

The Proof of the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes Inquired Into.

by John Gill

This sermon examines the question of whether Jewish proselytes were admitted by baptism, and concludes that there is no evidence to support this practice.

Scripture: Exodus 12:48

Topics: "Baptism", "Jewish Proselytes"

Description

John Gill examines the historical evidence regarding the baptism of Jewish proselytes, arguing that there is no substantial proof of such a practice existing before or during the times of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. He highlights that the Old Testament, Apocryphal writings, and early Christian literature do not mention baptism as a rite for proselytes, emphasizing that circumcision was the primary requirement for conversion to Judaism. Gill concludes that the absence of references to proselyte baptism in various historical texts suggests that this custom did not exist in the early Jewish community. His thorough investigation raises questions about the origins of the belief in proselyte baptism and its implications for understanding early Christian practices.

Transcript

A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity

Book 5--Chapter 3

THE PROOF OF THE BAPTISM OF JEWISH PROSELYTES INQUIRED INTO;

WHETHER THERE IS ANY PROOF OF IT BEFORE, AT, OR QUICKLY AFTER THE TIMES OF JOHN AND CHRIST

The inquiry to be made is, whether there are writings or records before the times of John, Christ, and his apostles, or at or near those times, or in the third and fourth century from the birth of Christ, or before the Talmuds were written; which make any mention of, or refer to any such rite and custom in use among the Jews, as to admit proselytes to their religion by baptism, or dipping, along with other things. Now upon search it will be found, 1. First, That nothing of this kind appears in the writings of the Old Testament, which chiefly concern the Jewish nation.

We read of many who either were, or are supposed and said to be made proselytes; as the Shechemites in Jacob's time, the multitude that came out of Egypt with the Israelites[1], Jethro, Moses's father in law[2], Shuah[3], Tamar[4], Rahab[5], and Ruth[6]; and many in the times of Mordecai and Esther, who became Jews[7], (Esther 8:17) but not a word of their being admitted proselytes by baptism. Dr. Lightfoot indeed says[8], that Jacob admitted the proselytes of Shechem and Syria into his religion by baptism, but offers no proof of it; the Jews[9] pretend, that Pharaoh's daughter was a proselytess, and the Babylonian Talmud[10], quoting the passage in Exodus 2:5, "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself"; R.

Jochanan says, she came down to wash herself from the idols of her father's house, and the Gloss on the place is, "to dip on account of proselytism;" but then the Gloss is the work of Jarchi, a writer in the twelfth century; and was it so said in the Talmud itself, it would be no sufficient proof the fact. Dr. Hammond says, that Jethro was made a proselyte this way; but produces no scripture for it; but refers to the Talmud, Tr. Repud; but there it is not to be found, as before observed: and Schindler[11] asserts the same, as said by the Jews, and seems to refer to the same Tract in general, without directing to any particular place: and from him Hammond seems to have taken it upon trust, and some other writers also, without examination; since no such passage is to be found in that Tract.

Pfeiffer[12], in proof of it, refers to a book called Zennorena, a commentary on the law, written in Hebrew-German, in the seventeenth century, by R. Jacob Ben Isaac, a German Jew[13]. Indeed, in the Talmud[14], Jethro is said to become a proselyte, but no mention is made in what manner he was made one; and elsewhere[15] explaining these words, dxyw "and Jethro rejoiced", says Rab, he made a sharp sword to pass over his flesh; that is, according to the Gloss, he circumcised himself, and became a proselyte; but not a word of his baptism, or dipping; and so the Targum on Exodus 18:6, 7 is, "And he said to Moses, I Jethro, thy father-in-law, am come unto thee 'to be made a proselyte';but if thou wilt not receive me for myself, receive me for the sake of thy wife, and her two children, who are with her; and Moses went out from under the clouds of glory to meet his father-in-law, and bowing himself, kissed him, and he made him a proselyte; but nothing is said of the manner of doing it."

Mr. Broughton also, as before quoted, says, that the Babylonian Talmud, and Rambam record, that in the days of David and Solomon, many thousands of heathens were made proselytes, and admitted by baptism only; but this instance is not to be met with in the Babylonian Talmud; yea, that expressly denies it in two different places[16]; and in which it is asserted that they did not receive proselytes neither in the days of David, nor in the days of Solomon; Solomon's wife, Pharaoh's daughter, is indeed excepted; because the reason for which they say, proselytes were not then received; namely, because they might be desirous of being made proselytes, that they might be admitted to the king's table, could have no influence on her, since she was the daughter of a mighty king; and yet it is said[17] by some, that though it was Solomon's intention to make her a proselyte, yet he was not able to do it; and she became one of his troublers; and by what is said of her, in 2Chronicles 8:11 it looks as if she did not become a proselyte; Rambam, or Maimonides, indeed, to reconcile what later writers have said, with those words of the Talmudists, have contrived a distinction between the Sanhedrim and private persons; as if proselytes, though not received in those times by the former, were by the latter.

He says[18], there were many proselytes in those times who were made so before private persons, but not before the Sanhedrim; he owns the Sanhedrim did not receive them, and though they were dipped, yet not by their order, and with their consent; but he produces no passage of scripture to support this private dipping; nor do the scriptures any where speak of such numbers of proselytes in those days, and much

less of their baptism; and the strangers, who in the Greek version are called proselytes, whom Solomon numbered and employed at the building of the temple, (2 Chron. 2:17) at most could only be proselytes of the gate, not of righteousness, and so there can be no pretence for their admission by baptism, or dipping; nor is there anything of this kind with respect to any persons to be found in the writings of the Old Testament.

There is a plain and express law for the admission of proselytes to the Jewish religion, and for what, as a qualification, to partake of the ordinances and privileges of it; particularly to eat of the passover; and that is the circumcision of them, with all their males; and on this condition, and on this only, they and theirs were admitted without any other rite annexed unto it, they were obliged unto; nor does it appear that ever any other was used; no, not this of baptism; there was but one law to the stranger or proselyte, and to the home born Israelite (see Ex 12:48, 49).

There were proselytes in the times of Hezekiah, (2 Chron. 30:25) who came out of the land of Israel, to eat the passover at Jerusalem, who therefore must be circumcised, according to the said law; but there is no reason to believe they were baptized. There was a law concerning the marriage of a captive woman taken in war, (Deut. 21:10-14) previous to which she must become a proselytess; and the law enjoins various particular rites to be observed in order to it, as shaving her head, paring her nails, and putting off the raiment of her captivity; but not a word of her baptism; which one would think could never be omitted, had such a custom prevailed as early as the times of Moses and Jacob, as is pretended.

There were various bathings, baptisms, or dippings incumbent on the Israelites, and so upon such proselytes who were upon an equal footing with them, and equally under obligation to obey the ceremonial law; which consisted of various washings, baptisms, or dippings, yet none of them for proselytism; but for purification from one uncleanness or another, in a ceremonial sense: these seem to be what a learned writer^[19] calls "aquilustria", "lustrations by water"; which he thinks it is clear the captive Jews in Babylon observed, from having their solemn meetings by rivers, (Ezek. 3:15; Ezra 8:15, 21) but it is not so clear they had their abode in such places, whether for a longer or shorter time, on account of them; and it is still less clear what he further says, that these lustrations had a promise of grace annexed to them, were sacraments of the Old Testament, and a type of our baptism.

However, though he supposes the returning Jews and proselytes were circumcised, he does not pretend they were baptized; nor does he attempt to prove proselyte baptism from hence. Among the ten families said^[20] by the Jews to come out of Babylon, the proselytes are one sort; but they say nothing of their baptism (see Ezra 6:21). As for those scriptures of the Old Testament the Rabbins make use of to justify this custom of theirs, they will be considered hereafter. 2. Secondly, whereas there are several books called Apocrypha, supposed to be written between the writing of the books of the Old Testament and those of the New, and are generally thought to be written by Jews, and to contain things which chiefly have respect to them; and though there is sometimes mention made in them of proselytes to the Jewish religion, yet not a syllable of any such rite or custom, as of baptism or dipping at the admission of them; particularly of Achior the Ammonite, in the times of Judith; upon her cutting off the head of Olophernes it is said, that "he, seeing all that the God of Israel did, strongly believed in God, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was added to the house of Israel unto this day;" that is, he and his posterity continued in the Jewish religion.

Now here is mention made of his being circumcised, previous to his addition, or his being proselyted to the Jewish church; but not a word of baptism, or dipping, in order to it; see Judith 14:6 in the Apocrypha. 3.

Thirdly, mention is made of proselytes in the New Testament, (Matthew 23:15; Acts 2:10, 6:5, 13:43) but nothing is said concerning their admission, and the manner of it. Indeed, in the Ethiopic version of (Matthew 23:15) the words are rendered, "They baptize one proselyte"; which seems to have respect to the custom under consideration; but then this is but a translation, and not a just one.

The Ethiopic version is not only reckoned not very good, but of no great antiquity. Ernestus Gerhard says[21] of the antiquity of it, he dare not affirm anything certain. And Ludolph, in his history of Ethiopia, relates[22], that he could find nothing certain concerning the author and time of this version but thinks it probable it was made at the time of the conversion of the Habessines, or a little after, but not in the times of the apostles, as some have affirmed; and in the margin, a little after, he observes, that in an Ethiopic martyrology, St.

Frumentius, called abbot of Salama, is said to be the author of it; who, according to another place in the said history[23], seems to have lived in the fourth century, in the times of Athanasius, and is thought to be the first founder of the Christian religion in Ethiopia, and the first bishop in it. Scaliger takes the Ethiopic version to be a recent one; and De Dieu[24], from what the author or authors of the version of the evangelist Matthew, add at the end of it, suspects that they were of the Maronites, who became subject to the pope of Rome A.

D. 1182, and so this version is too late a testimony for the antiquity of such a custom; and the closing the translation of some of the epistles with desiring the prayers of Peter and others, shows what sort of persons they were who translated them, and in what times they lived. The title of the book of the Revelation in this version, is, "The vision of John, which John was bishop of the metropolis of Constantinople, when he suffered persecution;" by which it appears not to be ancient.

Hence Dr. Owen[25] calls it a "novel" endeavour of an illiterate person; and the translation of the clause itself in (Matthew 23:15) is censured by Ludolphus[26] as ridiculous; the word by which it is rendered being used in the Ethiopic language to convert a man to Christianity, or to make a man a Christian; which is by it absurdly attributed to the Scribes and Pharisees. 4. Fourthly, as there are no traces of this custom in the writings before, at, or about the times of John, Christ, and his apostles; so neither are there any in those which were written in any short time after; as, not in Philo the Jew, who lived in the first century; who, though he is said by some to be ignorant of Jewish customs, yet one would think he could not be ignorant of such as were used at the admission of proselytes; since he lived at Alexandria, where it may be supposed many proselytes were, more than in Judea, and of the manner of their admission he could not but have knowledge, both then and in former times; and he makes mention of proselytes, and of them as equally partakers of the same privileges, and to be treated with the same honour and respect as home born citizens[27], and as they were admitted by Moses; but is altogether silent about this custom of baptizing, or dipping them; nor is there the least trace or hint of this custom in any Rabbinical books, said by the Jews to be written a little before, or after; such as the books of Bahir, Zohar, the Targums of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, and of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the prophets. 5.

Fifthly, Josephus, the Jewish historian, lived in the same age, a little after Philo, was well versed in the affairs of the Jews, even in their religious rites and ceremonies, having been a priest among them. He not only observes, that many of the Gentiles came over to their religion[28], but even speaks of whole nations who became Jews, and that they were made so by circumcision; as of the Idumaeans, whom Hyrcanus conquered, and suffered to remain in their own land, on condition that they would be circumcised, and conform to the laws of the Jews; and who, out of love to their country, did comply with circumcision, and so

became Jews[29], and of the Ituraeans, whom Aristobulus fought against, and added part of their country to Judaea, and obliged the inhabitants, if they would remain in their country, to be circumcised, and live after the laws of the Jews; and quotes Strabo, who, upon the authority of Timogenes, says, that he enlarged the country of the Jews, and made part of the country of Ituraea theirs, joining them to them by the bond of circumcision[30].

By which accounts it appears, that both these people were made Jews, or were proselyted to them by circumcision; but not a word is said of their baptism, or dipping; which, according to this custom, as is said, must have been of men, women, and children, which, had it been practised, could not have been well omitted by the historian. He also speaks[31] of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and of her son Izates, embracing the Jewish religion; and relates how desirous Izates was of being circumcised, that he might be a perfect Jew, without which he could not; but for a time he was dissuaded from it by his mother, and a Jew merchant, who instructed them; but afterwards, being exhorted to perfect the work by one Eleazer, who was more skilful in Jewish affairs, he submitted to circumcision: but neither Josephus nor Eleazer say a word about his baptism, or dipping; which yet, according to the pretended custom as then prevailing, was necessary, as well as circumcision, to make him a complete proselyte.

Nor is any mention made of the baptism or dipping of Helena; which, had it been at this time, would not have been omitted by the historian; since it was by that only, according to this notion, that females were then made proselytes. He also speaks[32] of another son of Helena, Monbaz, embracing the Jewish religion; but says nothing of his baptism. 6. Sixthly, it may be inquired, whether or no any mention is made of this custom of receiving proselytes among the Jews by baptism, or dipping, in the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases.

The most ancient ones extant are those of Jonathan Ben Uzziel of the prophets, and of Onkelos of the Pentateuch; the one at the beginning, the other toward the end of the first century; in which nothing is met with concerning the admission of Jewish proselytes by dipping. The other paraphrases are by uncertain authors, and of an uncertain age. The Targum of the Megillot, or five books of Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, and Esther, is written by an unknown author; it is the latest of all the Targums.

In that of Esther only the phrase became Jews, (Esther 8:17) is rendered, became proselytes; but nothing is said of their manner of becoming such. In that of (Ruth 1:16) the requisites of a proselyte are particularly observed; where Ruth is introduced, saying, that she desired to be made a proselyte; when Naomi informs her what commands the Jews were obliged to observe; as to keep the Sabbaths and festivals, and not to walk beyond two thousand cubits (on the Sabbath day); not to lodge with Gentiles; to observe the three hundred and thirteen commands; not to worship an idol, &c. to all which Ruth is made to agree; but not a syllable is said about baptism, or dipping; whereas, that, with a sacrifice along with it, before the building of the temple, and while the temple stood, and since, without it, is the only thing, according to this notion, by which females were admitted proselytes.

In the Targum of Jonathan of Genesis 9:27 the sons of Japheth are said to be made and to dwell in the school of Shem. In the Jerusalem Targum, and in that of Pseudo-Jonathan, the souls that Abraham and Sarah got in Haran, (Gen. 12:5) are said to be the souls who were made proselytes by them; and in the same Targum of Genesis 21:33 at Beersheba, where Abraham planted a grove, he is said to make proselytes, and teach them the way of the world, of the world to come; but nothing more is said of the way and manner in which they were made such.

In the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan of Genesis 38:2, Judah is said to make the daughter of a Canaanite a proselytess, and then married her; and in the same Targum of Numbers 11:4, the mixed multitude who came with the Israelites out of Egypt, are interpreted proselytes; and no doubt but many of them were such; and Jarchi thinks the son of the Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, was a proselyte, since he was among the children of Israel (Lev. 24:10). And Africanus affirms[33], that the Jews genealogical tables, in which an account was kept of original Jews and of proselytes; as of Achior the Ammonite, and Ruth the Moabitess, and those who came out of Egypt mixed with the Israelites; and which continued to the times of Herod, who burnt them, that his family might not be known.

But to return to the Targums; in the Pseudo-Jonathan's of Exodus 18:6, 7, Jethro is made to say to Moses, as before observed, that he was come to be made a proselyte; and Moses is said to make him one; but in what manner it is not said; and so the rest before mentioned; indeed, the same Targum of Exodus 12:44 is, "And every stranger who is sold for a servant to an Israelite, bought with money, then thou shalt circumcise him, and thou shalt 'dip him', and so shall he eat of it," the passover.

Now in this Targum of Exodus 26:9, not only mention is made of the Misnah, but it abounds with Talmudic fables and traditions, and so must be written after both the Misnah and Talmud; and in the Targum of Numbers 24:19 mention is made of the city of Constantinople, which shows it to be not ancient, and that it is not the work of the true Jonathan. And besides all this, the case of the servant refers not to a proselyte, who became so of choice, but to a bought servant, who, according to the original law in Genesis 17:12, 13 was obliged to be circumcised; and so, according to the Rabbinic custom, to be dipped; but then, according to these writers, baptism, or dipping for servitude, was a different thing from baptism, or dipping for proselytism; the one was on a civil, the other on a religious account; the one was repeated when a servant was made a free man, and the other never[34].

The same Pseudo-Jonathan in his Targum of Deutonomy 21:13 to the conditions required of a beautiful captive, in order to be married to an Israelite, this is added, that she should dip herself, and become a proselytess in his house; but the text has nothing of it, nor the Targum of Onkelos; nor is this custom to be met with in the paraphrases of the true Jonathan; only in this, which was written after the Talmud, and does not come within the time under consideration. 7. Seventhly, nor is there any mention of such a custom in the Jew's Misnah, or Book of Traditions; which is a collection of all the traditions among the Jews, which had been handed down from age to age, and were collected together from all parts, and written in a book of this name, in order to be preserved.

This was written by R. Judah Hakkadosh, in the middle of the second century, A. D. 150 or as others in the beginning of the third century, reckoning the date of it one hundred and fifty years from the destruction of the temple; which brings it to the year 220 and here, if anywhere, one might expect to meet with this rite or custom; but no mention is made of it. Dr. Gale[35] seems to allow it upon what Dr. Wall has transcribed from Selden, which he granted without examination.

The doctor says[36], It is not only mentioned in the Gemara, but in the text of the Misnah itself; which, as he suggests, speaks of a child becoming a proselyte by baptism, or dipping; but the passage he has from Selden[37] says no such thing; which runs thus[38]; "A she stranger, a captive, and a maiden, who are redeemed and become proselytes, and are made free, being 'under' (or, as in the following section, above) three years and one day old, are allowed the matrimonial dowry;" that is, when they come to age, and are married; but not a word is here of their being made proselytes by baptism, or dipping; indeed, the tradition shows, that minors may be proselyted, and that a man's sons and daughters may become

proselytes with him; but there is no need to have recourse to a tradition for this; the law is express, that a stranger who desires to be a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and to eat of the passover, must be circumcised, and all his males, and then he and all his children, males and females, may be admitted to eat of it, (Ex. 12:48, 49) only the circumcision of the males is required, but no baptism, or dipping of any.

There is a passage in the Misnah[39], which perhaps some may think countenances this custom; which is this, "A stranger who is made a proselyte, on the evening of the passover, the house of Shammai say, he 'dips' and eats his passover in the evening; but the house of Hillell say, he that separates from uncircumcision, is as he that separates from a grave." Now it should be observed, 7a. That here is a division about this matter, be it what it may; Shammai, and his party, assert, that a proselyte newly made, might dip and eat his passover that evening; but Hillell, and his party, dissent, for a reason given; and the determination, in all cases, was generally according to Hillell, as it was in this; so we learn from Maimonides[40]. 7b.

This baptism, or dipping, was not on account of proselytism, but for ceremonial uncleanness; for it goes along with cases of that kind, instanced in before. The canon begins thus, "A mourner (who was unclean according to the ceremonial law) dips and eats his passover in the evening; but eats not of the holy things: he that hears tidings of the death of his (friend or relation), and who gathers to him bones, dips, and eats of the holy things:" and then it follows, "A stranger who is made a proselyte, &c." 7c.

This rule, according to Shammai, was concerning one already made a proselyte, and therefore the dipping, or baptism, he prescribes to him, in order to his eating the passover that evening, was not to make him a proselyte; but for some other reason. Wherefore, 7d. This strongly makes against admission of proselytes by baptism, or dipping, at that time; for if he had been made a proselyte that way, there would have been no reason for a second dipping to qualify him for the passover. 7e.

The case of such an one, according to Hillell, is, that being just come out of heathenism, he was unclean, as one that touched a dead man, a bone, or a grave; and therefore could not eat of the passover that evening, but must wait seven days, until he was purified according to the law in Numbers 19:11-19. 7f. After all, the view of Hillell, in putting such a person off from eating the passover the evening he became a proselyte for the reason given, was with respect to the next year, and by way of caution; fearing that should he be then in any uncleanness, which required purification, he would say, Last year I did not dip, or purify myself from any uncleanness, and yet I eat, and now I must dip and eat; not considering that the last year he was an heathen, and incapable of uncleanness, according to the law, but now he was an Israelite, and capable of it; and so it is explained in the Gemara[41] and Gloss on it, and by other interpreters[42].

Besides, this baptism, or dipping, was not on account of proselytism, but was common to, and obligatory upon, a circumcised Israelite, in order to eat of the passover; as is acknowledged by all. There were several in the times of the Misnic doctors, and before the Misnah was compiled, who were persons of eminence, and said to become proselytes; as Onkelos the Targumist, who, it is said, was made a proselyte in the days of Hillell and Shammai[43], hence he is called Onkelos the proselyte[44]; some say[45] he was a sister's son of Titus the emperor, and by whom three Roman troops, sent one after another, to take him, were made proselytes also[46]; and Aquila, the author of the Greek version of the Bible, became, as is said[47], a proselyte in the times of Adrian and so the emperor Antoninus Pius, and Ketiah, a nobleman in Caesar's court, as before observed: yea, the famous R.

Akiba, a Misnic doctor, was a proselyte[48]; and so was R. Meir[49]. And of the circumcision of most of these we read; but nothing of their baptism; neither in the Misnah, nor in any other Jewish writings. Not to take notice of those very early masters of tradition Shemaia and Abtalion, before observed, who were proselytes of righteousness[50]; there were also women of note within this time, who became proselytes; as queen Helena[51], with her two sons, of whom mention is made in the Misnah[52]; and Beluria, the proselytess, who had a discourse with R.

Gamaliel[53]; and the wife of Turnus Rufus, whom R. Akiba married, after she was proselyted[54]. Now though female proselytes were admitted by baptism only, as is pretended, yet nothing is said of the baptism of these women. And as there is no mention of this custom in the Misnah, so neither have I observed any notice taken of it in the Rabbot, which are commentaries on the Pentateuch and five Megillot, before named; and which were written by R. Bar Nachmoni, about A. D. 300, according to Buxtorf[55] in one of which the text in Genesis 12:5 is commented on; "And the souls they had gotten in Haran"; which the Targums of Pseudo-Jonathan and Jerusalem, interpret of the souls they proselyted, before observed; and here it is said[56], "These are the proselytes which they made:--R.

Hona said, Abraham proselyted the men, and Sarah proselyted the women;" but not a word is said about the baptism or dipping of either. Yea, Abraham and Sarah are said to be proselytes[57] themselves; but it is not suggested that they were baptized. In these commentaries mention is made of the circumcision of proselytes, particularly of king Monbaz, and his brother, said to be the sons of king Ptolemy[58]; and of Aquila, the Greek translator[59]; but nothing is said of their baptism. 8.

Eighthly, nor is this rite or custom of receiving Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, once spoken of by any of the Christian fathers of the first three or four centuries; which they could not be ignorant of, if from hence Christian baptism was taken, and especially such who were Jews, or had any connection with them, or were acquainted with them, and with their affairs, as some of them were. Barnabas was a Jew, and an apostolic man, contemporary with the apostles; there is an epistle of his still extant, in which he treats chiefly of Jewish rites, and of their being typical of evangelic things, and of their having their fulfilment in them; and yet says not a word of this initiating baptism, which he could not have failed making mention of had he known anything of it; yea, he sets himself to find out what was beforehand said concerning the ordinance of baptism; he says[60], "Let us inquire whether the Lord has taken any care to make manifest beforehand anything concerning the water;" that is, concerning baptism: and then he adds, "Concerning the water, it is written to Israel, how the baptism that leads to the remission of sins, they would not; but appointed for themselves;" meaning their superstitious worship, our Lord inveighs against; but says not a word here, nor elsewhere, of the baptism of proselytes, for which he had a fair opportunity, had he known anything of it.

Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, was a Samaritan, and had knowledge of Jewish affairs; and had a dispute with Trypho the Jew, the same with Tarphon, a Jewish doctor, frequently mentioned in the Misnah; yet neither he nor Trypho say anything of this custom. In answer to a question put by Justin, what was necessary to be observed; Trypho replies[61], "To keep the Sabbath; to be circumcised; to observe the new moons; to be baptized, or dipped, whoever touches any of these things forbidden by Moses;" meaning, that such should be baptized, or dipped, who touched a dead body, or bone, or grave, &c. but not a syllable is here of the baptism, or dipping of proselytes.

And Justin himself makes mention of Jewish proselytes, and calls them circumcised proselytes[62], but not baptized; by which it seems he knew nothing of any such custom, as to baptize them; yea, he does, in

effect, deny there was any such custom of baptizing any, that universally obtained among the Jews, since he speaks of a certain sect, whom he will not allow to be truly Jews, called by him Baptists[63]. Whereas, if it was the practice of the whole nation to receive proselytes by baptism, or dipping, a particular sect among them, would not be stigmatized with such a name, since they must be all Baptists, both original Jews and proselytes, if they were all admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, as is affirmed.

Origen, who lived in the beginning of the third century, in the city of Alexandria, where were great numbers of Jews, with whom he was acquainted, and must know their customs, says of Heracleon, an heretic, he opposes[64], "That he was not able to show that ever any prophet baptized;" meaning, a common and ordinary one; and if none of these ever baptized, what foundation could there be for the baptism of proselytes before the times of Christ? Epiphanius, in the fourth century, was born in Palestine, lived some time in Egypt, had great knowledge of the Jews, and of their affairs; but seems to know nothing of this custom, as used neither in former nor in later times: he says[65], neither had Abraham baptism, nor Isaac, nor Elias, nor Moses, not any before Noah and Enoch, nor the prophet Isaiah; nor those who were after him and he speaks of the Samaritans, that when they came over to the Jews, they were circumcised again; and gives an instance in Symmachus, who, when he became a proselyte, was circumcised again.

So likewise he speaks of Theodotion being proselyted to Judaism[66], and of his being circumcised; but not a word of the baptism, or dipping, of either of them. He also speaks of Antipater[67], the father of Herod the king, that when he became procurator of Judaea, he was made a proselyte, and was circumcised, both he and Herod his son; but says nothing of their baptism, or dipping; so Herod is called by the Jews a proselyte[68]; and his reign, and that of his posterity, Myrgh twklm "the reign of the proselytes"[69], who became so by circumcision, and that only, for ought appears.

And of him, as a proselyte, but not of his baptism, speaks Jerome[70]; he lived in the same century, and great part of his time in Judaea, was acquainted with several Jews he had for his teachers, and with their traditions, of many of which he makes mention, but never of this of admitting proselytes by baptism, or dipping. He speaks of proselytes, and of their circumcision; and says[71], that "if strangers received by the law of the Lord, and were circumcised, and were eunuchs, as was he of the queen of Candace, they are not foreign from the salvation of God;" but not a word of their baptism or dipping.

The instances given by Dr. Wall[72], from Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, and Basil, only respect either the figurative baptism of the Israelites at the Red Sea; or their baptisms and bathings by immersion, for their purification from ceremonial uncleanness; but not for proselytism. So when the same writer[73] quotes Arrianus, an heathen Stoic philosopher of the second century, as speaking of tou bebamhnou, "a baptized Jew"[74], or one that was dipped; by whom the doctor thinks is meant one made a proselyte by baptism; no other may be designed than either a Jew who bathed his whole body, to purify himself from legal pollutions; or an Hemero-baptist, a sect of the Jews, who bathed themselves every day; or rather a Christian, as many learned men are of opinion[75]; since it was not unusual with heathen writers to call Christians, who were baptized, Jews; because the first Christians were Jews, and came from Judaea, into other parts of the world, and were reckoned by the heathens a sect of the Jews[76], and were often confounded with them.

Now since it appears there is no mention made of any such rite or custom of admitting Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, to the Jewish religion in any writings and records before the times of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; nor in any age after them, for the first three or four hundred years; or, however, before the writing of the Talmuds; it may be safely concluded there was no such custom, which

had obtained in that interval of time. It remains therefore to be considered, what is the true ground and foundation of such a notion and from whence it sprung, which will be done in the following chapter.

ENDNOTES:

[1] Targum Jon. in Numb. xi. 4.

[2] Ibid. in Exod. xviii. 6, 7.

[3] Ibid. in Gen. xxxviii. 2.

[4] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.

[5] Ibid. Megillah, fol. 14. 2.

[6] Targum in Ruth i. 16.

[7] Targum in Esther.

[8] Chronicle, p. 18.

[9] Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 18.

[10] F. Megillah, fol. 23. 1. Sotah, fol. 12. 1.

[11] Lexic. in voce lbj col. 686. vid. de Dieu, append. ad Matt. xxiii. 15.

[12] Antiqu. Ebr. c. 1. s. 5.

[13] Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 598.

[14] Zebachim, fol. 16. 1. vid. Shemot Rabba, s. 27. fol. 30. 2, 3.

[15] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

[16] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 76. 1. Avodah Zara. fol. 3. 2.

[17] Yalkut Chadasha tit. de David, n. 89. Apud Beckii, not. in Targ. 2 Chron. viii. 11.

[18] Issure Biah, c. 13. s. 15.

[19] Eric. Phaletran. de ablatione Sceptr. Jud. c. 9. p. 431.

[20] Misnah, Kiddushin, c. 4. s. 1.

[21] pentav Positionum ex Ling. Heb. Chald. Syr. At. & Ethiopic Pos. 5.

[22] Hist. Ethiop. I. 3. c. 4.

[23] Ibid. I. 3. c. 2.

[24] In Append. ad Matt. p. 584.

[25] Of the divine Original, &c. of the Scriptures, p. 343. vid. Theologoumen. I. 1. c. 1. p. 4.

- [26] Lexic. Ethiop. Col. 414.
- [27] De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 625. De Monarchia, l. 1. p. 818. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.
- [28] Contra Apion. l. 2. s. 10.
- [29] Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. s. 1. So Josippon Ben Gorion, Hist. Heb. l. 2. c. 9. & l. 4. c. 4. & l. 5. c. 23. & l. 6. c. 13.
- [30] Antiqu. ib. c. 11. s. 3. so Josippon, ibid. l. 4. c. 9.
- [31] Antiqu. ibid. l. 20. c. 2. s. 1. 5.
- [32] Antiqu. c. 3. s. 1. These became proselytes in the times of Claudius Caesar, Ganz Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 15. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 141. 1. Of king Izates, see Tacit. Annul. l. 12. c. 13, 14.
- [33] Apud Enseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 7.
- [34] Vid. Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 13. s. 11, 12, & Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 267. s. 9.
- [35] Reflections on Wall's History of Infant Baptism, p. 327.
- [36] History, Introduction, p. 49.
- [37] De Synedriis, l. 1. c. 3.
- [38] Misn. Cetubot. c. 1. s. 2. 4.
- [39] Ib. Pesachim, c. 8. s. 8. the same in Misn. Ediot, c. 5. s. 2.
- [40] Hilchot Korban Pesach, c. 6. s. 7.
- [41] T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 92. 1.
- [42] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ut supra.
- [43] Meor Enayim, c. 45. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2.
- [44] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 99. 1. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Avodah Zarah, fol. 11. 1.
- [45] Juchasin, fol. 52. 2. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 2.
- [46] Avodah Zarah, ut supra.
- [47] Shemot Rabba, s. 30. fol. 131. 3.
- [48] Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 4. Tzemach David, ut supra, fol. 28. 1.
- [49] Juchasin, fol. 41. 1. Ganz. fol. 29. 1.
- [50] Juchasin, fol. 18. 1.
- [51] Juchasin, fol. 141. 1.

[52] Yoma, c. 3. s. 10.

[53] Roshashanah, fol. 17. 2.

[54] T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 50. 2. & Gloss in ibid. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 1.

[55] Biblioth. Rab. p. 326.

[56] Bereshit Rabba, s. 39. fol. 35. 1.

[57] Bemidbar Rabba, s. 8. fol. 190. 4.

[58] Bereshit Rabba, s. 46. fol. 41. 3.

[59] Shemot Rabba, ut supra.

[60] Barnabae Epist. c. 9. Ed. Voss.

[61] Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 264.

[62] Dialog. ibid. p. 350, 351.

[63] Ibid. p. 307.

[64] Comment. in Joannem, p. 117.

[65] Contr. Haeres. l. 3. Haer. 70.

[66] De Mensur. et Ponder.

[67] Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 20.

[68] Juchasin, fol. 18. 1.

[69] Seder Olam Zuta, p. 111. Ed. Meyer.

[70] Comment. in Matt. xxii. fol. 30. l.

[71] Comment. in Esaiam, e. 56. fol. 96. B.

[72] History ut supra, p. 47.

[73] Ibid. p. 45.

[74] Epictet. l. 2. c. 9.

[75] "Quem locum frustra quidam adducunt, ut probent Judaeos ritu baptismi uti solitos fuisse, cum apertissime de christianis loquatur philosophus", Oweni Theologoumen. l. 1. c. 9. p. 109. And with Dr. Owen agrees Dr. Jennings; "It is most likely, "says he, "that Arrian meant Christians, in the place alledged; because in his time many persons became proselytes to Christianity, but few or none to Judaism.--Besides, if he had spoke of proselytes to Judaism, it is highly probable he would have mentioned their circumcision, for which the heathens derided them, rather than their baptism, which was not so very foreign to some of the heathen rites of purification." Jewish Antiquities, vol. 1. c. 3. p. 138.

[76] See Gale's Reflections on Wall's History, Letter 10. p. 355-362.

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