with the *Consensus*. Indeed, particularly Westphal -- the Ultra-Lutheran extremist -- was immoderately furious.<sup>618</sup>

Already on 13th March 1549, Calvin<sup>619</sup> and the Company of Pastors in Geneva sent *Articles concerning the Sacraments* to the Synod of Ministers in the State of Berne (both French-speaking and German-speaking). There, 'Article Six' and 'Article Seven' insist that in Baptism and in the Supper "the material element of water or bread or wine in no way offers us Christ....



Hence the error of the Papists is overthrown, who gaze on the elements and attach the confidence of their salvation to them."

### **131. The Zurich Articles anent the Sacraments**

These *Articles concerning the Sacraments* were then finalized, in and as the *Agreement of Zurich*, on 1st August 1549. There, Calvin stated that "the Sacraments...have also these ends: to be marks and tokens of Christian profession...; to incite gratitude (thanksgiving); and to be exercises of faith....

"The testimonials and seals of His grace...are verities.... He Himself will beyond all doubt make good to us inwardly by His Spirit what the Sacraments symbolize to our eyes and other senses, viz. [prior] possession of Christ.... We believe that all who by faith embrace the promises therein offered, do spiritually receive Christ.... They who have before been made partakers of Christ, do continue and renew their communion....

"The water, bread or wine by no means present Christ to us.... We must look rather to the promise whose office it is to lead us to Christ.... Faith makes us partakers of Christ.... Hence the error of those who superstitiously worship (*obtupescunt*) the elements....

"For the Sacraments apart from Christ, are nothing.... It is God alone Who works by His Spirit.... In using the instrumentality of the Sacraments, He thereby neither infuses into them His own power nor abates in the least the efficiency of His Spirit....

"Paul advises us that 'he who plants, is nothing; [so too] neither he who waters [or baptizes] -- but God Who keeps on giving the increase[is everything]!' First Corinthians 3:7.... The Sacraments...are nothing. For they will be of no avail, except God work the whole....

"The Sacraments are sometimes called seals; are said to nourish, confirm and promote faith; and yet the Spirit alone is properly the seal, and the same Spirit is the [pre-baptismal] Originator and Perfecter of our faith. For all these attributes of the Sacraments occupy a subordinate place -- so that not even the least portion of the work of our salvation is transferred from its Sole Author to either the creature or the elements" of the Sacraments.

"God does not exert His power promiscuously in all who receive the Sacraments.... Just as He enlightens unto faith none but those whom He has foreordained unto life -- so by the hidden power of His Spirit, He causes only the elect to receive what the Sacraments offer.... Nothing is received in the Sacraments [of Baptism and the Lord's Supper] except by faith.... Each one receives according to the measure of his faith....

Especially the 'Nineteenth Head' of this *Agreement of Zurich* is important. For there we read that "believers before and without the use of the Sacraments communicate with Christ." Here Calvin insisted: "The use of the Sacraments [itself], confers on unbelievers [absolutely] nothing more -- than if they had abstained therefrom. Indeed, [it] is only pernicious to them. So, without their use -- the verity which they [the Sacraments] symbolize, endures to those who

believe." Thus, even before Baptism and irrespective of Baptism, "believers receive the reality which is there figured" in Baptism.<sup>620</sup>

"Thus, in Baptism...Paul's sins...had already been washed away before [Acts 9:5-18 & 22:8-16]. Thus also Baptism was -- to Cornelius.... He had already received the gift of the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:1-48 & 11:12-17]. So in the Supper, Christ...imparted Himself to us before -- and abides continually in us forever.... In the Sacraments, [our] faith is confirmed."<sup>621</sup>

### **132. Baptismal water does not cleanse, but it does seal salvation**

The above *Confession* (or *Mutual Consent in regard to the Sacraments*), alias the *Tigurine Consensus* or the *Agreement of Zurich* between the Ministers in the Church of Zurich and Dr. John

Calvin of Geneva, was published in 1551. It was expounded in an *Exposition* -- itself published in 1554. "This *Confession*," says Calvin's successor Beza, "knit Bullinger and Calvin and the Churches of Zurich and Geneva in the closest ties."<sup>622</sup>

In the 1554 *Exposition* itself, Calvin showed<sup>623</sup> that Ultra-Lutherans like Westphal were very unlike Luther himself (who had died in 1546). For "Luther, whose imitators they would fain be thought, is too well known to all.... He could not bear that the Sacraments should be regarded merely as external marks of profession and not also as badges and symbols of divine grace....

"Without making further mention of a man [like Luther] whose memory I revere, and whose honour I am desirous to consult -- let me declare my opinion simply.... They [the **Ultra-Lutherans**] hear us [Calvin-ists] confess on the one hand that the Sacraments are neither empty figures nor mere external badges of piety, but seals of the divine promises....

"On the other [hand], they are instruments by which God acts effectually in His elect.... They are signs distinct from the things signified....

Calvin continued:<sup>624</sup> "Augustine (in his *Eightieth Homily on John*) truly and wisely teaches that the elements become Sacraments only when the Word is added -- not because it is pronounced, but because it is believed.... Our Saviour pronounces the Apostles clean...because of the Word which they had heard from Him -- not because of the Baptism with which they had been washed.... 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?

"We therefore truly conclude that it is not at all by the material of water...that we obtain possession of Christ and His spiritual gifts.... We are conducted to Him by the promise -- so that He makes Himself ours and, dwelling in us by faith, fulfils whatever is promised and offered.... God alone performs whatever we obtain by the Sacraments....

"The reality of Baptism was not wanting to Cornelius who, previous to the washing of water -- had been sprinkled with the Holy Spirit.... [On the other hand,] many are baptized with water...who, as they advance in life, are so far from showing that they were inwardly baptized -- that they rather make void their Baptism, by doing what in them lies to quench the Spirit of God."

### **133. Calvin warned England's Edward VI against baptismal regenerationism**

In his 1551 *Letter Dedicatory to King Edward VI of England*, which accompanied his *Commentary on First Peter*, Calvin referred<sup>625</sup> to "the Roman Antichrist" and its "recent rabble at Trent...assembled under the authority of Antichrist.... It is easy to show how preposterous and perverted is the administration of the Sacraments under the Papacy.... The Sacraments are adulterated.... The power of the Spirit is impiously tied to them....

"We must beware of...evil such as prevails among the Papists.... In not distinguishing as they ought, between the thing and the sign -- they stop at the outward element and fix on that their hope of salvation.

"Therefore the sight of the water takes away their thought from the blood of Christ and the power of the Spirit. They do not regard Christ as the only Author of all the blessings offered to us in it [Baptism with water]. But they transfer the glory of His death to the water, and tie the secret power of the Spirit to the visible sign."

### **134. (Ultra-)Lutherans were informed that Calvin opposed baptismal regenerationism**

Sadly, Calvin had to refute not merely Romish but also Ultra-Lutheran Sacramentalism. Thus, his 1556 *Letter to Clauburger* -- the Magistrate of Frankfurt -- defended the beliefs of French Calvinist refugees living in that German Lutheran city (which was then almost Ultra-Lutheran). For those French Calvinists (together with the absentee Calvin as their mentor in Switzerland) were being accused by their opponents in Frankfurt -- of holding unacceptable baptismal views.

As Calvin observed to Clauburger:<sup>626</sup> "I was very much surprised that, when they [the opponents] lately maintained that infants should rather be baptized at home and even by women, than that they should depart out of this life without Baptism -- they odiously brought an accusation against me." However, as far as the Lutheran and Romish practice of 'Emergency Baptism' is concerned -- explained Calvin -- "on what slight grounds has this error been propagated!"

For, as Calvin next explained: "Baptism is not conferred on children [of the Covenant] in order that they may become sons and heirs of God. But, because they are already considered by God as occupying that place and rank, the grace of adoption is sealed in their flesh by the rite of Baptism.

"Otherwise the Anabaptists are in the right -- in excluding them [the covenantal infants] from Baptism. For unless the thing signified by the external sign can be predicated of them -- it will be a mere profanation to call them to a participation of the sign itself.

"But if any one were inclined to refuse them Baptism -- we have a ready answer. They are already of the flock of Christ, of the family of God -- since the Covenant of salvation which God enters into with believers, is common also to their children. As the words import: 'I will be your God -- and the God of your seed after you!' Unless this promise [Gen. 17:7] had preceded -- certainly it would have been wrong to confer Baptism on them....

"If a sudden death carry off any one who shall have embraced the Gospel of Christ -- will they therefore doom him to destruction? [Just] because he has been deprived of the outward washing with water?

"Do not ancient histories furnish us with some examples of martyrs who were dragged away by tyrants to execution -- before they had presented themselves for Baptism? And for this want of water -- will the blood of Christ be of no avail to the holy martyr, who does not hesitate to shed his own blood for the faith of the Gospel in which is placed the common salvation of all?"

Calvin next made a most startling and [should be] unforgettable statement. For he implied that - as regards their doctrine of the absolute necessity for Baptism -- the Ultra-Lutherans are further away from the Scriptures than were the Romanists themselves.

He declared: "Assuredly, the Papists were more moderate" than these Anti-Calvinistic Ultra-Lutherans. For "the Papists..., at least in this case of necessity" -- as regards the salvation of unbaptized adults desiring Baptism -- "substitute for the washing of water, the 'baptism' of blood."

Retorted Calvin himself: "Unless we choose to overturn all the principles of religion -- we shall be obliged to confess that the salvation of an infant does not depend on, but is only sealed by, its Baptism. Whence it follows -- that it [Baptism] is not rigorously nor absolutely necessary."

### **135. Calvin refuted the Ultra-Lutheran Westphal on 'baptismal heresy'**

Already back in 1551, the *Consensus Tigurinus* had been published.<sup>627</sup> This had enraged the Ultra-Lutheran Westphal. He had then: massively misrepresented Calvinist Sacramentology; bitterly attacked Calvin; and even accused the Genevan genius of heresy.

Calvin replied in 1554 with his *First Defence*. We find him making a *Second Defence* in 1556. And we see him giving his *Third Defence* -- alias his *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal* -- in 1557.

Thus, 1556 saw the publication of his *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments (in answer to Joachim Westphal)*. Calvin introduced this *Defence* -- with an accompanying *Pastoral Letter* to the Church of Saxony and Lower Germany.<sup>628</sup>

In that *Pastoral Letter*, Calvin protested<sup>628</sup> that his accompanying *Second Defence* had "been extorted" from him. The very reluctant Calvin felt he had been 'forced' into writing it -- "if I were not, by my silence, to betray the truth of Christ." For here, "certain ferocious men" -- like especially the Ultra-Lutheran Westphal -- even "exceed the barbarism of the Papacy."

Calvin explained: "Joachim Westphal...writes that my books were highly esteemed and relished by the men of his sect [of Ultra-Lutherans] -- at the time when they thought that I differed from the teachers of the Church of Zurich [such as Bullinger and others]. Whence the sudden alienation now? Is it because I have abandoned my opinion?"

Apparently not. For Calvin had not abandoned his previous opinion on the Sacraments, since becoming a Bible-believing Christian alias a Protestant. He had not abandoned Calvinism and become a Zwinglian. Still less had he remained a Romanist, or become even a Hyper-Lutheran!

### **136. Calvin's conclusion: Baptism does not regenerate**

To Calvin, Baptism does not regenerate. Only the blood of Christ the Son of man does that -- by the Father's grace alone, through faith in the divine Christ alone, produced by the divine Spirit alone.

That faith is a gift which the Triune God often gives to covenantal children even before their birth. Baptism is the seal of this; for the elect; even in their infancy. A seal -- no more; no less!

For, in the words of the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* (10:3), "elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated by the Spirit" -- even without Baptism. Thus Baptism signifies and seals the non-baptismal benefit of God's great salvation. By God's grace, and through faith in Christ alone.

## **Endnotes**

- 1) See arts. *Hillel* and *Tannaim* in A.M. Hyamson & A.M. Silbermann's *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Shapiro & Vallentine, London, 1939, pp. 286 & 633.
- 2) See arts. *Ezra the scribe* and *Mishnah* and *Talmud* , in A.M. Hyamson & A.M. Silbermann's *op. cit.*, pp. 219 & 433 & 630f.
- 3) *Niddah* 30b..... 4) *Keth.* 11a..... 5) *Yeb.* 48b; *Bar. par. Ger.* 2:6f; *Yeb.* 22a,62a,97b; & *b. Bek.* 47a.
- 6) *Erub.* 11:1 & *Test. Levi* 14:6. See too *b. Shab.* 135<sup>b</sup> *Ber.* ; *Ger.* 2:1; *Keth.* 1:2-4; 3:1-2; *Qid.* 78a; *Ber. par. b. Yeb.* 60b; *Qid.* 4:66a.10; *j. Bik.* 1:64a.31f; *j. Yeb.* 8.9b.62f; and *Pes.* 8:8.
- 7) *The Origins of Infant Baptism*, Allenson, Napierville, Ill, 1962, pp. 46 & 75.
- 8) *De Cherub.*, 12-15, and *Ad Gajum*, 16 cf. 31. See too: *Lk.* 2:7 & 2:21.
- 9) *Antiq.* 18:3:3 & 18:5:2 compare *Life* 1 & 23.
- 10) *Epistle of Barnabas* 9..... 11) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 32,34,40; the *Acts of Paul* 3,24,31; the *Acts of Peter* 5; the *Acts of Xanthippe & Polyxena* 2,13,28; and the *Rest of the Words of Baruch* 6,23.
- 12) *Gospel of Thomas* (Logia 4 & 22). 13) *Herm.* II:4:3 & III:9:16f.....
- 14) *1st Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius*, 18..... 15) *Ib.* 15:6 cf. chs. 27 & 29.
- 16) *Dial.* 29.... 17) *Ib.* 23..... 18) *Excerpts* 7 & 5 & 48.....
- 19) *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970, VIII pp. 43-48.
- 20) *Against Heresies* II:22:4..... 21) *Ib.* V:15:3..... 22) *Ib.* IV:6:7. See too J. Inchley: *All About Children*, Coverdale, London, 1976, pp. 20f; and F.N. Lee's *Revealed to Babies*, Commonwealth, Rowlett Tx., 1986, pp. 1 & 6f.
- 23) *Eclogia*, 41 & 48 (cf. *Revelation of Peter* 25)..... 24) *Stromata* , II:9.....
- 25) See his *On the Soul*, 19 & 25-27..... 26) *On Baptism* , 16.
- 27) *On Repentance*, 6..... 28) *Oration* 40:18,28.....
- 29) *On the Untimely Death of Infants*, in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* XLVI:161-92.
- 30) *Concerning the Baptism of Tiny Children*..... 31) *On Psalm* 78.
- 32) *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV:19:16, citing Augustine's: *Old Testament Questions* Bk. III; his 80<sup>th</sup> *Homily on John* 13; and his *On Baptism Against the Donatists* Bk. V. See too our nn. 494 & 539 & 541 & 594 below.
- 33) For a good Calvinian refutation of these unbiblical baptismal views of Augustine, see at nn. 603-606

below.

- 34) S. Angus: *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, Murray, London, 1929, pp. 166f nn. 1.
- 35) B.V. Miller: *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*, Burnes Oates & Washbourne, London, 1930, p. 17.
- 36) P. Melanchthon: *Apology* (cited in R. Bellarmine's *De Sacramentis* I:iii).
- 37) J.P. Murphy: *The Sacrament of Baptism*, Burns Oates & Washbourne, London, 1929, p. 31.
- 38) J. Bonaventura: *IV Sentences* I iv, dist. iv..... 39) *Op. cit.* p. 60..... 40) *Ib.* p. 32.
- 41) *Westminster Confession of Faith* 25:2c, citing Gen. 3:15.
- 42) Gen. 3:15-21; 4:2f,25f;5:21f; Heb. 11:4-6 (all before Gen. 17:7-10f).
- 43) Gen. 6:8f & 7:1-11. See too below at: Heb. 11:7f; I Pet.3:20f; II Pet. 2:5.
- 44) Gen. 15:6 *cf.* 16:1,16 & 17:1-10,26..... 45) Ruth 4:10-13; Luke 1:5f; Heb. 11:11,31,35.
- 46) Gen. 17:12-26; Rom. 9:6-13; Heb. 12:14-17..... 47) II Sam. 11:27 & 12:15-23. Compare Gen. 17:12 & 21:4 with II Sam. 12:18.
- 48) Rom. 4:1-25 & Col. 2:11-13..... 49) Gen. 15:6; 17:7-27; 21:4; Rom. 4:9-11; Heb. 11:8-16.....
- 50) See our text at nn. 41 to 49 above. 51) Gen. 17:7-14..... 52) *W.C.F.* 25:2c..... 53) *W.C.F.* 27:1a.....
- 54) *W.C.F.* 27:2f..... 55) *W.C.F.* 28:4m. 56) *Westminster Larger Catechism* 162t..... 57) *W.L.C.* 166o.
- 58) *W.L.C.* 177s; *etc.* 59) Gen. 17:14; Ex. 4:24-26; Lk. 7:30f; *W.C.F.* 28:4m-5p.
- 60) *Comm.* on Gen. 17:14..... 61) Gen. 34:14,22-25f (*W.C.F.* 27:1d compare *W.L.C.* 162b).
- 62) *Comm.* on Gen. 34:13.
- 63) Ex. 4:24-26. For an extended discussion on this, see my own *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?* (Jesus Lives, Wavell Heights, Australia), 1981, pp. 5-7 & 12 nn. 39-42.
- 64) *Comm.* on Ex. 4:24f..... 65) Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, III, pp. 356-8.
- 66) *Inst.* IV:15:20-22..... 67) *W.C.F.* 28:4m..... 68) Ex. 4:24-26, quoted in *W.C.F.* 28:5n.
- 69) *W.C.F.* 28:5n. 70) *Ib.* 28:5op, citing Rom. 4:11; Acts 10:2,4,22,31,45,47; 8:13,23..
- 71) Ex. 12:48 (*W.C.F.* 27:1d & *W.L.C.* 162w). 72) Lev. 26:41 & Dt. 10:16.
- 73) *Comm.* on Dt. 10:16, in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, I, pp. 357.
- 74) Dt. 30:2-6..... 75) *Comm.* on Dt. 30:6..... 76) Ps. 22:9f..... 77) *Comm.* on Ps. 22:9f..... 78) Ps. 71:5f.
- 79) *Comm.* on Ps. 71:5f. 80) Jer. 1:5..... 81) *Comm.* on Jer. 1:5..... 82) Jer. 4:4..... 83) *Comm.* on Jer.

4:4.

84) Jer. 9:25-26..... 85) *Comm.* on Jer. 9:25f. 86) Ezk. 16:20-21..... 87) W.C.F. 25:2c.

88) *Comm.* on Ezk.16:20-21..... 89) Ezk. 44:7 *cf.* 36:25-27..... 90) Ezk. 11:19; 36:25-27; 39:29.

91) Lk. 1:15..... 92) Mt. 3:14..... 93) Mt. 11:11 *cf.* Jh. 1:17f & Acts 18:25 to 19:5.

94) *Comm.* on Lk. 1:15, in *Harmony of the Evangelists*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, I, pp. 17f.

95) Lk. 1:36. 96) Lk. 3:21-23 *cf.* Lev. 8:12f & Num. 4:1-3.

97) Lk. 1:35f & Mt. 1:18-20 *cf.* Lk. 2:40,52..... 98) *Comm.* on Lk. 1:35.

99) Mt. 1:18-20..... 100) Lk. 1:39-44..... 101) *Comm.* on Lk. 1:39-42..... 102) Lk. 1:79.....

103) *Comm.* on Lk. 1:79..... 104) Lk. 1:59,80..... 105) *Comm.* on Lk. 1:80..... 106) Lk. 2:21.....

107) Lk. 2:40,42,52.

108) *Comm.* on Lk. 2:40 (*Avec l'age des dons et graces d'Esprit croissoyent aussi et augmentoyent en Luy...en dons et graces de l'Esprit*).

109) Mt. 3:2..... 110) Mk. 1:4..... 111) Lk. 3:10,12,14..... 112) Mk. 1:5..... 113) Lk. 7:29.

114) *Comm.* on Mt. 3:2. 115) *Inst.* IV:15:7..... 116) Lk. 3:3..... 117) *Comm.* on Lk. 3:3.

118) *Inst.* IV:19:17. 119) *Ebaptizonto...exomologoumenoi* (in both Mt. 3:6 & Mk. 1:5).

120) *Comm.* on Mt. 3:6 & Mk. 1:5. 121) In W.C.F. 28:1f & W.L.C. 165g..... 122) W.C.F. 27:3h.

123) W.L.C. 163c..... 124) W.L.C. 177r..... 125) Lk. 7:29. 126) *Comm.* on Lk. 7:29.

127) *Comm.* on Mt. 3:7..... 128) Mt. 3:7f..... 129) *Comm.* on Mt. 3:8 & Lk. 3:8..... 130) Mt. 3:7f.

131) *Comm.* on Lk. 7:29..... 132) W.C.F. 28:4m..... 133) *Ib.* 28:5n, citing Lk. 7:30..... 134) Heb. 7:26.

135) Lk. 2:40,49,52 & Mt. 3:14-15. 136) Lk. 1:31-35, & Heb. 4:15..... 137) Mt. 3:17 & Lk. 3:22.....

138) Mt. 20:22; compare *Second Helvetic Confession* ch. 20.5..... 139) Rom. 6:3f & Col. 2:12.

140) Lk. 1:35-48..... 141) *Comm.* on Jh. 1:32.

142) *Comm.* on Mt. 3:13f (*Que c' est pour le profit des autres, et non pas pour le sien, que Christ demande d'estre baptizé*).

143) Mt. 3:16-17..... 144) Lk. 3:22,23,38 *cf.* Gen. 1:26-27 & 5:1-2..... 145) John 3:1-2 *cf.* v. 10.

146) Jh. 3:5-8 (*Ean mē tis gennēthēi ex hudatos kai Pneumatos, ou dunatai eiselthein eis tēn Basileian tou Theou... Mē thaumasē hoti eipon soi dei humas gennēthēnai. To Pneuma hopou thelei pnei, kai tēn phōnēn Autou akoueis, all' ouk oidas pothen erchetai kai pou hupagei. Houtōs estin pas ho*



*gegennēmenos ek tou Pneumatos*).

147) Jh. 3:12-18..... 148) Jh. 3:1f *cf.* Lk. 17:20-22.

149) *Cf.* : Lk. 3:7-16; 17:20-22; Mk. 14:21; Jh. 6:70f; 17:12; Acts 1:16-22,25.

150) Mt. 1:21 *cf.* Jh. 4:2..... 151) Acts 16:31f..... 152) I Cor. 1:14..... 153) W.C.F. 10:3mn and 28:6q.

154) *Comm.* on Jh. 3:3-8.

155) J. Calvin: *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. Beveridge & Bonnet, VI Pt. 3, p. 282.

156) *Inst.* IV:16:25..... 157) Jh. 3:22-26 & 4:1-2..... 158) *Comm.* on Jh. 4:2..... 159) Mt. 4:17.

160) *Inst.* III:3:2,19. 161) Mt. 9:2..... 162) *Comm.* on Mt. 9:2..... 163) Mt. 18:3-6 & 19:14.

164) *Inst.* IV:16:26..... 165) *Comm.* on Mt. 19:14.

166) W.C.F. 10:3m (citing Lk. 18:15f *etc.*) & 28:4m (citing Mk. 10:13f & Lk. 18:15f); and W.L.C. 166o (citing Lk. 18:15f).

167) Mk. 16:15f & Mt. 28:19..... 168) *Comm.* on Mt. 28:19..... 169) Mk. 16:16.

170) *Comm.* on Mk. 16:16; *cf.* Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* p. 116 n. 1.

171) *Sel. Works* , VI Pt. 3, p. 282..... 172) *Inst.* IV:3:4-6. 173) Mt. 28:19.

174) W.C.F. 27:1b and W.L.C. 162t & 176m..... 175) W.C.F. 27:3ik..... 176) W.C.F. 27:5l.

177) W.C.F. 28:1a and W.L.C. 164d..... 178) W.C.F. 28:1h and W.L.C. 176q.

179) W.C.F. 28:4m and W.L.C. 166o. 180) W.L.C. 165e.

181) W.L.C. 176p; compare *Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government (WFOPCG)*<sup>p</sup>.

182) Mk. 16:15f. 183) W.C.F. 28:4l..... 184) *WFOPCG* ~p~..... 185) Acts 1:5f.

186) Acts 2:32f *cf.* Mk. 1:8..... 187) Jh. 20:22f. 188) Lk. 3:3f *cf.* Jh. 1:25-37f..... 189) Acts 1:4f *cf.* 2:4f.

190) *Comm.* on Acts 1:5..... 191) Acts 1:2-5,26 *cf.* 2:1-4,14-17a. 192) Acts 2:16-18.

193) *Comm.* on Acts 2:16-18..... 194) Acts 2:38-41..... 195) Jh. 3:16 *cf.* 5:24..... 196) Rom. 8:9,14-16,30.

197) Acts 2:1f..... 198) Acts 1:5f *cf.* Jh. 1:25,37f..... 199) Acts 2:38-41..... 200) *Comm.* on Acts 2:38-39.

201) *Inst.* IV:16:13-15. 202) W.C.F. 10:3m and 25:2c..... 203) W.C.F. 28:4m compare W.L.C. 166o.

204) W.C.F. 28:6r. 205) W.L.C. 162w..... 206) W.L.C. 166n..... 207) W.L.C. 167x..... 208) W.L.C. 177s.

209) Acts 3:25. 210) *Comm.* on Acts 3:25..... 211) *Inst.* IV:16:15..... 212) Acts 7:2-4..... 213) Acts

7:8.....

214) *Comm.* on Acts 7:8. 215) Acts 8:12-24..... 216) *Comm.* Acts 8:12-16.

217) *W.C.F.* 28:5p (citing Acts 8:13,23)..... 218) *W.L.C.* 161s (citing Acts 8:13,23).

219) Acts 8:27. As a eunuch, he was possibly uncircumcisable, and certainly precluded from becoming a member of the house of Israel. Yet he was not precluded from public worship there, nor deprived of the expectation of being fully ingrafted into Christ. Dt. 23:1f *cf.* Isa. 56:1-7.

220) Acts 8:34..... 221) Acts 8:36-38..... 222) *Inst.* III:2:32..... 223) *Comm.* on Acts 8:27-37.

224) *Ib.* IV:14:8-9..... 225) *W.C.F.* 28:4l and *W.L.C.* 166n..... 226) II Tim. 1:3.

227) I Tim. 1:13f *Cf.* Phil. 3:4-7f. 228) Gal. 1:15f..... 229) Acts 9:5-6.

230) Acts 9:17-18. See too esp. at n. 288 below..... 231) *Comm.* on Acts 9:6,17f..... 232) *Inst.* IV:15:15.

233) Acts 10:2,22,31,35,45,47,48..... 234) *Comm.* on Acts 10:47..... 235) *Inst.* III:2:32..... 236) *Inst.* III:24:10.

237) *Inst.* III:17:4; IV:3:3; & IV:15:13-14..... 238) *W.C.F.* 28:5o, citing Acts 10:2,4,22,31,45,47.

239) Acts 11:1f. 240) Acts 11:16-17..... 241) *Comm.* on Acts 11:17..... 242) Acts 13:14,32f.

243) *Comm.* on Acts 13:32f..... 244) Acts 15:1-5f. 245) Acts 15:23-29f..... 246) *Comm.* on Acts 15:7f.

247) Acts 16:1-3..... 248) *Comm.* on Acts 16:3..... 249) Acts 16:14-15. 250) *Comm.* on Acts 16:15.

251) Acts 16:27-34..... 252) *Comm.* on Acts 16:31-34..... 253) Acts 16:14-15 & 16:32-34.

254) See Acts 16:14 ("Lydia...whose heart the Lord opened so that she gave attention to the things spoken by Paul..., was baptized -- and her Household "). Also see Acts 16:32 ("he was baptized , he and all his..., believing in God with all his Household ").

255) *Inst.* IV:16:8-9.

256) Acts 18:8. *Episteusen tōi Kuriōi sun holōi tōi oikōi autou Kai polloi tōn Korinthiōn akouontes episteuon kai ebaptizonto.*

257) I Cor. 1:12-17f; 3:6f; 6:11; 12:13; 16:15. 258) Acts 18:1,11 *cf.* n. 257 above.

259) Acts 18:24,27f *cf.* n. 197 above. 260) Acts 18:24a *Apollōs...Alexandreus tōi genei anēr logios).*

261) Acts 18:26b (*akribesteron autōi exethento tēn hodon tou Theou* ).

262) Acts 18:24b (*dunatos ōn en tais graphais* ).

263) Acts 18:25a (*houtos een katēchēmenos tēn hodon tou Kuriou* ); v. 25b (*zeōn tōi Pneumati*); v. 25c (*epistamenos...to Baptisma Iōannou* ).

264) Acts 18:24-28..... 265) Acts 11:26 *cf.* Mt. 16:18 & 18:17..... 266) *Comm.* on Acts 18:25.

267) Jh. 1:31-42f & 3:22-30f & 4:1-2. 268) *Comm.* on Acts 18:25..... 269) Acts 18:24 - 19:3.

270) Mt. 3:3-11f & Jh. 1:25f *cf.* Isa. 11:1-10f & 61:1f and perhaps also Acts 19:4-6.

271) Acts 19:3 (*eis to Iōannou Baptisma*)..... 272) Acts 19:2b (*oud' ei Pneuma Hagion estin ekousamen*).

273) Acts 19:4 (*Eipen de Paulos Iōannēs men ebaptisen Baptisma metanoias tōi laōi legōn eis Ton Erchomenon met' auton hina pisteusōsin, tout' estin Ton Christon Iēsoun*). It is the *Textus Receptus* which here has *men*. See nn. 274 & 275 below. Note that *Christon* is omitted in P<sup>38</sup>, AlephABE 614 pc lat, 13,25,40, Vulg., Boh., Syr. H., Aethr<sup>ro</sup>; so Tisch., W.H., RV, Weiss, Wundt & Blass. D has *eis Christon*. The reading *eis ton Iēsoun Christon* is found in: Sah., Gig. & Pesch. Other readings have: *Christon Iēsoun*.

274) Thus: Calvin, Beza, Calixtus, Lightfoot, Budde, Rambach, and others. See at nn. 275f. Acts 19:5 (*akousantes de ebaptisthēsan eis to Onoma tou Kurioi Iēsou*). Here, *akousantes* is the aorist participle of the Greek verb for "hear" or "hear-ken" [*akouein*]. This, like the word for "hear-ken" in the Germanic languages, *cf.* the German *hören* [hearken] and its cognate *gehören* [obey], usually means not merely to "listen" but to "hear well" and hence also to "heed". See too n. 273 above.

275) Gravemeijer (*Reformed Doctrine of Faith*, Wiarda, Sneek, 1888, III:175) argues that the verses Acts 19:4f do not at all teach that the heretics were then baptized by Paul with water. Argues Gravemeijer: Paul there merely told those men at Ephesus that after John himself had urged the people to believe in Jesus the Christ-ed One alias the Spirit-anointed Messiah, those who then heard or obeyed John's urgings were soon baptized (by John himself) in the Name of the One Who was then coming after him, that is the Lord Jesus. After Paul had finished telling the men this at Ephesus, claims Gravemeijer, Paul simply laid his hands 'waterlessly' on them *etc.*

Gravemeijer grounds this view on the fact that the "foundational text" (namely the *Textus Receptus*) has men...de in Acts 19:4-5. Thus the various editions of the *Textus Receptus*. Compare those of Stephens (1550), of Bloomfield (1843), and of Knowling even in the 1908 *Expositor's Greek Testament* (where however the men is noted as omitted in AlephABD, Vulg., Sah., Arm., Tisch., W.H., RV, Weiss & Wendt).

Gravemeijer thus reads Acts 19:4-6 as follows: "Then Paul said, 'John truly (men) baptized with the Baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who would come after him,' that is, in Christ Jesus. When (de) they [John's people] heard [or heeded], they were baptized [by John and in Palestine] into the Name [or 'unto the authority'] of the Lord Jesus. Then, when Paul had laid his hands on them [the ex-unitarians in Ephesus], the Holy Spirit came upon them" *etc.* . For the whole statement of Acts 19:4-5 in the Greek *Textus Receptus*, see at nn. 273-74 above.

These verses are thus to be taken together as stating what Paul said in corrective response to the heretics' statement anent "the Baptism of John" at the end of Acts 19:3. Only after recording this statement of Paul to the heretics about what John had really taught, does Luke go on to mention what Paul the Apostle next did to them (in Acts 19:6). The heretics apparently repented under Paul's preaching. Yet further, Paul then applied no water whatsoever to those ex-heretics, but simply laid his hands on them.

If Gravemeijer is right in this, Calvin too would be right in suggesting that Paul did not at all apply water

to those heretics. Consequently, there is no possibility of them having been rebaptized (with water) by Paul. See too at n. 283 below.

Against Gravemeijer's hypothesis, observe that the plural form *ebaptisthēsan* here in Acts 19:5b, as well as the plural form *akousantes* in 19:5a at n. 274 above, both seem to refer to Paul's plural listeners. Compare their corresponding plurals (*tinās mathētas* and *autous* and *hoi...ēkousamen* and *ebaptisthēte* and *hoi...eipan*) in the immediately preceding Acts 19:1-3, and their corresponding plurals (*autois* and *autous* and *elaloun* and *eprophēteuon* and *ēsan* and *hoi pantes andres hōsei dōdeka* in the immediately succeeding Acts 19:6-7. To us, it seems to be of some significance that in Acts 19:4a, Paul refers in the singular (*tōi laōi*) to the people that John himself had addressed. This in turn strengthens Kuyper's thesis (which we endorse) against Gravemeijer's. See n. 284 below. On the other hand, even Acts 19:4b goes on to use the plural *pisteusōsin* (apparently still in respect even of the singular *tōi laōi* in 19:4a). This, together with the *men...de* factor discussed above, lends some credence to Gravemeijer's hypothesis.

276) Acts 19:1-7..... 277) *Comm.* on Acts 19:2..... 278) Acts 19:4a *cf.* 18:25 & 19:1-3.

279) *Comm.* on Acts 19:4-5..... 280) *Inst.* IV:15:18.

281) See my 1990 manuscript: *Rebaptism Impossible! The Biblical Unrepeatability of Baptism in Presbyterian Church History with particular reference to the validity of 'Roman Catholic Baptisms.'*

282) *Inst.* IV:15:18.

283) Calvin himself here (in *Inst.* IV:15:18) takes the view that Acts 19:1-3 actually refers to true disciples of John. Calvin does not here regard the other view as "probable"; the view that it refers instead only to foolish imitators of John. That view was later elaborated by the great Abraham Kuyper Sr. Yet Calvin does present this view very fairly, and he forthrightly acknowledges that "some" indeed hold it. We ourselves agree with those "some."

For it certainly seems to us that at an earlier time, "some" of the followers of John had become confused, after John himself had temporarily questioned Jesus' Messiahship, and especially after John's own violent death. Mt. 11:2f, 11f & 14:10-12. Instead of then following Jesus, these confused followers of John had then started believing and ever teaching erroneous doctrines. Either they or their even more confused pupils had then themselves unauthorisedly and erroneously started baptizing "in the name of John." It was some of their heretical pupils and 'baptizees' in turn, that Paul later encountered at Ephesus. Acts 19:1-3.

When discussing Acts 19:1-7, that great Calvinist Rev. Prof. Dr. Abraham Kuyper (Sr.) rightly explains in his *Sacraments* pp. 134f (in his *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kok, Kampen, 2nd ed., IV): "The twelve men [Acts 19:1-7] had not been baptized by John. They themselves say: 'We have not heard whether there is a Holy Spirit!' So Paul explains to them what the Baptism of John meant....

"One group of John's disciples had sought to perpetuate themselves; had gone astray. This is easily to be grasped, for John himself fell into doubt. Part of John's circle had [previously] joined Jesus. Another part perpetuated itself as a sectarian group. These twelve [Acts 19:1-7] had been 'baptized *eis to Iōannou Baptisma*: into the Baptism of John.'

"This *eis* [or 'into'] indicates what was regarded as the highest within their group. For them, it was as if John was the revelation of God.... The preaching about Jesus and about the Holy Spirit fell away. Hence Paul did not here re-baptize, but administered Baptism: in the Name of Jesus." Acts 19:5 or 19:6f.

Calvin's chief reason for disagreeing with this, is his impression that "it is not probable that the

Jews...would have been destitute of all knowledge of the Spirit." Calvin thus assumes that these ignorant heretics were Jews. That, however, is not claimed in this passage (nor anywhere else in Holy Scripture). For Luke merely states they were "disciples": alias 'taught ones.' This could probably apply to Gentile heretics just as much as it certainly could to Jewish heretics. Cf. Mk. 2:18; Jh. 9:28; Mt. 23:15; Acts 5:36f cf. 17:18; Tit. 1:12f.

Moreover, even some Jewish heretics may very well have been ignorant about the Holy Spirit. Cf. Rom. 2:28f; 8:2-9; Jude 4,11-19; Rev. 2:9; 3:9. Calvin does not seem to have weighed sufficiently the clear difference between John 7:39's statement "The Holy Ghost was not yet given" (*oupoo gar ēn Pneuma Hagion dedomenon*) -- and the different statement "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost"

(*all' oud' ei Pneuma Hagion estin ēkousamen*) here at Acts 19:2. For, quite apart from the disputed word *dedomenon*, it is obvious that John 7:39's undisputed word 'ēn' alias "was" is quite different from the undisputed word 'estin' alias "is" (which the Holy Spirit Himself infallibly inscripturated at Acts 19:2).

Calvin gratuitously assumed that Paul in Acts 19:5 administered only a 'non-watery' and a purely 'spiritual' Baptism. We say Calvin 'perhaps' gratuitously assumed this, in light of Gravemeijer's comment at n. 275 above (*q.v.*). Unlike Gravemeijer, Calvin here takes the words "they were baptized" to describe what *Paul* then did: rather than as referring to what Paul then said *John* had done. Thus, right after these words "they were baptized" Calvin here assumes the implicit existence of the explicitly non-existent words: with the Spirit.

For the rest, however, we heartily concur with Calvin that Acts 19:1-5 teaches faith before Baptism. We also concur with him that the passage certainly precludes any repetition of Baptism with water, either in the Name of the Lord Jesus or in the Name of the Triune God (cf. Mt. 28:19 & Acts 8:16).

284) *Inst.* IV:15:18. See too Calvin's *Treatise Against the Anabaptists*, Baker, Grand Rapids, ed. 1982.  
285) *Inst.* IV:15:7-8..... 286) *Inst.* IV:10:20..... 287) Acts 22:1,10,12f,16.

288) Acts 22:16. *Kai nun ti melleis? Anastas,baptisai; kai apolousai tas hamartias sou epikalesamenos to Onoma tou Kuriou!* Rightly does the *Expositor's Bible* point out at Acts 22:16 that "*epikalesamenos* [or 'having called upon' (the Name of the Lord)]...necessarily involved belief in Him [Christ]." Acts 2:21,36f; Rom. 10:12-14; I Cor. 1:2. Observe in the original Greek of Acts 22:16 that it is only after the clause "when you *have* arisen" (*anastas*) -- that Paul was told: *baptisai* or "be baptized!" Too, the grammatically subsequent aorist middle participle *epikalesamenos* -- "you having called upon" (the Name of the Lord) -- is very probably referring to an event temporally prior to the "be baptized!" Indeed, the *epikalesamenos* -- "you having called upon" (the Name of the Lord) -- seems to be more connected to its immediate grammatical antecedent *apolousai tas hamartias sou* (or "wash away your sins"), than to its more remote grammatical antecedent "be baptized!" The meaning would then be: 'your sins were washed away when you called upon the Name of the Lord prior to your Baptism.' Consequently, "be baptized!" would seem to be temporally subsequent to and therefore no way causative of 'the washing away of your sins' alias the *apolousai tas hamartias sou epikalesamenos to Onoma tou Kuriou*. See too our text at note 230 above, on the implications of the pre-baptismal words "Brother Saul."

289) See our text at nn. 226 to 232 above..... 290) *Comm.* on Acts 22:10-16.

291) *Inst.* IV:15:15. See too n. 289 above.

292) Acts 22:13-16, *cf.* our text at n. 288 above (and especially that note itself)..... 293) *Inst.* IV:15:15.

294) Rom. 2:25-29 (*W.C.F.* 27:3g & *W.L.C.* 163c).

295) *Comm.* Rom. 2:25-29. See too the text at our nn. 72f above.

296) See: Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Ezk. 11:19; 36:25f; 39:39; 44:7..... 297) Rom. 3:1-3.

298) Rom. 4:9-11.

299) *W.C.F.* 10:3m, citing Rom. 8:9 (*ei de tis Pneuma Christou ouk echei, houtos ouk estin Autou*).

300) Rom. 9:4-13 *cf.* Gal. 4:22-30 & Heb. 11:8-9..... 301) *Comm.* on Rom. 4:9-11..... 302) *Inst.* IV:14:4-6.

303) *Inst.* IV:14:20,21..... 304) *Inst.* IV:16:13..... 305) *Inst.* IV:16:20..... 306) *W.C.F.* 27:1a & 28:1c.

307) *W.C.F.* 28:4m..... 308) *W.C.F.* 28:5o..... 309) *W.L.C.* 162t & 162y..... 310) *W.L.C.* 166o.

311) *W.L.C.* 167s. 312) *W.L.C.* 176o..... 313) *Comm.* on Rom. 5:17..... 314) Rom. 6:1-5.

315) *Comm.* on Rom. 6:3-4. 316) *West. Conf.* 27:1e and *West. Larg. Cat.* 165m & 167r.

317) *West. Conf.* 28:1d..... 318) *West. Conf.* 28:1g.. 319) *West. Larg. Cat.* 162z

320) *West. Larg. Cat.* 165k..... 321) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167p..... 322) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167q.

323) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167tw..... 324) Rom. 9:4-13..... 325) *Comm.* on Rom. 9:5-12.

326) *Inst.* III:22:4,11 & IV:2:3. 327) Rom. 11:16-20..... 328) *Comm.* on Rom. 11:16-21.

329) Rom. 11:16-22 *cf.* I Cor. 7:14 & Col. 2:11-13. 330) *Comm.* on Acts 13:32-33.

331) *Comm.* on I Cor. 7:14..... 332) *W.C.F.* 25:2c..... 333) *W.L.C.* 166o..... 334) *WFPCG* d.

335) Rom. 15:8..... 336) *W.C.F.* 27:1d..... 337) *W.L.C.* 162w..... 338) I Cor. 1:11-17.

339) *Comm.* on I Cor. 1:12-17. 340) *W.L.C.* 167r, citing I Cor. 1:11-13..... 341) I Cor. 3:5-6.

342) See too I Cor. 1:12-17 above, and compare I Cor. 4:1-6 (later below). 343) *Inst.* II:5:4.

344) *W.L.C.* 161s, comp. *W.S.C.* 91v.

345) I Cor. 6:11 (*Alla apelousasthe, alla hēgiasthēte, alla edikaiōthēte en tōi Onomati tou Kuriou Iēsou Christou kai en tōi Pneumati tou Theou hēmōn*).

346) *Comm.* on I Cor. 6:11..... 347) *Inst.* III:1:1..... 348) *Inst.* III:14:6..... 349) I Cor. 7:14,19.

350) *Comm.* on I Cor. 7:14-19. 351) *W.C.F.* 25:2c..... 352) *W.C.F.* 28:4m..... 353) *W.L.C.* 166o.

354) *W.L.C.* 177s..... 355) I Cor. 10:1-2..... 356) *Comm.* on I Cor. 10:1-2..... 357) *W.C.F.* 27:5l.

358) I Cor. 12:13 (*Kai gar en heni Pneumati hēneis pantes eis hen sōma ebaptisthēmen...*, *kai pantes [eis] hen Pneuma epotisthēmen*). To us, and to many others, it certainly seems that *epotisthēmen* is here clearly co-ordinate to its antecedent *ebaptisthēmen*. Consequently, the having "been baptized" would then be identical to the having "been drenched" or "watered." See the same word *epotisen* or "watered" in I Cor. 3:6, as cited with obvious reference to Baptism with water in the Calvinistic W.L.C. 161s. See too our own article *What Does First Corinthians 12:13 Really Teach ?* (Brisbane, 1989). Also see our next n. 359 below.

359) See our n. 358 above. Calvin himself is "not certain"; but "rather" inclines to a different "opinion" about this. He has nevertheless very fairly drawn attention also to the other view (our own), that "here he [Paul] is speaking about Baptism" rather than about the Lord's Supper. See Calvin's *Comm.* on I Cor. 12:13.

360) *Comm.* on I Cor. 12:13..... 361) *Inst.* IV:14:7; 15:15& 16:22..... 362) W.C.F. 25:2b & 27:3h & 28:1b.

363) W.L.C. 62w, 161s, 162a, 165l, 167pqy..... 364) W.S.C. 91w..... 365) WFPCG a.

366) *Cf.* Rom. 6:3-5 and Col. 2:12f & 3:1-4f.

367) I Cor. 15:16,20,22,29,30. The last two verses should be read together. Thus: *Epei, ti poiēsousin hoi baptizomenoi huper tōn nekrōn; ei holōs nekroi ouk egeirontai? Ti kai baptizontai huper tōn nekrōn? Ti kai hēneis kinduneuomen pasan hō ran?* Here, Paul clearly distinguishes the constantly rebaptizing heretics ("they") from the once-and-for-all baptized orthodox ("we").

368) W.L.C. 165k..... 369) *Comm.* on I Cor. 15:29..... 370) Gal. 2:3..... 371) *Comm.* on Gal. 2:3.

372) *Inst.* III:19:12. 373) Gal. 3:6..... 374) Gen. 15:6 *cf.* 17:7-27..... 375) Gal. 3:26-29.

376) *Comm.* on Gal. 3:26-29..... 377) *Inst.* IV:15:6 & 16:21.

378) Gal. 3:27 (W.C.F. 28:1d and W.L.C. 162y, 165fj, 167v, & 177rs which states that "baptism is...a sign and seal of our regeneration...even to infants").

379) Gal. 5:2f.... 380) *Comm.* on Gal. 5:2f..... 381) Eph. 4:4-5.

382) *22nd Sermon on Ephesians*, in *John Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians*, finished being delivered 1559, ed. 1562, Banner of Truth, London, 1979 rep., p. 331....

383) W.L.C. 162a..... 384) Eph. 5:25-26 (*cf.* too Eph. 4:4f); see too n. 385.

385) Eph. 5:25-26: "*Hoi andres, agapate tas gunaikas [heautōn], kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen tēn ekklēsia kai Heauton paredōken huper autēs, hina autēn hāgiasē katharisas tōi loutōi tou hudatos en Rhēmati.*" The temporally prior "having cleansed" (*katharisas*), as well as the chronologically subsequent "keep on sanctifying" (*hāgiasē*), here both occur specifically "by the Word" (*en Rhēmati*).

The passage states that Christ, initially, "cleansed...by the Word"; and indeed did so only "through the washing of the water." It does not say He cleansed 'by the washing of the water which is the Word'. That would require something like '*en tōi loutōi tou hudatos tōi Rhēmati*'. Nor does it say that He cleansed 'by the washing of the water of the Word' (which would require something like '*en tōi loutōi tou*

*hudatos tou Rhēmatos*').

Still less does the passage speak of 'the washing of the water *of Baptism*.' The "washing *of the water*" (*hudatos*), here seems to be but a material genitive. Significantly, "*en Rhēmati*" here means "*by* the Word." As an instrumental dative, it is connected to the antecedent *hagiasē*. It thus means: "sanctified by the Word." See Ps. 119:9; Jh. 15:3; 17:17.

The expression "by the Word" (*en Rhēmati* without the definite article) is not connected to the arthrous phrase "of the water" (*hudatos*); because *en Rhēmati* is anarthrous. Here as elsewhere, this *Rhēma* means not a silent sacramentalism, but specifically "the spoken Word." See Mt. 26:75; Mk.9:32; Lk. 1:38; 2:15,29,50; 5:5; Acts 10:37; Rom. 1:8; 10:8,17; II Cor. 12:4; 13:1; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 1:3; 6:5; 11:3; 12:19.

In his *Reformed Dogmatics* (Kok, Kampen, 1930, IV:495), Bavinck thus quite rightly says that in Eph. 5:26 the words *en Rhēmati* are not a closer determination of *loutrōi* or *hudatos*. For that would have required the definite article *tō* or *tou* before *en Rhēmati*. Instead, the words *en Rhēmati* belong with *hagiasē*. Christ cleansed His Congregation through the washing of the water, but not through the baptismal water. Indeed, He did so precisely when He cleansed her by the Word of the Gospel.

386) *Commentary on Ephesians* (5:26), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948..... 387) *Inst.* IV:15:2.

388) *Ib.* IV:16:22..... 389) *40th Serm. on Eph.*, in Calvin's *Serm. on Eph.*, pp. 578f..... 390) *W.C.F.* 28:6r.

391) *W.L.C.* 165h.... 392) Eph. 1:1 (*hagiois...kai pistois*).

393) Eph. 6:1 (*tekna...[en Kuriōi]*, om. **BD\*G**, defg, it Mcion., Cl., Tert., Cyp.; *ins.* KAD<sup>2</sup>EKLP, all cursives *appy.*, most Versions, Orig., Bas., Chr., Euth., Thdrt., Dam., Ambrst., Jer.).

394) Eph. 6:1-3..... 395) Eph. 6:4 (*mē parorgizete...alla ektrephete auta en paideia...tou Kuriou*).

396) *Ib.*: "rear them in the nurture...of the Lord" (*ektrephete auta en paideia...Kupiou*). Not 'transport them into the Lord's nurture' (which would require something like '*pherete auta eis paideian Kupiou*')! Note this usage of the imperative *phere* in II Tim. 4:13.

397) *Comm.* on Eph. 6:4..... 398) Phil. 3:3-5..... 399) *Comm.* on Phil. 3:3-5.

400) Col. 1:2 & 3:20; compare Eph. 1:1 & 6:1 and nn. 352-3. 401) Col. 2:11-12..... 402) Col. 2:13.

403) Calvin's *Commentary on Colossians* (2:11-13), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948.

404) *W.C.F.* 28:1e & 6r..... 405) *W.L.C.* 166o, 167p & 176o. 406) I Tim. 1:12 & 2:15.

407) In I Tim. 2:15a, "continue to be happy" translates *sōthēsetai*. Both in the context (2:15bcd & 3:11 *etc.*) as well as according to common sense, *sōthēsetai* could not possibly here mean that childless ladies (and all young girls) cannot have their sins forgiven until and unless they themselves actually (re)produce children!

408) In I Tim. 2:15b, *teknogonia* must (in principle) mean not the (re)production of children but rather the rearing and the training of them. For compare 2:15cd's "if they" (namely the children taught by the woman) "remain in faith...and holiness." Compare too the young widow in 5:14, who is to "guide the



house" alias to 'rule her home' -- teachingly! Also see Tit. 2:3-5.

409) In I Tim. 2:15c, *meinōsin* (plural) refers to the children implicit in 2:15b's *teknogonia*. It cannot mean the (singular) "woman" referred to in 2:14b and the "she" implicitly referred to in the (singular) *sōthēsetai* at 2:14a. See too our text and notes at nn. 392-96 & 408 above.

410) In I Tim. 2:15c, *meinōsin* means the children keep on remaining "in faith and...holiness" (cf. 2:15d).

411) In I Tim. 2:15d, the children being reared (in 2:15b) must even previously have been "in faith...and holiness" (as stated in 2:15d). Compare I Cor. 7:14 & Eph. 6:4b. These children being reared must previously have been "in faith...and holiness" (I Tim. 2:15bd), precisely in order to be able to "remain" in it (2:15c) through the 'saving' teaching of them by the godly child-rearing woman mentioned in 2:15a & 2:15b.

412) See our text at nn. 392-97 above.

413) Calvin's *Commentary on First Timothy* (2:15), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948. Although Calvin himself then goes on questionably to apply "if they continue in faith" to the (singular) 'woman' rather than to the (plural) children implied in *teknologia* -- his comment here is otherwise excellent.

414) II Tim. 3:15's "from a child" (*apo brephous*) here seems to mean "from a fetus onward" (cf. Lk. 1:41-44). Compare I Tim. 2:15's "childbearing" (*teknogonia*). See too our text regarding II Tim. 3:14-15 at nn. 433f below.

415) Acts 16:1-3. "Then came he [Paul] to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple [*mathētēs*] was there, named Timothy: the son of a certain woman who was a believing Jewess [*huios gunaikos Ioudaias pisteōs*].... Him [Timothy] would Paul have to go forth with him [Paul]; so he [Paul] took and circumcised him [Timothy], because of the Jews which were in those quarters. For they all knew that his [Timothy's] father was a Greek."

416) I Tim. 1:3,18; 4:6,12-14; 6:11. The translation of I Tim. 4:6 in our own text above, thus renders the Greek

"*entrephomenos tois logois tēs pisteōs kai tēs kalēs didaskalias hē parēkolouthēkas*." I Tim. 4:12 has: "Let

no man despise your youth"; *mēdeis sou tēs neotētos kataphroneitō*. See Calvin's *Comm.* on I Tim. 4:6 (and also his *Commentary on Second Timothy* (1:5), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948, as given below).

417) II Tim. 1:3-5..... 418) II Tim. 1:5a. The *TR*, *P* & *D* all have *lambanōn*, "I keep on remembering."

419) II Tim. 1:5b; "unfeigned faith," *anupokritou pisteōs* (lit.: 'non-hypocritical trust').

420) II Tim. 1:5c; "in you" (*en soi*). Compare the same expression in II Tim. 1:5g. See n. 424 below.

421) II Tim. 1:5d; "dwelt" (*enōkēsen*, aorist with still continuing consequences).

422) II Tim. 1:5e; "first" (*prōton*).

423) II Tim. 1:5f; "I am persuaded" (perfectly "persuaded" or *pepeismai*, perfect passive).

424) II Tim. 1:5g; "in you too" (*kai en soi*). Compare n. 420.

425) II Tim. 1:5cd; compare nn. 420 & 421 above. 426) II Tim. 1:5g; compare n. 424 above.

387) Compare n. 423 above..... 428) II Tim. 1:5 & 3:14f, and see n. 414 above.

429) II Tim. 1:5cg; compare nn. 420 & 424 above.

430) II Tim. 1:5a-g (*lambanōn tēn en soi anupokritou pisteōs...enōkeesen...en soi*).

431) *Comm.* on II Tim. 1:5.

432) *2nd Sermon on Second Timothy* (1:5), in *John Calvin's Sermons on Timothy and Titus*, 1579 ed., Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1983 rep., p. 684.

433) II Tim. 3:14-15.

434) II Tim. 3:14a. To be able to "keep on remaining" or *mene* (present continuous imperative) in things about which one has already learned and been assured of, implies not only long-standing knowledge but also conscious 'assurance' or *fiducia* about those things.

435) II Tim. 3:14b; "you have learned" (*emathes*, strong aorist, with continuing consequences).

436) II Tim. 3:14c; "you have been assured" (*epistōthēs*, aorist passive, with continuing consequences).

437) II Tim. 3:14d; "from whom." In *TR* & *D* and other manuscripts, "whom" is singular (*tinōs*) and implies Timothy's mother. See II Tim. 1:5's "your mother"; and especially 3:15a's "from a fetus" in n. 439 below.

438) II Tim. 3:14e; "you have learned" (*emathes*, strong aorist, with continuing consequences). See too at n. 435 above.

439) II Tim. 3:15a. "From a child" (*apo brephous*) here seems to mean "from a fetus onward" (*cf.* Lk. 1:41-44). See too at II Tim. 1:5 above. Also compare I Tim. 2:15's "childbearing" (*teknogonia*). Elsewhere, *brephos* is further used to refer to a tiny child from between less than a week to about three months old (Lk. 2:12-21; 18:15; Acts 7:19-20; I Pet. 2:2).

440) II Tim. 3:15b; "you have known the Holy Scriptures" (*[ta] hiera grammata oidas*, where *oidas* is a strong aorist with continuing consequences. See too at nn. 435 & 436 above.

441) II Tim. 3:15c; "able to keep on giving you wisdom" (*ta dunamena se sophisai*, where *sophisai* is an aorist infinitive with continuing consequences).

442) II Tim. 3:15d; "salvation through faith in Christ" (*sōtērian dia pisteōs tēn en Christōi*), implying that Timothy already had such "faith in Christ" even when still a fetus. See II Tim. 3:15a in n. 439 *etc.* above.

443) II Tim. 3:17a; "so that the man of God may keep on remaining equipped" (*hina artios ēi ho tou Theou anthrōpos*, where *artios* denotes an already completed action).

444) II Tim. 3:17b; ""having been furnished thoroughly" (*exērtismenos*, perfect passive, again denoting an already completed action).

445) Calvin's *Theme on Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy* (in his *Comm. on 2nd Tim.*).

446) *Comm.* on II Tim. 3:14-15..... 447) Tit. 3:4-6. 448) Tit. 3:5, *esōsen*, aorist with continuing consequences.

449) Tit. 3:7, *dikaiōthentes*, aorist passive participle with continuing consequences.

450) Tit. 3:7, *dikaiōthentes tē Ekeinou chariti*.

451) Tit. 3:5, *ouk ex ergōn tōn en dikaiosunē hōn* [or *ha*] *epoiēsamen hēmeis, alla kata to Autou heleos*.

452) Note that the word "and" here co-ordinates "regeneration" and "renewing." Consequently, no one is "saved" by "a washing" alone. Those "saved" must receive "a renewing of the Spirit."

453) See: Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:15f; 1:41-44; I Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15.

454) Tit. 3:5 (*dia loutrou palingenesias kai anakainōseōs Pneumatos Hagiou*). Note that *loutrou* and *palingenesias* and *anakainōseōs* are all anarthrous here.

455) Tit. 3:5; not 'tou loutrou' but only "loutrou"..... 456) Tit 3:5; "loutrou" but not '*nīptēra louein*.'

457) Thus Hendriksen in his *Commentary on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, Banner of Truth, London, 1964 (on Tit. 3:5).

458) Tit. 3:5; "through" (*dia*)..... 459) Tit. 3:5; not 'by' (*hupo*).

460) Abraham Kuyper, in his *Sacraments* p. 135, asks the following questions and makes the following comment about *palingenesia* (or "regeneration") in Tit. 3:5. "Is the *palingenesia* here an objective or a subjective genitive? Does regeneration have "washing" as its result, or the other way round? Even assuming the washing does refer to Baptism -- is that Baptism then administered because we have been regenerated, or is the Baptism that which has brought about the regeneration? Rome teaches the latter. Now if under the word *palingenesias* the personal regenerating deed of God is to be understood, the meaning is: God saved you through Baptism, which was the sealing of the regeneration which had taken place in you previously. But if *palingenesia* is not just the first act of regeneration yet instead identical with *anakainōsis tou Pneumatos Hagiou*, so that the latter is the actual *epexegetis* of *palingenesias* -- then the *palingenesia* follows Baptism. In neither case is this what Romanism teaches!"

To the above, Charles Hodge adds in his *Systematic Theology* (Nelson, London, 1874, III, pp. 596f) that *palingenesias* is the simple genitive of apposition -- 'the washing which is regeneration.' The 'renewing of the Holy Ghost' which immediately follows must be exegetical and not accessory. It cannot express something new not already expressed by the *palingenesia*. For it could hardly mean 'we are saved by the washing of regeneration and also by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Yet even if it did, it would only mean -- against John 3:5! -- that regeneration is an unfinished process.

461) Thus G.C. Berkouwer: *The Sacraments*, Kok, Kampen, 1954, pp. 161f.

462) Significantly, Gravemeijer, Honig, Kuyper and others all tend to see the "regeneration" in Tit. 3:5 as life-long. Further, they see it as secured not so much by the "washing" but rather by the "renewing of the Spirit" mentioned thereafter.

463) Thus Hodge's *op. cit.*, III, pp. 596f..... 464) *Comm.* on Tit. 3:5-6..... 465) Inst. IV:15:2.

466) 16th Sermon on Titus (3:5f), in Calvin's *Serm. on Tim. & Titus*, p. 1226.

467) W.C.F. 28:6r,7g,1e; W.L.C. 165h & 177r. 468) Heb. 6:1-2.

469) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Hebrews* (6:2), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948..... 470) Heb. 9:14.

471) Heb. 10:22..... 472) Heb. 11:6..... 473) *Inst.* III:11:15. 474) *Ib.* III:14:4.

475) Heb. 11:7 (and Gen. 6:8-9 & 7:1-4 cf. I Pet. 3:20-21 & II Pet. 2:5).

476) *Comm. on Gen.* (6:8f) cf. I Pet. 3:20-21..... 477) *Comm. on Gen.* (7:1-4) cf. n. 476 above.

478) *Comm. on Heb.* (11:7) cf. n. 477 above..... 479) Heb. 11:23.

480) Jas. 1:1-2,18-21 cf. 2:1. Jas. 1:18-21 has "*boulētheis apekuēsen hēmas Logōi alētheias, eis to einai hēmasaparchēn tina tōn Autou ktismatōn. Iste, adelphoi mou agapētoi..., apothemenoi pasan rhuparian, kai...dexashe ton emphuton Logon ton dunamenon sōsai tas psuchas humōn!"*

481) J. Calvin's *Commentary on James* (1:18), ed. of the Calvin Translation Society..... 482) I Pet. 1:2

483) *Inst.* III:1:1..... 484) *Inst.* III:14:6-7..... 485) *Inst.* III:22:6.

486) I Pet. 1:21 to 2:2. Here the TR (and various ancient manuscripts) reads: "*di' pisteuontas humas tous di' Autou pistous eis Theon..., hōste tēn pistin humōn kai elpida einai eis Theon.... [*Humas gar*] anagegennēmenoi ouk ek sporas phthartēs alla aphthartou, dia Logou Zōntos Theou menontos [*en humin*], eis ton aiōna.... Touto de estin to Rhēma to euangelisthen eis humas. Apothemenoi oun pasan kakian..., hōs artigennē'a brephēto logikon adolon gala epipothēsate, hina en Autōi auxēhēte!"*

487) J. Calvin's *Commentary on First Peter* (1:20-25), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948.

488) I Cor. 1:14-17; 3:5-8; 4:1-6; 10:2; 12:13..... 489) *Comm. on I Pet.* 2:1-2..... 490) *Inst.* IV:16:18.

491) I Pet. 3:18-21. "*Christos hapax peri hamartiōn hēmōn epathen..., thanatōtheis men sarki zōopoiētheis de tō Pneumati en Hōi kai tois en phulakē pneumasin poreutheis ekēruxen apeithēsin pote hote apexedecheto hē tou Theou makrothumia en hē merais Nōe kataskeuazomenees kibōtou [keibōtou], eis hēn oligai [oligoi] (tout' estin oktō) psuchai diesōthēsan, di' hudatos. Ho kai hēmas [*humas*] antitupon nun sōzei Baptisma, ou sarkos apothesis rhupou alla suneidēseōs agathēn eperōtēma eis Theon, di' anastaseōs Iēsou Christou."*

492) Gen. 6:8f & 7:1f; cf. Heb. 11:6-7 (above) & II Pet. 2:5 (below).

493) I Pet. 3:20 cf. Gen. 7:7 (cf. 7:14), LXX *dia to hudōr*. Compare too F. Josephus, who tells us in his *Antiquities* I:3:2 (ed. Whiston, Routledge, London, 1890) that "this ark had firm walls and a roof, and was braced with cross-beams so that it could not any way be drowned or overborne by the violence of the water; and thus was Noah, with his family, preserved (*diasōzetai*)."

494) Oecumenius explains this word "answer" (*eperōtēma*) in I Pet. 3:21, as an 'earnest' or a 'pledge'; as in Byzantine Greek law. "Its use for the questions put to the candidate in the baptismal service ('Dost thou renounce...?') is probably due to St. Peter here." Thus *Exp. Gr. Test.* V:69 at I Pet. 3:21. See too Isa.

65:1 & Rom. 10:20, where the cognate *eperōtōsi* in the *LXX* means seeking after or making a request to God.

Commenting on its usage in I Pet. 3:20, Witsius (*Economy of the Covenants*, Tegg, London, 1837, I pp. 429f) declares the following of this word *eperōtēma* (meaning 'answer' or 'demand'): "Oecumenius explains it by *arrhabōn*, *enechuron* and *apodeixis*; earnest, pledge and demonstration.

"This the celebrated Cocceius has adopted, who generally insists that *eperōtēma* denotes an argument, a ground of asking God as a Father, and a sign and seal which we may use with boldness, and when we draw near to God may beg His saving graces without fear."

Vossius observes "that *eperōtēma* does not simply signify an interrogation, but that which is answered to another interrogation. For the persons to be baptized ask of God whether He will be their God; and God, on the other hand, asks and restipulates whether they themselves will maintain a good conscience toward Him.

"Grotius's annotations here are very learned. He observes that *eperōtēma* is a law term...generally used...for a stipulation.... By a metonymy..., an answer or promise is comprehended under the name stipulation. Hence..., *eperōtōmai*, I promise, I engage.... Translate *eperōtan* : 'to answer'; as Erasmus has done."

495) *Exp. Gr. Test.* V:69f at I Pet. 3:21 ("The believer who comes to Baptism has believed in Christ and [has] repented of his past sins...and appeals to God for strength to carry out this renunciation in his daily life").

496) Thus Kuyper's *Sacraments* p. 135 (at I Pet. 3:21)..... 497) I Pet. 3:15-22..... 498) I Pet. 4:1.

499) *Exp. Gr. Test.* V:70 at I Pet. 3:21 ("di' anast. with *sōzei*; compare I Cor. 15:13-17).

500) *Comm.* on I Pet. 3:21. 501) *Inst.* IV:15:2..... 502) *Inst.* IV:10:3 *cf.* III:19:15.

503) Citing this same passage I Pet. 3:20 (in *Inst.* IV:14:4).

504) *Inst.* IV:14:4, citing Aug. *Hom. in Joann.* 13. 505) *Ib.* IV:16:21..... 506) *W.C.F.* 27:3g.

507) *W.L.C.* 161s, 163c & 167s..... 508) *W.L.C.* 161s, compare *W.S.C.* 91v.

509) II Pet. 2:5 *cf.* Gen. 6:8-9 & 7:1-4 and Heb. 11:6-7.

510) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Second Peter* (2:5), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948.

511) I Jh. 3:9 (*Pas ho gegenēmenos ek tou Theou hamartian ou poiei, hoti sperma Autou en autōi kai ou dunatai harmartanein, hoti ek tou Theou gegennētai*).

512) *W.C.F.* 10:3 (citing Lk. 18:15f; Jh. 3:3,5,8; Acts 2:38f; Rom. 8:9; I Jh. 5:12).

513) *Inst.* II:3:10. 514) *Ib.* II:5:10.

515) I Jh. 5:4 (*Pan to gegennēmenon ek tou Theou nika; ton kosmon kai hautēi estin hē nikē hē nikēsasa ton kosmon, hē pistis hēmōn*).

516) J. Calvin's *Commentary on First John* (5:4), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948..... 517) I Jh. 5:5f.

518) *Comm.* on I Jh. 5:6..... 519) *Inst.* III:1:1..... 520) I Jh. 5:12..... 521) *Comm.* on I Jh. 5:12.

522) *W.C.F.* 25:2bc. 523) *Comm.* on I Jh. 5:12..... 524) *Inst.* III:14:4. 525) *Inst.* III:15:6.

526) *W.C.F.* 10:3 (citing Lk. 18:15f; Jh. 3:3,5,8; Acts 2:38f; Rom. 8:9; I Jh. 5:12).

527) John 3:3 has *tis* (anyone), and not *anthrōpos* (a mature human) or *anēr* (a mature male alias a man) or *gunē* (a mature female alias a woman).

528) Rev. 1:5..... 529) *W.L.C.* 165g..... 530) Rev. 2:17..... 531) Rev. 3:12..... 532) Rev. 7:2-3.

533) Rev. 7:4. 534) Kuyper: *Sacraments*, p. 139..... 535) Rev. 12:1-5..... 536) Rev. 12:17.

537) Rev. 21:2,9..... 538) Rev. 21:27..... 539) *Inst.* IV:16:17..... 540) Rev. 22:1-4. 541) *Inst.* IV:2:11.

542) *Ib.* IV:14:1..... 543) *Ib.* IV:14:3 & IV:14:6..... 544) *Ib.* IV:14:7. 545) *Ib.* IV:14:8-9.

546) *Ib.* IV:14:12-13..... 547) *Ib.* IV:14:14..... 548) *Ib.* IV:14:15-19.

549) *Ib.* IV:15:1 (as translated in Wendel's *Calvin*, Collins, London, 1965, p. 318).

550) *Id.* (as rendered in the Beveridge translation, Clarke, London, 1957, II, p. 513).

551) *Ib.* IV:15:2 (Wendel)..... 552) *Ib.* IV:15:3 (Beveridge)..... 553) *Ib.* IV:15:5,6,10..... 554) *Ib.* IV:15:12-13.

555) *Ib.* IV:15:20.

556) *Ib.* IV:15:22, 1559 ed.; compare the 1550 ed. where it is located in a discussion of the Lord's Supper (*Corpus Reformatorum* (ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz & E. Reuss, Brunswick, 1863-1900) I:1038. See too Calvin's *Opera Selecta* (ed. P. Barth & W. Niesel, Munich, 1926-36).

557) Calvin: *Corp. Ref.* I:118 & I:982 (compare too I:1038, in n. 556 above). The historical development of the above-mentioned penultimate paragraphs of this section of *Inst.* IV:15:22, is most interesting (in the 1536, 1539, 1550 and 1559 editions of the *Institutes*). See G. Kramer's book *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*, De Vecht, Breukelen, 1897 (pp. 137f, 140f, and 143 & n. 2). Compare the two paragraphs immediately preceding with the two paragraphs immediately succeeding this present footnote reference 557 in the main text of this present study.

558) *Inst.* IV:16:3-7..... 559) *Ib.* IV:16:8-9..... 560) *Ib.* IV:16:15..... 561) *Ib.* IV:16:17.

562) *Ib.* IV:16:18 (cf. Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 136 n. 1). 563) *Inst.* IV:16:19..... 564) *Ib.* IV:16:20.

565) *Ib.* IV:16:21-22..... 566) *Ib.* IV:16:24.

567) *Ib.* IV:16:25-26; cf. too Calvin's *Sermons on Daniel* (9:19-20a), ed. Calvin Translation Society; and his *Op. Omn.* 41:577.

568) *Ib.* IV:16:31-32..... 569) *Ib.* IV:16:31..... 570) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:483..... 571) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:615.

572) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:494..... 573) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:483,489,493.

574) *Ib.* , as cited by J. Stagg's *Calvin...on Universal Salvation of Infants* , Richmond Va., Presb. Committee of Publication, n.d., pp. 105f.

575) *Instruction in Faith*, ed. Fuhrmann, Lutterworth, London, 1949, ch. 28.

576) P.E. Hughes: *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, pp. 35 & 44.

577) *Ib.* p. 44 n. 4..... 578) In *Tracts and Treatises*, II, pp. 33 & 85f.

579) L.B. Schenck: *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant*, Yale, New Haven Conn., 1940, p. 40.

580) In *Tracts & Treat.*, II, pp. 99B & 113f; *cf.* too p. v "Contents" (pp. 99B - 129) & pp. 129f.

581) *Ib.* I, pp. 69f.

582) *Corp. Ref.* X:625 (as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.*, p.111 n. 1. See too *Corp. Ref.* 9:101, as cited in R.S. Wallace's *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, Geneva Divinity School Press, Tyler Tx., 1982, p. 196 nn. 4 & 5.

583) *Op. Omn.* VII:61..... 584) Compare Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 142.

585) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* , II, pp. 33 & 86f. 586) Compare Hughes: *op. cit.* , pp. 53 & 55f.

587) Cited in Schenk: *op. cit.*, p. 15.

588) *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* V:3 & 5 (cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, II, pp. 79f).

589) *Sixth Session of the Council of Trent* , chs. 4 to 8 and can. 12 & 23. As quoted in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III:93-96 & 105f. See too Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983 ed., II:91f.

590) *Seventh Session of the Council of Trent* can. 4 & 5 & 9, and *Of Baptism* ch. 5. As quoted in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III:164f. For Latin text "*baptismo...est signum...indelebile unde eac iterari non possunt*," see Schaff's *Creeds* II:121.

591) See Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III:109f & 116f (against can. 5 & 8 of the *Sixth Session of the Council of Trent* ). Compare too Calvin's *Op. Omn.* VII:444.

592) *Of the Sacraments in General* can. 5 & 9, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III:165. For the full text of Canon 9, see at n. 590 above.

593) See Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III:174 & 176f (*Antidote* against can. 5 & 9-10 on the *Sacraments in General* and against can. 10 *On Baptism* ) of the *Seventh Session of the Council of Trent*).

594) In *Corp. Ref.* XXXV:425. 595) *Manual of Reformed Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1933, p. 235.

596) See the arts. *Bucer*, (Butzer) Martin (1491-1551); *Ratisbon (Regensburg), Colluquy of (1541)* : in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.*, pp. 162 & 826. Also compare the art. *Pistorius, Johannes* : in ed. Schaff-Herzog's *op. cit.*, III:1845. See too the *Translator's Preface* by Henry Beveridge, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. xi.

597) In Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III p. 189..... 598) *Ib.* pp. 232f *cf.* n. 596 above.  
599) Art. *Augsburg, Interim of (1548)* , in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 85.

600) Schaff's *Creeds* , II, pp. 77f..... 601) Art. *Augsburg, Peace of (1555)* , in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 85.

602) Beveridge's *Translator's Preface* pp xi-xii, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III.

603) Thus in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 193f.

604) *Interim Declaration of Religion* , ch. 15:1-2 & 15:6 & 26:1; in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III:209f & 235.

605) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 189f..... 606) *Ib.* pp. 240f.

607) *Ib.* pp. 269 & 275f. See too Kramer's *op. cit.* , p. 111 n. 1 & p. 122 n. 2.

608) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 344f. Citing *Corp. Ref.* VII & XLII, Kramer's *op. cit.* , pp. 143f & 145f  
n. 3, attributes the authorship to Flaccius.

609) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 346f (compare Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 122 n. 2)..... 610) *Ib.* pp. 348f.

611) *Ib.* pp. 351f..... 612) *Ib.* pp. 351f. 613) *Ib.* pp. 354f..... 614) *Ib.* pp. 355f.

615) Aug.: *Lib.* ii, *cont. ep. Parman.* c. iii..... 616) *Ib.* pp. 356f..... 617) *Corp. Ref.* VII:704.

618) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* (II:199-220); A.A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* (Nelson, London, 1879, pp. 651f); Böckel's *op. cit.*, 1847, pp. 173f); Ives's art. *Zurich Agreement* in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 1072; and  
Schaff's *Creeds* (I pp. 471).

619) Heads of Consent 7-13,15,17-19a; as cited in A.A. Hodge's *op. cit.*, pp. 651f. For the Nineteenth Head --  
the statement that "believers before and without the use of the Sacraments, communicate with Christ" -- see Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 218. See too (ed.) P.E. Hughes's *op. cit.*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, pp. 100-2, 115f, and especially pp. 121f.

620) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 218..... 621) Head of Consent 19b; as cited in A.A. Hodge's *op. cit.*, p. 654.

622) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 199..... 623) *Ib.* pp. 224f..... 624) *Ib.* pp. 227f.

625) *Dedication* in Calvin's *Commentaries on Hebrews and I & II Peter*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1963,



pp. 219f & 296.

626) *Sel. Works: Tracts & Let.*, VI Pt. 3, pp. 278f.

627) See in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 199 & 245..... 628) *Ib.* II pp. 246f.

629) *Ib.* II pp. 252f & 319f (compare Kramer's *op. cit.*, pp. 146f.

630) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 336f (compare Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 147).

631) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 338f..... 632) See our text between nn. 625 & 627 above.

633) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 339f.

634) *Ib.* pp. 340f (*prodesse ut semen, dum in terram proicitur, quod licet non eodem momento agat radicem, vel germinet, non tamen est inutile: quia nisi hoc modo satum temporis successu germen non emitteret*).

635) Schaff: *Church History*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, ed. 1969, VIII p. 663f; cf. Calvin's 1557 *Letter to Farel*.

636) Luther's 1535 *Sermon on Holy Baptism* at Matt. 3:13-17 (in the Erlanger ed. of his *Works* XVI pp. 43f, & esp. at pp. 63f): "When you see how this water is connected with God's Word and Name, because He Himself commands that these words be spoken over it: 'I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' -- you cannot say that it is only a watery or an earthly water. But you must say that it is a water of the divine Majesty itself. For it is not we humans but God Himself Who baptizes with it (through our hand). And He has thrust and woven His Name into it, so that the latter is thoroughly mixed into it and may be called a thoroughly deified water (*ein durchgöttet Wasser*)."

Thereafter, Luther compares the baptismal water with a red-hot iron (which is not just iron but also red-hot); and with sugared water. Thus Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* III:20 pp. 111f n. 2f & 112 n. 1. This view of Luther's is strongly advocated by Höfling, in his *The Sacrament of Baptism*, Erlangen, 1846, I p. 26: "God Himself acts with us in and with and under the water of Baptism; and indeed amid this action...produces our regeneration..., our justification and salvation."

637) Winer's *Compar. Darst.* p. 182, as cited in Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* III:20 p. 119 & its n. 2.

638) Schaff's *Creeds* I pp. 493f..... 639) *Ib.* III pp. 356f (arts. 34 & 35).

640) 7th Nov. 1559; cited in *Sel. Works*, VII, Pt. 4, pp. 73f.

641) Compare in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 502 & 508; cf. Schaff's *Ch. Hist.*, VIII pp. 671f.

642) *Ib.* pp. 534f..... 643) *Ib.* pp. 573..... 644) *Ib.* pp. 575f..... 645) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. xvf & 137f.

646) Compare P.J.S. de Klerk: *Reformed Symbolics*, Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1954, pp. 68f.

647) 1562 *Confession of Faith*, art. 24 (in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 152f)..... 648) *Ib.* art. 26.

649) Calvin's *Treat. Ag. Anab. (Article One: Baptism)*, p. 48.

650) Calvin as cited in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Oct. 1890, pp. 634-35.

651) Calvin's *Defense of the Secret Providence of God* ; as cited in Stagg's *op. cit.*, p. 100), and in Cole's *Calvin's Calvinism* , Wertheim & Macintosh, 1856 ed., p. 117.

652) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:489,493..... 653) *Ib.* VII:42..... 654) *Ib.* VII:680; compare VII:493f & IX:114.

655) *Ib.* VIII:494 & *Op. Omn.* (Amsterdam ed.) VIII:522. 656) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:615 & Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 135.

657) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:616. *Sed hunc ordinarium vocationis modum (ex auditu Verbi) quem tenet Dominus, minime obstare, quominus **occultum** vim Spiritus in pueris, ubi visum est, exerceat. Imo quum dicit Paulus, fidem esse ex auditu, ne his quidem verbis imponitur Deo necessitas quin **arcano instinctu** ad Se trahat discipulos.* Calvin apparently said this in his *Letters to Servetus* from about 1547 onward, published in 1554. Compare *Corp. Ref.* XI:895f & n. 656 above. See too Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 136 & 137 n. 1, p. 142 nn. 3 & 4, & p. 146 para. 2).

658) See T.B. van Halsema's *This was John Calvin*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1959, pp. 96 & 121.

659) *Corp. Ref.* VI:188. 660) *Ib.* XIV:567f. 661) *Sermon* on Eph. 1:7-10..... 662) *Corp. Ref.* VII:9.

663) *Op. Omn.* XIII:578. 664) *Ib.* XI:194..... 665) *Ib.* XIII:308..... 666) *Ib.* XV:227-8.

667) See *Sel. Works*, VI p. 71 n. 1. 668) *Ib.* pp. 71f.

669) *Comm. on Ezk.*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, I, p. xlvii.

670) Trent's last statement on Baptism itself was made at her *7th Session*, on 3rd Mar. 1547. See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 118f.

671) After her *Seventh Session* in 1547, Trent's doctrinal pronouncements only resumed at her *Thirteenth Session* (on 11 Oct. 1551). This was followed by another seventeen sessions. Only some of those (the Fourteenth and also the Twenty-first to and including the Twenty-fifth Sessions) address doctrinal matters. See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 126-206.

672) After her 1547 Seventh Session, Trent does not further refer to Baptism. The only exception to this, is a brief reference at [the 25 Nov. 1551] Second Chapter of the Fourteenth Session ("On the difference between the Sacrament of Penance and that of Baptism"). That Second Chapter on 'Penance' then calls it "a laborious 'kind of Baptism'...for those who have fallen after Baptism." It then further simply (re-)states that "Baptism itself is for those who have not as yet been regenerated." See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 139 & 141, and especially p. 143.

673) Thus Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 198 & 205.

674) Thus Trent's *Thirteenth* up to and including her last or *Twenty-fifth Session*.

675) *Comm. on Ezk.*, I p. xlvii & II pp. 3 & 346..... 676) *Ib.* , I pp. xxxv & xlv (cf. xlviii).

677) *Comm. on Ezk.* 16:20..... 678) *Comm. on Ezk.* 16:21.

679) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Ps. 51:5, Jh. 3:3-8, Rom. 5:12-17 & Eph. 2:1-3; his *Inst.* IV:16:17f; his *True Method of Giving Peace* (with its *Appendix*); in *Corp. Ref.* 8:615; and his *Op. Omn.* 8:522.

680) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:7-14, Ex. 11:7 to 13:5, Ps. 22:9-10, Lk. 1:15-45, Rom. 9:11-13, 11:16, I Cor. 7:14 & II Tim. 1:5-6; his *Serm.* on Eph. 1:7-10; his *Inst.* IV:16:5f,17f,24f; his *Literary Form for Administering Baptism*; and his *True Meth. Giv. Peace* (with its *Append.*).

681) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Ezk. 20-21, Mt. 19:14, Acts 2:38-39, 10:47, 16:15, 22:16, Rom. 4:10-12 & Heb. 6:2; his *Inst.* IV:16:20f; his *True Meth. of Giv. Peace*; his *Antidote to Trent*; his *Second Defence Against Westphal*; and his *True Partaking of the Holy Supper*.

682) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:14, I Cor. 1:17, 12:13, Gal. 5:3, Eph. 5:26, Tit. 3:5 & Heb. 6:2; his *Antidote to Articles of the [Romish] Paris Theological Faculty*; his *True Meth. Giv. Peace*; his *Appendix to the True Method of Reforming the Church*; his *Antid. to Trent*; (with Bullinger), his *Tigurine Confession*; his *2nd Def. Ag. Westphal*; and his *Letter to a Christian Gentleman of Provence* (in his *Sel. Works*, VI pp. 71f).

683) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Dt. 30:6, Jer. 4:4, 9:25f, Rom. 2:25-29, 6:1-9, I Cor. 10:1-6 & 15:29; his *Inst.* IV:15:20f; his *True Meth. Giv. Peace*; his *2nd Def. Ag. Westphal*; and his *Op. Omn.* 15:227-28.

684) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:7f, Mk. 16:16, Acts 3:25, 8:12-16, 8:37, 13:33, Rom. 11:16 & I Cor. 7:14; his *2nd Def. Ag. Westphal*; and his *Letter to Farel* (in *Corp. Ref.* 14:567).

685) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Ex. 4:22-26, I Cor. 4:1, 10:1-11 & Heb. 5:4; his *Inst.* IV:15:20-22; his *Lit. for Admin. Bap.*; his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*; his *Register of Genevan Pastors* (ed. Hughes); and his *True Meth. Giv. Peace* (with its *Appendix*).

686) Schaff's *Creeds* II:207f; compare art. *Roman-Catholic Church* (in Schaff-Herzog's *op. cit.* III:205).

687) *Catechismus Romanus* II:1:14; II:2:4; I:10:6; II:2:18f; II:2:25-33; II:2:38,39,44. Cited in Gravemeijer's *op. cit.*, II; 20th Section (on *Sacraments*), p. 118 and nn. 1 & 2. Cf. too the art. *Catechetics, Catechisms and Catechumens* (in Schaff-Herzog *op. cit.*, I, pp. 417f).

688) R. Bellarmine: *On Purgatory* 2,6.

689) *Belgic Confession* art. 34: "Christ shed His blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for adult persons.... What circumcision was to the Jews, that Baptism is to our children"). Cf. too the *Heidelberg Catechism* 74: "Are infants [of believers] also to be baptized? Yes; for since they, as well as adults, are included in the Covenant and Church of God..., they also must...be distinguished from the children of unbelievers."

690) Art. 20-21 (21-22). The official Latin text runs: "*non nudis signis, sed signis simul et rebus constant. In baptismo enim aqua signum est; at res ipsa regeneratio adoptioque in populum Dei.... Baptisma quidem ex institutione Domini lavacrum regenerationis quam Dominus electis suis, visibili signo per ecclesiae ministerium (qualiter supra expositum est) exhibeat. Quo quidem sancto lavacro infantes nostros idcirco tingimus, quoniam e nobis (qui populus Domini sumus) genitos populi Dei consortio rejicere nefas est tantum non divina voce huc designatos, praesertim quum de eorum electione pie est praesumendum.*"

691) Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 223-24..... 692) *Ib.* p. 224 n. 2..... 693) Ch. 20.

694) *nuncupari Nomine Dei.* 695) *appellari filium Dei.*

696) *foris autem accipimus obsignationem maximorum donorum in aqua, qua etiam maxima illa beneficia repraesentantur,*

697) *baptizamur id est abluimur aut adspargimur.*

698) *damnamus Anabaptistas, qui negant baptizandos esse infantulos recens natos a fidelibus.*

699) *horum est regnum Dei* ..... 700) *qui sunt peculium est in Ecclesia Dei?*

701) *Damnamus Anabaptistas!* 702) *Scots Confession* chs. 16,21-23..... 703) Ch. XI 9th Head (1) 4.

704) See C. Calderwood's *History of the Church of Scotland*, Wodrow Soc., Edinburgh, 1843, II, pp. 101f.

705) W. McMillan: *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1550 - 1638*, Univ. of Glasgow Press, London, 1931, pp. 243-47.

706) Cited in Schenk's *op. cit.* p. 39..... 707) *Ib.* p. 30 & n. 90..... 708) Ch. V:7..... 709) Ch. VII:12.

710) Art. *Craig, John (1512-1600)*, in Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. 268f..... 711) In Schenk's *op. cit.* p. 40 n. 128.

712) In Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 480 & 482.

713) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* ('Of the Administration of the Sacraments').

714) *W.L.C.* 161-167 & 177..... 715) *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 12:1 & 14:1 & 28:4-7..... 716) *Heid. Cat. Q. & A.* 72.

717) Gen. 3:6-19; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Eccles 6:29; Job 14:4; 15:14-16; 25:4-6; Ps. 51:5; John 3:3-8; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:1-3; *W.C.F.* 6:2-3; and *W.L.C.* 25-26. Compare too at n. 679 above.

718) Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 34:14; Ex. 11:7 - 13:5; Ps. 22:9-10; Esra 9:2; Neh. 9:2; Ezk. 16:20-21; Mal. 2:15; Lk. 1:15-45; Acts 2:38-39; 8:36-37; Rom. 9:11-13; 11:16; I Cor. 7:14; Col. 2:11-13; II Tim. 1:5-6; *W.C.F.* 24:2; 25:2; 27:1; 28:4; and *W.L.C.* 166 & 177. Compare too at n. 680 above.

719) II Sam. 12:15-23; Ps. 22:9-10; Jer. 1:5; Mt. 3:11; 19:14; Mk. 16:16; Lk. 1:15; 18:15-16; Jh. 3:3-8; Acts 2:38-39; 10:47; 16:15; 22:16; Rom. 4:10-12; 8:9; I Cor. 7:14; Heb. 6:2; I Jh. 5:12; *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 28:1; and *W.L.C.* 165 & 167 & 177. Compare too at n. 681 above.

720) Gen. 17:7-14; Rom. 4:10-12; I Cor. 1:17; 12:13; Gal. 5:3; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 6:2; *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 28:3 and *W.L.C.* 161 & 165. Compare too at n. 682 above.

721) Dt. 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25f; Rom. 2:25-29; 6:1-11; I Cor. 10:1-6; 15:29; Col. 2:11-13; *W.C.F.* 28:5 & 29:4; and *W.L.C.* 165 & 167. Compare too at nn. 640 & 683 above.

722) Gen. 17:7f; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; 8:12-16; 8:36-37; Rom. 4:10-12; Col. 2:11-13; *W.C.F.*

28:4-5; and *W.L.C.* 166. Compare too at n. 684 above.

723) Ex. 4:22-26; Mt. 19:13f; 28:19f; Mk. 10:14; 16:15f; Lk. 18:15f; Acts 2:38-42; Romans 11:16; I Cor. 1:2,14-16; 3:6; 4:1; 6:11-20; 7:14; 10:1-11; 12:13; Heb. 5:4; Knox's (& Others') *First Book of Discipline* Ch. II 2nd Head 1-3; Ch. IV 4th Head (1) 1-3; Ch. XI 9th Head (1) 4; *W.C.F.* 28:5 & 29:4; *West. Form of Presb. Ch. Gvt.* ('Of the Church' [d]; and 'Pastors' [p]); *West. Direct. Pub. Worsh. of God* ('Of the Administration of the Sacraments'). Compare too at n. 685 above.

724) Calv.: *Letter 229*, cited in L.B. Schenck's *op. cit.*, p. 15..... 725) *W.S.C.* 92x-95d.

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

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

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Dr. Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Visiting Lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol. He was at that time the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) -- and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has 21 earned degrees -- including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

Lee rises early; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited 110 countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has also lectured and/or preached in all of those countries, as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in the Commonwealth of Australia -- where he was for twenty years the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He retired in 2000.

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