

has the design to *cleanse* the baptised from all his guilt, and to *introduce him into the church of Christ as having been renewed in his disposition by the spirit of God*, while he trusts in the Redeemer, and is filled with new purposes, energies, and hopes, (1 Cor. 6, 11, comp. 12, 13. Eph. 5, 25—27. Gal. 3, 27. Col. 2, 11—13. Heb. 10, 22. 1 Pet. 3, 21). According to its true, original design, it can be performed only on *adults*, who are capable of true knowledge and repentance and faith, and it then separates the old life and the new, or betokens the entrance into the true Christian life: and therefore it is called the *bath of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Tit. 3, 5, 6, comp. John 3, 5, 6; Rom. 6, 3—6).

*The Biblical doctrine respecting the different sorts of baptism; and on the allowableness of infant baptism.*

No certain example of infant baptism is found either in Holy Writ, or in the first 150 years of the Christian church, and we must acknowledge that its numerous opponents cannot be refuted on gospel ground; but we own that the practice of baptizing unconscious children, not only has furthered much the growth of the outward church, but is also excused by the act of *confirmation*, which is said to ratify baptism, but which has in fact taken the place of the proper Christian baptism, and is performed, by prayer and blessing accompanied by the imposition of hands by the ministers, on those who have known the way of salvation and received the faith in a penitent heart. Yet we read in Scripture of *certain sorts of administration of baptism*, with which our usages bear resemblance. We find (1) the baptism of John the baptist, who baptized the penitent unto the Saviour who was to come, which is distinguished as *water baptism* from the strictly Christian rite or *the baptism of the spirit and fire*,

which is intended to purify believers and to fill them with gifts of grace. (Matt. 3, 11. Acts 1, 5; 11, 16; 17, 19, 2—4). (2), Even Christian baptism is divided into the two acts of *water-baptism* and *spirit-baptism*. For according to the Biblical descriptions of the proceedings of the apostles, there were many, who, though as yet without *thorough* knowledge, still confessed their *faith* in Jesus and desired baptism, and were thereby received into the number of the disciples of Jesus, but who did not till later receive the baptism of the Spirit from apostolic men through prayer and blessing *accompanied by the laying on of hands*, which ratified and completed their first baptism, (Acts 8, 12—19; 10, 47, comp. 44, 11, 15—17; 19, 2—4, comp. Heb. 6, 2).

If we now hold, in opposition to these sorts of baptism in the time of Jesus and the apostles, our *infant baptism* and *confirmation*, then the former may in some degree be compared with John's baptism unto the unknown Saviour who was to come, only that even John demanded sincere repentance as a condition of his baptism, and consequently baptized only adults. *Confirmation*, on the other hand, is much related to the apostolic confirmation or the spirit baptism (*consummatio*). Only more care than is usual ought to be taken, that no man receives this seal of grace, who does not give sure signs of his susceptibility and worthiness. But if we hold closely to the evangelic-apostolic principle, then ought, according to the appointment and example of Jesus and his apostles, *children to be consecrated through blessing*, (Matt. 19, 13—15. Mark 10, 13—16. Luke 18, 15, comp. 1 Cor. 7, 14), and only *adults should be baptized*, when they have attained to the knowledge of their need of salvation and the means of obtaining it, and truly believe in the gospel.