

BAPTIST HISTORY VINDICATED
By John T. Christian, 1899

Editor's Note: John T. Christian wrote this book as a result of William Whitsitt's articles and book claiming 1641 as the beginning date for immersion as baptism by Baptists. -- *jrd*

Dr. Christian has certainly rendered valuable service in bringing to light many facts bearing on the history of the English Baptists in the 16th and 17th centuries. -- *T. T. Eaton*

"Thus the 1641 theory rests upon the presence of ten words in an anonymous manuscript, of which the earliest extant copy belongs to the year 1860, and this copy is itself at best a mere copy of a copy!" (Chapter VI, p. 62. -- *John T. Christian*)

Baptist History Vindicated
"Introduction"
By T. T. Eaton

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter I-III

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter IV-VI

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter VII

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter VIII

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter IX

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter X

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter XI

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter XII

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter XIII

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter XIV

Baptist History Vindicated, Chapter XV

Baptist History Vindicated, Appendices I-III

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian, 1899

Introduction

By T. T. Eaton

Dr. Christian has certainly rendered valuable service in bringing to light many facts bearing on the history of the English Baptists in the 16th and 17th centuries. He has shown a wonderful gift for unearthing facts. As if by instinct he knows which way to turn and where to go to get valuable information. Who but he, for example, would ever have thought of overhauling the wills recorded in the old Somerset House, London. Yet there he found the will of Henry Jacob, probated in April, 1624, showing that his death occurred before that date. This fact contradicted the statements of the Gould documents -- the so-called "Kiffin" manuscript, the "Jessey Records," &c.

Dr. Christian has not only examined the material in the British Museum, and in the leading libraries, but he has gone into the civil and ecclesiastical court records; he has visited some of the oldest Baptist churches, founded long before 1641, and has brought to light many interesting and valuable facts. Even in his examination of the libraries he has uncovered what was before unknown. For example, he found the book of "R. B." to which writers of the 17th century referred, and which was claimed by those who hold the "1641 theory" to have been written by Richard Blunt. It turns out that "R. B." was not Richard Blunt at all, but "R. Barrow." His finding the testimony of Fox, which had been disputed, was a case of special interest. But there is no need to enumerate in detail the various interesting "finds" of Dr. Christian. The question is, what do they prove?

The claim has been made that the Anabaptists of England were in the uniform practice of pouring and sprinkling for baptism for nearly all the 16th century and up to 1641 in the 17th. In 1641, it is said, one Richard Blunt was sent over to Holland to be immersed, and returning to London he immersed Samuel Blacklock, and these two immersed others. This is claimed as the first immersion of a believer in England for more than a century. It is claimed that about this time others began to practice immersion without reference to being in any sort of succession, and without regard to any baptized administrator. Such is the charge against our Baptist fathers in England, from which Dr. Christian has furnished a complete vindication.

WHAT ARE THE PROOFS?

What is the evidence brought forward in proof of this charge? One would suppose that the evidence would be clear and decisive; that cases would be cited of the practice of affusion by the Anabaptists of England, and records would be produced of the change from sprinkling to immersion by the Anabaptist churches. But we find nothing of the sort. *Not a single instance has been cited where any Anabaptist in England practiced sprinkling or pouring, or where any Anabaptist church changed its practice.* The

remarkable claim is made that a practice was universal among a people, when not one of them has been shown to have observed any such practice!!! What sort of history is that?

But because certain parties on the Continent of Europe are said to have practiced affusion for baptism, it is *inferred* that these Anabaptists of England must have done the same. This strained inference is the first part of the alleged evidence that the immersion of believers was unknown in England for more than a century before 1641.

The second part of this evidence is a statement found in an anonymous document, the so-called "Kiffin" manuscript. The oldest extant copy of this document dates back only so far as 1860, less than 40 years ago. In this copy, now at Regents Park College, London, is an account of Richard Blunt's going to Holland to be immersed, of his return and of his immersing Samuel Blacklock, and of their immersing others. Along with this account occur the words, "none having then so practiced in England to professed believers." Even if it were conceded that this document were authentic and authoritative -- which I by no means concede -- all that could be claimed as proved by it, is that, *so far as the writer knew*, there had been no practice of immersing believers in England at that time. But this is a very long way from proving that there was no such practice in England. In 1850 Charles H. Spurgeon did not know that anybody practiced immersion in England. It was a surprise and a joy to him to find that there were people in England, whose existence he had not suspected, who observed the New Testament teaching in regard to baptism. He proceeded to become one of them, and soon he filled the world with his fame. He says of himself in this regard: "I had thought myself to have been baptized as an infant; and so, when I was confronted with the question, 'What is required of persons to be baptized?' and I found that repentance and faith were required, I said to myself, 'Then I have not been baptized; that infant sprinkling of mine was a mistake; and please [to] God that I ever have repentance and faith, I will be properly baptized.' I did not know that there was one other person in the world who held the same opinion; for so little do Baptists make any show, or so little did they do so then, that I did not know of their existence" (Sermon on God's Pupil. Ps. 71.17). If, then, a certain unknown man's not knowing of the practice of believer's immersion in England in 1640, proves there was no such practice there at that time, how much more does Charles H. Spurgeon's not knowing of the practice of believer's immersion in England in 1850, proves there was no such practice there at that time. They had facilities of information in 1850 far beyond what they had in 1640.

Thomas Crosby, who wrote a history of the Baptists of England, 1738-40, mentions a manuscript "said to have been written by Mr. William Kiffin," which corresponds in many respects to the document in Regent's Park College, and no doubt the latter is a version of the document Crosby saw, but of which he gives the substance, with some quotations. It is remarkable that Crosby does not mention or refer to the words, "none having, then so practiced in England to professed believers," and it is questionable whether those words were in the manuscript Crosby had before him. That document, however, mentioned the story of Richard Blunt. But there is no other evidence of the story except this sole document, which is anonymous. The only witness in the case is unknown, both as to his name and his date. We find no trace of him till Crosby speaks of him a century after the alleged occurrence. Neale also speaks of Blunt, but does so solely

on the authority of this same document. Indeed, outside that document there is no evidence that there was such a performance as Blunt's going to Holland to be immersed and of his immersing Blacklock and others. No writer of the period, or for nearly a century later, makes any reference to any such proceeding. The book written by "R. B." was supposed to furnish proof in regard to Blunt, but, as has been said, that book has been found, and turns out to have been written by "R. Barrow."

In 1643, only two years after 1641, the Baptist churches of London put forth their famous confession of faith, which was signed by the leading Baptists of the city. It is significant that neither the name of Richard Blunt nor that of Samuel Blacklock appears. If they did what the "Kiffin" document says they did, their names should have headed the list. Dr. Joseph Angus knows more about English Baptist history than any other living man, and in ransacking that whole period he finds no evidence of the existence of Richard Blunt or of Samuel Blacklock, so that in his list of Baptist worthies their names are omitted. Dr. Cathcart, in this country, in the *Baptist Encyclopedia* gives no hint of the existence of such a man as Richard Blunt. The only evidence of existence I have been able to hear of comes from a lady, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, who has relatives by the name of Blunt in England. She says that Richard Blunt was a Baptist, that he left the *o* out of his name so as to distinguish himself from the Roman Catholic Blounts, and that he died in 1620. She gives as authorities for these statements, Alexander Cooke's *History of the Blunts* and Maj. Gen. Blunt of the British army. I have had no opportunity to examine this evidence. If it shall prove to be valid, while it will show that such a man as Richard Blunt really did live, it will not help the 1641 theory, since a man who died in 1620, cannot be depended on to have introduced immersion into England in 1641.

But Dr. Christian has clearly proved that these documents, the "Kiffin" ms., "Jessey Records," &c., are thoroughly unreliable. They abound in the grossest and most glaring mistakes. They get names wrong, titles of books wrong, and dates wrong. They represent women as being men, men as operating long after they were dead, or as actively engaged over the country when the court records show they were in prison. If such errors do not prove a document to be unreliable, in the name of reason, what errors would prove it? The documents were evidently written long after the events, by parties who did not even dare to give their names, and who were in gross ignorance of the facts. The Epworth-Crowle document has been rejected on far less evidence than is produced against these Gould documents -- so-called because the extant copies were made in 1860, under the direction of the Rev. George Gould. According to all the recognized principles of evidence, these Gould documents are utterly unworthy of credit. Yet in them is found the only direct testimony (?) to the "1641 theory." On such evidence (?) we are asked to rest our historic faith.

The third part of the alleged evidence, that the immersion of believers was unknown in England for a long period before 1641, consists of certain expressions of writers after 1641, who speak of the Anabaptists as "new," "upstart," &c. These expressions are arrayed and paraphrased so as to conform to the "1641 theory," and interpreted as confirming the "Kiffin" manuscript. Even were these expressions all that is claimed for

them, they would prove nothing except that the practices of the Baptists were new to those who were writing. There are millions of people in the United States to-day to whom the practices of the Baptists are unknown. It was not until after the war between the States that Gen. Robert E. Lee knew that there were any Christians in this country who rejected infant baptism. Does that prove that before 1861 the Baptists of our land practiced infant baptism? Prof. George F. Holmes, of the University of Virginia, who recently died, wrote: "The Baptists are a religious laity whose main belief is in the necessity of the Hindoo practice of purification by bathing" (University of Virginia Bulletin for August, 1898). Dr. Holmes was one of the greatest scholars of the world. These are but samples from men who surely had abundant opportunity to know about the Baptists, but who had not taken the trouble to inform themselves. If, then, such men, who are not chargeable with hostility to the Baptists, and living in our own land and time, so utterly misunderstand our denominational beliefs and practices, shall we be surprised to find bitter enemies of the Baptists in the 17th century in England charging them with being "new" and "upstart?"

Let it be remembered that the persecuting courts of High Commission and Star Chamber went out of existence August 1st, 1641, and that then the Baptists, who had been obliged to conceal themselves, came out of their hiding places and preached their doctrine boldly, and broadly, as they could not do before. This, of course, made a stir, and it was all new to many of the people of that day. What wonder, then, that these Baptists should be pronounced "new" and "upstart?" But it is grotesque to claim such expressions as proving that Baptists began their practices in England at that time. The very fact that they showed themselves so vigorously and preached their doctrines so boldly in 1641, as is conceded on all hands, just so soon as they could do so safely, proves that they did not then invent or adopt these practices. They came from their hiding places and advocated openly what they had been believing and practicing in secret all the time.

Now, so far, I have assumed that the expressions "new," "upstart," &c., in the writings of the 17th century meant all that is claimed for them, viz.: that the writers thought the people and the practices mentioned were "new" and "upstart." But an examination of the writings shows this not to be true. What these writers denounce as "new" and "upstart," is not the practice of immersion. Not at all; for that was, up to the decree of the Westminster Assembly in 1643, regarded as the normal form of baptism. The "new" thing was the absolute refusal to admit that anything but immersion was valid baptism. These writers were used to the idea that while immersion was all right, affusion, especially in cases of sickness, was equally valid. It was the denial of the validity of affusion that gave offense, and which was denounced as "new" and "upstart." Those who had been sprinkled in infancy were now required to be immersed, and nothing but immersion would be accepted by these horrid Anabaptists. Dr. Featley in 1644 entered the lists against these "new upstart sectaries," and in his "Dippers Dipt or the Anabaptists Ducked and Plunged," &c., he served them up to the great satisfaction of their enemies. Dr. Featley clearly states the case when he says, p. 182: "Whatsoever is here alleged for dipping we approve of, so farre as it excludeth not the other two," that is, "washing" and "sprinkling." Dr. Featley made no objection to the practice of immersion, but only to the rejection of

affusion. The same may be said of others who denounce the Baptists of that day as "new," "upstart," &c.

Great reliance has been placed on a statement of the anonymous writer, Mercurius Rusticus, and so it may be well in passing to quote his language in full, which those who throw him at us have carefully avoided doing. On pages 21 and 22, of "Mercurius Rusticus or the Countrie's Complaint of the Barbarous Outrages," &c., A. D. 1646, we find:

"Essex is a deep country, and therefore we have travelled almost two weeks in it, yet we cannot get out; we are now at *Chelmerford* which is the Shire towne, and hath in it two thousand communicants; all of one and the same church, for there is but one church in this great towne, whereof at this time Dr. Michelson is parson, an able and godly man. Before this parliament was called, of this numerous congregation, there was not one to be named, man or woman, who boggled at the Common prayers, or refused to receive the sacrament kneeling, the posture which the church of England (walking in the foot-steps of venerable antiquity) hath by Act of Parliament enjoined all of those which account it their happinesse to be called her children. But since this magnified Reformation was set this towne (as indeed most corporations, as we finde by experience, are Nurceries of Faction and Rebellion) is so filled with Sectaries, especially *Brownists* and *Anabaptists*, that a third part of the people refuse to communicate in the Church Lyturgie, and half refuse to receive the blessed sacrament, unless they may receive it in what posture they may please to take it. They have amongst them two sorts of *Anabaptists*: the one they call Old men, or *Aspersi*, because they have been but sprinkled; the other they call the New men, or the *Immersi*, because they were overwhelmed in their rebaptization."

It is to be noted: 1. That this comes from an anonymous and a bitter royalist. The chief reliance of the advocates of the "1641 theory" is on anonymous documents. 2. He constantly confounded Anabaptists with Brownists and others, and denounced them all indiscriminately. Yet even here he does not claim that any who had been sprinkled in infancy were resprinkled, which must have been the case had the Anabaptists practiced sprinkling. The reasonable conclusion, even if this unknown writer be regarded as reliable, is that those who were converted from the state church and were immersed were the "Immersi," while those who broke from the state church without being immersed were the "Aspersi." But such a venomous writer was not apt to get things straight, and his utterance gives only his opinion at best. Yet even he says nothing of Blunt's introducing immersion in 1641 or at any other time.

Another writer greatly relied on is Robert Baillie, and it may be deemed worth while to consider what he says. He was a Scotch Presbyterian minister in Glasgow, and of course he knew all about what the Anabaptists all over England were doing. He says in his "Anabaptisme," p. 163:

"Among the new inventions of the late Anabaptists, there is none which with greater animosity they set on foot, than the necessity of dipping over head and ears, than the nullity of affusion and sprinkling in the administration of Baptisme. Among the old

Anabaptists, or those over sea to this day, so far as I can learn by their writs or any relation that has come to my ears, the question of dipping and sprinkling came never upon the Table. As I take it, they dip none, but all whom they baptize they sprinkle in the same manner as is our custom. The question about the necessity of dipping seems to be taken up onely the other year by the Anabaptists in England, as a point which alone, as they conceive, is able to carry their desire of exterminating infant-baptisme," &c.

It is to be noted that his special objection is not to the practice of immersion but to the advocacy of "the nullity of affusion and sprinkling." But how much Baillie knew of the people he was writing about, may be seen by reading further what he has to say of them. He tells of the origin of these Anabaptists, "unhappy men, Stock and Muncer, did begin to breathe out a pestiferous vapor, for to over-cloud that golden candlestick" (p. 3). He says further: The spirit of Mahomet was not more hellish in setting foot most grosse errors and countenancing abominable lusts, nor was it anything so much hellish in making an open trade of bloodshed, robbery, confusion and Catholick oppression through the whole earth as the spirit of Anabaptisme. This great and severe sentence will be made good in the following narrative by such abundance of satisfactory testimonies as may convince the greatest favourers of these men among us" (p.3). He says of these Anabaptists "that whosoever refused to enter into their society to be rebaptized and to become members of their churches were without all pity to be killed" (p.5). He goes yet farther: "So great is the despight of divers Anabaptists at the person of Jesus Christ that they rail most abominably against His holy name, they not only spoil Him of His godhead, but will have His manhood defiled with sin, yea, they come to renounce Him and His Cross, though some of them, with a great deal of confidence, avow themselves to be the very Christ" (p. 98).

Once more he says that among these Anabaptists "the Scripture is denied to be the Word of God, and is avowed to be full of lies and errors, men are sent from the Word to seek revelations above and contrary to it" (p. 99).

In all fairness let it be asked what reliance can be placed in the statements about the Anabaptists of a man who writes this way about them? Yet these are probably the main citations relied upon to confirm the statement of the so-called "Kiffin" manuscript. It is only fair, though painful, to add, that many of the authors cited in favor of the "1641 theory" have been grossly misrepresented. For example, Ephraim Pagitt is represented as saying in his *Heresiography* that the "plunged Anabaptists" are the newest sort. He wrote in 1645, and this is urged as confirming the theory that immersion had then been lately introduced. But the fact is, Pagitt says no such thing. I secured a copy of his book and read it through carefully twice (and others have read it), and the expression "plunged Anabaptists" does not occur in the book at all, and he draws no distinction whatever between the "plunged Anabaptists" and any other sort, nor does he intimate that immersion was new among them.

It is claimed that Thomas Crosby, the Baptist historian who wrote in 1738-40, favored the theory that immersion had ceased to be practiced in England, and was started afresh in 1641. But the claim is without valid warrant. Crosby does unhesitatingly speak of

restoring immersion, but that does not mean to convey the idea that immersion had ceased to be practiced, is manifest by his point blank declaration to the contrary. A practice can be restored without having entirely ceased to exist. When the abolition of the persecuting courts (High Commission and Star Chamber) in 1641, left Baptists free to publicly preach their doctrines and observe their practices, there was, as a matter of course, a revival of both. There was a decided Baptist movement, largely among Pedobaptists, and the mistake is made of thinking that these Pedobaptists who adopted Baptist views were the first in England, for over a century, to hold those views. Crosby, however, does not put the revival or restoring of immersion in 1641, but back at the beginning of the century, for he speaks of John Smyth as one of those who restored the ordinance in England, and Smyth died in 1609 or 1610. Crosby believed that the immersion of believers had been practiced in England from the earliest times, and that it had been kept up in the world since the days of John the Baptist. Hear him:

"The English Baptists adhere closely to this principle, that John the Baptist was by divine command, the first commissioned to preach the Gospel and *baptize by immersion* those that received it, and that this practice has been ever since maintained and continued in the world to this present day (Preface, Vol. II, page ii.)

Crosby gives a sketch of the preservation of immersion from the days of Christ to the beginning of the 17th century. He nowhere intimates that any Anabaptist church in England ever changed their practice from sprinkling to immersion. He assumes throughout that the Anabaptists from whom the Baptists largely sprang, had all along practiced immersion. He is at pains to point out how the Anabaptists in continental Europe practiced immersion from the beginning of the Reformation. He tells of the decree at Zurich in the year 1530, "making it death for any to baptize by immersion; upon which law some called Anabaptists were ty'd back to back, and thrown into the sea, others were burned alive, and many starved to death in prison." He reminds his readers how Pomeranius, a companion of Luther, explained that "plunging was restored in Hamburg" in 1529. Speaking of Arnoldus Meshovius and others about 1522, as opposed to infant baptism, Crosby says (Vol. I., p. 21, Preface): "'Tis still more evident that these first reformers looked upon sprinkling as a corruption of baptism." This historian believed that immersion had been continuously practiced in England since the time "the Gospel was preached in Great Britain soon after our Saviour's death" (Vol. II., p. ix). He says (Id. p. xlvi.), in speaking of Wickliffe's opinions: "I shall now only further observe that the practice of *immersion* of dipping in *baptism*, continued in the church until the reign of King *James I*, or about the year 1600." By "the church" he evidently means the Church of England, for on the very next page he says: "That immersion continued in the *Church of England* till about the year 1600."

HOW SPRINKLING CAME

The reign of James I. was the turning point, so far as the Church of England was concerned. James came from Scotland, where the Protestant divines on returning from their stay in Geneva, when Elizabeth ascending the throne made their return safe, had

established sprinkling. Hence James began to introduce sprinkling and to root out immersion from the Church of England.

These Protestant divines had fled from the persecution of Bloody Mary, and had gone to Geneva. There, under the tuition of John Calvin, they adopted sprinkling as the normal act for baptism; and when on the accession of Elizabeth they returned (as the Edinburgh Encyclopedia tells us), they thought they could not do their church a greater service than by introducing a practice suited to their Northern clime and sanctioned by the great name of Calvin. Thus sprinkling was established in Scotland, and James, coming from Scotland, believed in sprinkling and sought to make it the general practice. And just here Dr. Christian has rendered valuable service in enabling us to trace the growth of sprinkling in England. He has personally examined copies of the Articles of Visitation sent out to the clergy by the Archbishops, every year from the beginning of James' reign to the triumph of sprinkling in 1643. The high functionaries of the Church of England resisted the efforts of the Court to substitute the "bason" for sprinkling, instead of the "font" for immersion. In these Articles exhortations abound to keep the "font" in its place and to keep out the "bason." Thus the struggle went on until when the Westminster Assembly met the Presbyterian view prevailed, and that body in 1643 voted immersion down by a majority of one.

So far from immersion's beginning in England in 1641, it was not far from that time that sprinkling began. And the very fact that immersion was voted down in this Assembly by a majority of only one in 1643, is positive proof that immersion did not begin in England only two years before. It is incredible that a religious rite, introduced anew by poor and obscure people, and opposed to the practice and prejudice of those in power (as immersion must have been, according to the "1641 theory"), should in two years have taken such hold of the members of that Assembly as that the rite could be voted down by only one majority. Yet without an atom of positive evidence, we are asked to believe that just that took place.

ABSENCE OF RECORDS

During the times of persecution before 1641 (the year the persecuting courts were abolished), the Baptists could not safely keep records. To have done so would have been to furnish their enemies with facilities for identifying them and imprisoning and killing them. The persecutors sought for records that they might learn the names and locations of these "pestilent heretics;" and the existence of records would have been a constant peril. The Baptists were too wise to furnish their adversaries with such easy means of identification. Necessarily, therefore, the evidence of the existence and practices of the Baptists of those times, consists of what the court records tell us, of what writers chose to say of them, and of occasional utterances of the persecuted ones themselves, when they could safely write. It could not be expected that their enemies would do them justice. In certain obscure places, where they could safely meet, they might venture to build a house for worship. Such a house is found at Hill Cliff, where there is now a Baptist church which traces its existence back to 1522; and it is believed there has been a church there

since the earliest times. Dr. Christian saw there a tombstone, lately exhumed, with the epitaph of a pastor of that very church, and bearing date 1357. The ruins of an old baptistery have also been lately uncovered. This obscure and inaccessible place was a safe retreat in times of persecution. How many such there were in the land, there are no means of determining.

There are to-day 27 Baptist churches in England which antedate 1641. No one denies that these churches have been in existence during the time they claim; but it is coolly assumed, in the absence of any evidence, that prior to 1641 these churches practiced sprinkling. The reason for assuming this is that the exigencies of the "1641 theory" demand it.

From 1641 on, the material is abundant, just as we would expect. And if the Anabaptist churches of England did really change their practice in 1641 from sprinkling to immersion, there is no reason there should not be records of such a change. From 1641 on, it was safe to keep records, save during a brief space, when persecution was renewed to some extent after the restoration of Charles II. So while we see abundant reason for the absence of records before 1641, we can see no reason why there should be no record at all of any of the Anabaptist churches adopting immersion in 1641 and after, if they did adopt it.

POSITIVE EVIDENCE

Still we are not without positive evidence of the existence of believer's immersion in England before 1641. Dr. Christian gives a good supply of such evidence, much of which is new to the public. We note a very few of these.

The quotation from John Fox (Book of Martyrs, Alden Ed.) had been called in question. It was admitted that it was decisive, *if genuine*; but its genuineness was denied, and so Dr. Christian omitted it in the second edition of "Did They Dip?" because he could not verify the passage in the old editions of Fox's "Acts and Monuments." But when in England last summer he found the book of Fox, whence that quotation, changed somewhat, was no doubt originally derived. The title of the book is *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiastuarum, &c.*, A. D. 1517. In this book Fox says (in Latin which is given in full by Dr. Christian): "But while we are plunged into the waters and rise again out of them, the death of Christ first, and his burial is symbolized, and next his resuscitation, indeed and his return to life, &c."

This language does not tell of an ancient custom, long disused, but of a present practice which the writer and his readers observed -- "while *we* are plunged into the waters," &c. Moreover, Fox speaks of the Anabaptists of his day in a way which clearly shows that they practiced immersion. The quotation is given in full in the body of the book, and need not be repeated here.

Coming on down, we are furnished with numerous testimonies (Jewell, 1609; Busher, 1614; Hieron, 1614; Rogers, 1638, and others), both as to the practice of immersion in general, and as to its practice by the Baptists particularly, until we come to Edward Barber, who in 1641 was answering objections to the immersion of believers; which proves the practice to have existed before. Barber in this same "treatise," declares that the practice of immersing believers was older than the name Anabaptist, which name no one denies was current in the reign of Henry VIII., over a hundred years before.

Barber says (p. 7):

"In like manner lately, those that professe and practice the dipping of Christ, instituted in the Gospel, are called and reproached with the name of Anabaptists," &c. The *late* thing is the name Anabaptist, which was applied as a reproach to those who all along had been professing and practicing "the dipping of Christ." This does not prove that the practice was really older than the name, but that Edward Barber believed it to be so. That he wrote this in 1641, proves that the practice of immersing believers did not begin at that time in England, since it ran back beyond his recollection, certainly. Had immersion been a "splinter new" thing in 1641, he could not then have believed that it was older than the name Anabaptist.

Similarly, the account given by John Taylor in 1641 of the immersion of Samuel Eaton, by John Spilsbury, shows the practice of immersion in England previous to 1641. For the court records show that Sam Eaton (and there can be no question about his being the same man) died Aug. 25th, 1639, and that he was constantly in prison from May 5th, 1636, till his death. Hence his immersion and his immersing others must have taken place before May 5th, 1636.

The testimonies of Fuller, Busher, Featley and others are given fully by Dr. Christian, and need not be repeated here.

CONCLUSION

We have, then, briefly, the following conditions:

1st. It is admitted that there were Anabaptists in England before 1641, who were very strict in their belief and interpretation of the Bible, and were ready to die for their faith. But it is denied that any of them ever saw their duty in the Bible in regard to baptism till 1641, and then they all saw it at once and began to practice it.

2nd. It is admitted that these Anabaptists were constantly reminded of immersion by the rubric of the state church and by the writings of the commentators and scholars of the period. Yet it is denied that any of them took the hint till 1641, and then they all took it and adopted immersion.

3d. There is no account of any Anabaptist church's [sic] having practiced sprinkling and changing to immersion, and the absence of any such account cannot be explained on the "1641 theory."

4th. The only direct evidence offered in favor of the "1641 theory" is the statement of an anonymous document, the oldest extant copy of which is less than 40 years old, which is not, confirmed by any writer of the period, and which has been proved to be full of gross mistakes -- names wrong, dates wrong, titles wrong and facts wrong.

5th. The other evidence offered is circumstantial, and is, moreover, not to the point. The other testimonies cited to prove the "1641 theory" say nothing about 1641, but speak of these Anabaptists as "new and upstart," &c., which we would naturally expect when we remember that in 1641 the abolition of the persecuting courts left them free to publicly preach and practice their beliefs as they could not do before.

6th. We have actual documentary and monumental evidence of the practice of believers' immersion in England before 1641.

7th. It is claimed that "distinguished historians" have adopted the "1641 theory." Four names have been mentioned, but qualifications should be used in citing these names. On the other hand, it were [was] easy to cite scores of names of eminent historians who reject the "1641 theory." Not a single man in England has adopted it, so far as known, and many of them have distinctly rejected it. Surely historians in England can be supposed to know the facts of the history of England better than those in other lands. And, moreover, equally distinguished historians, and more of them, too, in this country distinctly reject the theory.

The reader, by examining the evidence produced, can judge for himself whether immersion was "splinter new" in England in 1641.

T. T. EATON.

[From *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. i-xx. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian, D.D., LL.D.

Chapter I [Go to Chapter II](#) [Back To Contents](#)

AN EXAMINATION OF THE JESSEY CHURCH RECORDS
AND THE "KIFFIN" MANUSCRIPT.

In presenting this subject I shall be very careful to give the exact sources of my information. I am particularly indebted to the Rev. J. H. Delles, D.D. and his admirable assistant, the Rev. W. C. Ulyat, the librarian of Princeton Theological Seminary. Two very large collections, one on the subject of baptism and the other on Puritanism, aggregating some ten thousand volumes, are to be found in that library, to say nothing of the important books in the general library. Unusual opportunities were granted me for the examination of these works. The British Museum, London, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, are rich in works which treat of early English Baptists. The Rev. Joseph Angus, D.D., kindly opened up his large collection of tracts to my use, and through the courtesy of the Rev. George P. Gould, President of Regents Park College, where Dr. Angus' library is located, I was able to examine this important collection. I am also indebted to President Gould for an examination of the Gould edition of the "Kiffin" Manuscript and of the Jessey Church Records. The library at York Minster also contains some important works not found elsewhere. The Record Office, London, where the State Papers are kept, and the Somerset House where wills, births and marriages are recorded contain invaluable information. Besides these, I am indebted to a number of libraries and individuals for information which I can acknowledge here only in the most general way. I have made full use of all these sources of information in addition to a careful examination of the works I have gathered in my own library during the last twenty years. I have no theory to serve, and have tried to weigh all the facts which have come before me. I have furthermore put myself to much trouble to find all the facts in the case, and while not able to fully accomplish this important consideration, the reader will find much important material that has not been presented before. The subject certainly needed investigation, and I am glad to be instrumental in throwing any light upon it.

Most extraordinary and exaggerated claims have been put forth as to the historic value of the "Kiffin" Manuscript. Its history is no less remarkable. It has been strangely confounded with other documents by more than one author, and has been made to serve a purpose on more than one occasion. It has been used to prove the most preposterous propositions, when these contradicted all known history. It has been asserted in the most positive manner that the manuscript is authentic and wholly reliable, although not one contemporaneous author mentions the document or ever refers to the most prominent persons named in it. The interpretations put upon its language are no less strained than the statements found in its pages. It has been the fruitful source for visions and extravagant vagaries, while the historians who have adopted it have given us instead of history confusion worse confounded.

As if one such manuscript is not enough we have two, which do not agree with each other, indeed they differ so widely that they both cannot be the same document, and yet they are both called the Kiffin Manuscript.

1. The Crosby edition. The historian, Crosby, who wrote his Baptist History in the year 1738ff., quotes a document which he declares was "said" to have been written by Mr. William Kiffin. Where Crosby got this document, and what became of it, are questions which at this time no one can answer. Crosby quoted the document with evident caution, and it is manifest that he was never fully convinced that it was written by William Kiffin. In his first volume he appears to have felt that some of the statements contained in it were worthy to be recorded, and he may have accepted some of its theories; but it is equally certain that in the second volume, upon maturer consideration, he rejected this document, at least he modified his previous statements. So far from Crosby believing that the Baptists of England began in 1641, he was a believer in church succession. Nor is there a word in all of his writings to indicate that he believed that the Baptists of England began to dip in 1641. He nowhere indicates that the words in regard to dipping, "none having so practiced in England to professed believers," were in the manuscript before him, which he would undoubtedly have done had the words been in there. His words on succession are plain and unmistakable. He says: "It may be expected, and I did intend, that this volume should have contained all I at first proposed to the publick. But since my publication of the former volume, I have had such materials communicated to me that I could not in justice to the communicators omit them, without incurring the just censure of a partial historian. Besides it having been objected to me that a more early account of the English Baptists might be obtained: it gave a new turn to my thoughts, and put me upon considering the state and condition of the Christian Religion, from the first plantation of the Gospel in England. Now in this inquiry, so much has occurred to me as carries with it more than a probability that the first English Christians were Baptists. I could not therefore pass over so material a fact in their favor; and now because it cannot now be placed where it properly belongs, I have fixed it by way of preface to this Second Volume."

On page ii of this Preface, Crosby says:

"This great prophet *John* had an immediate commission from heaven, before he entered upon the actual administration of his office. And as the *English Baptists* adhere closely to this principle, that *John the Baptist* was by divine command, the first commissioned to preach the gospel, and *baptize by immersion*, those that received it; and that this practice has been ever since maintained and continued in the world to this present day; so it may not be improper to consider the state of religion in this Kingdom: it being agreed on all hands that the plantation of the gospel here was very early, even in the *Apostles'* days."

That this manuscript was not written by Kiffin, will be abundantly proved in these articles. Two or three points are clear: Crosby did not believe the manuscript was written by Kiffin; he did believe that he Baptists began in England upon the first planting of

Christianity and had continued there since, and he did not affirm that dipping was a new thing in England.

2. The Gould edition. In 1860 Rev. George Gould, D.D., the father of President George P. Gould, of Regents Park College, had an unsuccessful lawsuit in regard to certain chapel property. Mr. Gould maintained a system of lax church order and open communion. After the suit was lost Mr. Gould presented his side of the question to the public in a volume entitled, "Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich." In this book was a quotation from the "Kiffin Manuscript," but it at once appeared that it was not the document quoted by Crosby, since the quotations made by Crosby and Gould upon the same subject did not at all agree. This entire Gould document, with three others from the same source, were printed in the WESTERN RECORDER under date of Dec. 31, 1896.

Recently I had the privilege of examining these Gould documents. Instead of consisting of one or even four documents, there are no less than thirty of these papers numbered consecutively, besides several miscellaneous papers. These are copied into a very large book under the general title, "Notices of the Early Baptists." If printed this material would make quite a large volume, and undoubtedly was compiled by the same person. From whence Dr. Gould obtained this material is a profound mystery, and what became of the papers he copied is a mystery. Prof. Gould only remembers that his father had these papers, but beyond this he knows nothing of the documents whatever. The first page is in Dr. Gould's handwriting, the remaining pages were copied by an old usher, or schoolmaster, who was in his employ. This was in 1860, two hundred and twenty years after the events occurred which are described. That is to say, for a period of two hundred and twenty years no one ever heard tell of this document, and it is not authenticated by a single contemporaneous document. It will also be borne in mind that this is not the original, neither is it a copy of the original. At the very best it is only a copy of a copy, but even that proximity of the original is not apparent. We are not even favored with the name of the "compiler." He is quite as indefinite as anything connected with this very indefinite manuscript. The book is itself equally indefinite. The following is the introduction to the thirty documents:

"A Repository of Divers Historical Matters relating to the English Antipedobaptists. Collected from Original papers or Faithful Extracts. Anno 1712.

"I began to make this Collection in Jan. 1710-11."

One could hardly conceive how an author could hide his personality more completely. Who is "I?" At any rate, we have a date given, 1712, but this is 71 years after 1641. Where were these manuscripts from A. D. 1641 to 1711? where were they from 1711 to 1860? and where were they from 1860 to 1898? The sub-introduction placed before the so-called "Kiffin" Manuscript is scarcely more definite. It reads: "An old Mss, giveing

some Accott of those Baptists who first formed themselves into distinct Congregations or Churches in London, found among certain Paper given me by Mr. Adams."

Who was the "me" to whom these papers were given? Who was Mr. Adams? Of course if a man desires to write conjectural history no documents would serve his purpose better; but if he wishes to state facts no documents could serve his purpose less.

I was quite certain when, on reading the Gould Kiffin Manuscript in its present form, that it was not a seventeenth century document. If the work was copied, as it is claimed, in 1712, the copyist did not follow the original, but introduced the form and spelling of his own time. That these compilations could not have been made before the date indicated, is absolutely certain, from the fact that late books like Wall on Infant Baptism, and Stripes' Memorials are quoted, which would stamp the entire work as of late date.

We have also another absolute proof that the Kiffin Manuscript is not authentic. The author writes an article of his own, Number 17, which he inserts in the work. That portrays fully the form and style of his writing, and the so-called Kiffin Manuscript and Jessey Records are in exactly that style in construction of sentences, in spelling and in all the peculiarities of language. Whatever may have been the basis for these various documents, one thing is certain: in their present form these thirty articles are all from one man, and that man did not live anywhere near 1641. It is also a fact that the documents have been so changed in this compilation that no dependence can be put upon them.

When the author of these articles professed to quote literally he did not quote correctly. A striking example of this will be presented later, and it could be illustrated at great length. I shall put in parallel columns the original extract from Hutchinson and this collator's quotation from Hutchinson. Two things will be apparent: the first is that the collator does not follow the form of the original, though this is one of the instances where he attempted to literally present the very words of his author. It will be seen also that the form of spelling and the peculiarities of style of the collator are the form of spelling and the peculiarities of style of the "Kiffin" Manuscript and of the Jessey Records. But before I present the parallel columns, I desire to present two short paragraphs with which the author introduces his quotation from Hutchinson. He says: "Mr. Hutchinson Account of ye Revival of Antipedobaptism towards ye latter end of ye Reign of King Charles ye First.

Mr. Edward Hutchinson, a learned & Ingenious defender of ye Practice of Baptizing Believers only, in his Epistle Dedicatory to those of ye Baptized Congregations, put at ye beginning of his Treatise concerning ye Covenant & baptism, gives ye following account of ye beginning & increase of ye People in these latter times."

There is no doubt these two paragraphs are from the collator, and yet any person who is at all familiar with the Jessey Records and the "Kiffin" Manuscript as given by Gould would not hesitate to declare that the style of this author and of those documents is precisely the same. That is true in reference to the use of the "&," the "ye," "Mr.," which is very uncommon in 1641, the use of the capitals, and indeed in every particular. The

peculiar doctrines and words of the Kiffin Manuscript and Jessey Records are all held by this collator, or perhaps I might more properly say that this collator put into the Kiffin Manuscript and the Jessey Records all of his peculiar views. The collator and these documents held precisely the same views, expressed in the same style of language, and spelled in the same way. The word "Antipaedobaptism," in this quotation corresponds with "Antipaedobaptist" in document number 4 where this statement occurs:

"An account of divers Conferances, held in ye Congregation of wch Mr. Henry Jessey was Pastor, about Infant baptism by wch Mr. H. Jessey & ye greatest part of that Congregation were proselited to ye Opinion and Practice of ye Antipaedobaptists."

It is manifest that this term was familiar to this collator, and it is quite certain that in 1638 (the alleged date) it was not in use, and therefore it stands to reason that it was read into these "genuine records" (?) by the collator. Crosby claims that the word "Antipaedobaptist" originated with Wall, who wrote his book, "A History of Infant Baptism," in 1705 (Crosby, vol. 1, p. viii). An editorial in the *Independent*, in refuting the authority of another manuscript, declares: "It employs also, in one instance, the word Pedobaptistery, which, to say the least, is quite suspicious for a paper claiming to belong to the Puritan period. So far as our reading goes, the Baptists never used that word prior to the year 1660; but always said in the place of it, 'Infants baptism, Childish Baptism or Baby Baptism.'" -- *The Independent*, July 29, 1880. The earliest use I have found of the word is in Bailey's "Anabaptism," but that is some years later than 1638.

The collator talks of "the revival" of "the practice of immersion," "of those of ye Believers," and in Document 4 the collator says: "An Account of ye Methods taken by ye Baptists to obtain a proper Administrator of Baptism by immersion, when that practice had been so long disused, yt then was no one, who had been so baptized to be found." This is almost a word for word statement of the case as we find it in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. These persons were called Baptists in the Jessey Church Records, a name which was not in use in 1641, and we all remember the celebrated words from the "Kiffin" Manuscript which have been so often used by some when speaking of immersion in England, "none having so practiced it in England to professed Believers," The collator must have added these words to the "Kiffin" Manuscript. This opinion is powerfully strengthened when we recollect that Crosby gives the passage from which these words occur, but he never mentioned these words. If Crosby intentionally omitted these words from the Manuscript, then he was not an honest man, but no one has ever suspected his honesty. We have shown that these are the very words of the collator, and since they are inserted here and omitted by Crosby, this collator is responsible for them.

But fortunately we have point blank proof that the words, "none having so practiced it in England to professed believers," are those of the compiler. If one will turn to Number 18 of this Gould collection, the words of this compiler are found as follows: "An account of ye Methods taken by ye Baptists to obtain a proper Administrator of Baptism by Immersion, when that practice had been so long disused, yt then was no one who had been so baptized to be found." There is absolutely no excuse for these words in the quotation which follows. This compiler had a theory of his own and a set form of words,

and he read these words into any narrative that happened to suit his convenience. He put them in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. It is thus demonstrated beyond a doubt that this compiler has manipulated the "Kiffin" Manuscript to suit his own purposes. Whether this "compiler" wrote in the 19th or the 18th century is of little moment. He either wrote a "Kiffin" Manuscript, or he "doctored" a "Kiffin" Manuscript to suit his purposes. One is as bad as the other. The fact remains that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is a fraud and of no value.

Here are the parallel columns from Hutchinson. The first column contains Hutchinson's own words as he wrote them, the second contains the collator's quotation from Hutchinson:

Hutchinson's Words

The Collator's Quotation

"When the professors of these nations have been
"When ye Professors of these Nations have been
a long tme wearied with the yoke of superstitions,
a long time wearied with ye Yoke of Superstitious
ceremonies, traditions of men, and corrupt mixtures
Ceremonies, Traditions of Men, & corrupt mixtures
in the worship and service of God, it pleased the Lord
in ye Worship & Service of God, it pleased ye Lord
to break these yokes, and by a very strong impulse
to break these Yokes. & by a very strong impulse
of his Spirit upon the hearts of his people, to
convince/of his Spirit upon ye hearts of his People,
to convince them of the necessity of Reformation.
Divers pious,them of ye Necessity of Reformation.
Divers Pious
and very gracious people, having often sought the
& very gracious People haveing often Sought ye
Lord by fasting and prayer, that he would show them
Lord by fasting and prayer, yt he would show them
the pattern of his house, the going-out and coming-in
ye pattern of his house, ye goings out & ye comings
in
thereof, &c. Resolved (by the grace of God), not to
thereof, &c. Resolved (by ye grace of God) not to
receive ot practice any piece of positive worship
which receive or practice any piece of positive
worship wch
had not precept or example from the word of God.
had not Precept or Example from ye word of God.
Infant-baptism coming of course under consideration
Infant baptism coming of course under consideration
after long search and many debates, it was found
long Search & many debates it was found
to have no footing in the Scriptures (the only rule
to have no footing in ye Scriptures (ye only rule
and standard to try doctrines by); but on the contrary
& standard to try Doctrines by) but on ye Contrary

a mere innovation, yea, the profanation of an ordinance a meer innovation, yea ye prophanation of an Ordinance of God. And though it was proposed to be laid aside, of God. And tho' it was proposed to be laid aside, yet what fears, tremblings, and temptations did attend yet wt fears, trembling & temptations did attend them, lest they should be mistaken, considering how them least they should be mistaken, considering how many learned and godly men were of an opposite many & Godly men ware of an opposite persuasion. How gladly would they have had the rest perswasion. How gladly would yhey have had ye rest of their brethren gone along with them. But when there of their Brethren gone along with them. But when there was no hopes, they concluded that a Christian's faith was no hopes, they concluded that a Christian's faith must not stand in the wisdom of men; and that every must not Stand in ye wisdom of men, & yt every one must give an account of himself to God; and so one must give an account of himselfe to God, & so resolved to practice according to their light. The great resolved to practice according to their light; The Great objection was, the want of an administrator; which, as Objection was ye want of an Administrator, wch (as I have heard was remov'd by sending certain I have heard) was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied." to Holland, whence they were supplied.

(A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism Dialogue-wise. Epistle to the Reader. London, 1676).

A comparison of this quotation with the original carries out fully my contention that the collator does not accurately follow the original, and that the form of words and spelling of the "Kiffin" Manuscript are after the collator rather than the original. In this passage he evidently tried to follow the original, although he met with indifferent success. But in the "Kiffin" Manuscript it is certain that he has added matter. I have already pointed that out, but this could be made out in any number of instances. The four superscriptions to the documents are all of that class. Take Document number one, the "Jessey Church Records." The following superscription occurs: "The Records of an Antient Congregation," &c. To call this church an "antient congregation" at that time was absurd. But that is not only in the superscription but it is in the main body of the "Jessey Records" at an alleged period when the church was not over 16 years old.

After a careful examination of the thirty articles which go to make up this book, with the miscellaneous matter thrown in, I cannot regard it as of any historical value. It is evident that an irresponsible collator has gathered a lot of miscellaneous material, never exactly following the original, and frequently only giving a paraphrase, and sometimes he makes the author say what the collator thinks, rather than what the author thinks. But I

have even more grave objections to the "genuine (?) records" than these. These will be given in the next article.

=====

[From *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 5-17. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter II

[Go to Chapter III](#)

[Back To Contents](#)

It is very interesting to note the opinions of the historians on the "Kiffin" Manuscript, and as to the Jessey Church Records no notice whatever has been taken of their existence. Not one historian has been willing to risk his reputation by declaring that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is authentic and authoritative. There is not one line that any historian has been able to find concerning the chief events or the principal persons mentioned in its pages. Whoever heard of Blunt or Blacklock outside of these "Kiffin" Manuscripts? Neal and others who refer to them do so wholly on the authority of these documents. It is incredible that all the things which the "Kiffin" Manuscript affirm of Blunt and of Blacklock, of the trip to Holland, of their introduction of immersion among Baptists, and the rest of the miraculous things recorded could have taken place, and yet the hundreds of contemporaneous pamphlets and books published on the subject of baptism never even mention or in the remotest manner refer to the exploits of either of these gentlemen. One could come as near believing the tales of Baron Munchausen as the tales of the "Kiffin" Manuscript. But the use that the historians have made of the "Kiffin" Manuscript is a very interesting one.

The first was Neal. He wrote in 1732-38, or 97 years after 1641. Crosby loaned the "Kiffin" Manuscript, along with other documents, to Neal. Nobody in those days mentioned a Manuscript corresponding with the Gould edition. The "Kiffin" Manuscript was so confusing and contradictory that Neal, like every one else who has tried to follow this document, got mixed in his facts. The result was that Crosby was disgusted and wrote a history himself.

Although Crosby had criticized Neal for his blunders in the use of the "Kiffin" Manuscript, he was scarcely more successful. Crosby, however, did not believe that the document had been written by Kiffin, for the very best he could say of it was: "This agrees with all account of the matter in an ancient manuscript said to have been written by Mr. Wm. Kiffin, who lived in those times" (Crosby, Vol. I., 100).

Who "said" that the manuscript was written by William Kiffin, Crosby fails to state. It is quite evident from the second volume of Crosby that he does not believe the "Kiffin" Manuscript to be authoritative, for he constantly maintains positions which contravene its

statements. Crosby had great trouble in quoting from his copy of the "Kiffin" Manuscript, but his difficulties would have been multiplied ten-fold had he attempted to quote the Gould edition of that document.

We come now to some very interesting statements from one John Lewis. After Crosby had published his history, John Lewis, an Episcopalian, of Kent, replied to it in a little volume entitled, "A Brief History of the English Anabaptists." After the publication of this book Mr. Lewis appears to have spent the remainder of his life in writing books against the Baptists. He was very violent and venomous, but he gathered a great many statements concerning the Baptists. These works were never published, but they are preserved in many volumes in manuscript form in the Bodleian Library, where I consulted them. He utterly repudiates the "Kiffin" Manuscript, and makes all manner of fun of Crosby for quoting such a document. After quoting the story of Blunt and Blacklock as given by Crosby, taken from the "Kiffin" Manuscript, he says: "This is a very blind account. I can't find the least mention made anywhere else of these three names of *Batte, Blunt and Blacklock*, nor is it said in what town, city or parish of the Netherlands those Anabaptists lived who practiced this manner of baptizing by dipping or plunging the whole body under water" (Rawlinson Mss. C. 409).

Mr. Lewis quotes the comment of Crosby where he says, "an antient Ms. said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin," and then adds: "How ignorant!" (Rawlinson Ms. C. 409).

In another volume Lewis remarks:

"But it is pretty odd, that nobody should know in what place this *antient congregation* (a congregation much about the same antiquity with the antient Ms.) was and, that *John Batte*, their teacher, should never be heard of before or since" (Rawl. C. 409).

This sarcastic remark that a supposed contemporaneous manuscript should refer to a church of the same date as an "antient congregation," does not miss its mark. Of course, a contemporaneous document would not make any such statement.

Lewis quotes the statement of Crosby --

"In the year 1633 the Baptists, who had hitherto been intermixed among the Protestant Dissenters without distinction, began now to *separate* themselves, & form distinct societies" -- and then makes this comment: "Here seems to me to be *two* mistakes -- 1. That the Anabaptists till 1633 were intermixed among the protestant dissenters viz: the *puritans, Brownists, Barrowists* and *Independents*. Since they all disclaimed them. 2. That the *English Anabaptists began* in 1633 to separate themselves. The writer of this ignorant and partial history owns," &c. (Rawl. C.409).

Again he says: "Others say it was first brought here by one *Richard Blount*, but who and what he was I don't know" (Rawl. C. 410).

Once more: "But we have no authority for this account but a manuscript said to have been written by William Kiffin" (Rawl. C. 110, p. 200).

It is refreshing to read the words of this historian, who had no good words for the Baptists, but the statements of this "Kiffin" Manuscript were too unauthentic for him to believe. This is the more remarkable because being hostile to the Baptists, it would have suited him exactly to have believed the statement of the Manuscript. With all his bitterness towards the Baptists, he was too honest to use against them unauthentic documents.

It is, therefore, perfectly clear that John Lewis rejects the "Kiffin" Manuscript as not authentic. But he goes further and declares and argues out an elaborate supposition that if this document is true, then the Anabaptists of that period in England were in the practice of sprinkling, which he did not believe. This proposition he regarded as absurd. He further goes on to elaborate that the Dutch Baptists were in the practice of sprinkling. Indeed, this supposition of his covered the entire statements of those Baptists of our day who hold the 1641 theory. This statement throws a curious light upon "the new discovery." Dr. Dexter borrowed his theory from Robert Barclay, a Quaker who wrote his "Inner Life" in 1860, and Barclay borrowed his theory from John Lewis, a bitter Episcopalian, who wrote about 1740. The difference, however, is startling. Lewis rejected the sprinkling theory, and put it forth as involving his opponent, Thomas Crosby, in an absurdity; but Barclay, writing a hundred and twenty years later, accepted this absurd supposition as a fact and elaborated it into a theory. It is amusing to see how these writers have followed each other, using the same quotations, theories, arguments and sometimes words, and how all of them have boasted of superior learning and the ignorance of Baptist historians, and each one boasted that he had made the only original and "new discovery." The case stands: Lewis invented the theory to overthrow his Baptist opponent, Crosby; Barclay accepted this invention as a fact; Dexter accepted the 1641 theory but rejected the "Kiffin" Manuscript, and the few Baptists who have gone off with this "invention" of Lewis' swallowed the "Kiffin" Manuscript and all.

Evans, the Baptist historian, regards the statements in this Manuscript as vague and uncertain. He says: "This statement is vague. We have no date and cannot tell whether the fact refers to the Separatists under Mr. Spilsbury or to others" (History Early English Baptists, Vol. II., p. 78).

Cathcart says this transaction of Blunt's *may* have happened, but he further remarks: "We would not bear *heavily* on the testimony adduced by these good men" (Baptist Encyclopaedia, Vol. I., p. 572).

Armitage is pleased to say:

"A feeble but strained attempt has been made to show that none of the English Baptists practiced immersion prior to 1641, from the document mentioned by Crosby in 1738, of which he remarks that it was 'said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin.' Although this manuscript is signed by fifty-three persons, it is evident that its authorship was only

guessed at from the beginning, it may or may not have been written by Kiffin" (History of the Baptists, p. 440).

Dr. Henry S. Burrage, who has given much time and attention to this subject, after a somewhat lengthy discussion of the Jessey Church Records and the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript, is constrained to say:

"It will be noticed that in our reference above to the Jessey Church Records, we say 'if they are authentic.' We have not forgotten the 'Crowle and Epworth' records. These made their appearance about the same time as the Jessey Church Records, and it is now known that they are clumsy forgeries. The Jessey Church Records may be genuine, but their genuineness has not yet been established" (Zion's Advocate, September, 1896).

Prof. A. H. Newman, who, if he has not accepted this Manuscript as genuine, has at least been an apologist, confesses that by following this manuscript he has been led into insuperable difficulties. After making some obscure statements about the Baptists of England, he makes the following remarkable apology:

"A few remarks seem called for by the obscurity of some of the statements quoted above. It is not possible out of the material that has thus far come to the light to trace in detail the evolution of the seven churches that signed the confession of 1644. The statement quoted from the so-called 'Kiffin' Manuscript, with reference to the division of 1640 involves a number of difficulties. P. Barebone, with whom half of the church withdrew, has commonly been regarded by Baptist writers as a Baptist. Yet in 1642 he published 'A Discourse tending to prove the Baptism in, or under, the Defection of Antichrist to be the Ordinance of Jesus Christ, as also that the Baptism of Infants or Children is Warrantable or Agreeable to the Word of God, and in 1643 and 1644 he published other polemical tracts against Antipedobaptism. If in 1641 he was the leader of the Antipedobaptists and immersionist half the divided congregation, he must soon after have abandoned his position. This is, of course, possible. From the construction of the sentence Jessey might be taken to be the leader of the Baptist half, but it appears that Jessey did not become a Baptist till five years later. This difficulty seems inexplicable without further material" (A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States, pp. 52, 53).

Dr. Newman is a very clear and convincing writer usually, but in this instance he has been betrayed into the use of material that would lead a man into all manner of errors. We hope that Dr. Newman will in the next edition of his otherwise admirable history leave out all of these statements which are given upon the authority of the "Kiffin" Manuscript alone.

The "Kiffin" Manuscript was so bad that even Dr. Dexter would not accept it. Anything that Dexter would not have used against the Baptists must have been very unreliable, but the "Kiffin" Manuscript, even in the Crosby form, was too much for him. His repudiation of the document was clear and explicit. He says:

"Crosby says he derived his information from 'an antient manuscript *said* to be written by Mr. William Kiffin, who lived in those times, and was a leader among those of that persuasion.' Conceding the genuineness of this manuscript, and its value in testimony -- both of which might be open to question -- let us note its exact words as to the point before us" (The True Story of John Smyth, p. 43).

Again: "On the other hand, had not Kiffin -- as it is supposed -- made the statement, it would be suspicious for its vagueness, and for the fact that none of the historians, not even Wilson, Calamy, Brook, or Neal, know anything about either Blount or Blacklock, beyond what is here stated" (p. 54).

We may, therefore, divide the historians into three classes -- 1. Those who reject the "Kiffin" Manuscript, and do not think it worthy of mention at all. This class is perhaps the largest and contains many of the foremost writers of these times. 2. Those writers who have seen fit to mention it but reject it as unworthy of credence, or call in question the statements which it makes. 3. A very small number of writers who attempt to quote the statements and reconcile them with known facts. These writers generally apologize for and do not endorse the manuscript in so many words. I can, therefore, make the claim that scholars, as far as they have expressed themselves on the subject, are almost unanimous against the authenticity and value of the "Kiffin" Manuscript.

One of my principal objections to the "Kiffin" Manuscript is that it contradicts Kiffin himself. The "Kiffin" Manuscript declares that immersion in 1641 was unknown in England, as "none having then so practiced it in England to professed believers." Now Kiffin in 1645 said in a document which is undoubtedly genuine: "It is well-known to many, and especially to ourselves, that our congregations as they now are, were erected and framed, according to the rule of Christ before we heard of any Reformation, even at that time when Episcopacie was at the height of its vanishing glory."

It has been contended that the "Reformation" here mentioned had reference to the Presbyterian Reformation in England. That is a very strained interpretation to put on this language and this explanation can only be prompted by a desperate desire to sustain a sinking cause; but even if this explanation were true it would carry us to a date much earlier than 1641. But fortunately we are not left in doubt as to what was meant by Kiffin. Mr. Josiah Richart, who says he wrote the queries to which Kiffin replied, understood that Kiffin referred to the Episcopal and not the Presbyterian Reformation. "You allege," he says, "your own practise, that your congregation was erected and framed in the time of episcopacie, and that before you heard of any Reformation." Richart admits that this might be true. (A Looking Glass for the Anabaptists, London, 1645, pp. 6, 7). Here, then, is a Baptist church organized and framed, immersion and all, "as they now are," long before 1641. This example is strictly to the point, and settles the existence of immersion in at least one Baptist church before 1641.

Further on Kiffin distinctly makes the claim that the Baptists outdated the Presbyterians. He says:

"And for the second part of your querie *That we disturb the great Worke of Reformation now in hand*; I know not what you meane by this charge, unless it be to discover your prejudice against us in Reforming ourselves before you, for as yet we have not in our understanding, neither can we conceive anything of that we shall see reformed by you according to truth, but that through mercie wee enjoy the practice of the same already; tis strange this should be a disturbance to the ingenious faithful Reformer; it should bee (one would think) a furtherance rather than a disturbance, and whereas you tell us of the work of Reformation now in hand, no reasonable men will force us to desist from the practice of that which we are perswaded is according to truth, and waite for that which we knowe not what it will be; and in the meantime practice that which you yourselves say must be reformed" (pp. 12-14. London, 1645).

William Kiffin, Thomas Patient, John Spilsbury and John Pearson, four of the most prominent Baptists of those times, wrote an introduction to a book written by Daniel King, which was published in 1650, entitled, "A Way to Zion, Sought Out, and Found, for Believers to Walk In." This startling proposition in the first part is proved, "1. That God hath had a people on earth, *ever since the coming of Christ in the flesh*, throughout the darkest times of Popery, which he hath owned as Saints and as his people."

The third part "Proveth that Outward Ordinances, and amongst the rest the Ordinance of *Baptism*, is to *continue* in the Church, and this Truth cleared up from intricate turnings and windings, clouds and mists that make the way doubtful and dark."

I think some people would have spasms if some prominent Baptist author were to put forth and "prove" the above propositions. But these words of Daniel King did not disturb William Kiffin, and these other Baptist preachers. These men declared that the assertion that "there are no churches in the world" and "no true ministers" has been of "singular use in the hands of the devil." I quote a portion of the words in the introduction:

"The devil hath mustered up all his forces of late to blind and pester the minds of good people, to keep them from the clear knowledge and practice of the way of God, either in possessing people still with old corrupt principles; or if they have been taken of them, then to perswade with them that there are no churches in the world, and that persons cannot come to the practice of Ordinances, there being no true ministry in the world; and others they run in another desperate extreme, holding Christ to be a shadow, and all his Gospel and Ordinances like himself, fleshy and carnall. This generation of people have been of singular use in the hand of the Devil to advance his kingdom, and to make war against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Now none have been more painfull than these have been of late, to poison the City, the Country, the Army, so far as they could; inasmuch as it lay upon some of our spirits as a duty to put out our weak ability for the discovering of these grosse errors and mistakes; but it hath pleased God to stir up the spirit of our Brother, *Daniel King*, whom we judge a faithfull and painfull minister of Jesus Christ, to take this work in hand before us; and we judge he hath been much assisted of God in the work in which he hath been very painfull. We shall not need to say much of the Treatise; only in brief, it is his method to follow the Apostles' rule, prove everything by the evidence of Scripture light expounding Scripture by Scripture, and God

hath helped him in this discourse, we judge, beyond any who hath dealt upon this subject that is extant, in proving the truth of Churches, against all such that have gone under the name of Seekers, and hath very well, and with great evidence of Scripture light answered to all or most of their Objections of might, as also those above, or beyond Ordinances."

Nor was William Kiffin alone in this opinion. Thomas Grantham was one of the greatest Baptist writers of that century, and he said: "That many of the learned have much abused this age, in telling them that the *Anabaptists* (i. e., the Baptized Churches) are of a late edition, a new sect, etc., when from their own writing's the clean contrary is so evident" (Christianismus Primitivus, pp. 92, 93).

Joseph Hooke, another Baptist writer of the same century, put forth the same claim for the long continuance of the Baptists in England. He says:

"Thus having shewed negatively, when this sect called *Ana-Baptists* did not begin, we shall show in the next place affirmatively, when it did begin; for a beginning it had, and it concerns us to enquire for the *Fountain Head* of this Sect; for if I were sure that it were no older than the *Munster-Fight* that Mr. Erratt puts in mind of, I would Resolve to forsake it, and would persuade others to do so too.

"That religion that is not as old as Christ and his apostles is too new for me.

"But secondly, affirmatively, we are fully perswaded, and therefore do boldly, tho' humbly, assert, that this Sect is the very same sort of People that were first called *Christians in Antioch*, Acts 11, 26. But sometimes called *Nazarenes*, Acts 24, 6. And as they are everywhere spoken against now, even so they were in the Primitive Times. Acts 28, 22" (A Necessary Apology for the Baptists, p. 19).

Nor is that an antiquated idea among the Baptists of England. Many of the most intelligent Baptist of England believe that the Baptists date back to the very days of the Apostles. The Rev. George P. Gould, to whom I have before referred, is now editing and bringing out a series of Baptist Manuals, historical and biographical. In 1895 he published one on Hanserd Knollys, by James Culross, M. A., D. D., ex-president of Bristol Baptist College. After stating that Hanserd Knollys became a sectary, probably in 1631, he declares

"Had Baptists thought anything depended on it, they might have traced their pedigree back to New Testament times, and claimed apostolic succession. The channel of succession was certainly purer if humbler, than through the apostate church of Rome. But they were content to rest on Scripture alone, and, as they found only believers' baptism there, they adhered to that" (p. 39, note).

I mention these facts, not for the purpose of proving Baptist succession, for that topic is not under discussion in this paper, but for a two-fold purpose. The first is that William Kiffin could have had no connection with this so-called "Kiffin" Manuscript, and the

second is that the Baptists of that century knew nothing of the alleged "facts" as given in this document.

=====

[Taken from John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 17-28. jrd]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter III

[Back To Contents](#)

It has been claimed that our people were called Anabaptists before 1641, and that they practiced believers' sprinkling, while after 1641, when they adopted immersion, they were on that account called Baptists. The following is the claim:

"But so long as their contention related merely to the subjects of baptism they could never shake off the name Anabaptists. Their act of baptism being the same as that employed by other Christians, namely, pouring and sprinkling, it was always described as mere repetition of baptism -- as Anabaptism. But when another act was introduced, namely, immersion, it then became possible for the brethren to obtain a new designation. Henceforth they were called 'baptized Christians,' *par excellence*, and in due time Baptists. The earliest instance in which this name occurs as a denominational designation, so far as any information goes, befell in the year 1644, three years after immersion had been introduced" (*Question in Baptist History*).

There are three answers to this statement, either of which is conclusive:

1. Sprinkling was just now only coming into use in England in 1641, and the Baptists, since all denominations practiced immersion in England, did not have to protest against it before this time. The Baptists always stood against living errors. The earliest charges against them in England after the Reformation was that they denied the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, and so they were burned to death on that account. Later the point of their contention was that infant baptism was not according to the Word of God, so they were put to death on that account. And when sprinkling began to prevail, at the end of the Civil Wars, they vigorously protested against that. There had been no occasion to protest against sprinkling previously. This is a complete and full answer to the above claim, and the objection is based upon a misunderstanding of the history of those times, and at best is a begging of the whole question at issue.

2. The name Anabaptists was always repudiated by the Baptists before and after 1641. It never did describe them and never was accepted by them; and the name Anabaptist was applied to them no less after 1641 than before. Even to this day the name is applied to them. There was no change in the Baptist opinion on the subject before and after 1641. Thomas Collie was a Baptist long before 1641. Indeed, he was a Baptist before 1635, for

he was in prison at that date for being a Baptist (*Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 282, fol. 82). He linked the word Anabaptist with "baptized Christians," which was always understood to mean immersed Christians in those days. His words are: "They (these persecutors) would say as much of the Anabaptists, or rather of the baptized Christians of this Nation." He further says that these persons are "malitiously mistaken," and show their ignorance "in calling them Anabaptists, for the practising Baptism, according to the Scripture, that grieves you it seems; but you have learned a new way, both for matter and manner: for matter, Babies instead of believers: for manner, sprinkling at the holy Font, instead of baptizing in a River: you are loth to go in with your long gowns, you have found a better way than was ever prescribed or practiced; who now Sir are the Ignoramuses?" Here, then, a Baptist who lived in 1641, writing ten years later, says that the word Anabaptist meant a denial of infant baptism, and included immersion as opposed to sprinkling. The objection to the name Anabaptist among the Baptists of 1641 was precisely the objection of the Baptists of 1898, viz.: it carried with it the idea of the repetition of baptism, which Baptists have always repudiated. I would not give the testimony of this Baptist, who lived and suffered in those days, for all the croaking objections of these days.

If the above objection, that the Baptists of 1641 changed their minds on immersion, that the word Anabaptists describes those who practiced sprinkling, and the word Baptist afterwards described the same people who had become dippers, then the writers of the Baptist Confession of Faith deliberately attempted to falsify the facts. These fifteen men put forth an article declaring that dipping was baptism, and that they were *falsely* though *commonly* known by the name of Anabaptists. They admitted that the name Anabaptist was the common name which was applied to them, and there was no denying that they were the people who had long been in England under that name. But they could not have used the word *falsely* if they had been sprinklers before. What they would have said before was, we have changed our mind, and we shall practice immersion after this, and so are no longer Anabaptists, but Baptists.

3. The Pedobaptists continued to call them Anabaptists. It is safe to say where they were called Baptists once by their opponents in that century, they were called Anabaptists twenty times. In a book which now lies before me entitled "An axe laid at the root of the Tree: or, a Discourse wherein the Anabaptist Mission & Ministry are Examin'd and Disprov'd," and bearing date London, 1715, written 74 years after 1641, these Baptists are called Anabaptists. Baptists in England are now not unfrequently called Anabaptists. The author of 1715 and the authors of this day could not possibly mean to say that the Baptists of these dates were sprinklers, and yet that must be the meaning if this objection has any weight. To state the objection is to refute it.

Furthermore, the same author would call them both Baptists and Anabaptists, which could not be true if the objection that Anabaptists meant those who practiced sprinkling, and Baptists those who dipped. For example, I. E., in his "The Anabaptist Groundwork for Reformation," says: "I ask T. L. and the rest of those Baptists, or Dippers, that will not be called Anabaptists (though they baptize some that have been twice baptized before) what rule they have by word or example in Scripture, for their going men and

women together into the water and for their manner of dipping, and every circumstance and action they perform concerning the same" (p. 23. B. M. E. 50. [2]). Now this work, which was written in 1644, demonstrates that the same people were called, by the same author Baptists and Anabaptists, and that the Baptists repudiated the name Anabaptist. The author called them Baptists because they dipped "men and women together into the water," and he called them Anabaptists because "they baptize some that have been twice baptized before," I do not see how a clearer distinction could be drawn.

I have already quoted the caption to the "Kiffin" Manuscript and of the Jessey Church Records, and shown that instead of giving light on the authors of these documents, they conceal the truth, but I desire now to point out that the statements themselves are false and contradictory. The Jessey Records say:

"The Records of an Antient Congregation of Dissenters from wch many of ye Independant & Baptist Churches in London took their first rise: ex MSS of Mr. H Jessey, wch I received of Mr. Rich Adams." The "Kiffin" Manuscript says: "An old Mss, giveing some Accott of those Baptists who first formed themselves into distinct congregations, or Churches in London, found among certain Paper given me by Mr. Adams."

The claims set forth in the above statements are false in almost every particular:

1. These are the words of the compiler, who did not write before 1710-11. The spelling and words are all his. It is known positively that he added the title to everyone of the thirty papers of this compilation, and that these two documents constitute two of the thirty papers in his motley collection. It therefore follows that the very first thing found in both of these manuscripts was added by a later hand, and yet added in such a way as to leave the impression that the words of this compiler were the words of the original manuscript.

2. The Jessey church was declared to be an "antient congregation" at this time, which is false. It was only organized in 1616, and was therefore in 1641 not a quarter of a century old.

3. The two accounts contradict each other. The Jessey Records say that "many" of "the Baptist churches took their first rise" from this church leaving the plain alternative that other Baptist churches of London had another origin; but the "Kiffin" Manuscript makes the distinct statement that the first Baptist churches of London originated in this Jessey church. These statements are, therefore, contradictory and hence unreliable.

4. Both of these documents call these congregations "Baptist churches." The word "Baptist" was not in use at that time to designate our people, and the phrase "Baptist churches" was not in use in England till long afterwards. These documents are therefore a false record and cannot be depended upon.

5. The statement that "many" or "all" Baptist churches of London came out of the Jessey church is false. Furthermore, there is no proof that even one Baptist church ever

came out of this Jessey church. I demand the proof. Neither do the Jessey Church Records nor the "Kiffin" Manuscript, outside of these superscriptions, which we are now examining, contain any such suggestion. Indeed some of the members of this Jessey church "joynd" Mr. Spilsbury's church in 1638. It would be very difficult to explain how these seceders could join an organization which had no existence. The Crosby "Kiffin" Manuscript declares (vol. 1, pp. 148, 150) that this entire transaction occurred in 1633, and not in 1638, and thus contradicts both the Jessey Records and the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript. The statement that "many" or "all" the churches of London had their rise in this Jessey church, therefore, is false.

6. The statement that the "Baptist churches" of London or of England in 1638 "first formed themselves into distinct congregations" is false. Nothing can be further from the truth. Any one who is at all familiar with the history of the Baptists of England from the reign of Henry the Eighth till the close of the Civil Wars will be solemnly convinced that all the Baptists were not only not associated with the "Dissenters" and "Independents," but that the Baptists had no more hostile enemies than these, and that the Independents took every opportunity to denounce them and declare that there was no connection between them. John Lewis, the bigoted Episcopalian, denounces this statement that they then began to separate from the Independents as a "mistake," since, says he, "They all disclaimed them" (Rawl. C. 409). The constant persecutions of the Baptists under the name of Anabaptists is sufficient refutation of the silly assertion that they only began to separate from the Independents in 1638.

The proof that Baptist churches existed in England before 1638 is so adequate and so often confessed that one does not know how to account for a denial of it. The simple question at this moment is not what was the act of baptism among them, but were there such churches. I would not argue the question a moment were it not that this Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript and this Jessey Church Record make this astounding assertion, and I crave the pardon of the reader while I point out how thoroughly unreliable these "genuine Records" (?) are. With all his trimming and "waiving the enquiry whether there had been, at some time previous to 1600, Baptist churches" in England, Dr. Dexter is constrained to admit:

"It seems to me to be conceded upon all hands that when Helwys and Murton re-crossed the German Ocean from Holland, in or about 1612, the church which they founded in Newgate was the first Baptist church, and the only one then in England in that century. By 1626 we can trace possibly ten others, making eleven in all, viz., those in London, Lincoln, Tiverton, Salisbury, Coventry, Stoney Stratford, Ashford, Biddenden and Eyethorne in Kent, Canterbury, and Anersham in Buckinghamshire" (*True Story of John Smyth*, pp. 41, 42).

While I do not at all agree with the date assigned to some of these churches, and that this church of Helwys' "was the first Baptist church, and the only one then in England," I present this statement of Dexter's to show how utterly worthless is the statement of the "Kiffin" Manuscript and the Jessey Records when they assert that the first Baptist churches were organized out of the Jessey church in 1638.

Perhaps Dr. Angus has given more attention to English Baptist churches than any other Englishman, and he says:

"That there was no such delay in forming Baptist churches as our American friends have supposed, is proved by the dates of the formation of a number of them. Churches were formed, chapels built and doctrines defined long before 1641, and others, down to the end of that century owed nothing probably to the discussions of that year.

"The following churches, were formed in the years mentioned, still remain: Braintree, Eyethorne, Sutton, all in 1550; Warrington, 1522; Crowle and Epworth, both 1597; Bridgewater, Oxford, and Sadmore, 1600; Bristol (Broadmead), 1640; King, Stanley, Newcastle, Kilmington (Devon), Bedford, Sutton, Cirencester, Commercial-street (London), Lincoln, Dorchester, and Hamsterley, in 1633; Lyme Regis, Chipping Sodbury, Uppottery, Boston, etc., 1650-1658.

Many others that belong to similar dates have since become extinct through change of population and other causes. Most of these churches hold the common faith, and most of them have received it without special reference to the creed of 1641. Dates and particulars of more churches may be seen in any recent number of the *Baptist Handbook*, published by the Baptist Union."

The original authorities for the opinions expressed by these authors, that there were Baptist churches in England before 1641, could be given at great length.

The testimony to this position is so ample, and the admissions of competent Pedobaptist historians so direct that I am embarrassed by the amount of material at hand. I shall, however, mention three Pedobaptist scholars. Herbert S. Skeats, the historian of the Free churches, says: "It has been asserted that Baptist church existed in England in A. D. 1417 (Robinson's *Claude*, Vol. II., p. 54). There were certainly Baptist churches in England as early as the year 1589 (Dr. Some's reply to Barrowe, quoted in Guiney's *Hist.*, Vol. 1., p. 109); and there could scarcely have been several organized communities without the corresponding opinions having been held by individuals, and some churches established for years previous to this date" (*Hist. Dissenting Churches of England*, p. 22).

The Baptists had so wonderfully prospered that Neal says that in 1644 they had 54 churches (Neal's *Hist. Puritans*, Vol. 3, p. 175). And it will be remembered that in the opinion of Neal a Baptist was always an immersionist. All of Crosby's material for a Baptist history was in his hands, but he never suspected that any Baptist ever sprinkled. His words are decisive:

"Their confession consisted of 52 articles and is strictly Calvinistical in the doctrinal part, and according to the independent discipline, it confines the subjects of baptism to grown Christians and the mode to immersion. The advocates of this doctrine were for the most part of the meanest of the people; their preachers were generally illiterate and went about the country making proselytes of all who would submit to immersion. * * * The people of this persuasion were most exposed to the public resentments, because they would hold

communion with none but such as had been dipped. All must pass under the cloud before they could be received into their churches; and the same narrow spirit prevails too generally among them to this day" (*History of the Puritans*, Vol. III., pp. 174-176).

The original authorities for the opinions expressed by these authors could be given at length, but I apprehend that this is not necessary at this moment. I do wish, however, to present the testimony of a Baptist who lived and was one of the principal actors in those times. He tells in simple language the story of the planting of those London Baptist churches in the days of persecution before 1641. The title of this book is: "A Moderate Answer Unto Dr. Bastwick's Book Called 'Independency Not God's Ordinance.' Wherein is declared the manner how some churches in this city were gathered, and upon what termes their members were admitted; that so both the Dr. and the Reader may judge how near some Believers who walk together in the Fellowship of the Gospell do come in their practice to the Apostolicall rules which are propounded by the Dr. as God's Method in gathering Churches and Admitting Members. By Hanserd Knollys, London, 1646." Of course, such a book is authoritative and worth a thousand guesses. Knollys says:

"I shall now take the liberty to declare, what I know by mine own experience to be the practice of some Churches of God in this City. That so far both the Dr. and the Reader may judge how near the Saints, who walk in the fellowship of the Gospell, do come to their practice, to these Apostolicall rules and practice propounded by the Dr. as God's method in gathering churches, and admitting Members, I say that I know by mine own experience (having walked with them), that they were thus gathered, viz.: Some godly and learned men of approved gifts and abilities for the Ministrie, being driven out of the Countries where they lived by the persecution of the Prelates, came to sojourn in this great City, and preached the word of God both publikely and from house to house, and daily in the Temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ: and some of them have dwelt in their own hired houses, and received all that came in unto them, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. And when many sinners were converted by their preaching of the Gospell, some of them believers, consorted with them, and of professors a great many, and of the chief women not a few. And the condition which those Preachers, both publikely and privately propounded to the people, unto whom they preached, upon which they were to be admitted into the Church was Faith, Repentance, and Baptism, and none other. And whosoever (poor as well as rich, bond as well as free, servants as well as Masters), did make a profession of their Faith in Christ Jesus, and would be baptized with water, in the Name of the Father, Sonne, and Holy Spirit, were admitted Members of the Church; but such as did not believe, and would not be baptized, they would not admit into Church communion. This hath been the practice of some Churches of God in this City, without urging or making any particular covenant with Members upon admittance, which I desire may be examined by the Scripture cited in the Margent, and then compared with the Doctor's three conclusions from the same Scriptures, whereby it may appear to the judicious Reader, how near the Churches some of them come to the practice of the Apostles rules, and practice of the primitive churches, both in gathering and admitting members" (pp. 24, 25).

We may note in passing that no one denies that in 1645, when this was written, Knollys was an immersionist, so when speaking of the practice of baptizing "with water" by the Baptist churches of London he must have meant immersion. And since he not even hints at any change of the ordinance by these churches, such must have been their practice from their organization, so far as his knowledge went.

I would not exchange the testimony of this Baptist preacher, who was pastor of one of the very churches in question, and writing at the very time, for all the "Kiffin" Manuscripts in existence, and the other variations of that famous document, which may be discovered when some Baptist may have a vagary to exploit. That Knollys knew all about the organization of these Calvinistic Baptist churches, there can be no question. And it is equally certain that he gives not the least hint about these churches all coming out of the Jessey church. The reason is perfectly plain; nothing of the sort ever happened. It did split all to pieces on the subject of immersion, but the "first" Baptist churches of England had no such origin. Therefore the "Kiffin" Manuscript and the Jessey Church Records are not authoritative nor of any value. Let the reader bear in mind that this "Kiffin" Manuscript is the sole foundation for the "1641 theory." With the foundation destroyed, the theory tumbles into chaos.

There is a record that in 1635-6, Feb. 20. Lambeth. 34. complaint was made that the Anabaptists "refuse on Sundays and other festival" days to come to their parish churches, but do meet together in great numbers on such days, and at other times, in private houses and places, and there keep conventicles and exercises of religion, by the laws of the realm prohibited."

We have in the same year, Jan. 11, in the *Acts of the High Court of Commissioners*, vol. cclxi. fo1. 307. b., charges preferred against Francis Jones, of Ratcliff, Middlesex, basketmaker.

"Being charged that he is a schismatic recusant, and that he has long fore-borne to come to his parish church to hear divine service said and to receive the holy communion, and that he useth to keep private conventicles and exercises of religion, and that he is an Anabaptist, and for that he confesseth he hath been rebaptized, he was committed to Newgate." Note he was "rebaptized."

I do not care to pursue this line of investigation at this time to any great length. Barclay, who cannot be regarded as very partial to the Baptists, and who has been quoted largely by those who believe in "1641," is pleased to say:

"As we shall afterwards show, the rise of the Anabaptists took place long prior to the foundation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe, small hidden societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the times of the Apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of divine truth and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than the Roman Church" (Barclay's *Inner Life of Religious Societies*, p. 12).

All this shows that the statements of the "Kiffin" (?) Manuscript are not true. The first English Baptists did not begin in 1641, nor in 1633, not at any date near these.

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter IV

[Go to Chapter V](#)

[Back To Contents](#)

The "Jessey Church Records" open with an elaborate account of the books Written by Mr. Jacob. Of course, if this were a minute of the church, the "Records" or minutes should set down a correct account of the first pastor of the church. This the document attempts to do, and yet it misses the facts in the case in almost every particular. They give a list of the books written by Mr. Jacob, and the dates at which they were written. Yet it is a remarkable fact that the author of the records did not know the titles of Mr. Jacob's books nor the dates when they were written. The document gives the following title and date to one of Mr. Jacob's books: "The Divine Beginning & Institution of a Visible Church, proving [sic] ye same by many Arguments opening Matth: xviii. 15, wth a declaration and fuller evidence of some things therein: "and the date is set down at 1612. The following is the correct title: "The Divine Beginning and Institution of Christs true Visible or Ministeriall Church. Also the Unchangeableness of the same by men: viz. in the forme & essentiall constitution thereof. Written by Henry Jacob. Imprinted at Leyden by Henry Hastings. 1610." (British Museum, 4103. b). It will therefore be seen that neither the date nor the title corresponds with the facts in the case. The book was printed two years before the "genuine records" (?) say it was. It will not only be seen that the author of the "Jessey Records" was ignorant of the title of Mr. Jacob's book and the time when it was written, but that the spelling and forms of expression are those of the person who began to "make this collection in Jan. 1710-11." The words "wch" and "proveing" are a clear give-away. It is hard for the "Collector" to cover up this tracks in his "Faithful Extracts," Fraud is written upon almost every line of these "genuine (?) church records."

The ignorance of the author of the document is further shown by reference to another work written by Mr. Jacob. This document gives the name of the book as follows: "An Attestation of ye most famious and approved Authors witnessing wth one mouth ye each Church of Christ should be independent as it should have ye full Power of all ye Church affairs entire within itsefe:" and the date of this book put down at 1610. The correct title is: "An Attestation of many Learned, Godly, and famous Divines, Lighters of Religion, and pillars of the Gospell, justifying this doctrine, viz. That the Church-government ought to bee alwayes with the peoples free consent," &c., and the date is 1613. The preface of the book is signed "July, 18. Anno 1612" (British Museum, 698, a, 35). The author of these "Records" in the former instance gives a date two years too late, and in this instance three years too early. Any one who will take the trouble to compare the title as given by the anonymous author of the "Records" with the true title as given above, will see how little he really knew about what he was discoursing. The reader will note here again that the spelling and expressions of the "Jessey Records" all belong to the man of "1710-11," and not to Mr. Jacob. The repeated use of "ye," the "wth" and the "famious" all say fraud, and that the "Jessey Records" are not genuine, to say nothing of their being not contemporaneous.

The "Jessey Church Records" make the following statements in reference to Mr. Jacob:

1624 -- "About eight years H. Jacob was Pastor of ye said Church & when upon his importunity to go to Virginia, to wch he had been engaged before by their consent, he was remitted from his said office, & dismissed ye Congregation to go thither, wherein after Years he ended his dayes. In the time of his Service much trouble attended that State and People within and without."

Without stopping to note that the "&" and the "ye" and other words all point to the man who made this "collection in 1710-11," I desire to show that every statement in the above extract is contrary to the facts in the case. Mr. Jacob did *not* serve this church eight years, but only six years; he did *not* go to Virginia in 1624, but in 1622; and he did not in "after years" end "his dayes" in Virginia, but he returned to England in 1624, and died there in April or May of that year, and was buried from St. Andrew Hubbard's Parish, Burrough of Canterbury (National Biography, Art. Jacob). That is to say, every statement in the above extract is false. How do I know all this? In the simplest way possible. There lies before me the last will and testament of Henry Jacob, "Extracted from the Principal Registry of the Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury," 1624. 38 -- Byrde, and may be consulted at Somerset House, London. This copy is taken from the records and duly signed. The will was probated "5th May 1624," and his estate was administered upon by his wife, "Sara Jacob." He declares that on "the fifth day of October, in the yeare of our Lord a thowsand six hundred and twenty and two," he was "now goeing thither" to Virginia. Why he returned to England I know not, but it is certain he died in London before the 5th day of May, 1624, since no man's will is probated till he is dead. Here is evidence that no man can doubt. The so-called "Jessey Church Records" are thus wrong in every statement concerning this pastor of that church.

It is a significant and certainly a fatal objection to these Records that they follow the ordinarily received statements in regard to Jacob rather than the original authorities. I mean this: the ordinary statements in the histories correspond with the "Jessey Records." If they are a fraud they would follow supposed historical facts as closely as possible. This the "Records" do. The facts set forth in this will until now have been unknown to historians, because they did not know this will was in existence. But the "Jessey Records" fall also into the mistakes of *modern* historians. It is incredible that the clerk of the Jacob church in London could have been ignorant of the return and death of Mr. Jacob, and should not even know the year in which Mr. Jacob severed his connection with the church. It is also incredible that the clerk of the church did not know that the wife of Mr. Jacob did not go with him to Virginia, but remained in London as a member of the church there. Mr. Jacob expressly says in his will that his wife and part of his children were to remain behind, and if providence permitted to come to Virginia the "ensewing May;" but instead of the good wife going to him, he came back to her. More than that, Sara Jacob was arrested, along with this church, on the 29th of April, 1632, and along with the other members of the church was tried and imprisoned May 3, 1632 (Records of the High Court of Commission and Star Chamber). The author of the "Jessey Records" not only did not know these facts, but calls this good pastor's wife "Mr. Jacob." The records of the Court are perfectly clear on this point. If there ever was a more stupidly blundering

document than this so-called "Jessey Records," unless it be the Gould "Kiffin Manuscript," which comes from the same quarter, I yet have to see it. The author of the "Jessey Records" knows scarcely one fact concerning Mr. Jacob and his family, but on the other hand, has made assertions and given dates which are proved incorrect. If these Records were the actual minutes of the church, not one of these blunders could have occurred. But these are the very blunders that a man writing long afterwards without the original records before him and with the statements of modern historians as his guide, would fall into.

The next statement of the "Jessey Records" is equally false. They say:

"After his Departure hence ye Congregation remained a year or two edifying one another in ye best manner they could according to their Gifts given to them from above. And then at length John Lathrop sometimes a Preacher in Kent, joyned to ye said Congregation; And was afterwards chosen and Ordained a Pastor to them, a Man of tender heart and a humble and meek Spirit serving the Lord in the ministry about 9 years to their great comfort."

The statement that the church was without a pastor "a year or two" cannot possibly be true. If Mr. Lathrop served the church about 9 years, he became pastor the latter portion of 1625. But we have already seen that Mr. Jacob left the church as pastor in 1622. At the very least calculation the church was more than three years without a pastor. And any one who is familiar with church records knows that "genuine" (?) church records would not be so indefinite about important matters as is this document. It would have been quite natural for church records to say that Pastor Jacob resigned upon a certain day named, and Pastor Lathrop became pastor upon a certain date. But even this effort to be indefinite is fatal to these records, for at any calculation "a year or two" is not three or four years.

In these alleged "Records," the most elaborate account is given of the arrest, trial and imprisonment of members of this church. The account is very specific and enters into minute details. Of course, if these were truly records of this church they would be accurate. Their glaring mistakes prove them to be forgeries. After much searching I have been able to secure a copy of the original court proceedings in the Court of High Commission and Star Chamber. These minutes were supposed to be lost, as they were not to be found in the Calendar of State Papers nor in the collection of original State Papers preserved in the Record Office in Chancery Lane, London. At length I located them, however, in the Rawlinson Manuscripts, Vol. 128, Bodeleian Library, Oxford. The subsequent proceedings in this celebrated case, as they are presented, may be found in the original papers in the Record Office. I give not theories nor "ingenious" guesses, but the actual facts in the case. But these facts contradict the "Jessey Records" in almost every particular, and show how utterly unreliable they are.

Take the case of Humphrey Barnett. The Jessey Records say of him:

"1632. The 2nd month (called Aprill) ye 29th Day, the Church was seized upon by Tomlinson, ye Bps. Pursevant, that ware mett in ye house of Hump: Barnet, Brewer's Clark in Black: Fryers, he being no member or hearing abroad, at wch time 18 were not committed but scaped, or ware not then present. About 42 ware all taken & their names given up," &c.

It appears from this account that Humphrey Barnett was not arrested and committed to prison. And yet this is directly contradicted by the Court Records. He was the very first man to appear before the court. The court record reads that "therefore the Inan of the howse wherein they were taken was first called: who was asked when he was at his parish church?"

The "Jessey Records" affirm that those arrested were put in various prisons, whereas as a matter of fact they were all confined in one prison. The "Records" say: "Several were committed to the Bps Prison, called the New Prison in _____ Crow a merchants house again) & thence some to the Clink, some to ye Gathouse & some that thought to have escaped he joynd to them, being in prison together," &c. It is singular that the writer of this document did not know the Location of the New Prison, and was compelled to leave a blank space. This is a very suspicious circumstance. It will be noticed that the "Jessey Records" mention at least three prisons where these persons were confined: The Bishops Prison, the Clink and the Gathouse. The evidence is that they were all confined in the New Prison, and none of them in the Clink or the Gathouse. We learn this from another trial where some other heretics taken in another conventicle were tried on the 14th of June, 1632. The Bishop of London directed that this company be "sent two and two to other prisons, and none to the New Prison, because the Keeper hath let some of the principall of the other companie to escape." The conclusion of the Archbishop of Canterbury was that since the keeper of New Prison was not careful enough, these prisoners should be scattered into various prisons. His words are: "Therefore let these men be put 2. and 2. in severall prisons." Here, then, we find that the "Jessey Records" are wrong again. I have official copies of the entire court proceedings in these cases, and it is manifest that the "other company" were the Jessey company.

These same "Jessey Records," say of Humphrey Bernard and Some others, that they were converted and added to the church in prison. "In this very time of their restraint ye word was so farr from bound, & ye Salnts so farr from being scared from the Ways of God, that even then many ware in prison added to ye church." Bernard was of this number. But the facts, as given in the records of the court, throw a very different light on the matter. He is there represented as a member of this conventicle, and his name immediately follows that of "John Latroppe the minister." He was imprisoned because he was a member of this church. It seems a pity to spoil this very pretty story, but the facts are against it.

Of the persons in prison the "Jessey Church Records" say: "Henry Dod, deceased in prison." Unfortunately for the records, that was not the fact. Henry Dod, did not die in prison, at any rate he did not die at this time. He was tried on the "3 Maij [March], 1632," and found guilty and imprisoned. He was probably one of those of whose escape the

Bishop of London complained, for we find that on the 25th of November, 1633, he was out of prison. Bishop Lindsell, of Peterborough, writes to Sir John Lambe, Dean of the Marshes, and says that he hopes he has conferred with the Archbishop of Canterbury about Mr. Dod and his preaching heresy, and has received directions what is to be done with him about it (Vol. ccli. Domestic -- Charles I. *Calendar State Papers*). So it is plain that the "Jessey Records" are wrong about Henry Dod's dying in prison.

Mr. Jacob is announced in these records as one of the men who was arrested. But "Mr. Jacob" was not a man at all. The person arrested and tried, as I find from the Court Records, was a woman, and her name was Sara Jacob, the widow of the late pastor of the church, Henry Jacob. The writer of these "faithful extracts" (?) did not know that Sara Jacob was still in London, and so he wrote the "original records" (?) to suit his case rather than according" to the facts. The fraud is not pious.

These "Jessey Church Records" say that "Sam House, Sister House," were arrested, and leave the impression that they were man and wife. The Court Records, however, mention no such man, and as to "Sister House," her name was "Penmina Howes," and she was "a maide."

The "Jessey Church Records" say that "Mr. Sargent" was one of the number arrested and imprisoned; but "Mr. Sargent," according to the Court Records, was a woman, and her name was "Elizabeth Sargeant."

The "Jessey Church Records" tell us that "Mr Wilson" was among the members of this church arrested, but the Court Records make it clear that "Mr. Wilson" was a woman, and her name was "Susan Wilson."!!!

A great deal is said of Mr. P. Barebone in the "Jessey Records" and in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. The said Barebones is one of the principal heroes of the amazing stories related in these documents, and the most extravagant claims have been put forth as to his doings. I shall return to Barebones at another time in these papers. I desire now only to point out a reckless statement concerning him made in the "Jessey Records." That document declares that

"Mr. Barebones" was arrested along with Lathroppe on the 29th day of April, 1632. Mr. P. Barebones was not only not arrested at this time, but was receiving honors from his fellow-citizens. He was admitted Foreman of the Leather Sellers Company, 20th January, 1623; elected a Warden of the Yoemanry, 6th July, 1630; a Liveryman, 13th Oct. 1634; and third Warden, 16th June, 1648 (Notes & Queries, 3rd Series, Vol. 1, p. 211).

Not only was he not in trouble with the authorities, but on Dec. 31st, 1635, he was paying over to the government ship money in course of business in large sums. He likewise was using in his business an elaborate seal bearing the arms of one of the nobles (*Calendar of State Papers*, Vol., 305, 80. I). But if we needed anything more to explode this absurd story of the "Jessey Records," I need only to say that the Court Records show that "Mr.

Barebones," who was arrested, was a woman, and that her given name was "Sara."!!!
These are "genuine records" with a vengeance.

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter V

[Go to Chapter VI](#)

[Back To Contents](#)

The following persons are represented by the "Kiffin" Manuscript and the "Jessey Church Records" as joining a church along with Sam. Eaton in 1633, Sept, 12: Henry Parker &, wife, Widd Fearne, Mr. Wilson, Jo. Milburne and others. This could not be, for the very earliest date that any of this party were released from jail was April 24, 1634, or some seven months later than the alleged event described. This is about as nearly correct as the dates in these documents ever are. Here is another instance where the State Papers show these Gould documents to be a fraud.

The "Jessey Church Records" further state: "1632. Elizab. Milburn, about 26 committed ye 12th of ye 2nd month (called May 12th) being ye Lord's Day." The records of the court show that this statement is not true, since Elizabeth Milburn was in court upon the 8th of May, and was tried upon that day. That is to say, Mary Milburn was present in court and tried four days before the "Jessey Records" say she was arrested. And it is also a fact May the 12th was not the Lord's day, but Saturday. It is also true that "genuine records" (?) of that date would not have used the apostrophe in "Lord's day," as is done here and elsewhere, for the apostrophe was not used in those times. And it is a further fact that a contemporaneous document would not have called this church, which was not over sixteen years old, an "antient Church," as the "Jessey Church Records" do in this place. All of these points are fatal to a claim of genuineness for these documents. No wonder the writer concealed his identity.

Sam Eaton figures largely in the "Jessey Church Records" and in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. These documents show the grossest ignorance of his history, and several things said of him are impossible. The "Jessey Records" make the following statement concerning him:

"1633. There haveing been much discussing, these denying truth of ye Parish Churches &, ye Church being become so large yt might be prejudicial, these following desired dismission, that they might become an entire Church & further ye communion of those churches in Order amongst themselves, wch at last was granted to them & performed Sept. 12th, 1632, viz

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| "Henry Parker & wife | |
| Widd Fearne | Marke Luker |
| ----- Hatmaker | Mr. Wilson |
| Mary Millburn | Thomas Allen |
| Jo: Milburn | -----Arnold. |

"To these joynd Rich. Blunt, Tho. Hubert, Rich. Tredwell and His wife Katherine, John Trimber, Wm. Jennings, & Sam Eaton, Mary Greenway. Mr. Eaton with some others receiving a further baptism, others joynd to them.

"1638 These also being of ye same Judgment with Sam Eaton & desiring to depart & not being censured, our interest in them was remitted wth Prayer made in their behalfe Julie 8th, 1638. They haveing first forsaken us & joyned with Mr. Spilsbury, viz

Mr. Petie Fenner
Hen. Penn
Tho. Wilson

Wm. Batty
Mrs. Allen (died 1639)
Mrs. Norwood."

The "Kiffin" Manuscript says of this last transaction:

"1633, Sundry of ye Church thereof Mr. Jacob & Mr. John Lathrop had been pastors, being dissatisfied with ye Churches owning of English Parishes to be true Churches desired dismissal & joyned together among themselves, as Mr. Henry Parker, Mr. Tho. Shepard, Mr. Sam Eaton, Marke Luker & others wth whom Joyned Mr. W. Kiffin.

"1638. Mr. Thos. Wilson, Mr. Pen, & H. Pen, & 3 more being convinced that Baptism was not for infants, but professed Believers joyned with Mr. Jo. Spilsbury ye Churches favour being desired therein."

There is scarcely a statement in the above bill of particulars which is according to the facts. Besides, it will be noted that the "Jessey Church Records" and the "Kiffin" Manuscript contradict each other in important particulars. If we had no other evidence the contradictory nature of these documents would be enough to show that we could not trust them. It would seem from the accounts as given in these documents that Sam Eaton spent a good part of his life in joining various churches, and yet it is certain that with all of the details given, the writer of these documents was grossly ignorant of the most important events in the life of Sam Eaton. For example, neither the "Kiffin" Manuscript nor the "Jessey Church Records" make mention of the fact that he was arrested at the same time Lathrop was, April 29, 1632. A long list of others was mentioned, but so prominent a man as Sam Eaton was is entirely overlooked. Not only was Sam Eaton arrested April 29, and tried May 3 of the same year, but he continued in prison until April 24, or a period of two years. He was released from prison under the very same bond that Lathrop was (Calendar of State Papers, Vol. 261, fol. 182). This is fatal to the "Jessey Church Records" and the "Kiffin" Manuscript, since these documents represent him as free, and organizing and leading in independent church movements in 1633. At the very time that these documents represent poor Sam Eaton as doing all these great things, he was in jail, and had been for a year, and continued in jail for a whole year afterwards.

The "Kiffin" Manuscript also makes a complete breakdown in speaking of the church under date of 1633. It says that "Mr. Jacob & Mr. John Lathrop *had* been pastors." Why put the verb in the past tense, for Mr. Lathrop *was* pastor at that very time? Another absurd statement is made in both of these documents, that the division of the Jacob church in 1633 was caused by "being dissatisfied with the Churches of English Parishes to be true churches." That reason will not answer, since this Jacob church had existed already 17 years on this very basis of opposition to the Parish Churches, and Sam Eaton had certainly been for more than a year, and perhaps for many years, a member of the Jacob church. Can any reasonable man have any confidence in such documents?

These alleged "genuine (?) documents" represent that on June 8th, 1638, Sam Eaton received "a further baptism," and that since he had been convinced that infant baptism was wrong he joined Mr. Spilsbury's church. These statements lack only one important element to make them reliable -- that is, they are not true. The "Kiffin" Manuscript and the "Jessey Records" have a habit of always giving the wrong date. On June 8th, 1638, Sam Eaton was again in jail and never came out alive. He was turned out on bond April 24th, 1634, on condition not to be present at any private conventicle. He did not keep the terms of his bond, and for a period of nearly two years he succeeded in hiding from the officers. But on May 5, 1636, he was arrested and confined in jail. The entry is: "Samuel Eaton of St. Giles without Crippe Gate. London. button-maker" (*Calendar of State Papers*, Vol. 324, fol. 13). He remained in jail until Aug. 31, 1639, when he died and was buried in Bunhill Fields (*Calendar of State Papers*, Vol. 427, fol. 107). So the facts are squarely against the "Kiffin" Manuscript and the "Jessey Records." At the very time that these documents represent him as joining Spilsbury's church he was in jail, and had been there for two years. Such is the testimony of the only witnesses to the "1641" theory.

Still again, the "Jessey Records" give another account of an arrest in which, as usual, Sam Eaton figured. The date was January, 1637. The account is as follows:

"11th Month (Vulgarly January) ye 21st day at Queenith (where Mr. Glover, Mr. Eaton, Mr. Eldred & others 1637 ware wth us) after Exercise was done, by means Mr. ----- the overthwart Neighbour, Officers and others came, at last both ye Sheriffs, & then Veasey ye Parsevant who took ye names; The Lord gave such wisdom in their carriage yt some of their opposers afterwards did much favour them & bail'd them. The next day Veasey the Pursevant got money of some of them, & so they ware dismissed, 4 ware remitted to ye Poulter Counter."

Here is the statement that Sam Eaton was arrested upon this 21st of January, 1637, and bailed out. This is flatly contrary to the facts of the case. Mr. Eaton had been committed to jail on the 5th day of May, 1636, and hence was at that moment in jail, and had been for nearly a year. He was not bailed out, but, as we have seen, he died in jail in Aug. 1639. The only element the "Jessey Records" lack of being authoritative is to tell the truth. And the month was not January, but February (Life and death of Mr. Henry Jessey, 1671, B. M. 1418. i.15).

Consider the facts a moment, and then read the following *fresh* statement: "Is it possible that he is the same Samuel Eaton who became pastor of the Congregational Church at New Haven, Conn., when it was established on the 22d of August, 1639, (Dexter, *Congregationalism*, p. 413, note; cf. p. 587, note) and returning to England in 1640 founded the Congregational Church at Duckingfield (Dexter, p. 635, note)" (*A Question in Baptist History*, p. 84). Of course not. The very month that the above author had Mr. Eaton going to New England, he died and was buried. It will never do to disturb the sleeping ashes of Sam Eaton to make him pastor of a Congregational church in 1640, when he died in 1639. A theory that requires dead men to be living and living men to be dead, is beyond my power of belief.

I speak of the Crosby "Kiffin" and the Gould "Kiffin" document as distinct versions of the so-called "Kiffin" Manuscript, because Crosby gives "the substance" of a document he saw and loaned to Neal, but which has perished, while the Gould document was copied by Dr. Gould in 1860, and is the only edition we have extant.

The Crosby "Kiffin" declares there were "twenty men and women, with divers others," who left the Jessey church in 1633; the Gould "Kiffin" mentions five and others, while the "Jessey Church Records" give 19 names. The list differs materially in the three documents. This contradictory evidence cannot be received as authoritative.

The lists of names for 1638 do not correspond in the three manuscripts. Crosby's "Kiffin" gives two names and "others;" Gould's "Kiffin" gives three names and says there were three others, and the "Jessey Church Records" give six names, and these six do not include some that are found in the Gould document. There is nothing surprising in all of this, for this is quite as near as these documents usually come to agreeing with each other.

The statements in regard to Mr. Lathrop in the "Jessey Church Records" are as follows:

"After ye space of about 2 years of the sufferings and patience of these Saints, they were all released upon Bail (some remaining to this day as Mr. Jones &c, though never called on) only to Mr. Lathrop and Mr. Grafton, they refused to show such favour, they were to remain in Prison without release.

"At last there being no hopes yt Mr. Lathrop should do them further service in ye church, he having many motives to go to New England if it might be granted. After the death of his wife he earnestly desiring ye Church would release him of yt office wch (to his grief) he could no more performe, and that he might have their consent to goe to New England. after serious consideration had about it, it was freely granted to him.

"Then petition being made that he might have liberty to depart out of ye land, he was released from Prison, 1634 about ye 4th month (called June), and about 30 of the members, who desired leave and permission from the Congregation to go along with him, had it granted to them, namely," &c.

Almost all the particulars mentioned in this extract are contrary to the facts.

1. It is claimed that these "saints" were "all released upon bail" with one exception; "only to Mr. Lathrop and Mr. Grafton, they refused to show such favour, they were to remain in prison without release." But the State Papers give a very different account. After a pretty diligent search through the original State Papers, I have been unable to find where one of these "Saints" was released before Mr. Lathrop, much less "all" of them. On the other hand, It would seem from the entry in the records that Mr. Lathrop played the baby act, while at a later date some of the prlsoners refused to take the oath and were recommitted to prison. The facts in the case are the very reverse of the statements in the "Jessey Records."

2. "Only to Mr. Lathrop and Mr. Grafton they refused to show such favor," and they were retained in prison. That statement is not true, and I give only one example out of many. After Lathrop was dismissed on June 12 William Granger and William Batty, two of this company, "refused to take oaths or to answer articles and were committed to the Gate-house" (*Calendar of State Paper*, Vol. 261, fol. 39).

3. The "Jessey Records" say that Lathrop was released from prison "about ye 4th month (called June)." The State Papers show that he was released April 24th.

4. The "Records" make the impression that he went to America immediately. As a matter of fact, he hung around London for some months until the magistrates made it too hot for him. On June 19, 1634, this entry was made against John Lathrop: "Bond ordered to be certified, and he to be attached for non-appearance" (*Calendar of State Papers*, Vol. 261, fol. 50). He did not leave London till the last of August, and arrived in Boston, Sept. 18, 1634, on board the ship *Griffin*.

I have already quoted the statement from the "Jessey Records" that Sam Eaton and others organized a church out of Lathrop's church in 1633, and the "Kiffin" Manuscript declares that William Kiffin was in this secession in 1633. This could not have been, for William Kiffin did not join Lathrop's church till 1634, and he is known to have continued in this church till he joined Spilsbury's church in 1638. This date of 1634, when Kiffin joined Lathrop's church, is undoubtedly correct, for in the account which Kiffin left of his own life, and which was used by Ivimey in the preparation of the Biography of Kiffin, 1634 is the date given (*Life of William Kiffin*, p. 13). And Waddington in his *Surrey Congregational History*, p. 21, gives the same date, with a remarkable extract from Kiffin himself concerning the annoyances he experienced from the persecutors. Here, then, again, in an important particular these "genuine records" (?) are wrong. The Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript makes William Kiffin secede from the Lathrop church before ever he joined that church and while he was yet an Episcopalian. The Crosby "Kiffin" Manuscript, however, declares that Kiffin joined Spilsbury's church in 1638. These documents, which are declared to be "identical," contradict each other on important points of facts, and, what is more note-worthy, both of them contradict the facts in the case. Yet it is on the sole testimony of such documents that we are asked to believe the Baptists of England all practiced sprinkling before 1641!

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter VI

[Back To Contents](#)

It is absolutely essential to a full understanding of this subject that a most clear and marked distinction be continuously maintained between the various documents which have been indiscriminately referred to as the "Kiffin" Manuscript, or the "So-called Kiffin Manuscript." Certain writers have classed as "Kiffin" Manuscript, documents drawn from widely different sources. These documents are as follows: Crosby gives (Vol. 1, pp. 101-2) the substance of a manuscript which he distinctly declares was only "said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin." Gould gives (pp. cxxiii., cxxiv.) a quotation which he claims to be the original language of this manuscript, "said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin," of which Crosby gives the substance. Crosby (Vol. 3, p. 41) makes a short quotation from a "manuscript" whose authorship he does not mention; and he also gives (Vol. 1, pp. 148, 149) a quotation of some length from what he says is an undoubted manuscript of William Kiffin.

Even if Crosby and Gould had not erected such plain and unmistakable signboards to guard the student against error in regard to these various documents, it would seem that the very nature of the manuscripts themselves would be sufficient to guard against any confusion concerning them. I give below in one column Crosby's quotation from what he accepted as a genuine and authentic manuscript of William Kiffin, and in the other column I give so much of the Gould manuscript "said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin," as purports to contain a record of the period preceding the year 1640:

Crosby's Manuscript of
Gould's Anonymous Kiffin
William Kiffin

Manuscript to the year 1640

An. Dom. 1633. "There was a
1633. "Sundry of ye Church thereof
congregation of Protestant
Mr. Jacob and Mr. John Lanthrop
Dissenters of the *independent*
had been Pastors. Being dissatisfied
Persuasion in *London*, gathered
with ye churches owning of English
in the year 1616, whereof Mr. Henry
Parishes, to be true churches desired
Jacob was the first pastor; and after him
dismission & joyned together among
succeeded Mr. *John Lathrop*, who
themselves, as Mr. Henry Parker, Mr.
was their minister at this time. In this
Tho. Shepherded, Mr. Sam Eaton, Mark
society several persons finding that the
Luker & others with whom joyned Mr.
congregations kept not to their first

Wm. Kiffin.

principles of separation, and being

also convinced that *baptism* was

1638. "Mr. Thomas Wilson, Mr. Pen,
not to be administered to *infants*, but
& H. Pen, & 3 more being convinced that
such only as professed faith in Christ,
Baptism was not for infants, but professed
desired that they might be dismissed from
Believers joyned with Mr. Jo. Spilsbury
that communion, and allowed to form
ye churches faviour being desired therein."
a distinct congregation in such order as
was most agreeable to their own Sentiments.

Records of that Church

"This church considering that they were now
grown very numerous, and so more than could in
these times of persecution conveniently meet
together, and believing also that those persons acted
from a principle of conscience, and not obstancy,
agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that
they should be constituted a distinct church; which was
perform'd the 12th of Sept, 1633. And as they
believed that *baptism* was not rightly
administered to *infants*, so they look'd upon the
baptism they had receiv'd in that age as invalid;
whereupon most or all of them received a new *baptism*.
Their minister was Mr. *John Spilsbury*. What number
they were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of the
names of about twenty men and women it is added,
with divers others

An. Dom. 1638. "In the year 1638, Mr. *William
Kiffin*, Mr. *Thomas Wilson* and others, being of the
same judgment, were upon their request dismissed to
the said Mr. *Spilsbury's* congregation.

"In the year 1639 another congregation of *Baptists*
was formed, whose place of meeting was in
Crutched-Fyrars; the chief promoters of which
were Mr. *Green*, Mr. *Paul Hobson* and Captain
Spencer."
Crosby, Vol. I, pp. 148-9.

At the very beginning we are struck with the contradiction in these documents. The Gould document contradicts the Crosby document in a most important particular: The Gould document declares that this movement to send Blunt to Holland all occurred among some dissatisfied persons in the Jessey church. It was a one church movement.

The words are so plain that there can be no mistake. The words are: "Sundry of ye church thereof Mr. Jacob & Mr. John Lathrop had been pastors;" and "the church became two by mutuall consent half being with Mr. P. Barebone," &c. But the Kiffin document according to Crosby affirms that there were a numbar [sic] of Independent churches engaged in this enterprize. The words are: "Several sober and pious persons belonging to the Congregations of the *dissenters* about *Lon do*, were convinced that *believers* were the only proper subjects of *baptism*, and that it ought to be administered by *immersion*, or *dipping* the whole body into the water." A more contradictory statement I never saw. The one document declares that this was undertaken by one church, the other as positively declares that more than one church was doing; this thing. And now we are asked to believe that these documents are the very same. Yet this is the contradictory trash we are asked to accept as authoritative, and this is the kind of stuff that the whole 1641 theory is built upon.

The most casual examination of these manuscripts would show that they are not the same: they may slightly resemble each other, but they cannot be the same. The document which Crosby claims as genuine is some four times longer than that part of the Gould anonymous document which covers the same period, and does not correspond with it in language or facts. All the Crosby document says of 1639 is entirely omitted in the Gould document. Yet we have been gravely informed that this Gould document is "identical with" that "used by Crosby in the preparation of his history." There is no important point of identity between the two. A man must have on a curious pair of spectacles who can find identity in these two extracts.

Now the only one of the documents which I have discussed that gives any support whatever to the 1641 theory is *Gould's version* of the anonymous manuscript "said," by some unknown person, "to be written by Mr. William Kiffin;" and the only words of that manuscript which afford any aid and comfort to the said theory is the entry under the date 1640, which immediately follows the quotation given above; and the only words in this 1640 part at all pertinent to that theory are the now famous words in regard to dipping, "none having then so practiced in England to professed believers." Thus the 1641 theory rests upon the presence of ten words in an anonymous m manuscript of which the earliest extant copy belongs to the year 1869, and this copy is itself at best a mere copy of a copy!!

Now, although but a small part of this anonymous manuscript, as given by Gould, is pertinent to the 1641 theory, yet if any part of the manuscript can be demonstrated to be false, then the whole must be discarded, for a genuine contemporaneous record contains no material falsehoods. False in one, false in all. I have already demonstrated that much of this "Kiffin" Manuscript cannot possibly be true, and much more is contradictory and absurd; and it will still further be shown that this Manuscript is a fraud. The entry for the year 1640 in Gould's edition of this anonymous manuscript begins as follows: "1640, 3d Mo. The Church [whereof Mr. Jacob and Mr. John Lathrop had been Pastors], became two by mutual consent, just half being with Mr. P. Barebone and ye other halfe with Mr. H. Jessey. Mr. Rich'd Blunt with him being convinced of. Baptism, yt also it ought to be by dipping ye Body into ye Water, resembling Burial and riseing [sic] again, Col.II., 12; Rom. VI., 4;" and then asserts that the subject baptized should be a professed believer. Now the facts are that neither "Mr. P. Barebones" nor "Mr. H. Jessey" did anything of the sort. The narrative says that Mr. Richard Blunt being convinced with "him," went to

Holland for immersion. Being convinced with whom? P. Barebones? Certainly not, for Barebones did not become a Baptist till somewhere before 1654. He was not a Baptist in 1641, nor was he convinced of the necessity of "immersion," nor yet of "beleavers' [sic] baptism," for after this he wrote at least three books, which are before me, in which he violently assailed both, and one of these books bears date as late as 1645. It was not Praise-God Barebones. Was it Mr. Jessey that joined in with Mr. Blunt? Certainly not, for Mr. Jessey did not believe in the necessity of dipping, nor was he convinced of the necessity of believers' baptism till the summer of 1644, and he was not baptized till the mid-summer of 1645, or five years after this date (*Life of Jessey*, p. 83). The plain conclusion is that this anonymous manuscript, as quoted by Gould, is false, for neither Barebones nor Jessey joined in 1640 with Blunt to go to Holland or any other place for immersion.

That this Jessey church divided, "just half being with Mr. P. Barebone and ye other halfe with Mr. H. Jessey" on the subject of immersion, is a very improbable story. Churches are not accustomed to divide on mathematical lines on the subject of immersion or any other doctrine. It is rather queer, when one comes to think about it, that there should have been an exact division of this church on such lines. The story here told is suspiciously like the one related by Ivimey in his *History of the Hubbard church*, which divided equally, but the reason there given was a legitimate one, since that church was so large that it was in danger of being apprehended, and it divided evenly for security. It is possible that the writer of the Gould document got these two churches mixed. Where, however, the compiler got this story is immaterial, but it is certain that it does not bear the marks of truth.

We now come to the passage -- the famous ten words -- in which so much reliance has been placed, where the Gould document declares that in 1640 none in England had practiced believers' baptism by dipping. It will be seen from the paragraphs above that I have shown that the first statement that Jessey was convinced of believers' baptism by dipping is false. One falsehood in a matter of fact would throw doubt upon the whole. But I attack the integrity of the passage itself. It is radically different from the account as quoted by Crosby from *his* copy of the Manuscript, "said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin." I give these accounts as they occur in the Gould "Kiffin" and the Crosby "Kiffin" for comparison in parallel columns:

Editor's note: These are not in parallel columns, but one follows the other.

GOULD MANUSCRIPT, 1860.

1640. 3rd. Mo: The Church became two by mutuall consent half being with Mr. P Barebone, & ye other halfe with Mr. H Jessey. Mr. Richard Blount with him being convinced of Baptism yt also it ought to be by dipping in ye body into ye water, resembling Burial and rising again. 2 Col. 2. 12, Rom. 6. 4. had sober conference about in ye Church, & then with some of the forenamed who also were so convinced; and after prayer & conference about their so enjoying it, none having then so practiced it in England to professed Believers, & hearing that some in and ye Netherlands had so practiced they agreed and sent over Mr. Rich. Blunt (who understood Dutch) with letters of Commendation, and who was kindly accepted there, and returned with letters, from them, Jo: Batte & Teacher there and from that Church to such as sent him.

They proceed therein, viz: Those Persons that ware [sic] persuaded Baptism should be by dipping ye body had met in two Companies, and did intend so to meet after this, all those agreed to proceed alike together. And then manifesting (not by any formal Words A Covenant) Weh word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutual desires and agreements each Testified:

Those two Companies did set apart one to Baptize the rest: so it was solemnly performed by them.

Mr. Blunt baptized Mr. Blacklock yt was a teacher amongst them and Mr. Blunt being baptized, he and Mr. Blacklock baptized the rest of their friends that ware so minded, and many being added to them, they increased much.

CROSBY'S ACCOUNT OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

Several sober and pious persons belonging to the Congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that believers were the only proper subjects of baptism, and that it ought to be administered bt immersion or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of a burial and resurrection according to Colos. II.,12, and Rom. VI., 4. That they often met together to pray and confer about this matter, and so consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in its primitive purity: That they could not be satisfied about any administrator in England to begin this practice; because tho' some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not as they knew of revived the ancient custom of immersion: But hearing that some in the Netherlands practiced it, they agreed to send over one Mr. Richard Blunt, who understood the Dutch language; that he went accordingly, carrying letters of recommendation with him and was kindly received both by the church there and Mr. John Batten, their teacher.

That upon his return he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these two baptized the rest of their company [whose names are in the manuscript to the number of fifty-three]. --- Crosby, Vol. I, pp. 101-2

Upon the statement made in this Gould document, that believers' immersion was unknown in England at this time the most elaborate treatises have been prepared, and the most extravagant theories put forth. Spurgeon states in his autobiography that when he himself made a profession of faith in England in this century, he did not know that any one in England practiced believers' baptism by dipping. Accordingly, even if this Gould document were a genuine manuscript, the mere fact that its prejudiced author did not know any thing about the Baptists would not prove that they did not exist. Genuine Baptists have never been much given to self-advertising.

It has already been shown that this "Kiffin" Manuscript is absolutely untrustworthy, and it has made statements in almost every particular which cannot be depended upon. It will also be seen, by consulting the parallel columns above, that these accounts differ in words, spelling, matter, and indeed in almost every particular. Both of these accounts cannot be genuine. One or the other is a fabrication. Which one am I to believe? Shall I accept Crosby's document as correct, then the passage "none haveing then so practiced it in England to professed Believers," is left out, for it is not in the Crosby "Kiffin" Manuscript. That passage gone, there is nothing left of the elaborate theory which has been built on those words. The rejection of the Gould document kills the 1641 theory, and if we accept the Gould document, we have a still worse state of affairs. Then it

follows that Crosby in quoting from this document deliberately falsified the facts to suit his purposes, and left out the most important words to be found in the Manuscript. Crosby did this, too, with a full knowledge of the fact that the Pedobaptist historian, Neal, knew all about it and had every means in his hands to expose him, for Crosby had loaned this very Manuscript to Neal, and Neal, in several instances, quotes from it. Besides, Crosby stands above reproach in his honesty and integrity. I do not believe that Crosby wilfully [sic] left out a passage like this. It must also be taken into account that this Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript is an unauthenticated document, and that no man can tell from whence it came or whither it went. The oldest extant copy was made less than 40 years ago: viz., 1860. A man must have a stupendous credulity to believe in the authenticity of this Gould document.

I once again call attention to a very important fact, that the opinion expressed on dipping of believers, as set forth in the Gould Kiffin Manuscript, was the peculiar opinion of the compiler of the thirty papers of which this manuscript is one. This writer, over and over again, in the other papers of this series, wove in these almost identical words in passages which he wrote himself, and around quotations from other authors whose words would not warrant such language. The reader can draw his own conclusions, Crosby had a "Kiffin" Manuscript before him, but it did not have these words in it. This unknown writer had these words as a pet phrase. This unknown writer, who changed every author he quoted, leaves a "Kiffin" Manuscript, and these words are in his copy. How did these words get into this copy? I repeat, how did these words get into this document? I would also repeat that this document from which Gould quotes is not pretended by anyone to be the original manuscript, but is at best the mere copy of a copy. Thus this whole 1641 theory rests upon the casual presence of ten words in an unauthenticated and remote copy of an anonymous manuscript, when these words are not reported by Crosby to have been in the copy of that manuscript, which was inspected by him and do not make their appearance except in a remote and unauthenticated copy. With these facts before us, and they cannot be denied, we do not regard this Gould "Kiffin" as of one particle of value. But let us consider some additional facts. There is not one line from any contemporaneous author to prove that Blunt ever went to Holland; there is not one contemporaneous author who indicates that he ever heard tell of Richard Blunt or Samuel Blacklock. All we know of these men is found in this so-called "Kiffin" Manuscript. It is calculated to stretch a man's credulity a good deal to believe that these men introduced believers' immersion into England in 1641, and yet were never heard of nor mentioned by any writer of those times. There is no proof that any such men ever lived. For more than half a century there is not a reference to either of them. If they did the great things claimed for them, the Baptists were incredibly ungrateful and unappreciative. Edwards does indeed refer to a Blount who was an Anabaptist, but his given name is not mentioned, and there is no circumstance to connect him with the alleged Richard Blunt. The Blount mentioned by Edwards was a General Baptist, and not a Calvinistic Baptist, as was Jessey and the rest, and so could not have been connected with them in this enterprise. Nor did the Blount mentioned by Edwards go to Holland. The first reference I have found to the Baptists sending to Holland for baptism is in an account by Hutchinson, who wrote in 1676, thirty-five years after 1641, and he declares that the point of the trouble is not immersion, but the administrator of baptism. Hutchinson says: *"the great objection was the Want of an administrator, which, as I have heard, was remov'd by*

sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied" (A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism Dialogue-wise. Epistle to the Reader. London, 1676). But Hutchinson does not mention Blunt, nor does he appear to know anything about him. Neither Blunt nor Blacklock signed the Confession of Faith of 1643, and I repeat that their names are not found in any Baptist document, nor in any other kind of a document anywhere near 1641. It is a matter incredible that a man of such importance should have been mentioned by no one of his contemporaries.

Indeed, the original story was not that Blunt went to Holland to get immersion, but that John Spilsbury went. Crosby gives the story in these words: "*Mr, Spilsbury*, who was falsely reported to have gone over to *Holland* to receive baptism from *John Smith*, declares expressly against a man baptizing himself, and judges it to be far from any rule in the Gospel so to do; but observes, that where there is a beginning, some one must be first. 'And because,' says he, 'some make it such all error, and so, far from any rule or example, for a man to baptize others, who is himself unbaptized, and so think thereby to shut up the *ordinance* of God such a strait, that none can come by it but thro' the authority of the *Popedom of Rome*; let the reader consider who baptiz'd *John the Baptist* before he baptized others and if no man did, then whether he did not baptize others, he himself being unbaptized. We are taught by this what to do upon like occasions.'

"Further,' says he, 'I fear men put more than is of right due to it, and so prefer it above the church and all other *ordinances* besides; for they can assume and erect a church, take and cast out *members*, elect and ordain *officers*, and administer the *supper*, and all a-new, without any looking after *succession*, any further than the scriptures. But as for *baptism* they must have that successively from the *Apostles*, tho' it comes thro' the hands of pope *Joan*. *What is the cause of this, that men can do all from the word but only baptism?*'

"Now is it probable that this man Should go over sea to find an *administrator of baptism*, or receive it at the hands of one who *baptized himself?*" (Crosby, vol. I, p. 103).

Here, then, is the original story that this going to Holland occurred in the time of John Smith, and that John Spilsbury was the man who went. This is flatly contradicted by Crosby. But there is just the same evidence for this as that Blunt went to Holland: namely, no evidence at all.

The date of the supposed visit of Blunt to Holland is as mythical as is the person of Blunt. A Baptist writer who published a *History of the Baptists*, supplementary to Neal's *History of the Puritans*, says that Blunt went to Holland in 1608, and there is just the same amount of evidence in favor of that date as any other, viz.: No evidence at all. Barclay says Blunt went to Holland in 1633, and some recently have been much impressed with 1640 as the date.

But the writer who has had more to say about Blunt than any other has named three dates, 1640, 1641 and 1644 as the time when Blunt went to Holland. He is equally certain about all these dates, and the funny thing is that he adopts both 1640 and 1641 as the proper date in the same book.. I quote the three statements. In the New York *Independent* he says: "But the mission of this Mr. Richard Blount, according to Neal ('History of the Puritans,' Vol. III., 173-4), did not occur until the year 1644, eleven years after the 'new baptism' was received by the Spilsbury secession. There is not the slightest reason anywhere to question the correctness of the date here given by Neal; and, hence, we must hold that the 'new baptism' of the First Particular Baptist church was a new sprinkling."

In his book he says: "The other leading item is that Mr. Blunt was sent to Holland in 1640 to obtain immersion; that he went to John Batten, well known as a teacher among the Collegiants, and, receiving the rite at his hands, returned to England" (A Question in Baptist History, p. 89).

In the same book, when he conceived that he needed the authority of Prof. de Hoop Scheffer, the "incomparable scholar," who had mentioned his researches to the "Royal Academy of Science," and had given such "encouragement for an humble professor across the sea," he names 1641 as the date. His words are: Professor Scheffer affirms that this intimate union continued until the year 1641 when Richard Blunt went to Rhynsburg, and receiving immersion at the hands of John Batten, returned to England and imparted it to the members of his church."

I mention this to show the utter confusion into which those fall who try to follow this Gould document; and in this very point the Gould document and Crosby's account contradict each other. The Gould document positively gives the date of Blunt's journey to May, 1640; whereas Neal, who used the manuscript which Crosby quoted from, positively states that the date mentioned is 1644. Neal is very plain on this point, and says he had the manuscript before him (Neal, Vol. 3, pp. 173, 174).

It was held by the *Independent* that Barber was the "founder of immersion" in 1641 among the General Baptists, and that Blunt founded immersion among the Particular Baptists in 1644. Two weeks before the editorial quoted above appeared, that is to say Oct. 21, 1880, an editorial appeared in the *Independent* setting forth this position, and the editorial of Nov. 7 was written to enforce this position. The editorial says: "We see no reason to question the accuracy of Neal in assigning 1644 as the date of Mr. Blount's mission to Holland. The seeming discrepancy which Dr. Burrage points out may be readily explained by reference to the rivalry of the two parties among Baptists. Those who sent Mr. Blount in 1644 would not recognize, and hence chose to ignore, the immersion which had been started by Barber in 1641."

It is therefore, necessary, in order to be right up with the "new discovery," "to move up the date to" 1644. Of course, the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1643 was then in full force, and that affirms that immersion is the only baptism, and it is against the contention of the above writer. But this could be met, as an editorial in the same *Independent* did answer the same objection when it was offered to the above extract taken from the *Independent*. The answer was: "High Baptist authority declares that the Confession of the Seven Churches in London 'was first put forth about the year 1643,' but no copy of the edition of that year has been recovered. If a copy could be recovered, it would, perhaps, be found to prescribe sprinkling or pouring, instead of immersion. It was probably not until 1644 that the London Confession decided in favor of immersion." -- *The Independent*, Jan. 19, 1882.

Of course, nobody is going to believe that the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1643 was a sprinkling document, and that the very same Confession, signed by the very same men, published one year later was a dipping document. But there is as much reason to believe that all Baptists of 1643 suddenly changed their minds, and from all practicing sprinkling all began to practice immersion, as to believe that all the Baptists of 1641 did this. Indeed, if we could believe all of these authors, Blunt spent 36 years in going; and returning from Holland to get dipped, and in all his sea voyages he never crossed a man

who cared enough about his doings to make a record of his exploits, or ever knew that such a man lived. And yet this is the only evidence that supports this 1641 business! We have already seen that Jessey was convinced that immersion was baptism, and was baptized in 1645. But document No.4 says that Blunt was convinced only the night before Jessey was. The exact words are: "After some time all these in ye 2nd Row were satisfied vide in their scruple and judged supra yt such disciples as are gifted to teach & Evangelists may also Baptize &c &c and ware baptized Some before H. Jessey and ye rest of ye Church ware convinced against Pedobaptism and hence desired to enjoy it where they might, & joyned also, some with Bro. Knollys, some with Bro. Kiffin, thus These

B. S. Knollys,
 B. S. Wade,
 B. Conver,
 S. Jane Todderoy
 S. Eliza Phillips,
 B. Darel,
 B. Blunt,

B. Ford,
 B. Potshall
 S. Dormer.
 S. Pickford,
 S. Reves,

"After that H. Jessey, was convinced also, the next morning early after that that wch had been a day of solemne seeking ye Lord in fasting & prayer (That infant Baptism ware unlawful and if we should be further baptised &c, the Lord would not hide it from us, but cause us to know it). First H. Jessey was convinced against Pedo-Baptism and then that himselfe should be baptized (notwithstanding many conferences wth his Honored Beloved Brethren."

1645 4 Mo. June 29 -- The weight, then, of the four documents which we are examining is against 1640 and in favor of 1644 as the time that Blunt went to Holland. Let us see. The Jessey Records and document No.4 make no mention of Blunt and his Holland performances. This is very strange. and thus the negative evidence is against this matter, since the Jessey Records should, if genuine, be a record of the proceedings of this church. The Crosby "Kiffln" Manuscript sets the date at 1644, and document No.4 puts the date of Blunt's joining the Baptists at 1644. The Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript declares that Jessey was convinced of the necessity of immersion at the same time Blunt was, and we know positively that Jessey was so convinced in 1644 and baptized in 1645. That leaves the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript unsupported in its date of 1640, and even suspicion is cast upon its statement by another statement in it. Thus the weight of evidence is all toward 1644 in these four documents. I am not arguing that 1644 is the date when Blunt went to Holland; I have no evidence that he ever went to Holland at all, or that there was ever such a man as Richard Blunt. I am simply setting forth an unanswerable argument to the effect that if these documents could be depended upon there is no doubt that the date that Blunt made his trip to Holland was in 1644, and not 1640.

=====

[John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 41-74. jrd]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter VII

[Back To Contents](#)

It has been shown that the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript contradicts Crosby's citation from the Manuscript, and that both of these are contradicted by the Jessey Church Records and Document number 4, and that all of these documents are contradicted by facts that cannot be called in question or set aside. I am under no obligation to prove that the Anabaptists immersed. As Dr. E. T. Winkler declared in the *Alabama Baptist* in 1881, when he was combatting this 1641 theory: "We assume that every Anti-pedobaptist of those ages was immersed, unless the contrary is shown by contemporary records." All that is needed is to emphasize the fact that immersion was the universal practice of the Anabaptists in England and challenge proof that they ever had any other practice. Not one example has been cited to show that any one Anabaptist practiced sprinkling in England before or since 1641. A good deal of theorizing has been engaged in, but I demand the name of just one Anabaptist who ever sprinkled any candidate for baptism in England before 1641. Till this is done there is no ground for any demand for proof that they immersed. All admit that they immersed in 1643, and there is no proof that any of them sprinkled in 1641. The man who affirms it must prove it. The Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript is the citadel of the 1641 argument; since that falls the argument falls with it. Facts must be produced, and boasts of great learning are no substitute for facts. Facts, hard facts, nothing but facts, will weigh in this matter. I have shown beyond any doubt that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is a fraud, and that the much-relied-upon expression, "none having then so practiced to professed believers" in England before 1641 is utterly unworthy of credit. While not under the slightest obligation to do so, I shall present some decisive proof of the practice of immersion in England before 1641. I shall present the testimony of the Episcopalians, Catholics, Independents or Presbyterians, and of the Baptists themselves. The following declaration sets forth the claim I am refuting: "I have often declared it to be my opinion that the immersion of adult believers was a lost art in England, from the year 1509, the accession of Henry VIII., to the year 1641, following the imprisonment of Archbishop Laud" (WESTERN RECORDER, July 9, 1896).

We begin with the Episcopalians. The following remarkable statement occurs in Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*: "So (parallel to the rest of their reformations) they reformed the font into a basin. This learned Assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in had been always used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of popery, and ever since churches were built; but that sprinkling as the common use of baptizing was really introduced (in France first, and then in other popish countries) in times of popery." (*History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. II., p. 403). And in another place he remarks: "And for sprinkling, properly called, it seems that it was in 1645 just then beginning, and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times of 1641." (*History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. II., p. 403).

Now is Wall correct in that statement? Were the Presbyterians the ones who reformed the font into a basin, and was sprinkling just beginning in 1645, having begun in the disorderly times of 1641? My recent investigations thoroughly confirm these statements. It is not necessary in this discussion to go back further than the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Gough, a learned antiquarian of the last century, states the condition of things in England

in the reign of this queen. He quotes the original authorities to make good his words. He says: "This [immersion] in England was custom, not law, for, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the governors of the Episcopal church in effect expressly prohibited sprinkling, forbidding the use of basons in public baptism. 'Last of all (the church wardens) shall see, that in every church there be a holy fonte, not a *bason*, wherein baptism may be administered, and it be kept comely and cleane.' 'Item, that the font be not removed, nor that the curate do baptize in *parish churches* in any basons, nor in any other form than is already prescribed.' Sprinkling, therefore, was not allowed, except as in the church of Rome, in cases of necessity at home" (*Archeology*, vol. 10, pp. 207, 208).

Sprinkling was, therefore, prohibited in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and was only permitted in cases of necessity, and that at home. This was the state of affairs when James VI. of Scotland became James I. of England, on March 24, 1603. A font of gold had been presented for his baptism (Turner, vol. 4, p.86, note). Although James had been immersed, he was a Scotchman. Many of the Scotch divines had gone over to Geneva and returned at length to Scotland greatly impressed with the views of Calvin. "These Scotch exiles, who had renounced the authority of the pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of Calvin; and, returning to their own country, with Knox at their head, in 1559, established sprinkling in Scotland" (*Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p.236). James was a thorough Scotchman, and some of the Court ladies had already been mightily taken with this custom. But the church of England not only did not receive sprinkling for baptism, but set itself officially against it. The Church of England legislated upon the question, and sprinkling never did prevail in England until the distractions of the Civil Wars following 1641. It was adopted by the Westminster Assembly, the Presbyterians, the party of Calvin, in 1643, but never was adopted by the Church of England. Immersion is now, theoretically at least, the normal form of baptism in the Church of England. So far from sprinkling being the ordinary custom in England in 1641 it only was just beginning.

Let the reader note the following confirmations of these statements. I have personally examined a vast number of the Articles of Visitations of the Bishops of England between 1600 and 1645, and these documents fully sustain Wall in his statements. The very year that James came to the throne the clergy seemed to fear the influence of the king, and passed a most significant canon in favor of dipping and against sprinkling. These men went so far as to get the king's approval, and it was published by "his Majesties authority." The Bishop of London was the President of the Convocation, as the Archbishop was dead, for the Province of Canterbury. In these "Constitvtions and Canons Ecclesiasticall" Canon LXXXI. provides: "*A Font of Stone for Baptism in euer [sic] Church*". According to a former constitution, too much neglected in many places, we appoint, that there shall be a Font of stone in every church, & Chappel, where Baptism is to be ministered: the same to be set in the ancient usual places. In which onely Font, the minister shall baptize publicly" (B. M. 698. h. 20 (17)).

This is certainly a very strong immersion document, and, what is more to the point, it comes from the highest authority in the Church of England. This Convocation was determined that sprinkling should not prevail in England, and it did not prevail till the Presbyterians came "into the saddle." The reader will bear in mind that the font was for immersion and the "bason" for sprinkling.

The Prayer Book of James I, 1604, called the *Hampton Court Book*, was in accord with these Canons. We read: "Then the priest shall take the child in his hands, and naming the

child shall dip it in the water, so it be discreetly and warily done; and if the child shall be weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it" (B. M. C. 25. m. 11).

The Bishops of the Church of England went to work at once to carry out the instructions of the Convocation. Their action proves that they were unalterably opposed to the introduction of sprinkling. At the risk of a little repetition I shall present these "Articles to be Enquired of," since they are very important in setting forth the views of the Episcopal church of those times, and I am not aware that any reference has been made to these Articles. It will be remembered that these Articles are the official orders of the Bishops to look into any violations of the Canon law of the church, and a direct order in case of such refraction to remedy it.

The Bishop of London had already anticipated the Canon quoted above, for we find as early as 1601 he had taken steps in that direction. In his Articles of Enquiry concerning the Church, number 6, he says: "Whether your fonts or baptisteries be removed from the place where they were wont to stand or whether any persons, leaving the vse of them, do christen or baptize in basons or other. vessels, not accustomedly vsed in the church, or do use any kind of laour with a remouable bason, or haue taken downe the olde & vsuall font heretofore vsed in the parish" (B. M. 698. g. 31).

For some years this admonition appeared to be sufficient and there was no complaint. but in 1618 the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his articles concerning the Minister, is pleased to ask: "2. Doth he vse the sign of the cross in baptism, or baptize in any Bason or other vessel, and not m the usual font," &c. (B. M. 698. h. 20 (13)).

The Bishop of Lincoln the same year followed with stringent instructions. In the fifth Article Touching the Church he enquires: "Whether haue you in your church a Font of stone set in the ancient Vsual place," &c. Then in Article 4, Touching the Ministrie, he enquires: "Whether the minster leauing the vse of the Font, doe christen or baptize in any Basons . . . And whether your minister in the baptizing of children, obserue the orders, Rites and ceremonies appointed in the booke of Common Prayer, without addition, omission, or innovation" (B. M. 1368. d. 36). This is a significant statement, since the minister must follow the Prayer Book in the immersion, and there must be no "addition, omission, or innovation."

The Bishop of Norwich, 1619, has twelve enquiries touching the administration of the Sacraments. He is quite urgent that there shall be no departures in his Diocese. There follows the invariable enquiry concerning Ministers, "doth he euer baptize in any Bason or other thing but the vsuall Font" (B. M. 698. h. 20 (14)).

The Bishop of London, 1621, in his Articles is not less urgent than the other Bishops, but he also gives a plain intimation that there were Baptists in his Diocese. So he adds an additional Article to his other enquires. Concerning the Clergy he enquires: "36. Whether your Minister Baptize any Children in any Bason or other vessell then in the ordinary Font, being placed in the Church or doth put any Bason into it?"

Concerning the Church he enquires: "4. Whether haue you in your Church or Chappell a Font of Stone set up in the ancient vsuall place?

"48. Whether any doe keepe their Children Vnbaptized longer then is conuent, unlesse that it be for the sicknesse of the Child, or other vrgent occasion?" (B. M. 5155. c. 9).

The Bishop of London in 1627 asked the very same questions in the same language (B. M. 700. g.17).

The Archbishop of York, 1633, in his Articles to be Enquired of Touching the Church says: "5. Whether have you in your Church, a font of stone for baptism set in the ancient usual place."

And on Touching the Ministry: "4. Whether any minister leauing the vse of the Font, doe in your Church or Chappell christen or baptize in any Basons, or other profane vessels; or whether your minister doe baptize or christen any out of the face of the Church & Congregation without speciall cause, or without Godfathers or Godmothers: And whether any person or persons be admitted to answere as Godfathers and Godmothers at the christening of any childe, except he or she haue before received the holy communion: And whether doth your minister in ye baptizing of children, observe ye orders, rites and ceremonies appointed and prescribed in the booke of common prayer, without addition, omission or other innovation" (B. M. 5155. c. 17). It is quite plain that the Archbishop of York intended that there should be no "innovations, additions or omissions" in the prescribed ceremonies of his See. Nothing less than immersion would satisfy him.

In 1636 the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks again. He enquires in his articles: "3.

Whether have you a Font of Stone in your Church or Chappell, and the same set in the ancient vsuall place?

"15. Whether your minister doe publikely baptize in any sort of vessell, and not in the Font only" (B. M. 698. h. 20. (1)).

The Bishop of Norwich enquired, 1638, concerning the Church: "2. Have you a comely Font of Stone with a cover, set in the ancient usuall place of the Church, is it whole and clean," &c. (B. M. (698. h, 20. (20)).

The Bishop of Exeter, 1638, enquired: "2. Whither. . . a Font of Stone set in the ancient usuall place of your Church, with a comely timber covering, and a lock and key, thereunto," &c. (B. M. 698. h. 20. (19)).

The Bishop of Winchester, 1639, enquired touching the Church: "6. Whether you, have in your Church a Font of Stone, set in the ancient usuall place" (B. M. 698. h. 20. (21)).

The Bishop of London, 1640, enquired: "8. Have you in your Church or Chappell a font of stone, where baptism is to be ministered, decently made, and kept as it ought to be? Is the same set in the Ancient usuall place appointed for it, and doth your minister publikely baptize in the same font only?" (B.M. 5155. c.26).

The Bishop of Lincoln enquired concerning the Church: "1. Whether have you in your severall churches and chappells. . . a Font of stone set up in the ancient usuall place" (B. M. E. 171 (24).

This activity on the part of the Bishops put fonts in nearly all of the Church houses of the Episcopalians in England, and vast numbers of these fonts and baptisteries may be seen in these churches to this day. Take, for an example, the little city of Canterbury. The Church of St. George the Martyr has an ancient octagonal font, the basin being upheld by eight small shafts and a thick center one. The Church of St. Mary Magdalene has a fine old Norman octangular font supported by a centre column. The Catholic church of St. Thomas has a very beautiful baptistery, and its carved oak canopy forms one of the most noticeable features in the building. St. Martin's church was the scene of the immersion of ten thousand Saxons at one time. It contains a font well preserved, of which the tradition is that in it King Ethelbert was baptized — three feet high surrounded with sculpture. St. John's Hospital has a singularly-shaped early font. An immense baptistery had been placed in the Cathedral, and the building remains to this day. It is a circular building with the roof in the

form of a cupola; underneath is a vault raised on stone pillars, from the center of which proceed ribs to an outer circle of pillars. The Norman arch is beautifully ornamented. But now remains a most striking fact. For some reason this baptistery was in ruins in 1636, and no font was found in the cathedral. There was a powerful interest taken in immersion at this moment, and it would never do for this noted Cathedral to be without a font or baptistery. Bishop Warner presented the Cathedral with a font in 1636, and it was placed in the Cathedral with great ceremony (*The Antiquity of Canterbury*, by William Sumner, London, 1640, B. M. 578, f, 17). In the strife which followed in the nation this font was destroyed in 1641, and was rebuilt by Bishop Warner in 1641. There is a notice which follows that several infants and the wives of two officers of the Cathedral were immersed in it from 1660 to 1663 (*Archlaeology*, vol. 11, pp. 146, 147. It is impossible to conceive that a font or baptistery would be placed in this Cathedral in 1636 and again in 1660 if immersion was not practiced, and yet we are compelled to believe this if this 1641 sprinkling theory is true.

On the use of these hundreds of fonts and baptisteries in England I shall let two of the most competent authorities speak. F. A. Paley says: "It is, however, well known that ancient fonts were made large enough for the complete immersion of infants. Exceptions to this all but universal practice are very rare; one or two instances are quoted in the *Archaeology*, vol. 11, p. 123. . . The violation of the same principle, arising from the unhappy custom of aspersion now prevalent in the English church, is one of the commonest faults of modern usage" (*Illustrations of Baptismal Fonts*, p. 31. B. M. 1265. c 7).

Samuel Carte, the Archaeologist, says of the Fonts of England: "Give me leave to observe, that antiently [sic] at least the font was large enough to admit of an adult person being dipped or immersed therein."

I am sure that the above facts sustain all that Wall claimed when he stated that sprinkling only began in 1641 in England, and made little headway till 1645. The Episcopalian authorities and divines were squarely against it, and did all in their power to prevent its practice in England. These facts cannot be controverted. They are taken from the original documents, and they contain the acts of the Bishops. Sprinkling prevailed only when the Presbyterians came into power in England. instead of immersion being out of practice in England from 1600 to 1641, it was well nigh the universal practice. It shows how utterly unfounded is the statement that there was any need for a "revival" of immersion, or a new "inventing" of immersion in England in 1641. No amount of words or evasions can overthrow these facts. These facts further show that the "Kiffin" Manuscript could not have been written in the atmosphere of the England of. 1641, and is therefore of much later date. To this proposition we have witnesses who lived and thoroughly understood the history of the times of 1641, For example, Thomas Blake, writing in 1645, declares, "I have been an eye wnesse of many infants dipped and know it to have been the constant practise of many ministers in their places, for many years together" (*Infants Baptisme Freed from Antichristianisme*, pp. 1, 2. B. M. 279. (10)).

Walter Craddock preached a sermon before the House of Commons at St. Margaret's, July 21, 1646. Among other things he said: "There is now among good people a great deal of strife about baptism; as for divers things, so for the point of dipping, though in some places in England they dip altogether" (p, 100).

Daniel Featley is also a good witness. In his *Clavis Mystica*, which was published in 1638, he says: "Our font is always open, or ready to be opened, and the minister attends to receive the children of the faithful, and to dip them in that sacred laver."

William Walker, a Pedobaptist, who wrote in 1678, says: "And truly as the general custom now in England is to sprinkle, so in the fore end of this centurie the general custom was to dip" (*The Doctrines of Baptisms*, p.146).

Sir John Floyer, one of the most careful writers, says: "That I may further convince all of my countrymen that *Immersion* in *Baptism* was very lately left off in *England*, I will assure them that there are yet Persons living who were so *immersed*; for I am so informed by *Mr. Berisford*, minister of *Sutton* in *Derbyshire*, that his parents *Immersed* not only him but the rest of his family at his *Baptism* (*History of Cold Bathing* p. 182. London, 1722).

Alexander Balfour says: "Baptizing infants by dipping them in fonts was practiced in the Church of England, (except in cases of sickness or weakness) until the Directory came out in the year 1644, which forbade the carrying of children to the font" (*Anti Paedo-Baptism Unveiled*, p. 240. London. 1827).

=====

[John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, pp. 74-85. jrd]

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian
Chapter VIII

[Back To Contents](#)

We find the English divines between 1600 and 1641 speaking out in no uncertain words. The Bishops by their Articles of Visitation were actively opposing the innovations, as sprinkling was called, and the English scholars were sustaining them in their writings. In the light of these Visitation Articles and the facts of these times we can intelligently understand the writings of Rogers and the others who spoke out boldly. These men were heroically standing against the incoming innovation which was supported by a corrupt Court, and "the love of novelty, and the niceness of parents, and the pretense of modesty." With these facts in mind, read and interpret the authors which I now present, and the list call be largely added to.

The Greek lexicons used in England in the first half of the seventeenth century were Scapula, Stephens, Mincaeus and Leigh. These all define <baptizo as dipping or submerging. I have been unable to find a single Greek lexicon before 1644 which gives sprinkle as a definition of *baptizo*, and the few that have given this definition since, as a remote definition appear to have been under the same influence that shaped the course of the Westminster divines.

Dr. Joseph Mede, 1586-1638, was a very learned English divine. He says: "There was no such thing as sprinkling or rantism used in baptism in the Apostles' days, nor many ages after them" (*Diatribes on Titus iii.2*).

Henry Greenwood in 1628 published "A Ioyfvl [Joyful] Tractate of the most blessed Baptisme that euer was solemnized." It is printed in black letter. When I first read it I was led to think that it was by an Anabaptist preacher, but after further examination I found that it was of the Episcopal church. He says of the baptism of Jesus: "The place where he baptized Christ was in the Riuer Iordan [Jordan]. * * * A duplicate Riuer, so-called, because it was composed of two Fountaines, the one called *Ior*, the other *Dan*, and therefore the river hath this name Iordan: In which Riuer Naaman was washed and cleansed from his Leprosie, 2 Kings, 5.14; which Riuer Eliah and Elisha diuided with their cloake, 2 Kings, 28.13. In this Iordan did Iohn baptize our Lord and Sauieur Iesvs [Jesus] Christ" (pp.7, 8).

Dr. John Mayer, pastor of tile church in Reydon, in Suffolk, says: "The Lord was baptized, not to get purity to himselfe, but to purge the waters for us, from the time he was dipped in the waters, the waters washed the sinnes of all men" (*A Commentary on the Four Evangelists*, Vol. 5, p. 76. B. M. 1010. e. 6. A.D. 1631). And on Matt. 28:19: "The order here is observed. First the Nations are taught, and then dipped in water" (p. 333).

Daniel Rogers, 1633, published *A Treatise of the two Sacraments of the Gospell, Baptisme and the Supper of the Lord*. He was an Episcopalian. He says: "Touching what I have said of Sacramentall dipping to explaine myself a little about it; I would not be understood as if scismatically I would instill a distaste of the church into any weake minds, by the act of sprinkling water onely. But this (under correction) I say: That it ought to be the churches part to cleave to the Institution, especially it being not left arbitrary by our church to the discession of the minister, but required to dip or dive the Infant more or lesse (except in cases of weaknesse), for which allowance in the

church we have cause to be thankfull; and sutablely to consider that he betrayes the church (whose officer hee is) to a disordered error, if hee cleaves not to the institution; To dippe the infant in water. And this I do so averre, as thinking it exceeding materiall to the ordinance; and no slight thing: yea, which both Antiquity (though with some addition of a threefold dipping: for the preserving of the doctrine of the impugned Trinity entire) constantly and without exception of cuntries hot or cold, witnesseth unto: and especially the constant word of the Holy Ghost, first and last, approveth: as a learned Cretique upou *Matthew, chap. 3, verse 11*, hath noted, that the Greeke tongue wants not words to expresse any other act as well as dipping, if the institution could beare it" (p. 77. London, 1633).

It is a very significant fact that Daniel Rogers was quoted by the Baptists of 1641 as having upheld their opinion. This could not have been in the Baptists of that period had been in the practice of sprinkling.

Stephen Denison, 1634, says: "*Bee Baptized*. The word translated *baptizing* doth most properly signifie *dipping over head and ears*, and indeed this was the most usual manner of baptizing in the primitive church: especially in hotte countries, and after this manner was Christ himselfe baptized by *Joh. Mat.3.16*. For there is sayd of him, that *when hee was baptized hee went out of the water*. Which doth imply that in his baptizing hee went under the water, and thus all those that were baptized in rivers they were not sprinkled but dipped" (*The Doctrine of Both Sacraments*, pp. 39, 40. London, 1634).

Edward Elton, 1637, says: "First, in signe and sacrament only, for the dipping of the party baptized in the water, and abiding under the water for a time, doth represent and seale unto us the buriall of Christ, and his abiding in the grave; and of this all are partakers sacramentally" (*An Exposition of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colossians*, p. 293. London, 1637).

John Selden, 1584-1654, was regarded as the most learned Englishman of his time. He says: "The Jews took the baptism wherein the whole body was not baptized to be void" (*De Jure Nat.*, c. 2).

Bishop Taylor, 1613-1677, says: "If you would attend to the proper signification of the word, baptism signifies plunging into water, or dipping with washing" (*Rule of Conscience*, I., 3, c. 4).

These citations show conclusively that the scholars of that period believed in immersion.

CATHOLICS

While we have not a great deal of evidence of the opinions of the Catholics of England in regard to dipping, what we have happens to be singularly clear and interesting. Thomas Hall, in a bitter attack which he makes on a Baptist preacher by the name of Collier, declares that Anabaptism is "a new invention not much above one hundred years old." And then (the date is 1652) he declares the Catholics are great dippers. His words are: "If dipping be true baptizing, then some amongst us that have been dipped by Popish Prelatical Priests, who are the greatest zealots for dipping, should be rightly baptlzed. The Papists and the Anabapilsts like *Sampsons* Foxes, their heads look and lie different ways, yet they are tied together by the tails of dipping" (*The Collier in his Colours*, p, 116).

PRESBYTERIANS

There had been brewing in England for a long time a revolution, and it came with the Civil Wars of 1641. The result of that war was not only the overthrow of the King, but it overthrew the Church of England as well. The Presbyterians took charge of the ecclesiastical affairs of the kingdom. They set out to reform everything. The Westminster Assembly convened and put forth the Confession of Faith and the form of Church Government which bears that name. One of the things they "reformed" was baptism, and they substituted sprinkling for immersion. They were the followers of Calvin, and Calvin must be their model. The Reformed Churches of Calvin practiced sprinkling and pouring, and so must the Reformed Church of England. They took hold of the matter with a bold hand, and at length they succeeded. Thus sprinkling, through the Westminster Assembly, triumphed in England. But with all the prestige of Calvin, even among the Presbyterians, it was not plain sailing. There was stubborn opposition, and when the vote was taken for the exclusion of dipping there was a tie vote, and the President of the Assembly was forced to cast the deciding vote. This, remember, occurred among the Presbyterians, who were the avowed party in England in favor of sprinkling for baptism. If the Presbyterians only carried this change by one vote, it would require no vivid imagination to portray the opposition to sprinkling among the Episcopalians, Baptists and others who were avowedly opposed to it. I boldly ask for any proof which goes to show that there was any particular sentiment for sprinkling in England outside of the Presbyterian church and those who sympathized with it in 1641-45. The Westminster Assembly is responsible for the introduction of sprinkling in England.

Perhaps I should here introduce the authority of Lightfoot, who was the President of the Westminster Assembly. He says:

"Then we fell upon the work of the day, which was about baptizing 'of the child, whether to dip him or to sprinkle.' And this proposition, 'It is lawful and sufficient to besprinkle the child,' had been canvassed before our adjourning, and was ready now to vote; but I spake against it, as being very unfit to vote; that it is lawful to sprinkle when everyone grants it. Whereupon it was fallen upon, sprinkling being granted, whether dipping should be tolerated with it. And here fell we upon a large and long discourse, whether dipping were essential, or used in the first institution, or in the Jews' custom. Mr. Coleman went about, in a large discourse, to prove *tbith*, to be dipping overhead. Which I answered at large. After a long dispute it was at last put to the question, whether the Directory should run thus, 'The minister shall take water, and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child;" and it was voted so indifferently, that we were glad to count names twice; for so many were so unwilling. to have dipping' excluded that the votes came to an equality within one; for the one side were 24, the other 25, the 24 for the reserving of dipping and the 25 against it; and there grew a great heat upon it, and when we had done all, we concluded upon nothing in it, but the business was recommitted.

"Aug. 8th. But as to the dispute itself about dipping, it was thought safe and most fit to let it alone, and to express it thus in our Directory: 'He is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing is not only lawful, but also sufficient and most expedient to be by pouring or sprinkling of Water on the face of the child, without any other ceremony.' But this lost a great deal of time about the wording of it" (*Works*, Vol. XIII, p. 209. London, 1824).

Sir David Brewster is regarded as high authority. He says:

"In the Assembly of Divines, held at Westminster in 1643, it was keenly debated whether immersion or sprinkling should be adopted: 25 voted for sprinkling, and 24 for immersion; and even that small majority was obtained at the earnest request of Dr. Lightfoot, who had acquired great influence in that assembly" (*Edinburg Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 236).

All this took place two years after the alleged "invention" of immersion by the Baptists. This action of the Westminster Assembly was followed by acts of Parliament which fully carry out the contention of Wall that sprinkling began in England "in the disorderly times of 1641," and that in 1645 it was "used by very few." The Presbyterians, when they came into power, determined to press sprinkling and overthrow immersion. They were not satisfied with passing an ecclesiastical law to govern the church, but they followed it by acts of Parliament to control the state. These acts of Parliament were summed up by the Rev. J. F. Bliss in his work entitled, "Letters on Christian Baptism." He says: "The original law of 1534 enforced immersion, and those who were not baptized were to be treated as outlaws. This law was passed when the Roman Catholic church was abandoned and the present Established church inaugurated in its stead. However, this law was repealed by an act of Parliament in 1644, at least so much of the old law as enforced immersion, and they passed an act enforcing sprinkling in its stead, and left the original penalty annexed to sprinkling. After this those who were not sprinkled were to be treated as outlaws, being deprived of the inheritance of the state, the right of burial, and, in short, of all rights to other sprinkled citizens of the realm."

On another page the same writer says: "After 1648 immersion was prohibited and for many years made penal."

Prof. W. T. Moore, Dean of the Bible College of Missouri and editor of the *Christian Review*, who was for many years a citizen of London, called my attention to the above extract from Bliss, and then made the following remarks:

"It will be seen that from 1534 to 1644, one hundred years, immersion was enforced in England by law, and after 1644 sprinkling was enforced. It is rather remarkable that only one year before this repeal of immersion and enforcement of sprinkling by Parliament, the Westminster Assembly, 1643, by a vote of 25 to 24 -- a majority of one -- laid aside immersion and adopted sprinkling, and this was ratified by Parliament the succeeding year."

This act of 1644 enforcing sprinkling, was followed by one in 1645 that looked toward allowing no parent to escape sprinkling the new-born child. One provision of that act read:

"There shall be provided at the charge of every parish or chaperly in the realm of England and dominion of Wales, a fair register book of vellum, to be kept by the minister and officers of the church, and that the names of all children baptized, and of their parents and of the time of their birth and baptizing, shall be written and set down by the minister therein."

Thus were the Presbyterians carrying out the provisions of the Westminster Assembly with a high hand. The "fair register book of vellum" was a silent witness against every Baptist in the land, and was intended to overthrow the practice of immersion entirely. But it was not till May 2, 1648, that the *gag law* was finally passed. By that time those in the practice of sprinkling had complete control of the laws of the land. Hence this enactment was made by the Parliament: finally passed. By that time those in the practice of

sprinkling had complete control of the laws of the land. Hence this enactment was made by the Parliament:

"Whosoever shall say that the baptism [sprinkling it had then become] of infants is unlawful and void, or that such persons ought to be baptized again, shall, upon conviction, by the oath of two witnesses, or by his own confession, be ORDERED to renounce his said error, in the public congregation of the parish where the offence was committed. And, in case of refusal, he shall be committed to prison, till he find surities that he shall not publish or maintain said error any more."

That this law meant the suppression of the Baptists and immersion, there is no doubt, for soon after four hundred Baptists were crowded into Newgate prison. It was, therefore, only in 1648 that sprinkling became the exclusive law of the land, and immersion was prohibited. But the Episcopalians never altered their Prayer Book, and immersion is the law of the Episcopal church at this moment. It will, therefore, be seen that the Presbyterians were responsible for the introduction of sprinkling in England. Sprinkling was introduced by them on the return of Knox and his party from Geneva into Scotland; it was advocated later by the Presbyterians in England, but it made no headway till the overthrow of Episcopacy in England, and the Presbyterians had come into power. It became under them an ecclesiastical law in 1643, a civil law in 1644, and an exclusive command in 1648. Therefore, Wall was undoubtedly right when he said sprinkling owed its origin to the troublesome times of the civil war. A simple statement of these facts are enough to overthrow all the theories which have ever been "invented" on the practice of sprinkling before 1641. Again we are reminded that an ounce of fact is worth a ton of fiction.

=====

John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 85-93. jrd

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian, 1899
Chapter IX

[Back To Contents](#)

I cannot, therefore, believe that immersion was a "lost art" in England from 1509 to 1641. Here is an absolute demonstration that immersion prevailed in England till 1641, when sprinkling began to be practiced by a few, and under the authority of the Presbyterians it became the law of the church in 1643, and through their influence was ratified by Parliament in 1644. The case is made out.

As we all know, the Baptists had been terribly persecuted by the Episcopalians, and their sympathies would all naturally be with the Presbyterians as against the Episcopalians. If the Baptists in 1641 deliberately changed their minds, indorsing immersion views more radical than the Episcopalians and against their allies who had gradually come to substitute sprinkling for immersion, and at the very hour of triumph for their affusion views, then for perverseness and contrariness there is no body of people who ever lived that can equal the Baptists of 1641. It is also remarkable that not one Baptist remained who did not suddenly change his mind, and not one who offered a word of protest. The Presbyterians were equally divided on the subject of immersion, but we are asked to believe the Baptists were all in favor of sprinkling till 1641, then they *all* changed their minds, and in 1642 they all favored dipping, and all of them submitted to that rite! For my part, that is the most astounding proposition I was ever asked to believe. But that is precisely what a man must believe if he accepts as genuine the "Kiffin" Manuscript and the interpretations put upon it by these Baptist advocates.

As for the views of the Baptists on the subject of believers' immersion, we have an excellent landmark. The Confession of 1643 was undoubtedly an immersion paper. I give the XL Article of the "Confession of Faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists:"

"That the way and manner of dispensing this ordinance is dipping or plunging the body under water; it being a signe, must answer the thing' signified, which is, that interest the Saints have in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ: and that as certainly as the body is buried under water, and rises again, so certainly shall the bodies of the Saints be raised by the power of Christ in the day of the resurrection, to reigne with Christ" (p. 20).

There is a note appended as follows: "The word *Baptizo* signifies to dip or plunge yet so as convenient garments be both upon the administrator and subject, with all modesty."

It would, perhaps, be impossible to state immersion views more clearly in a confession of faith. There is no hint of any change of views, but the document throughout presupposes that immersion had all along been their practice. There is no reference to a change of views, no evidence of any lack of agreement, as there certainly must have been had there been a change. Certainly there would have been something of the kind, for we know that with all the influence of Calvin, that when the vote came on the subject of immersion the Westminster Assembly was equally divided. The very fact that the Baptists were unanimous, and that none of them ever raised a question, unmistakably proves that immersion was previously their practice.

Let it be remembered that there were two sorts of Baptists in England. If one set had adopted immersion in advance of the other, they would have been assailed for so doing. The absence of any such assailing requires those who hold the 1641 theory to believe that these two separate denominations simultaneously changed their practice from sprinkling to immersion. This is incredible. These bodies frequently had debates on various subjects and were not overly friendly, and that the priority of immersion or any reference to any change among them was never raised, is proof that no such a difference ever existed.

Not only is this Confession plain on the subject of dipping for baptism, but it is equally plain on the subject of the administrator of baptism. The makers of this Confession of 1643 did not affirm the doctrine of church succession or baptismal succession. The view of Spilisbury prevailed, and was put into this Confession. Spilisbury held that if baptism were lost, that any disciple could begin baptism by administering it himself, and quoting the example of John the Baptist as a Scripture in point. None of the signers of this Confession avow that immersion was lost, but they do affirm that it is no necessary to send anywhere for baptism. Baptism, they declare, may be begun at any moment, in any place where there are believers. Men who believed this and put it in their Confession of Faith could not have sent to Holland only one or two years before for a baptism according to church succession or any other kind of succession. It would have been a queer commentary on the Particular Baptists of England of 1643 that in 1641 they sent to Holland for immersion to be in line of church succession, introduced immersion in England in Jan., 1642, in that theory and in a little more than a year they declared in a Confession of Faith that they believed in nothing of the sort! If the XL. article, as quoted above is plain on dipping, the XLI as here given is equally plain on the administrator of baptism. That article says: "The person designed by Christ to dispense baptism, the Scriptures holds forth to be a disciple; it being nowhere tied to a particular church officer, or person extraordinarily sent, the commission injoining the administration, being given to them as considered disciples. being men able to preach the Gospel." This declaration of the Confession of Faith of 1643 is directly opposed to the statement of the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript. Which am I to believe? To ask the question is to answer it. The Confession of Faith is a Baptist document, genuine and an honor to the Baptists; the Gould Kiffin Manuscript is a fraud and absolutely untrustworthy. The Baptists of 1641-4 did not have an agent "EXTRAORDINARILY SENT" to Holland for immersion. They said they did not, and I believe them; the fraud known as the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript says they did have Blunt "extraordinarily sent," and hence it is not worthy of credence. When we remember that the Baptists were imprisoned and had been burned at the stake in England, we should not expect much evidence concerning their doings. Mr. Brewer, one of their preachers. was confined 14 years and only released in 1640, and almost everyone of their preachers had been in prison. They were maligned and traduced. They did not dare to keep records, for a discovery that they were Baptists was equivalent to imprisonment. There were so many informers they did not know whom to trust, and yet in the face of all these difficulties I present a number of instances of immersion among them and facts which go to show that this was their practice. Some of this evidence has been cited before, but it is needful to repeat it in

connection with the new evidence I have secured, which illustrates and confirms what was previously known.

Thomas Fuller, the old English church historian, born in 1609, published his history 1656, and consequently lived through the period we are investigating, tells us that the Baptists of 1524 were dippers. His words are:

"A match being now made up, by the Lord Cromwell's contrivance, betwixt King Henry and Lady Anne of Cleves, Dutchmen flocked faster than formerly into England. Many of them had active souls; so that, whilst their hands were busied about their manufactures, their heads were also beating about points of divinity. Hereof they had many rude notions, too ignorant to manage themselves and too proud to crave the direction of others. Their minds had a bye-stream of activity more than what sufficed to drive on their vocation; and this waste of their souls they employed in needless speculations, and soon after began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of Anabaptists. These Anabaptists, for the main, are but 'Donatists new dipped;' and this year their name first appears in our *English Chronicles*; for I read that four Anabaptists, three men and one woman, all Dutch, bare faggots at St. Paul's Cross, Nov. 24th, and three days after a man and a woman of their sect were burned in Smithfield" (*Church History of Britain*, Vol. II., p. 97).

We have been gravely informed, however, that where the Anabaptists are called "Donatists new dipped" it does not mean that the Anabaptists were dippers. What else it could mean I confess I cannot understand. But fortunately we have an English writer who lived only a short distance from Fuller, and his book, "The Anabaptists Routed," was published only one year before Fuller's *History*, 1655, and he uses much the same expression that Fuller did, and he undoubtedly understood the Anabaptists to be dippers. If the Anabaptists had been in the practice of sprinkling before 1641, Fuller was exceedingly unfortunate in his expression when he called them "Donatists new dipped." But reading the author mentioned above puts that at rest when he says: "*Anabaptists* not only deny believers' children baptism, as the Pelagians and Donatists did of old, but affirm, That dipping the whole body under water is so necessary, that without it none are truly baptized (as hath been said)" (pp.171, 172).

It would appear that the objections of the advocates of the 1641 theory are always unfortunate as there happens to be a contemporary author who always refutes their views. The trouble with the 1641 theory is its utter lack of facts for its support. In 1551 William Turner, "Doctor of Physick" "devysed" "A Preservative or triacle, agaynst the poyson of Pelagius, lately renued, & Styrred up agayn, by the furious secte of the Anabaptistes." This book undoubtedly settles the question that the Anabaptists of England practiced immersion. He repeatedly calls them Catabaptists (see pp. 19, 27, 28, 49) in his day. It is claimed that Catabaptist does not mean an immersionist, but an opposer of baptism. "The fact is, it was used in both senses. These Baptists practiced immersion, and by immersing those who had been christened in infancy they were regarded as opposing and despising baptism. (See Liddell & Scott *in loco*). But my argument does not rest upon the meaning of this word, for Turner uses the word dip in reference to these Anabaptists. The Anabaptist in making his argument for believers' immersion is represented as saying:

"That such a lyke costome was once in our most holye relygyon, as was in colleges and in orders of relygyon, wher as none were admitted, before they had a year of

probation, wher unto ye put this that they that came to be baptized, demanded, and desyred to be received to fellow ship of the Christians after dewe prooffe of unfayned repentance, and thereby were called competentes. Yonge men, and wyemen requyrynge baptysime: and then were taught the principles of the Christian faith and were fyrst called Catechumeni. And after those principles learned, were upon certayne solemne dayes at two tymes of the yeaere approved, therefore baptysed: which was upon Easter even and Whit Sunday even: pronmysyng for themselves the observance of Gods law, with the renouncyng of the devell and the worlde in theys owne person, without God-father or God-mother, seven score yeaeres longe: tyll Ignius, Byshop of Rome ordered to baptysse an infante, a god-father and god-mother answeryng for hym.

"Where as ye say the lyke maner was in our most holy religion, as the scolers and religious men had: that none should be admitted, until they had been proved a yeaere, and first called competentes, and then catechtumeni. I marvayl what religion ye meane of: whether ye meane of the Popes religion, or Christes religion, or of the Catabaptistes relygion, which is your religion indeed" (pp. 6,7).

There are two very significant statements in these passages: (1) The Anabaptist quotes against his opponent the well-known practice of immersing on the two days of Easter and Whit Sunday (*Schaff's History Christian Ohurch*, Vol. II, p. 252). And (2) he says of the Anabaptist "of the Catabaptistes (dippers) religion, which is your religion indede." This shows that they were certainly dippers.

The following is conclusive: "And because baptism is a passive sacrament, & no man can baptise himselfe, but is baptised of another: & childes may be as wel dipped in to the water in ye name of Christ (which is the outward baptysm and as myche as one man can gyve another) even as olde folke: and when as they have the promise of salvation, as well as olde folkes & can receive the signe of the same as wel: there is no cause why that the baptyme of childes should be differred" (pp.39, 40).

Here he says that the "olde folke" that the Anabaptist baptized are dipped. This is certainly sufficient.

The following are additional testimonies to the practice of Immersion among the Baptists of England before 1641:

The Rev. John Man, Merton College, Oxford, in 1578 published in English a translation and adaptation of the "Commonplace of the Chrstian Religion," by Wolfganus Musculus.

Man says: "The word baptisme cometh of the Greek, and is as much as to say in English, or dipping or drowning in."

He knows no baptism but immersion. He never intimates that baptism could be performed in any other manner. Then he goes on to say that the Anabaptists had no excuse "to dippe" twice since the candidate had already been dipped. He argues that the re-baptism in Acts was no excuse for the Anabaptists to "dippe twice." He continues: "But some man will object. If the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ be all one, then the apostle had no reason to baptize the twelve disciples in the manner of our Lord Jesus, who were baptized before of John. For what purpose was it to dippe them twice in one baptisme? Did not some of the fathers, and the Anabaptists of our dayes, take the foundation of their baptizing of this" (p.678). Then he argues that the Anabaptists and the Donatists did wrong. In washing "them again which have been once washed in the same sacrament." A plainer account could not he given or words

more direct. Here is an author writing 63 years before 1641 who declares that the Anabaptists were in the practice of dipping. The only blame he has for them is that they "dippe twice" instead of once: That is, the Anabaptists re-dipped those who had been dipped in infancy.

=====

John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 94-101. *jrd*

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian
Chapter X

[Back To Contents](#)

In the first edition of "Did They Dip?" the following statement was made: "The Rev. John Fox, the distinguished author of the *Book of Martyrs*, was born in England, A. D. 1517, and died April 15, 1587. The first complete English edition appeared in 1563. There is no doubt as to his testimony. He says:

"There were some Anabaptists at this time in England, who came from Germany. Of these there were two sorts; the first only objected to the baptizing of children, and to the manner of it, by sprinkling instead of dipping. The other held many opinions, anciently condemned as heresies; they had raised a war in Germany, and had set up a new king at Munster; but all these were called Anabaptist, from their opposition to infant baptism, though it was one of the mildest opinions they held (Alden Edition, p. 338)."

This quotation from Fox was called in question by Dr. Newman. It was admitted that my edition of the *Book of Martyrs* had in it the words as I had quoted them, but it was pointed out that they were omitted in some other editions. Pending an investigation I left this extract out of the second edition of "Did They Dip?," since it was not desired to place reliance upon any doubtful proof. After an extensive investigation a curious state of affairs was found to exist. The text in ant two editions of the *Book of Martyrs* agree even in essential particulars. This is true of the earliest editions as well as of the later ones. I can say that the language of the above extract is very ancient, perhaps of Fox, and not the words of a modern compiler.

But as to the real opinions of John Fox, we are not left in doubt. A rare work lies before me with the title, "*Reformatio Legvm Ecclesiasticarvm, ex Avthoritate Primvm Regis Henrici 8. inchoata: Deinde per Regem Edvoardum 6. &c.*" If King Edward VI had lived, this book was to have been set forth with his authority, drawn up by A. B. Cramner, B. May and other commissioners, and penned, as supposed, by Dr. Haddon. The book bears Dr. Haddon's coat of arms. But its publication was defeated by the death of the King. Afterwards, through the endeavors of A. B. Parker, it was set afoot again in the Parliament of the 13th Elizabeth, and by a leading member recommended to the consideration of the House of Commons. Care was taken to have the entire work published as we now see it by John Fox in the year 1571, and the conclusion of the preface plainly intimates the main design of the publication. It would therefore be impossible to find a book where we could more authoritatively get at the opinions of the Anabaptists, from the standpoint of the State, than from this work, if it should speak on the subject at all. Fortunately it does speak. First of all, this work is quoted on the subject of dipping and then upon the subject of dipping among the Anabaptists of 1517 and previously. I present the original Latin, and a translation follows, made by a distinguished professor in a State University. The following is said of dipping in general:

"Dum autem in aquas demergimur, & rursus ex illis emergimus, Christi mors primum & sepultura commendatur, deinde, suscitatio quidem illius, & reditus ad vitam, ut istius mortis & vitae monumeutis recordemur, &

palam testificemur peccatum in nobis mortuum, & sepultum jacere, sed novum & salutarum Dei spiritum reviviscere in nobis, & reflorescere; tinctoq; foras externis aquis corpore, nostras intus animas, abstersis peccatorum sordibus, puras & perpuratas ad aeternas & coelestes oras se attollere".

Translation: "But while we are plunged into the waters and rise again out of them, the death of Christ first, and his burial is symbolized, and next his resuscitation, indeed, and his return to life, so that we may be reminded of that death and life by memorials, and may openly bear witness that sin in us lies dead and buried, but that a new and wholesome spirit of God awakes again to life in us and flourishes anew, and the body having been dipped outwardly in external waters, that our souls within lift themselves pure and thoroughly purged to the eternal and celestial shores, the filthiness of sins having been wiped away."

While it is probable that Fox thought that the sprinkling of "weak infants" was valid baptism, he undoubtedly here strongly advocates dipping. The following is said of the Anabaptists:

"De Baptismo. Cap, 18.

"Deinde crudelis illorum impietas in Baptismum irruit, quem infantibus impartiri nolunt, sed omnino nulla ratione. Nec enim minus ad Deum & Ecclesiam pertinent Christianorum infantes, quam liberi quondam Hebreorum pertinebant, quibus in infantia cum circumcisio adhiberetur, nostris etiam infantibus debet baptismus admoveri, quoniam ejusdem promissionis & foederis divini participes sunt, & a Christo sunt etiam summa cum humanitate suscepti. Plures item ab aliis cumulantur errores in baptismo, quem aliqui sic attoniti spectant, ut ab ipso illo externo credant elemento Spiritum sanctum emergere, vimque ejus, nomen, & virtutem ex qua recreamur, & gratiam, & reliqua ex eo proficiscentia dona in ipsis baptismi fonticulis innatare. In summa totam regenerationem nostram illi sacro puteo deberi volunt, qui in sensus nostros incurrit. Verum salus animarum, instauratio spiritus, & beneficium adoptionis, quo nos Deus pro filiis agnoscit, a misericordia divina per Christum ad nos dimanante, tum etiam ex promissione sacris Scripturis apparente proveniunt. Illorum etiam impia videri debet scrupulosa superstitio, qui Dei gratiam, & Spiritum sanctum tantopere cum Sacramentorum elementis colligant ut plane affirmant nullum Christianorum infantem aeternam salutem esse consequuturum, qui prius a mortefuerit occupatus, quam ad Baptismus adduci potuerit: quodlonge secus habere judicamus. Salus enim illis solum adimitur, qui sacrum hunc Baptismi fontem contemnunt, aut superbia quadem ab eo, vel contumacia resiliunt: quaemi portunitas cum in puerorum aetatem non cadat, nihil contra salutem illorum auctoritate Scripturarum decerni potest; immo contra, cum illos communis promissio pueros in se comprahendat, optima nobis spes de illorum salute concipienda est."

"Afterwards the cruel ungodliness of them rushes headlong into baptism, which they are unwilling to bestow upon infants, but utterly without reason. For the infants of Christians belong to God and the Church no less than the children of the Hebrews formerly (belonged to God and the Church); since to them in infancy circumcision was allowed, even so ought baptism to be administered to our infants, because they are partakers of the same divine promise and covenant, and they were taken up by Christ also with supreme gentleness. Likewise more errors are heaped up by others in baptism, which some so amazed look at as if they believe that from that external element itself the Holy Spirit emerges, and that his power, his name, and his efficacy, out of which we are renewed, and his grace, and the remaining gifts proceeding out of it, swim in the very fountains of baptism. In a word, they wish our total regeneration to be due to that sacred pit, which inveighs against our senses. But the salvation of souls, the renewal of spirit and the benefit of adoption, by which God owns us as sons, by divine mercy flowing through Christ to us, then, too, come forth out of the promise made good by sacred Scriptures. Also, wicked should seem the scrupulous superstition of those who bind together the grace of God and the Holy Spirit with the elements of the sacraments, to such a degree, that they, clearly affirm that no infant of Christians (Christian parents) will obtain salvation who has been seized by death before he could be brought to baptism: which we decide to hold far otherwise. For salvation is denied only to those who condemn this font of baptism, or from a sort of pride or contumacy recoil from it: since this insolence falls not into the age of children, nothing against their salvation can be decreed by authority of the Scriptures; indeed, to the contrary, since a common promise includes those children, we must conceive the best hope concerning their salvation."

Four things are perfectly clear from the above extracts: 1. That immersion was baptism in 1571 in England. 2. That the Anabaptist denied infant baptism. 3. That the Anabaptist practiced dipping in England in 1571. Nothing else can be made out of the passage. 4. That the old charge of baptismal regeneration was charged against the Anabaptists of 1571 as it is made against the Baptists of 1898. Fox had every opportunity to know the truth. He had investigated the Anabaptists. There is a letter from him to the Queen, which has been preserved, in which he appeals for her clemency in the case of some condemned Anabaptists. With all of the facts before him he could speak assuredly, and his declaration that they practiced dipping is conclusive. In the case of Leonard Busher we have a clear instance of immersion. He was a firm believer in and an advocate of immersion. It has been held that he was a member of the church with Helwys. But whether he was or not he "was an Anabaptist" (*Lawne's Prophane Schisme*, p. 56. A.D. 1612. B. M. 4139. Bb. 12) and a believer in dipping. He was "a citizen of London," and wrote his book in 1614. Busher says: "And therefore Christ commanded his disciples to teach all nations, and baptize them; that is, to preach the word of salvation to every creature of all sorts of nations that are worthy and willing to receive it. And such as shall willingly and gladly receive, He has commanded to be baptized in the water; that is, dipped for dead in the water" (*Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, p. 50).

From this tract it is certain that Busher held three distinctive Baptist doctrines:

1. Liberty of conscience;

2. Immersion or dipping, and
3. Believers' baptism.

It is impossible to break the force of this testimony. Nobody but a Baptist would talk about dipping a believer for dead. Nobody denies that Busher was a Baptist. Here, then, is one Baptist who was a dipper 27 years before 1641, and not one proof exists that even one other Baptist differed from Busher on the subject of dipping.

It is probable that Busher was connected with the church of Helwys and Morton in London. We have already seen that he was pronounced in favor of dipping. The other members of this congregation were likewise dippers. Prof. Masson, who is perhaps the foremost authority in Great Britain on English affairs of the period of the Civil War, says: "Now, this Helwisse, returning to England shortly after 1611, drew around him, as we saw, the first congregation of General or Arminian Baptists in London; and this obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of Liberty of Conscience expressed in the Amsterdam Confession as distinct from the more stunted principle advocated by the general body of the Independents. Not only did Helwisse's folk differ from the Independents generally on the subject of Infant Baptism and Dipping; they differed also on the power of the magistrate in matters of belief and conscience" (*Life of John Milton*, Vol. II, p. 544).

Fortunately we have contemporaneous evidence which is as clear as could be desired. One I. H. in 1610 wrote a book against this very congregation, in which he declares: "For tell me, shall every one that is baptized in the right forme and manner (for that ye stand much on) upon the skinne be saved" (*A Description of the Church of Christ*, p. 27). Here, then, we have the direct statement of this antagonist that this church of Anabaptists not only differed from the Puritans around them on the subject of baptism, but on the "forme and manner" of it as well. The form of the Puritans was undoubtedly sprinkling, the form of the Baptists was immersion. John Robinson, in his reply to John Morton, declares that he and his congregation practiced dipping. He says: "In the next place they come to baptism, in which they think themselves in their element, as filth in the water. And beginning with John's baptism" &c. (*Defence of the Doctrine propounded by the Synod of Dort*, p. 147. B. M. 3925. bb. 23) There is no other interpretation possible for this passage.

But Morton testifies himself to his belief. He declares that John baptized his disciples IN JORDAN, and then he adds "this indeed was the practice of the primitive churches, it cannot be destroyed" (*A Description of What God hath Wrought*, 1620, pp. 129, 130. B. M. 4255. aa).

Fortunately we have yet another witness, and this is I. G(raunt). He declares that Morton differed with some on free grace, but he agreed with the rest on immersion. The words are in the form of a conversation, and bear date 1645. He says: "*Heres*. But we have found a rule of truth in God's Word, plainly directing us to the making matter of the Church of Christ, none but such as are qualified by faith, are fit subjects of baptism, which faith is wrought by teaching, and then baptism of dipping admits and gives entrance unto such believers, to have communion in church fellowship with us in all holy ordinances of God; which church and ordinances are not understood, but neglected and contemned of all the Heretickes you have named and conferred with before, therefore we are the true church, for we professe but one Lord,

one Faith, and one baptisme, Ephes. 4.5. *Truth*. Sir, I perceive you are an Anabaptist, and therefore I shall speedily make good my late promise, and indeed, some thirty years since, Mr. Morton, a Teacher of a Church of the Anabaptists, in Newgate, then his confession comprehended all the errors of the Arminians which now of late, many that go under your name, in and about London dissent from, as it seems you do" (*Truths Victory*, p. 19. B. M. E. 277. (7)).

Now this carries John Morton back to about 1615, and declares in the plainest terms that he practiced dipping. Morton differed only from some of the Anabaptists of 1645 on the subject of Arminianism, but not at all on the subject of believers' baptism and dipping. Here is another very clear example before 1641 in favor of dipping.

In 1623 in London Edmond Jessop published "A Discovery of the Errors of the English Anabaptists." On page 62 of the book we find:

"In whom also yee are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sinnes of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptisme, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of operation of God, who hath raised him up from the dead. In which word (I say) he settled downe expressly, that the baptisme which saveth, the baptisme whereby we put on Christ, the baptisme whereby our hearts are purged and sanctified, and the sinnes of our flesh done away, whereby we are buried with Christ and doe rise with him, even that which is through the faith and operation of the Spirit, is one and the same, with the circumcision of the heart, &c."

In Daniel Featley we have a powerful witness of the existence of immersion among the Baptists from a date before 1625. He published his book, "The Dippers Dipt," in 1645, and he says that they had lived near his residence for more than twenty years, which would carry the date of their immersions back to a period prior to 1625. In his *Epistle Dedicatory* he says: *"They preach, and print, and practise their Hereticall impieties openly, and hold their Conventicles weekly in chief Cities, and Suburbs thereof, and there prophesie by turnes; and (that I may use the phrase of Tertullian) aedificantur in ruinam, they build one another in the faith of their Sect, to the ruine of their souls; they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both Sexes enter into the River, and are dipt after their manner, with a kind of spell containing the head of their erroneous Tenets, and their engaging themselves in their Scismaticall Covenants, and (if I may so speake) combination of separation. And as they defile our Rivers with their impure washings, and our Pulpits with their false Prophecies, and Phanaticall Enthusiasmes, so the Presses sweat and groane under the load of their blasphemies. For they print not only Anabaptisme, from whence they take their name; but many other most damnable doctrines, tending to carnall liberty, Familisme, and a medley and hodge-podge of all Religions."*

That passage is certainly clear enough on the subject of dipping among these Anabaptists. He then proceeds to tell us that he has known these "new upstart sectaries" for twenty years near his own home. His words are:

"As Solinus writeth, that in Sardina where there is a venomous serpent called Solifuga (whose biting is present death) there is also at hand a fountain, in which they who wash themselves after they are bit, are presently cured. This venomous serpent (vere

Solifuga) flying from, and shunning the light of God's Word, is the Anabaptist, who in these later times first shewed his shining head and speckled skin, and thrust out his sting near the place of my residence for more than twenty years."

Here we have the explicit testimony of Featley that the Baptists were dippers as far back as 1620. Prof. Vedder very well said:

"These words of Dr. Featley are specially significant. He professes to speak of Baptists from personal knowledge, and though he was bitterly prejudiced, there is no reason why he should exaggerate in such a particular. Since he wrote in 1644, his 'twenty years,' however carelessly he used the phrase, evidently carry the date of immersion far back of 1641."

The Pedobaptist historian who replied to Crosby, John Lewis, saw the force of this testimony of Featley's, for he says:

"Dr. Daniel Featley in 1645 assured the Lords and Commons in parliament, to whom he dedicated his book, that the Anabaptist in these later times first shewed his shining head near the place of his residence, Lambeth, for more than twenty years, or before 1625" (Rawl. C. 409).

Great effort has been made to show that Featley was wrong in his statement of the existence of Baptist churches near his residence for twenty years. The following very extravagant claim has been made:

"The Borough in those days may have contained as many as seven or ten thousand inhabitants. If anybody had been immersing at Lambeth, near Dr. Featley's residence, for more than twenty years, there is scarcely one chance in a million that the men of the Jessey Church would not have become aware of it. And there is scarcely one chance in ten millions that Dr. Featley, who was an outsider, should have heard of these immersions, while the men of the Jessey Church remained in ignorance of them" (*A Question in Baptist History*, p. 74).

It is always hazardous to argue against a positive statement of an eye witness, when an author has nothing more than a mere conjecture. There is not "one chance in ten millions" that such an author is right, and this time the facts all happen to be against him. The opinion of the Baptists were notorious in London. Barber was before Featley in 1639 for being a dipper (Tanner Ms. 67. 115. Bodleian Library. Acts High Court of Commission, vol. 434, fol. 81. b). Certain "Anabaptists" were before Parliament in January, 1640, and the case was a notorious one and recorded at length in the Journal of the House of Lords, vol. 4, p.133. B. M. Reading Room. Two of these signed the Confession of 1643, namely John Webb and Thomas Gunn. At the same date there is a long petition with the names of many noted Baptists on it presented to Parliament. Such names as those of Thomas Lamb and Mark Whitlock are on it (House of Lord's Manuscript). One who is at all familiar with the records of those times can find case after case in the courts referred to Dr. Featley. He was perfectly familiar with what he was saying, and therefore he declared that for more than twenty years the Anabaptists had been dipping near his residence in Southwark In fact, Fuller, speaking of this church in Southwark and its arrest, says: "This day happened the first fruits of Anabaptisticall insolence" (*History*, vol. 6, p. 180). That is, they preached before members of the House of Lords. All one needs to do is to relate the facts and down the 1641 theory. The effort to prove Featley ignorant about facts which came before him every day is amusing. Featley was prejudiced and bitter toward the Baptists but he was

not ignorant, and when he says they dipped for more than twenty years before 1641 he knew what he was talking about.

Mr. Lewis, however, is wrong in one statement, and that is that these Anabaptists near Featley's residence were the first, in these later times. Featley directly traces these Anabaptists to the Continent and declares that they were all dippers. He mentions the Anabaptists of the time of Henry VIII, Elizabeth and James I, and declares they all practiced dipping. I again quote his words:

"Of whom we may say, as Irenaeus sometime spake of the Heretick Ebon, the Father of the Ebonites, his name in the Hebrew signifyeth silly, or simple, and such God wat was he: So we may say, the name of the father of the Anabaptists signifieth in English a senseless piece of wood or block, and a very blockhead was he; yet out of this block were cut those chips that kindled such a fire in Germany, Halsatia and Suevia that could not be fully quenched, no not with the blood of 150,000 of them killed in war, or put to death in severall places by Magistrates.

"This fire in the reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James and our gracious Sovereign, till now, was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the Ecclesiasticall and Civil Magistrate, it was soon put out. But of late since the unhappy distractions, which our sins have brought upon us, the Temporall Sword being other ways employed, and the Spirituall locked up fast in the scabberd, this sect, among others, hath so far presumed upon the patience of the State that it hath held weekly Conventicles, re-baptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight in Rivilets, and some arms of the Thames and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defense of their Heresie, yea and challenged some of our Preachers to disputation. Now although my bent hath been hitherto against the most dangerous enemy of our Church and State, the Jesuit, to extinguish such balls of wildfire as they have cast in the bosome of our church, yet seeing this strange fire kindled in the neighbouring parishes, and many Nadabs and Abihu's offering it on God's Altar, I thought it my duty to cast the waters of Siloam upon it to extinguish it."

No argument is needed to enforce the words of Featley as given above in favor of dipping. A. R., a Baptist, wrote a book in 1642 on the *Vanity of Infant Baptism*. A. R. makes a clear and positive declaration on the subject of dipping. Featley replies to this book, but does not controvert the doctrine of dipping as advocated by A. R., but confirms it. He goes further and gives a history of the dipping Anabaptists. He says: "At Zurick after many disputations between Zuinglius and the Anabaptists, the Senate made an Act, that if any presumed to rebaptize those that were baptized before, they should be drowned.

"At Vienna many Anabaptists were so tyed together in chains, that one drew the other after him into the river, wherein they were all suffocated (*Vide Supra*, p. 61).

"Here you may see the hand of God in punishing these sectaries some way answerable to their sin according to the observation of the wise man (Gastius, p.18), *quo quis peccat eo puniatur*, they who drew others into the whirlpool of error, by constraint draw one another into the river to be drowned; and they who prophaned baptisme by a second dipping, rue it by a third immersion. But the punishment of these Catabaptists we leave to them that have the Legislative power in their hands, who though by present connivence they may seem to give them line: yet, no doubt, it is that they more

entangle themselves and more easily be caught. For my part, I seek not the confusion of their persons, but the confusion of their errors, two whereof A. R. undertaketh strenuously to defend" (p. 73).

It will be remembered that I quoted the testimony of Fuller, the English Church Historian, to the effect that Baptists of 1638, who were burned in Smithfield were dippers. Featly makes the same statement. His words are:

"Let the punishment bear upon it the print of the sin: for as these sectaries drew one another into their errors, so also into the gulfe; and as they drowned men spiritually by re-baptizing, and so prophaning the holy sacrament, so also they were drowned corporally. In the year of our Lord, 1539, two Anabaptists were burned beyond Southwark, in Newington; and a little before them, five Dutch Anabaptists were burned in Smithfield,"

How a man could be more definite in his statements than Featly is difficult to see. He declares that one of the "peculiarities of this sect" is exclusive dipping. Think a moment of this testimony. Featly was born in 1582 and died in 1645. His life covered the whole period under discussion. He declares that the Anabaptists lived near him for twenty years, and I know from other sources that he caused great numbers of them to be apprehended, and many of them were sent to Dr. Featly for examination and instruction. It will be seen from these papers that Edward Barber was one of that number. When he declares, therefore, that they practiced dipping, he was well acquainted with what he was saying. No amount of objection can overthrow this conclusive and unanswerable testimony.

=====

[From *Baptist History Vindicated*, John T. Christian, 1899, pp. 102-116. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian
Chapter XI

[Back To Contents](#)

We give now some Baptist testimony showing the practice of the immersion of believers in England before January, 1642, the date mentioned by the "Kiffin" Manuscript:

The Rev. John Canne, in April, 1641, was a "baptized man;" this is conceded to mean an immersed man. Dexter, in his *Congregationalism* as shown in its *Literature*, admits that Canne had long been a Baptist at this date, and that his troubles in Amsterdam some years previously was probably based on his being an Anabaptist. But we find in Stovel's Introduction to Canne's *Necessity of Separation* that Canne was an Anabaptist in Holland. The date was before January 16, 1621. There were, it is declared, many sects of the Anabaptists, and "Canne was pastor of one company" (Evans' *Early English Baptists*, vol. 2, pp. 107, 108). There is no proof of any change of sentiment on the part of Canne. He was a Baptist before 1621, he was a Baptist in 1641. He practiced dipping in 1641, and there is no reason that he was not in the practice of dipping as an Anabaptist in 1621. But the Broadmead Records in April, 1641, declare that Canne was a "baptized man," that is, an immersed man, and this is eight months before the alleged events described in the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript. No amount of ingenuity can explain away the fact that Canne, an immersed Anabaptist, was preaching in Bristol early in 1641. The statement is taken from the Broadmead Records, and the facts set forth cannot be denied. These Records say:

"Anno, 1640. And thus the Lord led them by His Spirit in a way and path that they knew not, having called them *out of darkness into his marvelous light* by Jesus Christ our Lord. So that in the year of our ever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640), one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons, namely, Goodman Atkins, of Stapleton, Goodman Cole, a butcher of Lawford's Gate, Richard Moone, a farrier in Wine street, and Mr. Bacon, a young minister, with Mrs. Hazzard, at Mrs. Hazzard's house, at the upper end of Broad street, in Bristol, they met together, and came to a holy resolution to separate from the worship of the world and times they lived in, and that they would go no more to it. And with godly purpose of heart (they) joined themselves in the Lord, only thus covenanting, that they would in the strength and assistance of the Lord come forth of the world, and worship the Lord more purely, persevering therein, to their end" (Broadmead Records, pp. 17, 18).

The Records continue:

"At this juncture of time the providence of God brought to this city one Mr. Canne, a baptized man; it was that Mr. Canne that made notes and references upon the Bible. He was a man very eminent in his day for godliness, and for reformation in religion, having great understanding in the way of the Lord."

Mrs. Hazzard, who was the wife of the parish priest, found him and fetched him to her home. Then the Records say:

"He taught the way of the Lord more perfectly, and settled them in church order, and showed them the difference betwixt the church of Christ and anti-Christ, and left with them a printed book treating of the same, and divers printed papers to that purpose. So

that by this instrument Mr. Canne, the Lord did confirm and settle them; showing them how they should join together, and take in members" (pp. 18, 19).

Mr. Canne then attempted to preach in a suburb of the city and a wealthy woman placed some obstructions in his way. The Records say:

"The obstruction was by a very godly great woman, that dwelt in that place, who was somewhat severe in the profession of what she knew, hearing that he was a baptized man, by them called Anabaptists, which was to some sufficient cause of prejudice, because the truth of believers baptism had been for a long time buried, yea, for a long time by popish inventions, and their sprinkling brought in room thereof. And (this prejudice existed) by reason (that) persons in the practice of that truth by baptism were by some rendered very obnoxious; because, about one hundred years before, some beyond the sea, in Germany, that held that truth of believers baptism, did, as some say, did some very singular actions; of whom we can have no true account what they were but by their enemies; for none but such in any history have made any relation or narrative of them" (pp. 19, 20).

A statement could not be more positive or more to the point. John Canne was a "baptized man" in April, 1641, and that is a considerable time before the "11 Mo. Janu," 1641, according to modern reckoning Jan., 1642, when the "Kiffin" Ms. says immersion began.

With these facts before us, the following statements are very amusing: "Stovel says: '1641, Canne is at Bristol, April 25.' This would agree to a nicety with the fact that Blunt had begun the practice of immersion in Southwark, London, early in the year 1641, after his return from Holland, whither he had gone to obtain it in 1640. Mr. Canne, who was well acquainted in Southwark, appears to have submitted to the ordinance very promptly in 1641, and was in time to reach Bristol by the 25th of April, 1641" (*A Question in Baptist History*, pp. 77, 78).

The Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript makes Blunt's baptism in England to take place in January, 1641, old style, that is to say, January, 1642, and that is eight months after April, 1641. How a man who writes "Baptist History" could be ignorant of this fact, is beyond comprehension. I take it that no competent scholar would question for a moment that April, 1641 is eight months in advance of January, 1641, old style; new style it would be April, 1641, and January, 1642. Here is an absolute proof that one Baptist at least was immersed before Blunt is said to have exploited his performances in England. That is to say, if it could be proved that there was such a man as Blunt and the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript is correct, then this would follow. But no one knows anything of Blunt, and the "Kiffin" Manuscript is thoroughly discredited.

Edward Barber has been put forward as the "founder of immersion among Baptists." How Edward Barber could be the founder of immersion and the "Kiffin" Manuscript remain true, cannot be explained. If the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript is to be trusted, then Richard Blunt is the "founder of immersion among Baptists." Certainly both Edward Barber and Richard Blunt did not accomplish this remarkable feat. The fact is that neither of these gentlemen founded immersion among Baptists or among anybody else. One can but be struck by the one-sided statement of facts always put forward to sustain this amazing 1641 theory. Each particular instance is adjusted to fit the preconceived theory. One minute Richard Blunt "revived" immersion in England, and the next moment we are requested to believe that Edward Barber is "the founder of

immersion among Baptists." I would like for the advocates of this theory to be just a little specific, and tell us just what they do intend to stand by. Now the following are some of the claims made for Edward Barber:

"And this reminds us that our Baptist friends do not give sufficient honor to the man who deserves all their praise for having recovered to Protestants the apostolic rite of immersion. We do not remember to have seen a single reference in their current newspaper press, in the eulogiums that pass current at their anniversaries, to the man whose name ought to eclipse far that of Roger Williams -- we mean Edward Barber, the father of modern immersion." -- *The Independent*, July 29, 1880.

"Happily for us, however, the above assertion is confirmed by the authority of Edward Barber, the founder of the rite of immersion among the Baptists. In the preface to his 'Treatise of Baptism, or Dipping,' London, 1641, the earliest book in the English language to assert that immersion is essential to baptism, Mr. Barber praises God that he, 'a poore tradesman,' was raised up to restore this truth to the world. *Zion's Advocate* has incautiously permitted Ivimey, or some other Baptist historian, to mislead it about the cause of Barber's imprisonment in 1641. Crosby (I. 218) says it was for "denying the baptism of infants, and that to pay tithes to the clergy is God's ordinance under the Gospel." This agrees with Barber's own statement. He was not imprisoned "for publishing the 'Treatise of Baptism or Dipping.'" On the contrary, he tells us that he wrote this treatise while he was in prison for the cause above mentioned." -- *N. Y. Independent*, Oct. 7, 1880.

"Immersion had been started by Barber in 1641." -- *The Independent*, Oct. 21, 1880.

"The new 'Cyclopaedia' does not even mention the name of Edward Barber the founder of immersion among the Baptists. This looks like an act of ingratitude toward a man who has exerted a greater influence upon the Baptist denomination than any other." -- *The Independent*, Feb. 24, 1881.

"When Edward Barber sent forth 'A Small Treatise of Baptisme or *Dipping*' a new note had been struck. The man was here asserting against the whole of Western Christendom that baptism is synonymous with dipping; that there is no other baptism but *dipping*. He aimed to show 'that the Lord Christ ordained Dipping' and not sprinkling or pouring. The claim that immersion is the *only valid act* of baptism had been a long while unknown in England.

"Mr. Barber also indicates the exact time when it was introduced again. His book bears the date of 1641, and in it he claims the distinguished honor 'to divulge this glorious Truth to the World's Censuring.' Nobody in recent times had divulged it in England. His book was the first in modern ages to make it known to the English public. The annals of English literature will be searched in vain for a volume that precedes it in date and yet maintains that nothing else is true baptism but immersion.

"Whatever quibbles may be raised about other questions, none can be raised about this one. The ordinance was extinct in England in 1641, if Barber's authority is worth anything at all, and if the plainest statements of fact are capable of being understood by the human mind" (*A Question in Baptist History*, pp. 90, 114, 115, 119).

I have been thus explicit in stating this case since so much has been claimed for the testimony of Edward Barber. For the life of me, I cannot guess what the testimony of Edward Barber has to do with the "Kiffin" Manuscript in the way of confirming it, because if Edward Barber founded immersion, Richard Blunt did not. Edward Barber

was a General Baptist; this "Kiffin" Manuscript business had reference to the Particular Baptists. Any one in the least acquainted with the history of these two bodies, knows that they not only did not affiliate, but were hostile. If Richard Blunt had invented immersion, it would not have been a powerful reason for Barber to accept it, but rather a reason against his acceptance; and had Barber been the founder of immersion, it would not have appealed to Blunt. It has taken three hundred and fifty years to get these two bodies of Baptists to co-operate in their work, which was accomplished two or three years ago, and even now all friction and jealousies are not gone. There was no harmony between them at that period. The co-operation of these Baptist bodies in 1641 in reviving immersion is a myth and did not exist. The above quotations show ignorance of the fact of Edward Barber, and indicate a knowledge of only a few extracts from his book on Baptism

In 1641 Barber had long been a Baptist. *The Dictionary of National Biography* is a great work which is now appearing in England in many volumes. I find it unusually accurate. Each article is prepared by a specialist who goes into the original authorities. The article on Edward Barber was prepared by Thompson Cooper, F. S. A. He says of Barber: "Edward Barber, baptist minister, was originally a clergyman of the established church, but long before the beginning of the civil wars he adopted the principles of the Baptists" (Vol. 3, p. 330. B. M. 2008. d). And yet the view I am opposing rests itself entirely upon a misuse of the word "divulge," as used by Barber. It is claimed that Barber was the founder of immersion, that he was imprisoned in 1641, and at the close of this year he came out of prison, and in the closing months, later than October, of 1641, founded immersion (*Independent*, Jan. 19, 1882). Not one of these propositions is true. Edward Barber was not in prison in 1641. The facts are these: Edward Barber appeared before the King's Commission sitting at Lambeth on Wednesday 20 day of June, 1639.

"This day the said Edward Barber appeared personally, and being required to take his corporal oath to answer articles, hee humbly desired to be allowed to be released concerning the same until the High Court day of Michaelmas term next, which humble request, the Court taking into their consideration, did grant the said Barber, for taking his oath untill the first Court day of the next term according as was decreed, and monished him in the meantime to confer with some learned divine concerning the lawfulness of taking the oath *ex officio*, touching which he was (as he allowed) not satisfied in conscience the Court ordered him to appear the first Court day of Michaelmas come next foresaid, to take his oath to answer articles, according to the stile of the Court, to wh in regard he refuse, he is decreed then to bee then *pro confesso*, touching all the matters concerning said articles against him, his refusal to take his oath notwithstanding" (Tanner MSS. 67. 115. Bodleian Library).

The next entry is 1640. Edward Barber and Mark Whitlocke. The cause to be informed in; and inform them the Court if in prison (orders them) to be brought (Acts of the High Court of Commission, Vol. 434:, fol. 52. b. Jan. 23),

1640. Jan. 30. vol. 434. fol. 67. Edward Barber and Marke Whitlocke are ordered to be declared *pro confesso* if they take not oaths to answer the articles by this day. For next Court day.

1640. Feb. 6. vol. 434. fol. 81. b. Edward Barber. Appointed for next Court day.

1640. June 25. vol. 434. fol. 224. Edward Barber, prisoner in Newgate. Released at his wife's petition on giving bond to appear here the first Court day of Michaelmas term, and of his promise to confer with Featley and other divines touching the lawfulness of the oath *ex officio* in the meantime.

Now here is an abstract of the Court records of Edward Barber, taken from the public records preserved in the Record Office, London, and the Bodleian Library. Edward Barber was not in jail in 1641 at all, and all that about his getting out of jail and publishing immediately his book on Baptism is a fairy tale. He was out of jail a whole year and a half before his book was published. It is admitted that he held this view of immersion since he was in prison, therefore he had been an immersionist since June 25th, 1640.

But we can come closer to the date of his opinion on dipping than that. He distinctly says at the end of his Preface in his book on Baptism that he was a prisoner because he denied the lawfulness of the sprinkling of infants. His words are: "By Edward Barber, Citizen, and Merchant-Taylor of London; late Prisoner, for denying the sprinkling of Infants, and requiring tithes now under the Gospel to be Gods Ordinance." There can be no dodging of these words. They are very plain. Edward Barber declares that he was imprisoned for denying the sprinkling of infants. The date of his imprisonment was June 20, 1639. Edward Barber was therefore an immersionist two years and a half before the alleged time that immersion was introduced, in England. He was in 1639 already a Baptist, and was therefore an immersionist before that date. Therefore the statement of Edward Barber is fatal to the "Kiffin" Manuscript when that document declares that immersion had not been practiced previously.

When we come to look into the case of Edward Barber we find yet further evidence of his immersion views in 1639. One of the most prominent Baptists of the times of the Civil Wars was Dr. Peter Chamberlain. He was a whole-souled Baptist and rather aggressive. For some reason he had occasion to attack Dr. Gouge, who was a prominent Episcopalian scholar. Dr. Chamberlain was very bold in his statements, and so far from affirming that immersion began in 1641, he affirmed that sprinkling in England was of very recent date. His words are so interesting that I shall lay a few of them before the reader. He says: "Therefore *the washing of the whole body*, as was appointed by the book of *Common Prayer*, and was the COMMAND and PRACTICE OF CHRIST and his APOSTLES, and those learned men whom they commonly call FATHERS, is the *right way of administering the Sacrament*, and not a new invented way of SPRINKLING, which (though practised) was never commanded till of late" (Mr. Blakewells *Sea of Absurdities concerning Sprinkling driven Back*, p. 6. London, 1650. B. M. 702. d. 12 (10)). This exactly corresponds with the statement of Wall that sprinkling did not begin to prevail till 1644 and must have begun in 1641. It is refreshing to hear this Baptist talk right out in meeting. It is quite certain that he did not think that immersion began in 1641. And Dr. Chamberlain continues: "To avoid the hardship of *Winter*, the *Common-Prayer-Book* will tell you in the preamble, that *Easter* and *Whitsuntide* were therefore appointed by the Antients for fit times of Baptisme. After the *Winter-Baptizing* of children in Wales, will sufficiently testify that you first in your own untruths, by the strength of your distorted imaginations" (p. 11). It is perfectly plain that the Welsh Pedobaptists in 1650 were still immersing infants.

What has all this to do with Barber? Much in every way. Edward Barber not only endorsed these statements but he lent a helping hand to his friend, Peter Chamberlain. He wrote a letter to Dr. Chamberlain giving him some facts. Of this letter Dr. Chamberlain says: "For I have been enformed by Mr. Edward Barber, and have it under his hand since you printed your letter, that at 2 severall times, both upon his being sent unto him by the Bishops, and one *Marke Whitlocke*, to be satisfied for taking the oath *ex officio*. Dr. *Gouge* did acknowledge (not onely sprinkling) but the baptizing of infants was a tradition of the church, and used it as one argument to take that oath: But to your arguments" (p.3). Here is a positive statement that Dr. Gouge, when arguing with Edward Barber, confessed that immersion was baptism, and tried to convince him not to make immersion a point against taking the oath. It is precisely the same thing which Barber himself stated that he was imprisoned for denying infant sprinkling. The date is likewise given. It was when he and one "Mark Whitlocke" were to be satisfied "for taking the oath *ex officio*," and that this occurred on two occasions. Turn to the Court record as given above, and the dates are apparent, viz.: June 20, 1639, and Jan. 30, 1640. Therefore Edward Barber was an immersionist in 1639. Edward Barber is therefore a positive witness against this 1641 theory, or more properly this 1642 theory.

=====

[*Baptist History Vindicated*, by John T. Christian, 1899, pp. 116-126. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian
Chapter XII

[Back To Contents](#)

Edward Barber's testimony is decisive. Writing in 1641, he answers objections to the practice of immersing believers, and this proves the practice must have previously existed. For example, on page 2 Barber says: "Others affirming there was no plain text for the Dipping of any Woman, by the which they discover much ignorance of, or malice against the Truth, striving to uphold the traditions of men instead of the glorious Institutions of Jesus Christ: for the word saith, Acts 8.12, that when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were dipt, both men and women."

Of course, they must have been immersing the women before this objection could have arisen, and now in 1641 it not only had arisen, but had spread so far that Barber felt he must answer it. Certainly, then, they immersed women in England before 1641.

Again Barber says, p.40 (official ms. from British Museum):

"Lastly, whereas the clothes, or vestments, are said to be holy, which they weare when they receive the Ordinance of Dipping, they being dipt into the death of Christ: for answer, hee might as well have said, the clothes are holy, preached unto, exhorted to repentance, faith, and other duties that men weare when they are in their Assemblies, but as is the man so is his strength Judges: 8.21, and for setting our parts by Gods parts. Ezek: 43.8."

Here Barber is in 1641 answering the objection that his co-religionists regarded the very clothes in which they received "the ordinance of dipping" as holy. Such an objection proves the previous existence of the dipping. The practice must have existed for some time in order for this objection to arise, and for it to become sufficiently general to make Barber think he must answer it.

Still again Barber says (p. 6):

"In like manner lately, those who professe and practice the dipping of Jesus Christ, instituted in the Gospel, are called and reproached with the name of Anabaptists, although our practice be no other than what was instituted by Christ himselfe, &c."

The reader will note that it is not the "practice of dipping" which has "lately" appeared; but the thing that has "lately" come to pass is that "those who professe and practice the dipping of Jesus Christ" are "called and reproached with the name of Anabaptists." The dipping, according to Barber, was older than the name Anabaptist. It is conceded that there had all along for over a century been those in England "called and reproached with the name of Anabaptists." Hence Barber believed "our practice" viz., "the dipping of Jesus Christ instituted in the Gospel," had been observed for a longer period than that. Certainly Edward Barber was not "the founder of the rite of immersion among the Baptists," nor had he ever heard of the recent introduction of immersion from Holland or from anywhere else. Remember Barber wrote this in 1641.

It has been claimed that Barber said that baptism was "destroyed and raced out" in England" (*Question in Baptist History*, p. 115). This is a complete mistake. Barber says no such thing. He is answering P. B.'s [PraiseGod Barebone -- *jrd*] argument that Roman

Catholic baptism was valid "despite the defection of Anti-Christ," and he shows that such baptism could not be valid because the Roman Catholics had destroyed and raced out baptism both as to the act and as to the subject. Speaking of the Romish departures from Bible teaching, Barber says, p. 39:

"Thus it stands in truth for the Dipping of Christ, destroyed and raced out both for matter and form, as hath been formerly showed, the matter being a believer desiring it, the true form dipping them into Jesus Christ in the New Covenant, to be visible heires, Rom: 8.17, Gallat: 4.5, Matth: 28.20, whereas the other is but the tradition of the Church." Barber nowhere intimates that immersion was a "lost art" in England, or that it needed any reintroduction. If this testimony of Barber be not decisive, will not some one explain what he could have said that would have been decisive?

An ounce of fact is worth a ton of fiction.

Thomas Lamb became a Baptist long before 1641, and was an ardent supporter of immersion. He was a General Baptist, and in no wise connected with the Calvinistic Baptists of England, so he could not have been connected with the Blunt story and baptizing in any way, even if that baptizing took place and there ever was a Blunt. Mr. Lamb joined the Baptists before the Civil Wars, and in the first years of Charles the First was active as a Baptist minister. Crosby says of Lamb: "Was a zealous and popular preacher among the Baptists, during the tyranny of Archbishop Laud" (*History of the Baptists*, vol. 3, p. 54).

He was arrested on the 6th of February, 1640, and committed to the Fleet prison "to restrain him from company, keeping of conventicles, and private exercises of religion" (Acts of High Court of Commission, vol. 434, fol. 88). He was released from the Fleet, June 25, 1640. He was released on bail on the petition of his wife who, with his family, had no means to maintain themselves. He was ordered "not to preach, baptize or frequent any conventicle" (Acts of High Court of Commission, vol. 434, fol. 221). That this baptism which this man was performing was immersion, there is no doubt. He was not well out of prison till he was sent for to go into Gloucestershire. I have an account of this visit into Gloucester from an Episcopalian rector. I give the account as he records it: There were nere my dwelling a company of the separation, who undertook to erect a Church by entering into a covenant, and these carried on their resolutions hand smooth, until they were grown into a great faction. And (as it is the property of that schisme to speak at randome) they began to let flie against the Church assemblies of England, as false, Antichristian, and out of Gods way.

"Whereupon I began to enquire into the nature of their Covenant, and told them, that if it were a covenant of first entrance into the true visible Church of Christ, then of necessity the parties so entering must have the seale of first entrance imprinted upon them, which (under the Gospell) is Baptisme. For if the ministry they leave be false in the very constitution thereof, then the Sacraments by them administered, must needs be nullities; and so now they having a lawful ministry constituted and set in Christs way, they must begin all anew, Baptisme and all. Thus (by way of arguing) I spake unto diverse of them, which did so puzzle them, that not long after some of them fell upon this practice of sealing their covenant with baptisme, renouncing their baptisme in their infancy, as a nullity and an Idoll, and being demanded by the magistrates of the City of Gloucester (before whom they were convented) who was that advised them into this practise, they nominated mee to be the first that put them up to it: whereas I was so farre from it, that I

held that the dangerous Covenant of the Separation would necessarily lead unto this. And moreover one Walter Coles of Painswicke a Taylor (a man of good behaviour a long time, and well esteemed by the godly and best Christians). This man (I say) fell off first to the Separation, (where he had his bane.) And God having given him another child, he refused to have it baptized untill it co[u]ld answer for itself. This matter fell into debate in Mr. Wels his congregation at Whaddon, Pastor to the Separation there, where the said Coles was a member. Now Mr. Wels and the Church officers his division (foreseeing the ill consequence of this businesse) had resolved to determine against the said Walter: but this being perceived by the said Coles, he desired to go out of the said company, and happy had it been for him, if hee had returned to his former godly and profitable courses of doing good. But he goes further, and turns plain Anabaptist. And so making a journey to London hee brings down one Thomas Lambe a chandler (as is reported) and one Clem, Writer a Factor in Blackwell-hall London (both Anabaptists) into this country. And I being in London, these two travellers (by Walter Voles his directions) came on the Lords-day to Cranham (where I did and doe serve in the work of the ministry) and there the said Lamb (being in a grey-suit) offers to preach in publicke, but being disappointed by Gods good providence of his wicked purpose he retires to a private house in Cranham above said, and by Preaching there he subverted many. And shortly after in an extreame cold, and frosty time, in the night season, diverse men and women were rebaptized in the great riyer Severne in the City of Gloucester. And so at length returning from London, I found the face of things much altered, and many strangely leaning to the heresie of the Anabaptists. And they put on the businesse with such preemtory boldnesse, as if the world had beene unable to gainsay their practice, or refute their doctrine. Whereupon to clear myselfe, and to satisfie others, I undertooke the controversie at Cranham, where they had left their poyson. And when I undertook it, the Anabaptists from Gloucester, and Painswicke came to heare mee and set. upon mee in the open face of the Congregation, as soon as I came downe out of the Pulpit. I desired them to forbearre publique tumults, and to send in their exceptions against what I laid down for Paedobaptism. And at first they sent mee in a paper with no hand to it: but this I rejected, and delivered backe to them againe, because I knew no one of them would stand to it, when once the folly thereof was declared. At length I received about to sheetes of paper, and yet (though it came in the name of them all) there was but one hand unto the same, and this Champion doth so stoutly manage the matter, that surely if his cause were suitable to his stomacke, neither men nor angels could stand before him. It is high time then for us to bestirre ourselves, when condemned heresies shall find such bold abettours, and that in the Land of light and truth. The Lord put it into the hearts of our parliament to settle a Government with us with speed, that outfacing impudencie may be called to account, that truth and peace may dwell in our land" (*The Covenants Plea for Infants*. Oxford, 1642. B. M. E. 115. (17). Preface to the Reader).

That this baptism in the Severn river took place in the Winter or late Fall of 1640 there can be no doubt. The season is well marked, for the narrative says it was "an extreme cold and frosty time." We can come very near setting the exact date. Mr. Wynell, in writing to these Baptists, says further: "And so Lamb your founder in his directions to you expounds the place. But aske that asse how he can make good his exposition. And his letter will answer you, that you must take it upon his word, or else he knowes not what to say to you. And I between you had this deep Divinity from that letter, for that letter

bear date Feb. 11. Anno 1641. And your paper bears date March 22. Anno 1641 so that allowing a considerable time for the coming of his letter from London to you: you might have time enough to make use of your instructions" (p.40) Now we have a fixed date to work from. Lamb dated his letter in London, Feb. 11th, 1641. This letter marked the time that the rector was replying to the Baptists, but the immersions had long before this taken place in the Severn. Let us for a moment watch the trend of affairs. This man, Walter Coles, became a Baptist, had a child born to him, refused to have it "baptized," went to London and brought Lamb and one other preacher to Gloucester, these preachers remained some time in Gloucester preaching, returned to London; after a while, the rector, who was in London, returned home, found a great change had taken place in the sentiment of the people, prepared a sermon and preached it, held a controversy with the Baptists, received propositions from them and returned these propositions to them because they were not satisfactory, and then the Baptists wrote to London to Lamb for a paper, which was prepared and returned to Gloucester by Feb, 1641. It is, therefore, perfectly plain, when we take these facts and the slowness of travel into consideration, that this baptism in the Severn took place in the Autumn or early Winter of 1640. If Feb. 11, 1641, is old style, then this immersion took place in 1639.

But the Autumn or early Winter of 1640 was more than a year before the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript places the date of the Blunt episode.

Another fact stands out most prominent. Thomas Lamb was known by the authorities as a baptizer, and was turned out of jail with the admonition that he should not "baptize," which could only mean that he should not immerse, for nothing was said about re-baptism or Anabaptism. When he went to Gloucester he was known as a dipper, since he was an "Anabaptist," and the rector expressed no surprise that this Anabaptist should dip his converts, but took this as a matter of course. This instance shows, therefore, that immersion was the custom of the Anabaptists before 1641. This of itself is sufficient to show that the Baptists were dippers in 1640, and that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is wholly unreliable.

But this is not all. Mr. John Goodwin, a Congregational preacher of London, had a prominent member, Mr. William Allen, to join the Baptists, and Mr. Allen became a very prominent minister among the Baptists. This made Goodwin furious, and he wrote his book, "*Water Dipping*." In that book he spoke of the "new mode of dipping" Allen relies to one of these attacks, and says "dipping" is not "new," but is the "old" baptism (*Answer to Mr. J. G.*, B. M. E. 713. 17. p. 34).

Thomas Lamb was indignant at this attack of Mr. Goodwin, and at once resented it. He knew that dipping among the Baptists was no new thing. Lamb's opinion of Goodwin's book is expressed in rather vigorous words. He says:

"Sir, you say to Mr. *Edwards* that his Gangraena made great joy in hell: whatever his Gangraena did in hell I know not, but I believe, upon good grounds, that your water-dipping, especially this eighteenth consideration [which was on dipping], hath made more joy on earth, among the seekers, Ranters, and all sorts of non-churches, than even they had in all their lives before, by how much you excell the most, in parts, learning, wit, &c, by so much the more in their consolation, that you seem to feel weight in the arguments, HEAR HOW THEY CLAP THEIR HANDS AND SING" (*Truth Prevailing*, p. 78.

London, 1655. B. M. 4323 b.) Mr. Goodwin became much ashamed of what he had done and in his Cata-Baptism apologized for this "Grasshopper expression," as he calls it, and

declares that he "should not have appeared in print in these Baptismal controversies." But he nowhere stated that dipping began in 1641, and he declares that "the Nation hath had experience of these" Anabaptists "for many years."

He says in his book, "*Water Dipping no Firm Footing for Church Communion*," London, 1653:

"First we understand by books and writings of such authority and credit; that we have no ground at all to question their truth that that generation of men, whose judgments have gone wandering after Dipping and Re-baptising, have from the very first original and spring of them since the late Reformation, been very troublesome and turbulent in all places where they have encreased to any numbers considerable; and wiser men than I are not a little jealous over the peace of this nation, lest it should suffer, as other places formerly have done, from the tumultuous and domineering spirit of this sort of men so numerously prevailing as they do" (pp. 37, 38).

And on p. 40-41 he declares that Nicholas Stork was "dipped," and that the first Anabaptists of "this nation," whoever they were, baptized others after "that exotique mode." Goodwin, however, fixes the date of the beginning of immersion among the Anabaptists in 1521. He says:

"Whether since the first invention and practice of your way in later times, which according to Sculitus, who wrote the history of the Reformation of Christian Religion by *Luther*, and other his assistants (partakers of the same grace with him therein) was in the year 1521 men of your judgment, wherever (almost) they have come, have not obstructed the course and proceedings of the Gospel, opposed troubled, defamed, the most faithful and worthy instruments of Christ, in the work of Reformation, and upon this account been complained of by them" (pp. xv., xvi.).

And yet this "Grasshopper expression," for which the Baptists made Goodwin apologize, is the one that is peddled around by some Baptists of our time, and we are asked to believe on the authority of Goodwin that dipping was a brand new thing in 1655, when Goodwin himself says dipping began among the Anabaptists in 1521. It is strange that there are those among us who not only seem anxious to rake up every old slander that they can find against the Baptists, but who likewise are exceedingly anxious to prove that the Baptists did sprinkle, and, moreover, who resent any instance that is pointed out where Baptists immersed. Thomas Lamb and William Allen would not let an instance of this kind go by without rebuke. They knew better. Long before 1641 Thomas Lamb dipped converts, and long before the times of Thomas Lamb our Baptist forefathers did the same thing.

=====

[From *Baptist History Vindicated*, by John T. Christian, 1899, pp. 126-136. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John t. Christian

Chapter XIII

[Back To Contents](#)

The most elaborate and sometimes the most far-fetched arguments have been offered to sustain this date of 1641 and Richard Blunt's trip to Holland. A writer of 1642-3, by the name of P. B., which initials have been interpreted to mean Praise God Barebone has figured largely in these calculations, and the most amazing arguments have been put forth as to his teaching. In order to be absolutely fair I give two rather lengthy extracts setting forth this claim: It is likely that Barebone knew personally every member of Jessey's Church and had canvassed them over and over again during the schism which he produced in May, 1640. There can be little question that he knew Mr. Richard Blunt by heart. He may indeed have heard something of the project to send him into Holland that he might fetch immersion over seas. At any rate when that practice was introduced among them in the year 1641 -- 'the yeare of jubilee' -- Mr. Barebone got upon the track of it almost as soon as anybody else in England. This marked change struck him very forcibly, since adult immersion was unknown in England in 1640. "The above treatise of Mr. Barebone apparently met a speedy reply from the very man who of all others we should expect to enter the list against him. Richard Blunt, who had gone to Holland to obtain immersion took up his pen and probably before the close of the year 1642 issued a printed work which up to this moment, so far as I know, has not been recovered. It might throw a desirable light on these discussions if it could be produced, and it is worthy of diligent search in many libraries. Its exact title cannot be given: all that we know of it is found in the following work by P. B[arebone]: *A Reply to the Frivolous and Impertinent Answer of R. B. to the Discourse of P. B.*, in which Discourse is shewed that the Baptisme in the Defection of Anti-christ is the ordinance of God, notwithstanding the corruptions that attend the same, and that the Baptisme of Infants is lawful, both of which are vindicated from the exceptions of R. B., and further cleared by the same author [i.e. P.B.]" (*Question in Baptist History*, 103, 8, 9).

This statement shows a singular ignorance of facts. Mr. Barebones did not know "Richard Blunt by heart" for the best of reasons, for it he had ever heard of such a man he does not mention him, and consequently he never replied to anything he had to say. And as to Richard Blunt, who "had gone to Holland to obtain immersion," taking "up his pen and probably before the year 1642" issuing "a printed work," is not even an "ingenius guess." This book that the above writer thought was lost "has been recovered," and there is no further need "for diligent search in many libraries;" "its exact title can be given," and, as might be expected, the author's name is not Richard Blunt, but his name is R. Barrow. The book lies before me as I write, and this is the exact title: "A Briefe Answer to a Discourse Lately Written by one P. B. To Prove Baptisme under the defection of *Antichrist*, to be the Ordinance of JESUS CHRIST, and The Baptizing of Infants to be agreeable to the Word of God. Wherein is declared (from his own ground) that the Baptisme. and a false Church is inconsistent, and cannot stand together; and also maintained, That the Baptizing of Infants hath no authority from the Scriptures. *The simple beleeveth every Word: but the prudent man looketh well to his goings.* Prov. 14.15. By R. Barrow. London, Printed in the yeere 1642." This one statement that R. B. is

R. Barrow and not Richard Blunt. sweeps away whole pages of argument, and recalls to us the truth that "an ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory."

R. Barrow, like all Baptists are, and were, was a straight-along immersionist. His book appears to have very much exasperated Praise God Barebones, who replied in 1643 with much heat. Barebones declares that Barrow had already been dipped three times, and was seeking a fourth immersion, for Barrow was disturbed on the subject of a proper administrator of baptism. The question of immersion did not trouble him, for he had already in 1643 been dipped three times, and was seeking a fourth dipping (pp. v., vi.) Barebones does not know of anyone who had been to Holland for baptism, for he tells Barrow that if he was not satisfied with his baptism, to go to Holland to get an administrator. His words are: "There were baptized persons in Holland of an hundred yeers descent and more, to have repaired thither were more easie, then for the Eunuch to have gone to Jerusalem: as easie as it was, for them to have gone thither, as for our Lord to have gone over Jordan to John." He adds that this would not be altogether agreeable to Barrow since "if R. B. question their baptisme, it is much: happily he may, because they practise not totall dipping" (pp. 18, 19). It is therefore evident: that Praise God Barebones knew no one that had been to Holland for baptism, and that while he suggests such a course, he did not think it would be entirely satisfactory. Barebones further declares that Barrow's opinion was so rare and singular that only two or three churches believed in it (p.30). Barebones becomes, not a witness in favor of Blunt's trip to Holland, but a witness who states, singularly enough, that the Baptists of England had not received their baptism from Holland. The witness, who was declared to be none other than the original Richard Blunt, turns out not to be Richard Blunt at all, and Praise God Barebones, who "knew Richard Blunt by heart," knew nothing about him, and this excellent witness who was to throw so much light on the subject, when duly examined testifies on the other side. Rather than spend my time in speculating what a man would say if he could be found, and putting words in his mouth that he never uttered, I went to work, brought the witness forward and let him tell his own story. That was supposed to be the last thing needed to establish the authenticity of the "Kiffin" Manuscript. Here, as everywhere else, the facts are against that document. The "Kiffin" Manuscript and the Jessey Records always collapse when the facts are told.

The conclusion that the Anabaptists practiced dipping before January, 1642, may be reached in another way. I have a little book called: "*An Anabaptist Sermon which was preached at the Re-baptizing of a Brother at the new or holy Jordan, as they call it, near Bow, or Hackney River; together with the manner how they used to perform their Anabaptisticall Ceremonies. London, 1643.*" It is worth while to note that this report was written by an enemy, who refers to the Ana-baptists as "they." It will also be noted that it describes a past event, and that the baptism was at some considerable time before 1643, for the writer says that it was "the manner they use to perform their Anabaptisticall ceremonies." The only point, however, that I wish to especially emphasize is that the Hackney River was the baptizing place, "the new Jordan," where these Anabaptists dipped their candidates. Remember that the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript declares that Blunt performed his immersion in January, 1642. But I have another book called "*The Booke of common Prayer vindicated from the aspersion of all Schismatiques, Anabaptists, &c Together with a discovery of the sort of people called Rebaptists, lately found out m Hackney Marsh. neere London.*" This book was written in 1641, some

months before the "Kiffin" Manuscript says Blunt returned from Holland. The following is an account of the Hackney Marsh transaction, the New Jordan, the dipping place of the Baptists, before Blunt had returned from Holland and instituted immersion: "The discovery of a base Sect of people called Rebaptists, lately found out in Hackney Marsh neere London.

"About a Fortnight since a great multitude of people were met going toward the river in Hackney Marsh and were followed to the water side, where they were all baptized againe, themselves doing it to one another, some of which persons were too feeble and aged that they were fayne to Ride on horseback thithere this was wel observed," &c. (pp. 9, 10). Here comes very nearly being the name Baptist, that we have so often heard was not in use till some time after, for these people were called Re-baptists. It is such a pity that these Baptists would insist upon dipping before they heard of Blunt and of his trip to Holland! It was my pleasure to preach to a Baptist church near Hackney Swamp the past summer, which was organized before 1641, and may have been the very church referred to in the above narrative. It is also a fact that Spilsbury's church was located near the Hackney river, and that river was doubtless the baptizing place for that congregation. The Spilsbury church had existed from, or probably before 1633; and like all Baptist churches had a convenient place for immersions.

This Lathrop church had much trouble on the subject of immersion. Some of the members seceded and went over to John Spilsbury in 1633, and the agitation kept up till he went to America, and, as we shall see, it did not then close. If Lathrop had hoped to free himself from this immersion controversy when he came to America, he was to be disappointed. He brought quite a number of persons over with him. He and the church located at Scituate, Mass., where Lathrop remained pastor till 1639. On his settlement the immersion controversy broke out immediately. Dean, who was a very able historian and editor of a number of the works of the Massachusetts Historical Society, says:

"Controversy respecting the mode of baptism had been agitated in Mr. Lathrop's church before he left England, and a part had separated from him and established the first Baptist (Calvinistic) church in England in 1633. Those that came seem not all to have been settled on this point, and they found others in Scituate ready to sympathize with them." In 1639 Lathrop removed to Barnstable with a number of his members and formed a new church. A majority, however, of those who remained in Scituate believed in immersion, and Dean says that some believed in "adult immersion exclusively." Here, then, is immersion and adult immersion exclusively in this American Lathrop church before 1639. Not only so, when this church came to call a pastor to succeed Mr. Lathrop, they called an avowed immersionist as pastor, Mr. Chauncy. Fortunately we are not at a loss for Mr. Chauncy's views. Felt says of Chauncy, July 7, 1642:

"Chauncy at Scituate still adheres to his practice of immersion. He had baptized two of his own children in this way. A woman of his congregation who had a child of three years old, and wished it to receive such an ordinance, was fearful that it might be too much frightened by being dipped as some had been. She desired a letter from him, recommending her to the Boston Church, so that she might have the child sprinkled. He complied and the rite was accordingly administered" (*Felt's Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I., p. 497).

Think for a moment how powerful and direct this evidence is. Here is John Lathrop who was pastor of this Jacob church in London. His church divides, and part of it becomes Baptist by joining with John Spilsbury in 1633; there was another secession to John Spilsbury in 1638. In the meantime John Lathrop and a part of this church has settled in New England, and this same immersion controversy breaks out there. There were some who believed in "adult immersion exclusively," and when Mr. Lathrop resigned this church called to its pastorate a noted immersionist. Mark you that this was not a Baptist church but an Independent church, and the very one the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript declares never heard of immersion of believers till 1641. But we furthermore reach the conclusion that the Baptists were immersionists as they have always been. I should immensely rather trust the facts in the case than to tie myself blindly to the so-called "Kiffin" Manuscript, a document of which no one knows its origin and which has been proved false in almost every particular.

We happen to have another direct proof of immersion in this Jessey church in London before 1641. I have a book called "*To Sions Virgins*." This edition was printed in 1644. There was an earlier edition, because the title page tells us that this catechism, for that is that the book is, "is in use in these times." We are pretty well able to locate its exact date. It was written after Sept. 18, 1634, for it declares that "Mr. John Lathroppe" was "now pastor in America," and that was the date of Mr. Lathroppe's arrival in America. And it was before 1637 when Mr. Jessey was called to the care of the church, for the church was engaged in prayer for a pastor, and Mr. Jessey continued pastor until after 1644. The date, then, was 1634-7. But this church at that date had already had great disturbance on the subject of believers' immersion. The writer of this book, who declares that he is "an antient member" of the Lathrop church, makes the statement that we should avoid "those that make divisions," and then continues:

"I desire to manifest in defence of the Baptisme and forme we have received, not being easily moved, but as Christ will more manifest himself, which I cannot conceive to bee in the dipping the head, the creature going in and out of the water, the forme of baptisme doth more or lesse hold forth Christ. And it is a sad thing that the citizens of Zion, should have their children born foreigners not to be baptized," &c.

Now here is a direct statement of immersion and believers' baptisms long before 1641.

Then on p. 18 it is asked: "Then sayes such as be called Anabaptists, &c. and this answer is given in part: 'Wherefore let such as deny infants baptisme, and goe into the water and dip downe the head and come out to shew death and buriall, take heede they take not the name of the Lord in vaine, more especially such as have received baptisme in their infancy.'"

I cannot conceive how there could be a more appropriate witness. He was a member of this Lathrop or Jessey church, he was an "ancient member," and he certainly knew what he was talking about. He testifies directly that believers' immersion was then practiced by persons who had been members of this very congregation, and at that very moment these persons were causing divisions on account of believers' immersion. And yet in the face of this kind of a witness I am asked to believe this "Kiffin" Manuscript, which professes to be an account of this very church, and that says that none in England practiced believers' immersion before 1642. The "Kiffin" Manuscript is not even a respectable forgery.

=====

[From John T. Chrisitan, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 136-144. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated
By John T. Christian
Chapter XIV [Back To Contents](#)

We will now notice the names of those who were reported to have been baptized as recorded in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. The list is as follows:

"The names of all 11 MO Janu: Begin
1 Richard Blunt Sam Blacklock
2 Greg Fishburn Dere. Fishburn
3 John Caldwell, Eliz. Cadwell
4 Sam Eames Tho. Munden,
5 Thos. Kilcop William Willieby
6 Robert Locker Mary Lock
7 John Braunson John Bull
8 Rich. Ellis, Mary Langride.
Tho. Shephard)
Hus wife)
Mary Millison
9 Wm. Creak, Mary Haman,
10 Robt. Carr, Sarah Williams,
11 Martin Mainprise Joane) Dunckle
Anne)
12 Henry Woolmare Eliz. Woolmore,
15 Henry Creak, Judeth Manning
16 Mark. Lukar Mabel Luker,
17 Henry Darker Abigal Bowden,
13 Robert King, Sarah Norman,
14 Thomas Waters Isabel Woolmore.

Eliz. Jessop Mary Creak
Susanna King
41 in all

11th month 11 January 9 added

understood John Cattope George Wenham
as appears Nicholas Martin Thomas Davenant
above! &. Ailie Stanford Rich Colgrave
this was Nath Natthon Eliz. Hutchinson
Jan. 9th Mary Birch John Croson
Sybilla Dees
John Woolnlore.
Thus 53 in all."

I would call attention to the date. This baptism was in January, 1642, and it was in the early part of January, for upon the "9" of that month 12 other persons were added to this number. That is to say, that after all, even according to the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript, immersion was not revived in England in 1641, but in 1642. We would be compelled "to move up the date to" 1642. On the basis of the "Kiffin ' Manuscript it is a 1642, rather than a 1641, controversy.

But look at that list of names who were said to have been baptized by Blunt and tell us how many prominent Baptists were in the list. If these persons were immersed at this time, what about all the other leading Baptists before and after this date? There is nothing to prove that one of them was immersed at or near this time. Read carefully over the above list, and then read the following words of the New York *Independent* on this 1641 theory:

"If immersion was introduced, as we suppose, in 1641, then it is clear that John Spilsbury, who became a Baptist in 1633, was sprinkled or poured upon; likewise Mr. Kiffin, who became a Baptist in 1638; likewise Roger Williams and his church at Providence, who joined the Baptists in 1639; likewise Mr. Clark and the church at Newport, who, we must believe, joined the Baptists very shortly after Mr. Williams. The year 1644, which is mentioned as the date when the 'First Baptist church at Newport was formed and set in order,' we are inclined to think was the time when the church accepted and began the practice of immersion." N. Y. *Independent*, Oct. 7th, 1880.

This statement is wide of the mark, and is not based even upon the "Kiffin" Manuscript. That document is false and unauthoritative enough, but it has never made a statement like that. I challenge the *Independent* to make good this statement. The "Kiffin" Manuscript does not intimate that John Spilsbury was sprinkled in 1633 and afterwards dipped in 1641. It does not say that Kiffin, "who became a Baptist in 1638," was poured upon. Nor does it even mention Roger Williams, nor Mr. Clark, nor the first Baptist church of Providence, nor the first Baptist church of Newport. There is no proof that these men were sprinkled by anybody to make them Baptists.

If we are to believe the account of the baptism as given in the "Kiffin" Manuscript, then not one of the great Baptist leaders of 1641 had anything to do with it. Let us see. William Kiffin had nothing to do with this procedure, nor was he baptized by Blacklock and Blunt. His baptism came from some other source. John Spilsbury was not strict enough for William Kiffin. Although John Spilsbury practiced immersion, shortly after 1638 Kiffin separated himself from this church because this church occasionally admitted a minister to preach for it who had not been immersed. He was, in other words, a Landmark Baptist. Crosby says:

"He was first of an *Independent* congregation, and called to the ministry among them; was one of them who were concerned in the conferences held in the congregation of Mr. *Henry Jessey*; by which Mr. *Jessey* and the greatest part of the congregation became proselyted to the opinion of the *Baptists*. He joined himself to the church of Mr. *John Spilsbury*, but a difference arising about permitting persons to preach amongst them that had not been *baptized by immersion*, they parted by consent" (*History of the Baptists*, Vol. III., p. 3-4).

Samuel Richardson had nothing to do with this Blunt affair. His baptism came from some other source.

John Spilsbury was not baptized by Blunt. He owed his baptism to another administrator. Paul Hobson was not baptized by Blunt. He was baptized by another.

The same is true of Thomas Lamb. Edward Barber was not baptized by Blunt. He was baptized years before.

Hanserd Knollys was not baptized by Blunt. He owed his baptism to another administrator.

Crosby was therefore quite right when he affirmed: "But the greatest number of English Baptists looked upon all of this as needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old Popish Doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession which neither the Church of Rome, nor the Church of England, much less the modern Dissenters, could prove to be with them" (Vol. I., p. 103).

Look at those who were declared to be baptized in the "Kiffin" Manuscript.

Nobody ever heard of Blunt in or about 1641. So far as history records, he was a myth.

Nobody ever heard of Blacklock. He is another myth, so far as history records.

There is Thomas Shephard! History does speak of him, but he was a Congregational preacher at that moment in Boston; and he had not been in England for years, and, so far as I know, he never was in London.

Yet this is the crowd we are asked to believe started immersion among the Baptists in 1641!

The "Kiffin" Manuscript makes the following statements concerning the Confession of Faith of 1643.

"1644. These being much spoken against as being unsound in doctrine as if they were Armenians & also against Magistrates &c, they joyned together in a Confession of their Faith in fifty-two Articles wch gave great satisfaction to many that had been prejudiced. Thus subscribed in ye names of 7 Churches in London.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Willn Kiffin | Thos. Gunn | Paul Hobson |
| Tho. Patience | Jos. Mabbet | Tho. Goore |
| Geo. Tipping | John Web, | Jo. Phelps |
| John Spilsbury | Tho. Kilcop | Edward Heath |
| Thos. Shephard, | | |
| Tho. Munder." | | |

So ignorant was the writer of the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript of Baptist affairs that he did not know that this Confession of Faith was put forth in 1643, and not in 1644.

If the author of the "Kiffin" Manuscript is wrong on the date of the Confession of Faith, he is also wrong in regard to the persons who signed it. I copy the names directly from the Confession itself: "William Kiffin, Thomas Patience, John Spilsbery, George Tipping, Samuel Richardson, Thomas Skippard, Thomas Mundy, Thomas Gunne, John Mabbatt, John Webb, Thomas Killcop, Paul Hobson, Thomas Goare, Joseph Phelps, Edward Heath" (B. M. E. 12. (24)).

It will be seen that the compiler who made this "collection in 1710-11," or some other time, has taken the privilege to "doctor" the facts. He follows his own method of spelling here as everywhere else, and hence does not get the names correctly. Neither does he get the names in the right order. But what is worse, he leaves out the name of Samuel Richardson altogether. He was one of the most prominent Baptists of those times and a great writer. Yet the "Kiffin" Manuscript, "a contemporaneous record," "a genuine church record," knows nothing about him. The closest the "Kiffin" Manuscript can come to Thomas Munday is Tho: Munder, and John Mabbatt becomes Jos. Mabbet.

But the most curious thing is yet to be mentioned. Thomas Shephard is represented as signing the Baptist Confession of Faith. He was then, and had been for nine years, a

Congregational preacher in Boston, and, so far as I know, he never returned to England. He was not only not a Baptist, but a bitter opponent of them. One year from the date the "Kiffin" Manuscript represents Thomas Shephard as signing a Baptist Confession of Faith, we find him writing an introduction to a book written by George Philips in favor of infant baptism and sprinkling, in answer to Thomas Lamb, the English Baptist minister. This book was published in England in 1645. In that introduction he complains that

"the doctrine of Anabaptisme especially in this controversie concerning Infants, will gangrene farre, and leaven much."

This is no mere misprint for this same Thomas Shephard, as has been claimed, for that document represents him as baptized by Blunt on his return. It will not relieve the "Kiffin" Manuscript to say, as has already been said, that it was not this Thomas Shephard, but another, who was a Baptist. The trouble with this is that there is not one particle of evidence to support it. Thomas Shephard did not sign the Baptist Confession of Faith, published in 1644, as the Gould manuscripts assert. This is a fabrication pure and simple. But this is as authentic as anything else in the "Kiffin" Manuscript. But we have still other proof of the unreliability of this "Kiffin" Manuscript. In January, 1640, two of the persons who signed the Confession of Faith were already Baptists. The names of these two men were John Webb and Thomas Gunn. They were arrested and brought before the House of Lords on that date for being Baptists (*Journal of House of Lords*, vol. 4, p. 13. A. D. 1639-40). The Journal says: "Anabaptists recommended to the justice of the House by his majesty." Six names are mentioned; in which number are the two above, and there were at "least sixty People more." It is significant that not one of these six persons is found among the persons baptized by Blunt in the list recorded in the Gould document, and two of this number signed the Baptist Confession of Faith. Bluntism did not make much progress among the Baptists of 1641! The Gould Document Number 4 makes this absurd statement in regard to Hanserd Knollys:

"1643. About Baptisme,. Qu: Ana:

Hanserd Knollys our Brother not being satisfied for Baptizing his child, after it had been endeavored by ye elder & by one or two more; himself referred to ye Church then that they might satisfye him, or he rectifye them if amiss herein, which was well accepted. "Hence meetings were appointed for conference about it at B. Ja: & B. K. & B. G. & each was performed with prayer & in much Love as Christian meetings (because he could not submit his judgment to depend on with its power: So yielded to) Elder _____. The maine argument was from these fower conclusions.

"1. Those in Gospel institutions are so set down to us. Those not cleare.

"2. Whatever Priviledg God hath given to his Church is still given to all churches.

"3. God hath given to his Church as a Church this Privilege to have their children in a Gosspe covenant, & to have its token in Infancy Gen. 17.7. 10.

"4. Baptism seems to be in ye rome of Circumcision.

To be now to Churches Infants."

Every fact known in regard to Knollys goes to prove that this statement is not true. The Rev. John Lewis, who replied to Crosby's History, affirms that Knollys rejected infant baptism as early as 1636 (Rawlinson Mss. C. 409. p. 62). Crosby declares that he was a Baptist in 1636. He came to America in 1635 and settled in New Hampshire, and returned to England in (?) 1640. While in America he was regarded as an Anabaptist. Cotton Mather mentions a number of Baptists among the first planters of New England, and that some ministers of that persuasion came over. He says of Hanserd Knollys: "Of them there were some godly Anabaptists; as namely, Mr. Hanserd Knollys (whom one of his adversaries called *absurd Knowles*), of Dover, who afterwards moved back to London, lately died there, a good man, in a good old age" (*Magnalia Christi Americana*, Vol. I., p. 243, Hartford, 1855). (Crosby, Vol. I., p. 120).

He wrote an autobiography of himself, which was edited and completed by William Kiffin. Knollys died September 19, 1691, and from the words of Kiffin it is probable that he became a Baptist as early as 1631. Kiffin's words are: "The author of these ensuing experiences was that ancient and faithful servant of God, Mr. Hanserd Knollys, who departed this life in the ninety-third year of his age, having been employed in the works and service of Christ, as a faithful minister, for above sixty years; in which time he labored without fainting under all the discouragement that attended him, being contented in all conditions, though never so poor in this world; under all persecutions and sufferings, so that he might therein serve his blessed Lord and Saviour. I have myself known him for above fifty four years, and can witness to the truth of many things left by him under his own hand" (*Life and Death of Hanserd Knollys*, p. 2. London, 1692. B. M. 1694. (1)).

The point I raise is a definite one. The Gould Document number 4 declares that in 1643 Hanserd Knollys was a Pedobaptist, and gives at great length the argument that satisfied his mind and made a Baptist out of him. On the other hand, I present indisputable authorities who declare that Hanserd Knollys was an Anabaptist as far back as 1636, and perhaps 1631. The proof is simply overwhelming, and these statements, like the rest of the statements of these Gould documents, are false.

=====

[From *Baptist History Vindicated*, by John T. Christian, 1899, pp. 146-152. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

By John T. Christian

Chapter XV

[Back To Contents](#)

The Conclusion

In a former article, Number V., it was pointed out that the story in the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript of Sam Eaton was absolutely inconsistent with the Court Records and the State Papers of England. It was demonstrated that not one of the things related of him in the Gould document could have taken place. Not one statement there made needs to be modified, but my attention has been called to an important additional matter which goes to show that Sam Eaton became a Baptist, and that he was immersed by John Lathrop between April 24, 1634 and May 5, 1636, and Sam Eaton immersed others. This information is given by John Taylor, who put in rhyme the following:

Also one Spilsbury rose up of late,
(Who doth or did dwell over Aldersgate)

* * * * *

He rebaptiz'd in Anabaptist fashion
One Eaton (of the new found separation)
A Zealous Button-maker, grave and wise,
And gave him orders others to baptize;
Who was so apt to learne that in one day,
Hee'd do't as well as Spilsbury weigh'd Hay.
This true Hay-lay-man to the Bank side came
And likewise there baptized an impure dame"
&c. (A Swarme of Sectaries and Schismatiques).

This was published in London probably in 1641, but possibly earlier. It is admitted that this was an example of immersion among the Baptists. Now Sam Eaton died in prison Aug. 25, 1639 (Calendar of State Papers, vol. 427, fol. 107). Therefore Spilsbury immersed Eaton before Aug. 25, 1639. But Sam Eaton immersed others. He was in jail from May 5, 1636, continuously till his death, therefore he was immersed before 1636, and he also immersed others before that date. This simple statement overthrows the entire 1641 theory, and demonstrates that immersion was in practice more than five years before 1641, which is in accord with all the facts in the case. I beg to present my congratulations.

This additional fact permits my giving a pretty detailed account of the church relations of Sam Eaton. In the Court Documents which I have before me which give an account of the trial of Lathrop's church, April 29, 1632, it is shown that Sam Eaton was a member of the Lathrop, or, as it was afterwards called, the Jessey church. He continued in jail until April 24, 1634, when he was released from prison under the same bond that Lathrop was (*Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 261, fol. 182). After this date, and before May 5, 1636, he was immersed by John Spilsbury, for that was the only date he was out of prison until his death. The record of this second imprisonment is: "Samuel Eaton of St. Gile's, without Cripple Gate, London, button-maker" (*Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 324. fol. 13). Then there follows a petition, the exact date is not given, of one Francis Tucker, B.D. He

complains that Samuel Eaton is an unruly fellow, and persists in preaching in prison. One of the points is that "Eaton has oftentimes affirmed in his sermons that baptism was the doctrine of devils, and its original and institution of the devil, and has railed against the arch-bishop." &c. (*Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 406, fol. 64). This is about what a bigoted Pedobaptist of that day would report against a Baptist who was denouncing infant baptism and sprinkling. The next entry in the *Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 437, fol. 107, where there is an account of his death under date of Aug. 31, 1639, which occurred Sunday, the 25th. A Mr. Alsop reports that he was present at the funeral, and he reports that he met the Anabaptists, and some others, "I think at least two hundred, with Eaton's corpse, so I went back with them to see how they would bury the dead. I observed how they answered such as met them, demanding who that was to be buried; they said it was one of the bishop's prisoners, but when they came to the grave, It being made ready for them in the new church yard near Bethlehem (Bunhill Fields) they, like so many bedlams, cast the corpse in, and with their feet, instead of spades, cast and turned in the mold till the grave was almost full. Then they paid the grave-maker for his pains, who told them that he must fetch a minister, but they said, that he might spare his labour." This single instance is, therefore, absolutely fatal to the whole 1641 theory.

In Article VIII the ground is taken that the Presbyterians were the first to introduce sprinkling in England to the exclusion of immersion. Wall declared that sprinkling began in England "in the disorderly times of 1641," and that in "1645 it was used by very few." Sprinkling came in with the Westminster Assembly, which excluded dipping by a majority of one. This was in 1643 and in 1644 that the Presbyterians passed acts in the Parliament excluding dipping and substituting pouring in its place. At the time that Article was written, only extracts of these Acts of Parliament were before me, now I have these acts in full. They are even stronger than I supposed, and carry out fully my contention that sprinkling was introduced as the ordinary act of baptism in 1644.

Scobell's Collection of Acts of Parliament, Anno 1644, it is decreed that "The book of Common-Prayer shall not be henceforth used, but the Directory for Public Worship." The Book of Common Prayer prescribed immersion, and the Directory prescribed affusion. It was ordered that the Directory should under penalty be used throughout the United Kingdom. In order that none might escape, it was decreed that "a fair Register book of Velim, to be kept by the Minister and other Officers of the Church; and that the Names of all Children Baptized, and of their Parents, and of the time of their Birth and Baptizing, shall be written and set down by the minister;" &c. This infamous law was meant as a check on every Baptist in the land, and all that was needed to convict such a one was to refer to this book of "Velim." In order that there might be no mistake on the meaning of baptism, it was decreed: "Then the Minister is to demand the Name of the Childe, which being told him, he is to say (calling the Childe by his Name)

"I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"As he pronounceth the words, he is to Baptize the Childe with water: which for the manner of doing it is not onely lawfull but sufficient and most expedient to be, by powring [pouring] or sprinkling of the water on the Face of the childe, without adding any other ceremony." Here, then, is the law which directly replaces immersion by sprinkling and pouring, and this was passed in January 3, 1644-5.

It was not, however, till 1648 that the Presbyterians were enabled to enact the gaglaw." They had already substituted sprinkling for dipping, but they now go further and punish the Baptists as "blasphemers and heretics." It was declared that any person who said "that the baptizing of Infants is unlawfull, or such Baptism is void, or that such persons ought to be baptized again, or in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized," shall be placed in prison and remain there until they "shall finde two sufficient surities" that "they shall not publish the same error any more." Under this infamous law 400 Baptists were thrown into prison. This was the triumph of sprinkling in England, and reached its culmination in 1648. Sprinkling began in 1641, became the ecclesiastical law in 1643, the civil law in 1644-5, and was vigorously pushed in 1648, and those who held dipping were punished as blasphemers and heretics. Thus did sprinkling prevail in England. Those who declare that Baptists sprinkled till the Presbyterians came into power, and when sprinkling became the law of the land they became dippers, only make the Baptists absurd in the eyes of the world.

It may have been observed by some that up to this point I have engaged in no discussion upon one John Batte, who, it is declared, baptized Blunt in Holland. The reason for this delay was to give time to examine a certain book which Dr. Rauschenbusch, of Hamburg, Germany, found which was declared to settle the baptism of Blunt by Batte. If such evidence had been found, I was anxious to see it and to accept it, if it were valid. The *Journal and Messenger* published an article which professed to be a translation of the advanced sheets of a chapter from a work which was to appear from Dr. Rauschenbusch. It was claimed that Dr. Rauschenbusch had found a "rare book" which settled the entire question. The book in question was called: "*Geschiedenis der Rhynsberger Vergadering.*" Since the appearance of this article I have secured Dr. Rauschenbusch's book, and have also read the "old" Dutch book mentioned above, so I can speak in the light of the facts. The quotation from a translation of a chapter from Dr. Rauschenbusch's book in the *Journal and Messenger*, in which I was interested, is as follows:

"The Rhynsburgers were a Christian party which began in Holland in 1620. Like the Puritans in England they permitted not only their pastors, but also lay members to speak in their meetings. Baptism was practiced by them only by immersion, therefore they were called in Dutch 'Dompelaers,' that is, immersionists. (To this day one can see at Rhynsburg the large basin where they baptized). Blount was most cordially welcomed at Rhynsburg and received baptism of Jan Batte, their pastor. He returned immediately to the church at London and immersed the pastor, Samuel Blacklock, and the latter 53 others. Most probably they belonged to several Independent churches, but principally to the church, which had separated in 1633 from the Independent church founded by Henry Jacob. Their pastor was at that time John Spilsbury, a godly and most intelligent man, who also received baptism. It was only conjectured in former years, but not known for a certainty that it was the Rhynsburgers, from whom Richard Blount received baptism. But in the year 1880 the writer had the privilege by special providence of God to meet at the watering place Godesberg near Bonn on the Rhine; a Dutch book-seller who showed me great kindness and sent me a copy of the very rare book, '*Geschiedenis der Rhynsburgische Vergadering,*' that is, *History of the Rhynsburger Congregation.* This copy I presented later to the library of the German Baptist Theological Seminary at Hamburg-Horn, where all who wish can read it for themselves. In this book right at the beginning Jan Batte is named as a very prominent teacher of the Rhynsburgers.

Undoubtedly he is the same of whom Thomas Crosby (who calls him John Batte) tells, affirming that "Richard Blount was baptized by him."

After reading the above extract rather carefully, it was easy to see that the "rare book" which "the special providence of God" had thrown in the way of Dr. Rauschenbusch after all was not thoroughly convincing to Dr. Rauschenbusch himself. It was far from being convincing to others.

1. Dr. Rauschenbusch distinctly tells us above that he relies upon the testimony of Thomas Crosby for the connecting link between John Batte and Richard Blunt; and Crosby distinctly declares that all the testimony he has on that subject is a manuscript said to have been written by William Kiffin. Prof. Newman says of Dr. Rauschenbusch's book: "He seems not to be familiar with the later discussions on this question, and to possess only the information supplied by Crosby." In truth, no one has presented any testimony in regard to" John Batte that has not had its origin in Crosby. Dr. L. Cramer, Professor of History in the Mennonite Preachers' Seminary, Amsterdam, Holland, after an investigation of the subject, wrote under date of March 23, 1899: "About John Batten we here in Holland know nothing more than you can find in Crosby." We have already seen that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is of no authority whatever, and is absolutely contrary to well known and well established facts.

2. Dr. Rauschenbusch directly contradicts the Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript when he says: "Blount was most cordially welcomed at Rhynsburg, and received baptism of John Batte, their pastor." The Gould "Kiffin" Manuscript does not declare that Batte baptized Blunt, but only that he "was kindly accepted there, and returned with letters from them." The Gould "Kiffin" does not assert that Blunt was ever dipped by anybody.

3. Dr. Rauschenbusch makes a statement of which there is not one line of proof in the "Kiffin" Manuscript or anywhere else. He says: "Their pastor was at that time John Spilsbury, a godly and most intelligent man, who also received baptism." There is no proof that Spilsbury was re-immersed or baptized in any way in 1641. He is not in the list of those baptized by the "Kiffin" Manuscript, nor is there any other proof that he was baptized in 1641.

4. There was a sense of uncertainty that ran all through Prof. Rauschenbusch's statements that would not make his words very authoritative where facts and not suppositions are needed. "Most probably" does not just now answer where facts are needed. The 1641 vagarists are already well-supplied with opinions, but just now they are dreadfully in need of some facts.

But let us look after the book, "the rare book," which Dr. Rauschenbusch found. "The brilliant professor" who furnished this translation of Prof. R.'s book to the *Journal and Messenger* makes Prof. Rauschenbusch declare of "*The History of the Rhynsburger Congregation*," "this copy I presented later to the library of the German Baptist Theological Seminary at Hamburg-Horn, where all who wish can read it for themselves." As a matter of fact, the book is not in Hamburg-Horn, but in Philadelphia; not in the library in Germany, but in the American Baptist Historical Society. Library, and was not presented to the German library, but was sold, as the owner had a perfect right to do, to the Society in Philadelphia. How is this known? Through a personal letter from Prof. Rauschenbusch, and also through the very book which the "brilliant professor" was trying to translate, namely: *Die Entstehung der Kindertaufe*, by A. Rauschenbusch, Hamburg,

1898, p.124. And I was permitted to examine this very copy through the courtesy of the officers of the Historical Society.

Of course, I was expecting something very ancient and very authoritative. I was surprised to find an anonymous book of recent origin. The following is the title-page: "*Historie Der Rijnsburgsche Vergadering*. Te Rotterdam, Bij Jacob Burgvliet on Zoon.

MDCCLXXV." In other words, a nameless author had printed a book 134 years after 1641, and I am asked to accept that book as conclusive. The book does not even possess the merit of telling us where it got its information in regard to Batten. A distance of 134 years does not seem to trouble the 1641 theorists.

The book does not contain one solitary word about Richard Blunt. There is not a line in the book from beginning to end in regard to the English Baptists. It is not declared that Batten was a teacher. There is not a word to prove that Batten was ever immersed, or that he believed in immersion. Besides, the name of the man mentioned in the Crosby "Kiffin" and the Gould "Kiffln" Manuscripts is not Jan Batten, but John Batte. I would have no reason to believe that these were the same persons, although the author of *A Question in Baptist History* has changed the name from Batte in the "Kiffin" Manuscript to Batten, p. 82, to make it appear that these names were the same, and in so doing he changed the very text he was professing to quote. (See *Gould's Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*, pp. cxxiii., cxxiv.)

This Dutch book does not contain a statement about John Batte and only one in reference to Jan Batten. I present a literal translation of the Dutch:

"Then some one rose up and read a text or Scripture passage which he treated (or expounded) in the manner of a harangue or sermon. This speech having been ended was left to the criticism of the hearers, so that every one who had any remarks to make or additions, to the end (or purpose) that any one might make use of the liberty of the place. Then another one arose who read and spoke in the manner already mentioned.

"It has even happened in the beginning of the movement that this was repeated by four speakers successively, so that these meetings prolonged themselves into the (or toward) the morning and several in the audience had fallen into a deep sleep.

"Notwithstanding the freedom extended to all, the usual speakers were ordinarily Gysbert Jacobszoon (son of Jacob) Van der Kodde, Jan and Adriaen Van der Kodde, Tonis Komeliszoon (son of Cornelius) from the Kaeg and a certain Jan Batten from Leiden. Although occasionally some one else brought forward something, the former nevertheless were also heard on one or the other subject.

"This new persuasion, also known by the name of the 'Sect of the Prophets,' did not remain hidden very long. Many preachers got wind of it, and among others the Rev. Jakobus Batelier, who was formerly settled at Kralingen, but on account of his Remonstrant views was deposed and was now living at Leiden, appeared in their meeting" (pp. 21, 22).

The date in which Jan Batten's name waft mentioned was before 1618, for the Rhynsburgers were not yet organized, and were having some meetings which afterwards resulted in the organization of that people. At this time "the sect of the prophets" was hidden, and the new persuasion was not known to the people. It was not until quite a time after this, "when the meetings increased in size," that the Lord's Supper was instituted, and still later they baptized by immersion (pp. 38, 39). This is the only mention of Batten; he is not represented as having accepted immersion; he is not represented as a teacher; he

is not represented as ever having become a member of the Rhynsburg Congregation. He was simply affiliated some time before with the persons who afterwards formed an organization. He was a citizen of Leyden, and appears to have been only a transient visitor in or near Rhynsburg. In this history detailed accounts are given of this Congregation throughout Holland, and the performances of many teachers in Leyden, and elsewhere, but not one word is ever said in regard to Jan Batten. This is more than 23 years before 1641, and there is not the slightest reason to believe that Jan Batten was a teacher in a Society that was never large for 23 years and more, where there are detailed accounts of doings of this Society and not a mention made of this man. It is amazing how a little light and a knowledge of the facts in the case dissipates all this 1641 business. There is not a court on earth that would receive such stuff as testimony.

Here is an anonymous book, written 123 years after 1641, telling of a man who lived 146 years before, whose name was Jan Batten. This book knows not one word of Richard Blunt, never heard of the English Baptists, and does not mention John Batte. In order to make this book serve the 1641 theory, we must imagine that John Batte and Jan Batten were the same, that Jan Batten was still alive in 1641, that he joined the Congregation, that he became a preacher, that he moved from Leyden to Rhynsburg, that he was immersed, and that finally he immersed Richard Blunt, and finally we must imagine that there was a Richard Blunt who lived in England, that he was a Baptist, that he changed his mind on the subject of immersion in 1640, that he made his trip to Holland, met Batten, that he convinced Batten that he was the proper man to be baptized, that he was baptized, that he came back to England, that he convinced all the Baptists that they ought to be immersed, that he immersed them all and introduced immersion in England; we must further imagine that he so effectually hid himself that nobody ever heard of him, and that he remained absolutely unknown to any man of his generation. We must further imagine that somebody sometime wrote an anonymous manuscript which was called the "Kiffin" Manuscript, and that this must be hid away for an hundred years before anybody ever heard of it, and when it is needed this "Kiffin" Manuscript can appear in a new edition to suit local conditions, and that no man knows whence it came or whither it went. And when all of these imaginings have taken place, we must still further stretch our imagination and explain that the "Kiffin" Manuscript is infallibly correct, although it contradicts court records and all contemporaneous documents, &c., &c., &c.

In this series of papers there has been no discussion of the act of baptism among the Dutch and German Anabaptists. That has not been done because the point of contact between these and the English Baptists was not of such a character as to demand it at this time. Fortunately I have a very large number of Dutch and German works on the subject, but shall content myself with giving the opinion of a few scholars who can express an intelligent opinion. The first is Rev. W. W. Evarts, D.D., who has given a good deal of study to German and Dutch Baptists. He says:

"What is needed in discussing a point in history is data. Here are a few facts that bear on the question of the practice of immersion before the year 1641: In 1524, at Zurich, Leo's ritual says: 'Dip it into the water.' In 1530, at Gotha, Myconius suggests the substitution of pouring for immersion in cold weather. In 1532, in Holland, Slachtcaif dips a child in a pail of water. In 1533, at Munster, Rothmann says: 'Baptism is a dipping into water, a true sign that the candidate is dead to sins, buried with Christ, and arises to newness of life.' Dr. Leopold Dick described, in 1530, the mode of German Anabaptists as follows:

'Only those who are old enough to believe and repent are permitted to be baptized in water, which custom is both indecorous and new, though they call it the rite of purification. It is increasing from day to day, so that many cities are disturbed, where the Anabaptists scarcely cease baptizing, using domestic baptisteries.'

"Gastius in 1530, tells of the Anabaptists of Basel, who 'are wont to meet in the flowery field by a flowing stream, most handy for baptism.'" Urbanus Rhegius says of the Anabaptists at Augsburg at the same time: 'They think if they are only baptized as Christ was in the Jordan, then it is all done.' As early as 1523 'The Sum of Holy Scripture' was published in Holland. It says: 'So we are dipped under as a sign that we are as it were dead and buried. The life of man is a battle upon earth. In baptism when we are plunged under the water, we promise that we will fight.'

"Passing over into England we find that no mention of pouring occurs in any ritual before 1550. In 1603 the eighty-first canon revives one of 1570 that ordered in every church a font of stone for dipping and forbade the use of a basin. In 1635 Daniel Rogers writes a treatise in favor of restoring the practice of dipping, which was then becoming obsolete. When Edward Barber published in 1641 his argument for the immersion of believers, it is natural to suppose that the practice preceded the defense of the practice.

"Ricraff, in his 'Looking Glass for Anabaptists,' published in 1646, quotes Kiffin, the Baptist, as saying: 'What can you find for your practice more than the dirty puddle of men's inventions. Our congregations were erected and framed as now they are, according to the rule of Christ, before we heard of any Reformation, even at that time when Episcopacy was in the height of its vanishing glory, even when they were plotting and threatening the ruin of all those who opposed it.' These words seem to throw the practice of immersion back of 1641 to the day when Archbishop Laud was holding a high hand. To this conclusion we are led by the remark of Richard Baxter, who spoke in 1655 of Anabaptists, who 'within twenty years' had given trouble in a corner of the world. To the same conclusion we are led by the words of Dr. Featley." -- *The Chicago Standard*, Nov. 14, 1896.

I have at hand the testimony of a celebrated English scholar, Prof. T. Witton Davies. He has given this subject much attention. He is a Professor of History in the Midland Baptist College, Nottingham. He says:

"The real explanation is simple enough. 'Dopper' in Dutch is the English word 'Dipper,' and the German word '*Taufer*.' The 'Dippers,' as they are called in Holland, are a very powerful body in that country, almost as numerous and as wealthy as the Reformed community, which is the established church of the land; they are really Baptists, and trace their origin to Simon Menno, who died A. D. 1561. At first they dipped as Baptists do in this country now; they still hold that no one has a right to the ordinance of baptism but those who have reached years of discretion, and, first of all, make a public profession of Christianity. They do not now dip nor do they sprinkle; they pour, or rather they dip their hand in a basin of water, and convey such as can be carried to the head of the candidate. I have attended their services and witnessed the observance of the rite of baptism among them. There can be no doubt on historical, as well as on etymological, grounds that originally they immersed; they have abandoned the mode on account of its inconvenience, but they adhere to what the Baptists

the whole world over regard as immeasurably more important than the mode, the practice, namely, of baptizing those only who know what they are about, and who of their own free will and choice, wish to submit to the ordinance."

The great German historian, Karl Rudolf Hagenbach, D.D., wrote the article on the Collegiants, or Rbynsburgers, for the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1, p. 512. His testimony is simple and direct. He says: "Like the Anabaptists, they used immersion at baptjism." No one will assert that he is not a competent historian.

Dr. Ludwig Keller, the great German Anabaptist historian declares: "That a portion of *Taeufer* (those who baptized) practiced immersion is certain."

Along by the side of such historians I am willing to stand.

=====

[From John T. Chrisitan, *Baptist History Vindicated*, 1899, pp. 152-166. *jrd*]

Editor's note: There are three appendices in this section. *jrd*

Baptist History Vindicated

Appendix I

[Go to Appendix II](#)

[Back To Contents](#)

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LIVING SCHOLARS OF THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND TO IMMERSION.

While I was in England, I had occasion to speak to a number of clergymen and other Church of England scholars on the subject of baptism. Their answers were given in such direct and usually in such unbiassed [sic] terms that I at once felt that I was in an entirely different atmosphere from that which I found in the Pedobaptist communions of America. My curiosity was excited and I determined to investigate. The result was as surprising to me as it was gratifying. It will be seen from this paper that I present the testimony of the foremost Hebrew and Greek professors of the Universities, together with the testimony of bishops and foremost preachers of the Church of England.

I. The Hebrew scholars. I asked the leading English University and College professors of Hebrew the following questions:

1. What is the literal or ordinary meaning of the Hebrew word *tabhal* which is translated in the Old Testament by the Greek word *baptize*?
2. Does any authoritative Hebrew-English lexicon define the word by the words "to sprinkle" or "to pour?"

The answers were clear and explicit. Prof. S. R. Driver, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford University, and perhaps the foremost Hebrew scholar in England, says:

Christ Church, Oxford, Aug. 31.

J. T. Christian, Esq., LL.D.

DEAR SIR: The word *tabhal* which is represented in the Septuagint by *baptize* in 2. Ki. v. 14 -- it is more usually represented by *bapto* -- means to immerse or dip; it is regularly rendered dip in the Auth. Version, Gen. xxxvii. 31, Lev. ix. 9, Ex. xii. 22, Ruth ii. 14, Rev. xiv.6, Josh. iii.15, 1 S. xiv.27, except once, Job ix.31, where it is rendered plunge, and the same rendering is adopted by Gesenius, and is in fact the meaning recognized by all authorities. The word does not mean to pour or sprinkle.

Believe me yours very truly,

S. R. DRIVER.

It will be remembered that Dr. Driver is the author of a great Hebrew lexicon which is now appearing from the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Prof. John F. Stebbing, of the University of London, says, in a letter to me, of this work: "The best Hebrew-English Lexicon is one by Brown, Briggs and Driver of which the first six parts have now been published." This

work is also highly commended by Prof. W. H. Bennett, of New College, London. It will be seen therefore that this definition is in accord with the latest and most critical scholarship. The definition given in Brown, Driver and Briggs is: "Dip -- (NH id; Aram *tebhal* dip, bathe,) 1. trans. dip a thing in. 2. Intrans. dip (oneself), sq. be, 2 K. 14 in Jordan."

The Rev. Charles H. H. Wright is one of the Examiners in Hebrew of the University of London. He is a D.D. of Trinity College, Dublin; an M.A. of Exeter College and a Ph.D. of the University of Leipzig; Bampton Lecturer 1878 in the University of Oxford, Donnellan Lecturer in the University of Dublin 1880-81, etc. He says in his letter to me:

"(1). The Hebrew word for baptize (*tabhal*) unquestionably meant originally to dip, to bathe; and Jewish baptism was unquestionably by immersion.

"(2). No Hebrew lexicon would render *tabhal* by pour or sprinkle."

Prof. John F. Stebbing, Washburn College, Oxford, and Examiner to the University of London, says:

"(1) The Hebrew word *tabhal* denotes 'to dip,' being usually followed by the prep. *be* (=in). Examples of this occur at Gen. 37.31. Lev. 4.9. 14. 51 (in blood), Num. 19.18 (in water), 1 S. 14. 27.

"The verb also occurs as an intransitive = 'to dip oneself' at 2 Kings 5. 14. The parallel phrase is vs. 10 and 12 being *rahatz* 'to wash in.'

"(2) As far as I know (though I have not any of my books with me) it is not translated 'to sprinkle' or 'to pour' in any authoritative Hebrew-English Dictionary."

Prof. William H. Bennett, M. A., Professor of Hebrew, New College, London, says:

"It is usually *bapto*, rarely *baptizo*, to which *tabhal* is rendered in the new Standard lexicon, Brown-Driver-Briggs, by dip, moisten, dip oneself; similarly in Seigfreid and Stade's lexicon. The root has the meaning 'dip' in Aramaic and in post-biblical Hebrew. In the latter it also means to take luncheon.

"No authoritative lexicon would give 'sprinkle' or 'pour' as equivalents to *tabhal*.

"Feurst indeed gives in his concordance '*rigere, tingere, perfumdere*,' but I imagine these are to lead up to, and be interpreted by '*immergere*' which he gives last in italics.

"I see that Young's Analytical Concordance gives 'moisten, besprinkle,' but the Concordance is scarcely an authority on points of Hebrew.

"I think Feurst means that *tabhal* by etymology and perhaps by original use meant pour or sprinkle; but in O. T. means to dip."

Rev. Laurence M. Simmons, B.A., LL.B., professor of Hebrew and Arabic in Owens College, Manchester, says:

"The Hebrew verb *tabhal* (T. B. L.) has the meaning of dip in, either active or reflective. I do not know any where it is defined 'to sprinkle' or 'to pour.'

The Rev. S. Leathes, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature in Kings College, London, writes:

"I am without books of reference here, but as far as I remember there is no word in the Old Testament exactly answering to the New Testament *baptizo* because the act implied is peculiar to the N. and no certain Hebrew word is used to translate the Greek. The point must then be referred to the original about which I apprehend there can be little doubt as to the meaning and I don't think any Hebrew word meaning to sprinkle or pour would be used to translate the Greek." The Rev. D. W. Marks, the Goldsmid professor of Hebrew in University College, London, says that an entirely different Hebrew word means to sprinkle and refers to M. Josephs' English-Hebrew lexicon which defined *tabhal* simply "to dip." Stronger testimony than this could not be presented on the meaning of the Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek *baptizo*? These are all Pedobaptist scholars, professors in the universities and colleges of England, and yet their definition of *tabhal* is quite as definite and unmistakable as any Baptist could desire.

II. The Greek scholars on *baptizo*. I asked eminent English professors of Greek the following questions:

1. What is the literal or ordinary meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* in classical Greek literature?
2. Is there an authoritative Greek-English lexicon which defines the word "to sprinkle" or "to pour?"

I received answers as follows:

The Rev. H. Kynaston, D.D., Professor of Greek and Classical Literature, University of Durham, says: "The word *baptizo* means 'to dip, or sink' into water -- not sprinkle, which is *raino*. I know of no lexicon which gives 'sprinkle' for *baptizo*."

Prof. G. C. Warr, M.A., Professor of Greek in Kings College, says: "Certainly the classical meaning of *baptizo* is to dip, not to sprinkle or to pour!"

Prof. John Stracham, M.A., Owens College, says: "You will find illustrations of the use of *baptizo* in Liddell & Scott's Greek Lexicon or in Stephanus' Thesaurus. It is not much used in Classical Greek. The Primary meaning is 'to dip' (under water) and its metaphorical was clearly come from that. I never to my knowledge met with the word in the literal sense of 'sprinkle,' and I doubt if it has any such meaning."

Prof. A. S. Wilkins, Litt. D., LL.D., Professor of Greek New Testament Criticism, Owens College, says: "I think there can be no doubt that the normal meaning of *baptizo* denotes 'put in,' 'to immerse.' You may fully trust the account of the use which you find in Thayer's edition of Grimm's Lexicon. I do not think that any lexicon of authority gives the literal meaning of 'to pour.'"

Prof. G. E. Marmdin, Esq., M.A., Examiner of Greek in the London University says: "I think you will find a perfectly correct account of the classical use of *baptizo* in Liddell & Scott's Lexicon. The word in classical writers means 'to dip,' and may imply to dip into water (or any thing else) or to dip completely under, so as to sink. In fact it has the same sense as the commoner word *bapto*, except it does not like *bapto* bear the acquired meaning 'to dye.'

"In regard to your second question, I do not know of any Greek-English lexicon which gives the meanings 'to sprinkle' or 'to pour' -- If any does so, I should say it makes a mistake."

Prof. R. Y. Tyrrell, D.Litt., LL.D., M.A., Examiner of Greek in London University, says: "(1) *Baptizo* occurs in classical Greek only in the sense of 'drowned,' metaphorically, as 'drowned with an avalanche of questions,' 'soaked in wine.' (2) The word could not mean to 'sprinkle' or 'pour,' only to 'dip' or 'put under water.'"

It will be seen that the lexicons quoted by these professors are Liddell & Scott which defines the word "to dip in, or under water;" Stephanus, "mergo, immergo," "to merge, to immerse;" Thayer who defines the word: "I. (1) prop. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge; (2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean wth water; (3) metaph. to overwhelm. II. In the N. T. it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards by Christ's command received by Christians and adjusted to the contents of their religion, viz., an immersion in water," &c.

But, as a closing testimony on this point, I present a letter from Prof. R. C. Jebb, Litt. D., Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge and Trinity College. Dr. Jebb says:

Springfield, Cambridge, Sep. 23, '98.

Rev. John T. Christian,
31 Bernard St., Russell Square,
London, W. C.

Dear Sir: --

1. The ordinary meaning of *baptizo* in classical Greek is, as you may see in Liddell & Scott's Lexicon, to "dip," "to put under water." The root of the verb *baph* is probably akin to *bath*, the root of *bathus*, "deep," *bathos*, "depth." The idea of submersion is thus inherent in it.

2. I do not know whether there is any "authoritative Greek-English lexicon" which makes the word mean "sprinkle" or "pour." I can only say that such a meaning never belongs to the word in classical Greek.

Yours faithfully,

R. C. JEBB.

=====
[From John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, Appendix, I, 1899, pp. 1-7. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

Appendix II

[Go to Appendix III](#)

[Back To Contents](#)

III. Bishops and other prominent preachers of the Church of England on the meaning of *baptizo*.

I asked the leading bishops and some other prominent clergymen the following questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the Greek word *baptize*?
2. Was the word used by Christ and his Apostles in this literal sense?
3. About what date was sprinkling and pouring substituted for dipping in England, and the cause for that substitution?
4. What is the present attitude of the Church of England toward dipping? Are there any baptisteries in the churches of your diocese?

To these inquiries I received the following answers:

The Archbishop, Right Honorable and Most Reverend Frederick Temple, D. D., Primate of all England and Metropolitan, in reference to my "first three questions," referred me to "The Teachers' Prayer Book," by Bishop Barry, and to Bishop Harold Brown's article on "Baptism " in *Smith's Dictionary*. Bishop Barry, whose language the Archbishop of Canterbury indorses, gives this account of the origin of sprinkling:

"The Rubric still directs the old practice of immersion as a rule, Affusion being permitted in cases of weakness of the child. The ancient form was undoubtedly that of immersion, generally a three-fold immersion (as directed in the old *Sarum Manual* and in the Prayer Book of 1549), which had a far closer accordance with the symbolism both of the burial and Resurrection, and of perfect cleansing of the whole man. This form accorded with the Eastern custom: for it the ancient Baptisteries were built. But from comparatively early times, especially in the West, from considerations of climate and convenience, and possibly for the avoidance of scandal, the Affusion of Water, originally supplementary to the immersion, became not unfrequent substitute for it; and has gradually come, in despite of old custom and the literal directions of the Rubric, to prevail almost universally." -- P. 23B. B. M. 3408. aaa. 27.

The above statement is explicit enough as to the fact that sprinkling was substituted for immersion. The other author to whom Dr. Temple refers is plain on the Scripture meaning of the word. Bishop Browne says: "The language of the New Testament and of the primitive fathers sufficiently points to immersion as the common mode of baptism. John the Baptist baptized in the river Jordan (Matt. 3). Jesus is

represented as 'coming up out of the water,' *ana bainon apo tou hundatos*, after his baptism (Mark 1.10). Again, John is said to have baptized in AEnon because there was much water there (John iii. 23; see also Acts viii.36). The comparison of baptism to burying and rising up again (Rom. vi.; Col. ii.) has been already referred to as probably derived from the custom of immersion." -- *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1. Appendix, p. xciii. B. M. 3107. df. 5.

Archbishop Temple concludes his letter to me as follows: "In answer to your fourth question I may say that there is in Lambeth Parish church a font in which baptism can be administered by immersion."

I had been led to ask in regard to baptisteries and fonts in churches on account of some important statements I had met with. I have found that there are hundreds of fonts throughout England sufficiently large for the immersion of infants, and that there are quite a number sufficiently large for the immersion of adults. The statement is put forth and confidently stated upon the highest Episcopal authority that the English fonts are much larger than the fonts of any other nation, since this nation held to immersion longer than any other. Those who may desire to follow this subject will find a very full discussion of it in the various volumes of the *Archaeologia*. It is, perhaps, sufficient for my present purpose to quote two short statements from altogether competent authorities. The first is F. A. Paley. He says: "It is, however, well known that ancient fonts were made large enough for the complete immersion of infants. Exceptions to this all but universal practice are very rare; one or two instances are quoted. in the *Archaeology*, Vol. XI. p.123. . . . The violation of the same principle, arising from the unhappy custom of aspersion now prevalent in the English church, is one of the commonest and worst faults of modern usage." -- *Illustration of Baptismal Fonts*, p. 31. B. M. 1265. c. 7. And Samuel Carte, speaking of the English Fonts, says: "Give me leave to observe, that antiently at least the font was large enough to admit of an adult person being dipped or immersed therein."

It is not a question of ancient fonts only, but the subject of immersion is a very live one in the Church of England at this moment. At least two of the most prominent Episcopal churches of England are building baptisteries sufficiently large to admit of the immersion of adults. I refer to Christ Church, Oxford, and Lambeth Parish Church, which is the church annexed to Lambeth Palace, the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to which the Archbishop referred in his letter quoted above. The history of the baptistery in the last mentioned church is a very interesting one. It is known that the late Archbishop Benson died very suddenly. One of his last wishes was that a baptistery should be placed in Lambeth church. The present clergyman, the Rev. I. Andrewes Reeve, with the approval of his bishop, has now about completed the undertaking. After Archbishop Temple had called my attention to this baptistery, I wrote Mr. Reeve and received from him a printed statement concerning the baptistery, and also

a letter further explaining the enterprise and his own opinions concerning immersion. In this printed statement Mr. Reeve says: "I wish very much to have some lasting memorial of our late Archbishop Benson in Lambeth Parish church, where he was wont so frequently to worship. In thinking over what form the memorial should take, I remembered that on one occasion -- I believe it was the very last when he had worshiped with us -- I had after service asked his opinion as to the best way of placing a font for adult baptisms in our baptistery. He was very much interested in the idea, and gave me several practical suggestions. So I desire now to choose this work as his memorial.

"The Prayer Book and the Bible seem definitely to assume that baptism should in ordinary cases be administered by immersion; and if any catechumen expressed a desire that the service should be performed, any clergyman, I presume, would be bound to comply with the request; and yet scarcely any of our churches possess a font-grave suitable to the action.

"Besides this, in our neighborhood there has been much earnest work in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle' and in other Baptist chapels, and I find that many of those whom I meet in my ordinary parish work have a conscious conviction that baptism should be administered by immersion.

"Our own Bishop, to whom I have submitted my idea, cordially approves of it, and suggests that other clergymen would perhaps be glad to use our font-grave for any catechumens of their own who desired baptism by immersion. I should always cordially welcome such to our church and baptistery."

In his letter Mr. Reeve says: "I have always felt that baptism by immersion, which has been universally used in the Greek church, is the more correct way of administering that Holy Sacrament; and I felt that there should be somewhere in London a baptistery where adults as well as infants might be thus baptized." Mr. Reeve is careful to say that he "firmly believes that baptism by affusion is true baptism," but he thinks that immersion is the "better way." In conclusion he writes:

"The font-grave is now nearly ready; in a month or six weeks I hope it will be in place, when I should be glad to meet you at the church and show it to you." When I visited the church about the middle of September the font was still unfinished. It was protected so that the cement might dry; but I could see that it was ample enough for the adequate immersion of adults.

"The font of stone in the ancient usual place" was large enough for the immersion of an infant, provided that it was "discreetly and warily" done. I take it, however, that the bason inside of the font was used for sprinkling. If anything further were needed to impress the importance which is attached to the erection of the baptistery in Lambeth Parish church, which is supported by so many distinguished patrons, is the further fact that this enterprise is looked upon, not as a matter of local Interest only, but in some way touching the whole Church of England. For example, the Bishop of Rochester thought it of sufficient importance to write me: "But his Lordship thinks you may be interested to know that the rector of

Lambeth has recently established a font for immersion in Lambeth Parish church."

While speaking of Mr. Spurgeon and this baptistery, I am reminded of an incident which was related to me by a gentleman who ought to know.

When the Baptist General Meetings were held in Southampton Mr. Spurgeon was the guest of the Rev. Mr. Wilberforce, who was a son of the distinguished bishop of that name. One evening the rector invited some of the clergy to meet Mr. Spurgeon. After tea they concluded that they would rout the great Dissenter, and they set upon him right royally. The battle raged till two o'clock in the morning, when the disputation had taken such a turn that the clergy concluded that they had much the best of the argument. But Mr. Spurgeon rallied, and as a result of that night's discussion a fine baptistery was placed for the purposes of immersion in the principal parish church of Southampton.

Very recently a list of more than one hundred baptisteries in Episcopal churches in England was published in *The Freeman*. I have myself seen more than one such baptistery and a number of fonts large enough for the immersion of children. For example, I saw in the Cathedral of Chester two such fonts, one of which was of unusual size. There is a part of Canterbury Cathedral called the baptistery which was once used for the purpose of immersion; it is octagonal and united with the main building by a corridor. The well known Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Farrar, in a recent letter says that "*baptizo* means 'to dip' or 'submerge,'" and then adds that "the font at Canterbury would suffice for the immersion of an infant." As a matter of fact, it was placed there for that very purpose.

The large parish church of Canterbury had a very large and fine baptistery. The cathedral at York is said to have been built on the place where was formerly a pool or fountain, in which Paulinus baptized King Edwin, A. D. 627. When heathenism passed away and parish churches were erected, it became the custom to place in them large stone fonts or basins, not sufficient for the baptism of adults, but for the immersion of infants, many of which of considerable antiquity are still extant, of a size which would be preposterous if only intended for sprinkling. There is one large enough for immersion to be seen at St. Brecon's Bed, of the workmanship of the sixth century. One can trace everywhere and in every period of time since the island was converted to Christianity, the historical monuments which proclaim immersion. The Baptists usually immersed their converts in the running streams, but in their secret places of worship they sometimes erected baptisteries. I saw two such baptisteries belonging to the times before the Civil Wars. The one was at Eythorne in Kent, hid away under a hedge fence, and only recently the rains washing away the earth have made known its existence. The other is at Hill Cliffe in Cheshire, which some claim belongs to a period which antedates the Reformation itself. The Right Honorable and Right Reverend Mandell Creighton, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Bishop of London, Principal Dean of Canterbury and Dean of the Chapel Royal, the author of many books, is not only a very

scholarly man, but is said to be the most influential churchman in England. I give his letter in full without comment. He writes:

Fulham Palace, S. W., July, 26, 1898.

J. T. Christian, Esq:

DEAR SIR: -- The Greek word *baptize* properly means to dip. Baptism in our Lord's time was performed in the open air, in a river or pond. Sprinkling was first allowed for sick people in bed, and in the middle of the third century was held to be equally valid. The Rubric in the prayer book recommends dipping, "If the child may well endure it, he shall dip him in the water; if the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water on it." The coldness of our climate is the principal reason why sprinkling has become universal.

"I know of no baptistery in London where there is provision for immersing an adult; of course, an infant could be immersed."

Yours faithfully,

M. LONDON.

The Rt. Rev. John Sheepshanks, D.D., Bishop of Norwich, writes: "The Prayer Book with its Rubrics shows the teaching of the church with regard to immersion. I have authorized the immersion of several adults."

The Rt. Rev. the Hon. Augustus Legee, D.D., the Bishop of Lichfield, referred me to two authorities which presented his views. The first is Wharton B. Mariott, M.A., whose article is found in *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*. Mr. Mariott says; "*Triple immersion*, that is, thrice dipping the head while standing in the water, was the all but universal rule of the church in early times. Of this we find proof ill Africa, in Palestine, in Egypt, at Antioch and Constantinople, in Capadocia." -- Vol. 1. p.161. The other authority to whom Bishop Legge refers is Walter F. Hooke, D.D., in his *Church Dictionary*. Dr. Hooke says: "*Baptein*, to dip, and *baptizein*, to dip repeatedly, or thoroughly, to bathe." -- p.75. He continues; "The place of baptism was at first unlimited, being some pond or lake, some spring or river, but always as near as possible to the place of public worship. Afterwards they had their *baptisteries*, or *fonts*, built at first near the church, then in the church-porch, and at the last in the church itself. There were many in other days who were desirous to be baptized in the river Jordan, out of reverence to the place where our Saviour himself had been baptized." -- p. 76. And again: "In performing the ceremony of baptism the usual custom was to immerse and dip the whole body." Upon the introduction of sprinkling he is equally explicit. He says:

"The custom of sprinkling children, which at first was allowed in case of weakness or sickness of the infant, has so far prevailed, that immersion at length is almost excluded. What principally tended to confirm the practice of affusion or sprinkling, was that several of our English divines, flying into Germany and Switzerland, during the bloody reign of Queen Mary, and returning home when Queen Elizabeth came to the crown, brought back with them a great zeal for the Protestant churches beyond [the] sea where they had been sheltered and received; and having observed that at Geneva, (Calvin Inst. lib, iv. c. 15.) and some other places baptism administered by sprinkling, they thought they could not do the Church of England a greater piece of service than by introducing a practice dictated by so great an oracle as Calvin. This together with the coldness of our western climate, was what contributed to banish entirely the practice of dipping infants in the font." -- p. 79.

The Rt. Rev. Earnest R. Wilberforce, Bishop of Chichester, refers me to Bishop Browne, whom I have already quoted, and to *Blunt's Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*. Blunt says: "From all which illustrations we may gather the meaning of a thorough cleansing, as by immersion or washing, and not by mere affusion and sprinkling a few drops of water. The bathing of Naaman and Judith was by immersion; cups and dishes were not cleansed by a few drops of water, but by a thorough washing; and the comparison of our Lord's suffering to baptism is intended to show how thorough and overwhelming, as it were, was their nature. Hence, as might be supposed, the primitive mode of baptism was by immersion, as we learn by the clear testimony of holy Scripture and of the fathers. Thus John baptized in AEnon, near Salim (John iii. 23), 'because there was much water there,' and Christ after baptism 'ascended out of the water.' We cannot doubt in these cases that there was an immersion, for it is shown from the Baptist's *reasons* for baptizing in AEnon, and Christ's ascending from the waters of Jordan. St. Paul's language, however, is more explicit; he speaks of our being buried with Christ in Baptism (Rom vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), and with the same illustration in view that Christians die with Christ, and are raised with him (Rom. 6. 11. Col. ii. 20, iii. 3), are immersed in the baptismal water, and arise from it as our Lord from his burial in the tomb." -- p. 75.

The Bishop of Chichester also refers me to Bingham. Joseph Bingham is quite clear on this point. He says: "The ancients thought that immersion, or burying under water, did more lively represent the death and burial and resurrection, as well as our death unto sin, and rising again unto righteousness; and the divesting or unclothing the person to be Baptized did also represent the putting off the body of sin, in order to put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. For which reason they

observed the way of baptizing all persons naked and divested, by a total immersion under water, except in some particular cases of great exigence, wherein they allowed of sprinkling, as in the case of clinic baptism, or where there was a scarcity of water." -- *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Book XI., chapter xi., sect. I. Bingham further says: "As this was the original Apostolic practice, so it continued to be the universal practice of the church for many ages, upon the same symbolical reasons as it was first used by the Apostles."

The Rt. Rev. Henry Bickersteth, D.D., Bishop of Exeter, and author of that beautiful poem, "Yesterday, To-day and Forever," referred me to Harold Browne's book, and his chaplain suggested I might find the bishop's opinion in his *Practical Commentary on the Holy Bible*. On Matt. 8:7-12 Bishop Bickersteth says: "The Jews were accustomed to this rite from the habit of thus receiving proselytes. It was administered in the daytime by immersion, whole families, including infants, being baptized together; and while standing in the water, the proselytes were instructed in certain portions of the law."

In the poem, "Yesterday, To-day and Forever," referred to above, Bishop Bickersteth beautifully illustrates the classical use of *baptize*. Aratus, describing the setting of the constellation Cephes in latitude sixty-nine or seventy degrees, calls it baptizing or plunging his upper parts into the sea; and, "also if the sun baptizes himself without a cloud into the western sea." These expressions are often found in the poets. Bickersteth says:

"The sun,
Who climbing the meridian steep of heaven,
Shone with a monarch's glory, till he dipp'd
His footsteps in the ruddy western waves."

And again:

"It was golden eventide. The sun
Was sinking through the roseate clouds to rest Beneath the western
waves."

He speaks thus of the work of the Baptist:

"Jerusalem
Hurried to Jordan. 'Ah what deeds of wrong
Lips, counted by their fellows as pure as babes,
Flung then upon startled winds! What filth
Was wash'd away from penitential hearts
In that baptismal stream."

Of the baptism of Jesus he says:

"John, abash'd,
Shrank from the suit he urged. But he refused
Refusal. And, as from the shallow ford
Returning, on the bank he knelt in prayer."

The poet also throws light on the much disputed passage, Rev. 19:13: "And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood." He says:

"Who knows not
The loves of David and young Jonathan,
When in unwitting rivalry of hearts
The son of Jesse won a nobler wreath
Than garlands pluck'd in war and dipp'd in blood."

In another passage he expressly refers to this passage:

"The Lord of hosts,
Apparell'd in a vesture dipp'd in blood."

John the Baptist said that Christ when he came, would baptize the wicked in the fires of hell. Bickersteth, in the "Millennial Sabbath," catches the spirit of this when he describes how God utterly ruined some of the fallen angels:

"He hurled them down
Like meteors through the lurid vault, and fix'd
Their adamantine fetters to a rock
Of adamant, submerged, not consumed, Beneath the lake of fire."
And the wicked sank –

"Still down, still ever down, from deep to deep"
Into the outer darkness, till at last
The fiery gulf received them, and they plunged
Beneath Gehennah's sulphureous waves
In the abyss of ever enduring woe."

This poet also gives us a significant exposition of the "baptism of suffering:"

"The Sun
Of Righteousness, with healing in his wings,
Has risen upon a world weary of night:
Most glorious, when emergent from the flood
That from far Lebanon to Kadesh roll'd
Its waves of fire baptismal, Zion rose
In perfect beauty."

=====

[From John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, Appendix, II, 1899, pp. 7-19. *jrd*]

Baptist History Vindicated

Appendix III

[Back To Contents](#)

This statement, of course, clearly points to the act of Baptism by immersion.

The Rt. Rev. Charles John Ellicott, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester, is well known to all. He writes: "Excuse a very busy man only answering question 4. The other questions you will be able to answer yourself through Prof. Thayer's edition of *Grimm's Lexicon of the New Testament*, and *Bingham's Antiquities*. As to question 4, the Church of England would not, I believe, refuse immersion if asked for." Without quoting Thayer and Bingham, I shall present the Bishop's own words as taken from his New Testament Commentary. On Matthew 3:1, he says: "The baptism was, as the name implied, an immersion, and commonly, though not necessarily, in running water." On the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 3:11, he says: "As heard and understood at the time, the baptism of the Holy Ghost would imply that the souls baptized would be plunged, as it were, in that creative and informing Spirit which was the source of hope and holiness and wisdom." And in the parallel passage, Acts 1:5, vol. 1, p. 2, he also says: "Now they were told that their spirits were to be as fully baptized, i.e., plunged into the power of the divine Spirit, as their bodies had been plunged into the waters of the Jordan."

In the passage Mark 7:1-4, which is largely used as a proof text for sprinkling, the washing of pots, etc., Bishop Ellicott says: "The Greek verb differs from that of the previous verse, and implies the washing or immersion (the verb is that from which our word 'baptize' comes to us) of the whole body, as the former does of part. The idea on which the practice rested was not one of cleanliness or health, but of arrogant exclusiveness, fastening on the thought of ceremonial purity. They might have come, in the crowd of the market, into passing contact with a Gentile, and his touch was as defiling as a corpse. So, too, the washing of cups and the like was because they might have been touched by a heathen, and therefore impure lips."

On Acts 8:37, the baptism of the eunuch, Bishop Ellicott remarks: "The Greek preposition might mean simply 'unto' the water, but the universality or immersion in the practice of the early church supports the English version. The eunuch would lay aside his garments, descend chest deep into the water, and be plunged under it 'in the name of the Lord Jesus' -- the only formula recognized in the Acts." (Com. vol. 2, p. 54)

He also declares that the immersion of the jailer, Acts 16:27-34, was perfectly possible. His words are: "A public prison was likely enough to contain a bath or pool of some kind, where the former (immersion) would be feasible." (Ellicott, Com., vol. 2, p. 109.) Bishop Ellicott further says: "Jewish ablutions . . . had nothing in common with the figurative act which portrayed through immersion the complete disappearance of the old nature, and by

emerging again, the beginning of a totally new life." (*Life of Christ*, p. 110.)

The Rt. Rev. Randall Thomas Davidson, D.D., is Bishop of Winchester. He is a great favorite with the Queen and is said to owe his appointment to her influence. The Queen recently bestowed on him the distinguished honor "Prelate of the order of the Garter." The Bishop thanked me for my letter and referred me to some authorities already quoted. "As to the position of the Church of England in the matter," says he, "the Bishop thinks that it is sufficiently defined by the two rubrics in the Prayer Book, 'The Ministration of public Baptism of Infants.'" "In answer to your last enquiry," the Bishop continues, "at least one important church in this Diocese possesses a font for the immersion of adults."

Dr. W. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Rippon, in "The Great Charter of Christ," p. 155, says: "The old heathen held his right arm aloft out of the baptismal water, refusing to consecrate to holier uses the arm which had struck down his foes, and which should do so again. He at least declined to pretend to accept Christ's complete sovereignty over him. But many baptized Christians keep up the show of faith in Christ, and yet break the law which Christ consecrated by His sanction."

The Rt. Rev. George Rodney Eden, D.D., Bishop of Wakefield, referred me to a long list of authorities. I shall quote such as have not been already given. For the meaning of the word he refers me to *Sophocles' Lexicon*. Sophocles defines the word "to dip, to immerse, to sink." He then remarks: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks."

Singular enough the next two writers to whom the Bishop of Wakefield refers are the two well-known Baptists, D. B. Ford, *Studies on the Baptismal Question*, and T. J. Conant, *Baptizein*. Dr. Conant says: "From the preceding example it appears, that the ground idea expressed in this word is 'to put in or under the water, (or other penetrable substance), so as to entirely immerse or submerge;' that this act is always expressed in the literal application of the word, and is the basis of its metaphorical uses. This ground idea is expressed in English, in the various connections where the word occurs, by the terms (synonymous in this ground element) to immerse, immerge, submerge, to dip, to plunge, to imbathe, to whelm."

The only authority that he suggests as favorable to "affusion" is "*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*." It is significant that the New Testament is not quoted as favorable to sprinkling. The Bishop calls my attention to the Baptistery in Cranabrook, Kent, "as a good example." The Rector of that church says that the baptistery was built in 1720. The Bishop concludes: "Our fonts are

large enough for dipping infants and if adults demanded It, arrangements would be made for their immersion."

The Rev. John Percival, D.D., Bishop of Hereford, endorses the meaning of the word as laid down in Grimm which we have already seen (in Thayer) means to dip.

The Rt. Rev. John Wogan Festing, D.D., Bishop of St. Albans, refers me to Wall's *History of Infant Baptism* and to Dr. Gibson on the *Thirty Nine Articles*. Dr. Wall says: "Their general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant, or grown man or woman, into the water. This is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that, as one cannot but pity the weak endeavours of such Paedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it, so also we ought to disown and show a dislike of the profane scoffs which some people give to the English anti-Paedobaptists merely for their use of dipping. " And Dr. G. S. Gibson, whom the Bishop endorses, in the only place in which he refers to the act of baptism, quotes with approval the words of the late scholarly Bishop Lightfoot, which are as follows: Baptism is the grave of the old man (Col. 2:12), and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges thence, he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life. . . . Thus baptism is an image of his participation both in the death and in the resurrection of Christ." "It is obvious," the Bishop adds, "how much the dramatic impression of baptism and its representative force is increased where immersion is the method employed." Vol. 2, p. 622, note.

The Rev. William Alexander, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L., Archbishop of Armagh, writes as follows:

EAGLE LODGE, WOODALL, LINCOLNSHIRE.

August 1. 1898.

John T. Christian, LL.D., London:

My Dear Sir: -- I am not well and away from my books, so I will attempt to say but little.

I cannot produce offhand at what date sprinkling (or pouring) was substituted for immersion. I take it that the substitution came from our colder climate very much. Yet even the rubric in our Service for the Public Baptism of infants supposes dipping to be the ordinary practice, and this must be the attitude of the Church of England and Ireland (theoretically) towards Baptism.

In my present See there is no Baptistery, but when my clergy have adults to baptize, I always instruct them to find out if immersion is desired and in that case to prepare a font or a laver, which is easily done, though not of stately structure. The symbolism of Rom. vi. is, of course, much more strikingly brought out by immersion.

Yours Most Truly, WILLIAM, Armagh.

The Rt. Rev. J. C. Ryle, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool, writes: "I do not think there are any baptisteries in my Diocese, though I remember there were some in the county of Suffolk when I had a church there. If an adult person wishes to be baptized by immersion, the clergyman ought to make provision for it." In his book on *Baptism*, pp. 10, 11, Bishop Ryle has given us a clear statement of the attitude of the Church of England toward immersion. He said: "The Baptismal service expressly sanctions 'dipping' in the most plain terms. To say, as many Baptists do, that the Church of England is opposed to baptism by immersion is a melancholy proof of the ignorance in which many Dissenters live. Thousands, I am afraid, find fault with the Prayer-book without ever having examined its contents. If anyone wishes to be baptized by 'dipping' in the Church of England, let him understand that the parish clergyman is just as ready to dip him as the Baptist and that 'immersion' may be had in Church as well as in Chapel."

The Right Rev. J. Wordsworth, D.D., who is a son of the distinguished poet of that name, referred me to the Greek lexicons and to Wall on Infant Baptism which we have already quoted and found to be so favorable to immersion.

The Right Rev. B. F. Westcott, D.D., the distinguished author and scholar and Bishop of Durham, endorses the definition of Thayer in his lexicon that *baptizo* means to dip and says: "The mind of the Church of England is clearly expressed in the Rubrics of the Service; and there is, I think, a growing desire to restore immersion, especially in the case of adults. I am not aware that there is any permanent provision for the immersion of adults in this Diocese -- most of the fonts are for the immersion of infants -- but I have heard of temporary provisions being made."

The Right Rev. John Owen, D.D., Bishop of St. David's, writes: "I will only add that several churches of this Diocese have baptisteries and that adult candidates are baptised by immersion when they desire it." Not only in the Diocese of Bishop Owen but throughout Wales in many of the parish churches there are baptisteries. I know that in the important church of St. John. Cardiff, where Canon E. T. Thompson, M.A., D.D., is Vicar. This

baptistery was erected when alterations were made in the church in 1892 at the request of the Vicar.

=====

[From John T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated*, Appendix, III, 1899, pp. 19-25. *jrd*]