

**A SHORT CATECHISM
ABOUT BAPTISM**

BY

JOHN TOMBES, B. D.

*Heb 6.2. Of the Doctrine of Baptisms.
Luke 7.35. But Wisdom is justified of all her Children.*

LONDON: 1659

Copyright (Public Domain)

www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html

(Reformed on the Web)

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER

To the Christian Reader.

Many are the things at this day charged on Antipaedobaptists in their Doctrine and Practise, which have been proved to be unjustly imputed to them, by many large Treatises extant in print. For a more facile understanding of the truth than by reading larger Tracts, is this Compendium, in a manner of a catechism composed and published in this time, wherein others of different judgment, have thought fit to declare their way to the world, which is done, not because the disagreement in other things is either small, or of particular persons (whose cause is to be severed from that which is commonly held) and therefore requires not a distinct Confession or Declaration from that which is by others published.

Which I have thought necessary to be done because of the importance of restoring right baptism, the Doctrine of which is one article of the foundation of Christianity, Heb. 6.2. whereby we put on Christ, Gal. 6.27. united to his Members, Ephes. 4.5. conformed to Christ, Col. 2.12. Rom. 6.3,4,5. required with faith to salvation, Mark 16.26. with repentance to remission of sins, Acts 2.38. with express profession of the Baptized's faith required, Acts 8.37. upon manifestation of conversion, Acts 10.47. Acts 11.17. as the duty of the Baptized, and not a meer Priviledge, Acts 22.16. most solemnly administered in the Primitive times, with strict examination and greatest engagement of persons baptized, accounted the chief evidence of Christianity, of as much or more moment than the Lords Supper; insomuch that some conceived from Heb. 6.4. that falling away after it irreparable.

But the pretended Baptism of Infants, as now used slightly and profanely done, quite different from Christ's Institution and the Apostles practise by Ministers and people in so wholly and carnal manner as that, it is upon and with gross untruths and perverting of holy Scripture, obtruded on unwary souls with a pretence of a Baptismal Vow, which is a meer fiction, and so many ill consequents both in Christian conversation and communion and church-constitution and Government, that were men sensible to their evil as they should be, they would tremble at such mockery of God, and abuse of so holy an Ordinance of God's worship and men's souls by it, and with such arrogant presumption in avowing such a manifest invention of men as God's precept.

And to speak truth, if the History of this corruption were fully cleared, it would be found that the undue Ministration of this Ordinance was the inlet to the Antichristian darkness and tyranny which overspread and oppressed the Christian Churches. The aim of the composer of it is the manifestation of the truth, wherein doth he rejoyce, and desires thou mayest rejoyce with him. His motion is that of the Apostle, Phil. 3.15,16. As many of us be perfect let us be thus minded, and if ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Farewel.

A SHORT CATECHISM ABOUT BAPTISM

1. Is Baptism with Water an Ordinance of Christ, to be continued by his Disciples till the end of the World?

Baptism with Water is an Ordinance of Christ, which is to be continued by his Disciples till the end of the World; as appears by his command, Mat. 28.19,20. Mark 16.15,16. it is to be joined with Preaching of the Gospel, and making Disciples, by Preaching, and teaching them to observe all that Christ commands; and so to be continued while these are to continue, which is proved to be till the end of the world, by Christs promise of his being with them till then, which were vain, if the things appointed were not to be done so long.

2. Is not the end of the world, as much as the end of the Age?

It appears that Matthew means by the end of the World, the last time, or day, wherein there will be a separation of good and bad, the one to be burned with fire, and the other to shine as the Sun, in that in the places wherein Matthew, useth the self-same form of speech (to wit Mat. 13.39,40,49. Mat. 24.3.) he cannot be understood to mean any other.

3. May not the baptizing in Mat. 28.19. Mark 16.16 be understood of some other Baptism, than that of water?

The Baptism there, must needs be understood of Baptism by Water, sith Baptizing, where ever it is made of John Baptists, or the Disciples Act, which they did or were to do, is meant of Baptizing with Water, as John 4.1,2 and in many other places it appears; and the Apostles by their practise and command, Acts 2.38,41. Acts 10.47,48. shew that they so understood Christ's appointment, Matt. 28.19. Mark 16.16.

4. May it not be meant of Baptizing by the Spirit, or afflictions?

It cannot be so understood, sith Baptizing with the Spirit is no where ascribed to any other than Christ, Mat 3.11. Luke 3.16. Nor is baptism with the Spirit a duty for us to do, but a free gift of Christ; not common to all Disciples of Christ, but peculiar to some: and to appoint them the baptizing by affliction had been to make the Apostles persecutors.

5. Why did Paul then say, Christ sent him not to Baptize? 1 Cor. 1.16.

Not because he was not appointed at all to Baptize, for if so, he would not

have Baptized those he did Baptize, 1 Cor. 1.14.16. etc. But because it was not the chief thing he was to do, as when the washing of Water is said not to save, 1 Pet. 3.21. because it is not the only, or principal means of saving.

6. What is the Baptizing appointed by Jesus Christ?

The Baptizing appointed by Jesus Christ, is the dipping of the Whole Body in water in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as is manifest from the term Baptizing, and the use of going into and coming up out of water, Mat. 3.16. Acts 8.38,39. the use of much water, John 3.23. The resembling, by the Baptism used, the burial and Resurrection of Christ, Rom. 6.4. Col. 2.12. and the testimonies of the Ancients of the first Ages.

7. May not the sprinkling or pouring water on the Face be the Baptism of Christ?

Neither the Scripture, nor any other antient author calls sprinkling, or pouring water on the Face, Baptism, nor any use of it in the primitive times doth countenance it, and therefore such sprinkling or pouring water is not the Baptism which Christ appointed.

8. What is it to Baptize into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

It is not to baptize only with the naming of those persons, but into the profession of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Master or Teacher, as appears by the words of Paul, 1 Cor. 1.13. Which shew that if the Corinthians had been baptized into the name of Paul, they had professed him to be their master.

9. Are they rightly Baptized, who are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, though no other person be named?

They are, it being all one to Baptize into the name of Jesus Christ, and to baptize into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as appears by the precept, Acts 2.38. and practice, Acts 10.48. Acts 19.5. Though the expression of each person be convenient.

10. Are the persons to be baptized altogether passive in their Baptism?

No: For Baptism is their duty required of them as well as the Baptizer, Acts 2.38. and Paul is commanded to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins calling on the name of the Lord, Acts 22.16.

11. Who are appointed to Baptize?

They who are appointed to preach the Gospel, Matth. 28.19. Mark 16.15,16.

12. Whom are they appointed to Baptize?

Those who repent of sin, believe in Christ Jesus, and are his Disciples, Matth. 28.19. Mark 16.16. Acts 2.38. Acts 8.37.

13. Were not Infants baptized, when whole households were baptized, Acts 16.15,33.?

No: For it appears not there were any infants in the houses, and the Texts shew they were not baptized, sith the word was spoken to all in the house, ver. 32. and all the house rejoiced believing God. ver 34. and elsewhere the whole house is said to do that which Infants could not do, Acts 18.8. Acts 10.2. 1 Cor. 16.15. compared with 1 Cor. 1.16. John 4.53.

14. Is not Christ's speech and action to little Children, Matth. 19.14,15. Mark 10.14,15,16. Luke 18.16,17. a warrant to baptize infants?

No: but an Argument against it, sith Christ did neither baptize, nor appoint those little children to be baptized.

15. Why should not Infants be baptized, sith they were Circumcised?

The reason why Male Infants were to be Circumcised, was a particular Command of God to Abraham's house for special ends belonging to the time before Christ, which Baptism hath not, nor is there any Command to use Baptism according to the rule of Circumcision.

16. Did not Baptism come in the room of Circumcision, Col. 2.11,12. and so to be used as it was?

The Apostles words import not that our Baptism came in the room of the Jews Circumcision; there is no mention of any bodily Circumcision but Christ's, which our baptism cannot be said to succeed to, as there it is made the cause of Spiritual Circumcision, without arrogating that to it which belongs to Christ alone, and Baptism is mentioned with faith, as the means whereby we are in Christ, and compleat in him.

17. May we be said to be compleat as the Jews without Infant Baptism?

Our compleatness is in that we have not Ordinances as the Jews had, but we are compleat in that we have all in Christ without them, Col. 2.8,9,10.

18. Have not our Children then less Priviledge than the Jews had?

No: For Circumcision was a privilege only for a time, and comparatively to the estate of the Gentiles who knew not God; but of itself was a heavy yoke, Acts 15.10. Gal. 5.1,2,3.

19. Why did the Jews then so much contend for it, Acts 15.1,5.?

Because they too much esteemed the Law, and knew not their liberty by the Gospel.

20. Had it not been a discomfort to the believing Jews to have their Children unbaptized, and out of the Covenant?

The want of Baptism to Infants was never any grievance to Believers in the New Testament, nor were they thereby put out of the Covenant of Grace.

21. Was not the proper reason of Circumcising the Infants of the Jews the interest which they had in the Covenant to Abraham, Gen. 17.7. to be a God to him and to his seed?

The end of Circumcision was indeed to be a token of the whole Covenant made with Abraham, Gen. 17.4,5,6,7,8. not only the promise, ver. 7. But the formal proper distinguishing reason why some were to be Circumcised, and others not, was God's Command alone, not the interest in the Covenant; sith Ishmael who was not a Childe of promise, Gen. 17.20.21. Rom. 9.6,7,8,9. and those who were in Abraham's house, though not of his Seed, were Circumcised, but no Females, nor Males under eight days old.

22. Was not the Covenant with Abraham, Gen. 17. the Covenant of Grace?

It was, according to the hidden meaning of the Holy Ghost, the Evangelical Covenant, Gal. 3.16. But according to the open sense of the words, a Covenant of special benefits to Abraham's inheriting natural posterity, and therefore not a pure Gospel Covenant.

23. Are not Believer's Children comprehended under the promise, to be a God to Abraham and his seed? Gen. 17.7.?

No: unless they become Abraham's seed according to Election of Grace by Faith.

24. Did Circumcision seal the Gospel Covenant? Rom. 4.11.

That text speaks not of any ones Circumcision but Abraham's, which sealed the righteousness of faith he had before Circumcision, and assured thereby righteousness to all, though uncircumcised, who should believe as he did.

25. Are not the Sacraments of the Christian Church in their nature, Seals of the Covenant of Grace?

The Scripture doth nowhere so call them, nor doth it mention this as their end and use.

26. Doth not Peter, Acts 2.38.39. exhort the Jews to baptize themselves and their Children, because the promise of Grace is to Believers and their Children?

Those he then spake to were not then Believers; and therefore the words, Acts 2.39. Cannot be understood of a promise to Believers and their Children as such, but the promise is to all, Fathers and Children as called of God; nor are any exhorted to Baptism without fore-going repentance: nor is the promise alledged as conferring right to Baptism, but as a motive to encourage them and hope for pardon, though they wished Christs blood to be on them and their Children. Matth. 27.25. In like sort as Joseph did, Gen. 50.19,20,21.

27. Are not the Children of Believers holy with Covenant-holiness, and so to be baptized, 1 Cor. 7.14.

There is nothing there ascribed to the faith of the Believer, but to the Marriage-relation, which was the only reason of their lawful living together, and of which alone it is true that all the Children of those Parents, whereof one is sanctified to the other, are holy, the rest unclean, that is, illegitimate.

28. Are not the Gentile-believers Children to be ingrafted by Baptism with their Parents, as the Jews Children were by Circumcision? Rom. 11.16,17.

The ingrafting there is by giving Faith according to Election; and therefore not meant of Parents and Children by an outward Ordinance into the visible Church.

29. Are there not Infants of Believers Disciples, by their Parents Faith to be Baptized? Mat. 28.19. Acts. 15.10.

No: For the Disciples there are only such as are made by Preaching the Gospel to them, nor are any termed Disciples, but those who have heard and learned: and the putting the yoke, Acts 15.10. was by teaching Brethren, ver. 1 and therefore the Disciples, ver. 10. not Infants.

30. Are not the Infants of believers visible members of the Christian Church, by a Law and Ordinance, by God's promise, to be God to them and their seed,

and precept to dedicate them to God, unrepealed?

There is no such Ordinance or Law extant in Scripture, or deducible from the Law of Nature, nor are Infants any where reckoned as visible members of the Christian Church in the New Testament.

31. Hath God not promised, Gen. 22.16,17,18. to make every believer a blessing, so as to cast ordinarily Elect Children on Elect Parents, and thereby warrant Infant-Baptism?

The promise doth not pertain to any believers seed but Abraham's, who are, Heb. 6.12,13,14, Gal. 3.8,9. Acts 3.25. expounded to be Christ and true believers only, who are to be baptized, not their Infants, till they themselves believe in their own persons.

32. Did not Christ appoint, Mat. 28.19. the Disciples to Baptize Children with Parents, as the Jews did Proselytes?

If the Jewish Baptism had been the pattern for Christians, the Apostles would have so practiced, but their not so doing, shews they understood not it to be Christ's mind.

33. Is not the Infant-baptism sufficient if it be avouched at age?

It is not a sufficient discharge of their obedience to Christ's command, which requires each Person to be Baptized after his own Repentance and believing in Christ, Mark 16.16. Mat. 28. 19. Acts 2.38. Ephes. 4.5.

34. What is the chief end of Baptism?

To testifie the Repentance, Faith, Hope, Love, and Resolution of the Baptized to follow Christ, Gal. 3.27. Rom. 6.3,4. 1 Cor. 15.29. calling upon the Name of the Lord, Acts 22.16.

35. How came Infant-baptism to be common in the Christian Churches?

As Infant-communion came from mistake of John 6.53. So Infant-baptism began about the third Age of the Christian Church, from mistake of John 3.5. the opinion of its giving Grace, and the necessity of it to save the Infant dying from perishing, and after Augustin's time became common, which before was not so frequent.

36. Is there any evil in it?

Infant-baptism tends much to harden People in presumption, as if they were

Christians afore they know Christ, and hinders much the Reformation of Christian Churches, by filling them with ignorant and scandalous members, besides the great sin of profaning God's Ordinance.

37. Have not all opposers of Infant-baptism, been wicked in the end?

Blessed be God, experience proves the contrary, though some here to fore proved seditious, and entertained great errors.

38. Is there any good by Baptizing Persons at Age, which might not be, though Infant-baptism were continued?

Yes, For thereby they would be solemnly engaged to adhere to Christ, which is a strong tye on the Consciences, when it is done by a Person understandingly, according to Christ's mind, besides the assurance thereby of Union and Conformity to Christ, and Righteousness and life by him, Rom. 6.3,4. Gal. 3.26. 1 Pet. 3.21.

39. What are Christians to do when they are Baptized?

To associate together in Church-Communion, and to walk according to their engagement, in obedience to them, who are over them in the Lord.

40. Are Persons so joined to serarate from those they have joined to upon deficit in outward order and Ordinances, or variation from the Rule therein by Pastors or People?

No, Unless the evil be such in Faith, Worship, or Discipline, as is not consistent with Christianity, or the estate of a visible Church, or is intolerable oppression, maintained with obstinacy, after endeavours to cure them, to which end each member should keep and act in his station.

FINIS

THE CHARACTER
OF AN
OLD ENGLISH PURITAN,
OR
NON-CONFORMIST

and Preacher of the Word sometime at, Tewksbury, but now at St. Albons.

Published according to order

BY JOHN GEREE, M.A.

LONDON,
PRINTED BY W. WILSON FOR CHRISTOPHER MEREDITH
AT THE CRANE IN PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1646

THE CHARACTER
OF AN
OLD ENGLISH PURITAN,
OR
NON-CONFORMIST

The Old English Puritan was such an one, that honored God above all, and under God gave every one his due. His first care was to serve God, and therein he did not what was good in his own, but in God's sight, making the word of God the rule of his worship. He highly esteemed order in the House of God: but would not under color of that submit to superstitious rites, which are superfluous, and perish in their use. He revered Authority keeping within its sphere: but durst not under pretence of subjection to the higher powers, worship God after the traditions of men. He made conscience of all God's ordinances, though some he esteemed of more consequence. He was much in prayer; with it he began and closed the day. It is he was much exercised in his closet, family and public assembly. He esteemed that manner of prayer best, whereby the gift of God, expressions were varied according to present wants and occasions; yet did he not account set forms unlawful. Therefore in that circumstance of the church he did not wholly reject the liturgy, but the corruption of it. He esteemed reading of the word an ordinance of God both in private and public but did not account reading to be preaching. The word read he esteemed of more authority, but the word preached of more efficiency. He accounted preaching as necessary now as in the Primitive Church, God's pleasure being still by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe. He esteemed the preaching best wherein was most of God, least of man, when vain flourishes of wit and words were declined, and the demonstration of God's Spirit and power studied: yet could he distinguish between studied plainness and negligent rudeness. He accounted perspicuity the best grace of a preacher: And that method best, which was most helpful to the understanding, affection, and memory. To which ordinarily he esteemed none so conducive as that by doctrine, reason and use. He esteemed those sermons best that came closest to the conscience: yet would he have men's consciences awakened, not their persons disgraced. He was a man of good spiritual appetite, and could not be contented with one

meal a day. An afternoon sermon did relish as well to him as one in the morning. He was not satisfied with prayers without preaching: which if it were wanting at home, he would seek abroad: yet would he not by absence discourage his minister, if faithful, though another might have quicker gifts. A lecture he esteemed, though not necessary, yet a blessing, and would read such an opportunity with some pains and loss. The Lord's Day he esteemed a divine ordinance, and rest on it necessary, so far as it conduced to holiness. He was very conscientious in observance of that day as the mart day of the soul. He was careful to remember it, to get house, and heart in order for it and when it came, he was studious to improve it. He redeems the morning from superfluous sleep, and watches the whole day over his thoughts and words, not only to restrain them from wickedness, but worldliness. All parts of the day were like holy to him, and his care was continued in it in variety of holy duties: what he heard in public, he repeated in private, to whet it upon himself and family. Lawful recreations he thought this day unseasonable, and unlawful ones much more abominable: yet he knew the liberty God gave him for needful refreshing, which he neither did refuse nor abuse. The sacrament of baptism he received in infancy, which he looked back to in age to answer his engagements, and claim his privileges. The Lord's Supper he accounted part of his soul's food: to which he labored to keep an appetite. He esteemed it an ordinance of nearest communion with Christ, and so requiring most exact preparation. His first care was in the examination of himself: yet as an act of office or charity, he had an eye on others.

He endeavored to have the scandalous cast out of communion: but he cast not out himself, because the scandalous were suffered by the negligence of others. He condemned that superstition and vanity of Popish mock-fasts; yet neglected not an occasion to humble his soul by right fasting: He abhorred the popish doctrine of opus operatum in the action. And in practice rested in no performance, but what was done in spirit and truth. He thought God had left a rule in his word for discipline, and that aristocratical by elders, not monarchical by bishops, nor democratical by the people. Right discipline he judged pertaining not to the being, but to the well-being of a church. Therefore he esteemed those churches most pure where government is by elders, yet unchurched not those where it was otherwise. Perfection in churches he thought a thing rather to be desired, than hoped for. And so he expected not a church state without all defects. The corruptions that were in

churches he thought his duty to bewail, with endeavors of amendment: yet he would not separate, where he might partake in the worship, and not in the corruption. He put not holiness in churches, as in the temple of the Jews; but counted them convenient like their synagogues. He would have them kept decent, not magnificent: knowing that the gospel requires not outward pomp. His chief music was singing of psalms wherein though he neglected not the melody of the voice, yet he chiefly looked after that of the heart. He disliked such church music as moved sensual delight, and was as hinderance to spiritual enlargements. He accounted subjection to the higher powers to be part of pure religion, as well as to visit the fatherless and widows: yet did he distinguish between authority and lusts of magistrates, to that he submitted, but in these he durst not be a servant of men, being bought with a price. Just laws and commands he willingly obeyed not only for fear but for conscience also; but such as were unjust he refused to observe, choosing rather to obey God than man; yet his refusal was modest and with submission to penalties, unless he could procure indulgence from authority. He was careful in all relations to know, and to duty, and that with singleness of heart as unto Christ. He accounted religion an engagement to duty, that the best Christians should be best husbands, best wives, best parents, best children, best masters, best servants, best magistrates, best subjects, that the doctrine of God might be adorned, not blasphemed. His family he endeavors to make a church, both in regard of persons and exercises, admitting none into it but such as feared God; and laboring that those that were borne in it, might be born again unto God. He blessed his family morning and evening by the word and prayer and took care to perform those ordinances in the best season. He brought up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and commanded his servants to keep the way of the Lord. He set up discipline in his family, as he desired it in the church, not only reprovng but restraining vileness in his. He was conscientious of equity as well as piety knowing that unrighteousness is abomination as well as ungodliness. He was cautious in promising, but careful in performing, counting his word no less engagement than his bond. He was a man of tender heart, not only in regard of his own sin, but others misery, not counting mercy arbitrary, but a necessary duty wherein as he prayed for wisdom to direct him, so he studied for cheerfulness and bounty to act. He was sober in the use of things of this life, rather beating down the body, than pampering it, yet he denied not himself the use of God's blessing,

lest he should be unthankful, but avoid excess lest he should be forgetful of the Donor. In his habit he avoided costliness and vanity, neither exceeding his degree in civility, nor declining what suited with Christianity, desiring in all things to express gravity. He own life he accounted a warfare, wherein Christ was his captain, his arms, prayers, and tears. The Cross his banner, and his word, *Vincit qui patitur*.

He was immovable in all times, so that they who in the midst of many opinions have lost the view of true religion, may return to him and find it. Reader, seeing a passage in Mr. Tombes his book against paedobaptism^[1]; wherein he compares the Nonconformists in England to the Anabaptists in Germany in regard of their miscarriages and ill success in their endeavors, till of late years; I was moved for the vindication of those faithful and reverend witnesses of Christ, to publish this Character; whereof if any shall desire proof in matter of fact, as in the matter of right, the Margin contains evidence, let him either consult their writings, or those who are fit witnesses by reason of age, fidelity and acquaintance, having fully known their doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecution and affliction, etc. 2 Timothy 3:10, 11. And I doubt not but full testimony will be given that their aim and general course was according to rule: some extravagance there be in all professions, but we are to judge of a profession by the rule they hold forth, and that carriage of the professors which is general and ordinary.

FINIS

FOOTNOTE:

[1] John Tombes was a prolific champion of Believer's Baptism during the third quarter of the 17th Century. Of all the men who have ever taken pen in hand to write on baptism, Tombes has the largest number of published pages. Writing as an Oxonian scholastical Puritan, Tombes brings all of his scholarship to bear upon this one issue: historically, exegetically, and theologically. For those of you familiar with the era, Henry Scudder was John Tombes' father-in-law.