

THE TRUE IDEA OF BAPTISM,

BY

LORD CONGLETON.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John iii. 8).

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts ii. 38).

“I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins”—*The Nicene Creed.*



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“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean:..... A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;.....And I will put my Spirit within you.”—

Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

It is generally agreed, I believe, that the first of the above verses refers to the remission of sins; the second has the doctrine of a new nature; and the third speaks of the privilege of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

These *three* matters are also cardinal points in the teaching of our Lord and his apostles. I say these *three* matters, because the Holy Spirit's indwelling in those whom He (the Holy Spirit) has begotten, is carefully to be distinguished from the thing begotten or the new nature. He, the Holy Spirit, builds the House: He also dwells in it.

The difference between one who is a Christian and one who is not, is not simply that one has the Holy

Spirit: the other, not. In John iii. where the necessity of being born again is urged by our Lord, it is said, at verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This does not mean that he that is born of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit, or has the Holy Spirit: but, he that is born of the Holy Spirit has the new nature called "spirit," as distinguished from the old corrupt nature called "flesh," even as the new body is called "a spiritual body," as distinguished from the old body called "a natural body" (1 Cor. xv. 44—46).

This new nature is the nature of the new Man, the risen Jesus; and in it the Christian is united to Christ and is a member of Christ. Thus, he that is born of the Holy Spirit is, even now, in part, a partaker of the resurrection of Christ, and shall be completely so at His coming.

But, again, in Rom. viii. 8, 9, it is said, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Here we are taught the blessed fact, that the Holy Spirit dwells in those that are in the spirit, that is, that have the new nature called "spirit," and that His indwelling is the proof of their having that new nature. The fact is, that whilst it is the Holy Spirit that begets the new nature, He himself dwells in the believer, as having this new nature. Thus we are told in John vii., "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For

the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 37, 38, 39). And when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, it was upon those who were already believers, who were already born of the Spirit, that He came. See also, John xiv. 16, 17; Acts ii. 38; v. 32; viii. 15, 17; xix. 1, 2, 6; Gal. iii. 14; iv. 6; Eph. i. 13.

I. The importance of the doctrine of Baptism has always been felt more or less, by reason of the fact that it stands at the entrance of the kingdom of God. The day we live in sees its importance recognized afresh, but fearfully abused. That some attach too little importance to it, will be readily granted: that others attach too much, will be one point that I shall attempt to shew in the following pages. But that it has *very much* more importance than those think who oppose the excessive view of it held by some, will be another point.

That the doctrine of the Prayer-book of the Church of England ascribes to Baptism, regeneration "with" the Holy Spirit, the author of these pages cannot see how any candid person can deny. *Before* the performance of the ordinance, prayer is made that God would give his Holy Spirit that the infant to be baptized may be born again; and, *after* baptism, hearty thanks are yielded, that it hath pleased God to regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit. And, in consistency therewith the child so baptised is taught by the Catechism from his tenderest youth to say concerning his baptism, "Wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The service for the baptism of adults, although it has to do with *believers*, and, therefore,

with persons already born of God (1 John v. 1), is similar. Further—Remission of sins is also connected with the ordinance of Baptism in both services.

What I propose is, to examine the passages of the New Testament that bear on this doctrine; and, in so doing, I shall carefully endeavour to watch as to whether either of these privileges, *regeneration with the Holy Spirit* or *remission of sins*, is bestowed in this ordinance.

The first passage I shall examine is John iii. 5:—
“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Here we have the *necessity* for Baptism strongly stated—so strongly, that it would seem there is no entrance into the kingdom of God without it. But the remarkable feature of this passage is, that Baptism is made a birth by itself, *apart from* being born of the Spirit. According to this passage, there is a regeneration with water, as well as a regeneration with the Spirit.

Let us go from this passage to Titus iii. 4, 5. “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

Here we get the same idea. There is the washing of regeneration, and also the renewing by the Holy Ghost—a regeneration-washing, and also a regeneration with the Holy Ghost. There is also a reference to the doctrine of God's putting the Holy

Ghost himself within his people to dwell, in these words:—"Which He shed on us abundantly." The *necessity* for baptism is here also strongly implied,—so strongly that salvation seems to depend *in part* upon it.

Both these passages make against the idea, that regeneration with the Holy Spirit is the blessing bestowed in the ordinance of baptism; inasmuch as they both assign to baptism an importance (amounting to a regeneration) apart from the idea of regeneration with the Holy Spirit.

Let us look at some other passages. In Acts ii. 38, we find Peter saying, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for (or unto) the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The form of expression here is more specific: it is not for or unto salvation, but for or unto the remission of sins. However, it is not for or unto being born again of the Holy Ghost. The putting of the Holy Ghost himself within the penitent sinner to *dwell* (not the being born of, or the renewing by, the Holy Ghost), stands in connection; but baptism is for, or unto, the remission of sins. This surely is doctrinal instruction upon the subject. *Baptism is an outward and visible act whereby penitent sinners obtain outwardly and visibly the remission of their sins.* This is the same as the Scripture testimony to John's baptism: "John did baptise in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for (or unto) the remission of sins" (Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3).

Let us take another passage—Ananias's word to Paul—"And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be

baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16).

Here, again, *baptism is an outward and visible act whereby penitent and believing sinners obtain outwardly and visibly the remission of their sins.*

Both these passages (Acts ii. 38, and xxii. 16) strongly imply the *necessity* of baptism, and they both say specifically that it is for, or unto, the remission of sins. This will enable us to understand two other passages:—

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with *the washing of water by the word*" (Eph. v. 25, 26).

"The like figure whereunto, even *baptism*, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21).

The commission to the apostles contains the same idea: "He that believeth and is *baptised* shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16).

Thus, then, we get two leading ideas connected with baptism; namely, that it is in itself *a regeneration* apart from the idea of regeneration with the Holy Spirit, and that it is *an outward and visible act whereby penitent and believing sinners obtain outwardly and visibly the remission of their sins.*

Let us examine these two ideas in the light of some other passages; but, first, we may (to prevent any misunderstanding) consider what belongs to every sinner the moment he believes, *before* any ordinance has been administered to him.

The man that has been slain is the Son of God; the blood that has been shed is the blood of the Son of God. By that shed blood, God's hatred of sin or holiness has been *fully* declared. This God shewed, by raising Him up on the third day. He thereby declared Himself satisfied with that sacrifice, as a *complete* manifestation of the greatness of his hatred of sin. God's hatred of sin is as great as the person of Jesus is excellent, and as the blood of Jesus is precious. In the person of the man Jesus, God has been *fully* pleased and glorified, both as regards the matter of *obedience*, and the matter of *transgression*. God has been more glorified by human nature in the person of the man Jesus, than if sin had never come into the world at all. Therefore, there is, now, forgiveness with God. *Sinners* of the human race can be received and forgiven without any impeachment of his holiness. All are invited to come: all are commanded to come: all are promised forgiveness upon coming. Those that believe these things will come; and, therefore, *the moment* a sinner truly believes that Jesus is the Son of God, Scripture warrants us in saying of Him, He *is* justified from all things; "by Him all that *believe* are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39).

Such a one *is* a son of God, being born of God, or of the Spirit. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11, 12, 13).

“Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God” (1 John v. 1).

Such a one *hath* everlasting life. “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth* on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that *believeth* on me hath everlasting life” (John vi. 40, 47). “I am the resurrection and the life: he that *believeth* in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and *believeth* in me, shall never die” (John xi. 25, 26).

Moreover, such a one stands before God as having died in Christ and as having risen in Christ, and as having been made to sit in heavenly places in Christ; for the elect have died in Christ as their Surety on the cross, and this has been owned towards such a one by making him a partaker of Christ’s resurrection-life, and thus forgiving him all trespasses (1 Pet. ii. 24; Col. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6).

Without baptism, such a one is a saved person, as we know by the case of the thief on the cross (Luke xxiii. 42, 43). This must be held fast. But this is *private*, unconnected with any *outward* and *visible act* of reception. But God has not left matters there. He has appointed an *outward* and *visible act*, whereby penitent and believing sinners are to be received. God thereby (He having appointed the act) receives them. Till that *act* takes place, God has not *outwardly* and *visibly* received them. For this reason, baptism is spoken of in Scripture as *an act whereby penitent and believing sinners obtain the remission of their sins*.

We have also found it spoken of in Scripture, as in

itself a *regeneration*, apart from the idea of regeneration with the Holy Spirit.

Let us now look at some other passages, where these two ideas are opened up and explained.

Rom. vi. 3—7: “ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death we shall be also^a of His resurrection : knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [*margin*, justified] from sin.”

In this passage we find that the waters of baptism are an emblem, not of life, not of the Holy Spirit, but, of death. The water is “ the likeness ” of Christ’s death. Those who have been baptised are considered as having been put into the death of Christ, and thus under the judgment of God, in being put into the water; and as having emerged from that judgment in emerging from the water. Thus they have been *regenerated*, not, however, in the sense of a change of *nature* (though those that are baptised are responsible to “ walk in newness of life ”), but in the sense of a change of *state*, or standing, resulting in justification from sin.

Col. ii. 11, 12: “ In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circum-

^a “ In the likeness ” has been omitted, because it is not in the original. So the Vulgate and Syriac.

cision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Here we have the same idea,—believers who have been baptised are considered as having been buried with Christ, and raised up with Christ. They have put off the body of the sins of the flesh.

Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Here again, the same idea,—believers who have been baptised are considered as having put on Christ, and thus become sons of God. They have put on the new man, even Christ.

In all these passages, Scripture regards those who have been truly (as having come with faith and repentance) baptised, as having died with or in Christ, and as having been raised up with or in Christ, and, as such, regenerated (as to state), justified from sin, and sons of God. Thus those that have been truly baptised are said to have been “baptised into Christ,” that is, incorporated by baptism with Christ. And thus they are “all one in Christ.” Hence the visible Church;—the company of *the pardoned ones*, as distinguished from *the world* lying under God’s displeasure and exposed to coming judgment. Thereupon (in the same chapter of the Epistle to the Romans vi. 12—14) this exhortation to the Church to walk in holiness of life: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither

yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, *as those that are alive from the dead*, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have the dominion over you (the wages of sin is death, v. 23): for ye are not under the law" (and thus exposed to the curse and coming wrath), "but under grace." And again, in Colossians iii. 1—4, "If ye then be *risen with Christ*, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For *ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

I do not suppose that the expressions, "born of the Spirit," and "born of God," ever mean anything but change of *nature*; but Scripture speaks of "the washing of water," and "the washing of regeneration," and of being "born of water," and we must not lightly consider these latter expressions as identical with the former; we should, on the contrary, rather suppose them to mean something additional to the former. If being "born of the Spirit," and being "born of God," mean change of *nature*, the presumption is that "the washing of water," and "the washing of regeneration," and being "born of water," do not. I then go to Rom. vi., Col. ii., and Gal. iii., and there I find a believing sinner becomes, by the *outward and visible* act of baptism, a new man in Christ, in the sense of a change of *state*; and thus I get an explanation of "the washing of water," "the washing of regeneration," and "being born of water."

The result, however, of the examination of these

passages, Rom. vi., Col. ii., and Gal. iii., is, that we find that baptism, in being called a *regeneration* (apart from the idea of regeneration with the Holy Spirit), is not so called as implying some blessing in addition to the remission of sins, but as referring to *the manner* in which remission of sins is brought about, namely, by death and resurrection with Christ (see *suprà* page 10, line 12).

Thus far the passages of Scripture that it was proposed to examine.

The conclusion arrived at from them is, that Baptism is *not* the means whereby a man is born again of the Holy Spirit, but THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE ACT WHEREBY PENITENT AND BELIEVING SINNERS DO, OUTWARDLY AND VISIBLY, OBTAIN THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS.

According to Scripture, a man is supposed to be born again *of the Holy Spirit* (as distinguished from being born again of water), at some moment *previous* to Baptism, because those who were baptised were persons who were supposed to be *believers*. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). "But when they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women" (Acts viii. 12). And we know, that "whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, *is* born of God," or born of the Spirit (1 John v. 1). Until born of the Spirit, a man *will* not believe, *will* not repent (John v. 40; i. 11, 12, 13). This is the condemnation (John iii. 19, 20, 21).

Neither does God put his Spirit within his people to *dwell* (as distinguished from the Spirit's begetting) by means of Baptism. In Acts ii., that is, at Pentecost, this was accomplished *after* Baptism, without any instrumentality. In Acts viii. it was *after* Baptism, by means of the laying on of the hands of the apostles. In Acts x. it was *before* Baptism. And in Acts xix. it was *after* Baptism.

It does not follow, from this view of Baptism, that all who have been baptised have been received by God, and have obtained the remission of their sins; because Baptism being, according to Scripture, the exclusive privilege of those who truly repent and believe, those who get baptised without so repenting and believing, have "neither part nor lot in this matter" (Acts viii. 21; John iii. 18, 36; vi. 53; Mark xvi. 16). But to such as do truly repent and believe, it is *God's outward and visible act of receiving them and of remitting their sins*. That it is God's act is involved in the fact, that God instituted the ordinance, as has been already observed (Matt. xxviii. 19).

This view of Baptism sustains the *necessity* for the ordinance that we have seen adhering to it in sundry passages, whilst, at the same time, it guards against that necessity being considered absolute. Without it a person has not, by any *outward and visible act*, been received and forgiven by God; and without it, before the unity of the visible Church was broken, a person was not incorporated with—had not *entered*—the visible community of God's saints, and, thus, neither shared in the *provision* of God's house nor in the *service* which he had given his people to perform. That this neces-

sity is not absolute we know, because the dying thief was received by God and yet was not baptised (Luke xxiii. 42, 43); and such a reception belongs to all who go to God, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 13); and they may be *assured* of it, and must be so, if they have a true sense of the value of the blood of Him who was slain, as shewn by God's raising him up on the third day and exalting him to His own right hand in the heavenly places: but such an assurance (if possessed by a young Christian previous to baptism) would be only an additional reason for *submitting* to God's ordinance, whereby, as by an *outward* and *visible act*, sinners are received by God and have their sins *openly* forgiven.

Some might be disposed to say this is making baptism a seal of forgiveness. Certain it is, that it is making baptism to a penitent sinner what the parent's kiss is to her child, who, having behaved ill, has been told he shall be forgiven when he confesses his fault. The child confesses, and may be said to know, by the truthfulness of his parent's word, that he is forgiven; but it is the kiss that the child will call forgiveness. Others might call it the seal.

Baptism is no where called a seal in the Holy Scriptures;^b but there can be no objection to its being called a seal, as above, provided that the idea of its being an *outward* and *visible* act of association with Christ in His death and resurrection, and thus

^b The seal (in the sense of an *abiding* token) wherewith Christ's people are sealed, according to the New Testament, is the Holy Spirit, as put within the believer to *dwell* and there *abide* till the day of redemption (Eph. i. 13, 14; iv. 30; John xiv. 16, 17).

a regeneration as to *state*, involving remission of sins, be not thrown away. Nay, more, it is only whilst Baptism is felt to be a *real* act of God, implying the remission of sins, through *real* association with Christ in his death and resurrection that it can have any *sealing* effect upon the conscience.

In this point of view Peter speaks of it when alluding to the waters of Noah, whereby he and those with him were saved: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of *a good conscience toward God*), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God" (1 Pet. iii. 21, 22). Here again, the waters of Baptism are an emblem not of life, not of the Holy Spirit, but of death. Here baptism, as a *saving* ordinance, is made to result in *a good conscience*, or a conscience set free from the sense of sin through conscious association with Him who has risen out of, and far above, the water-floods of God's wrath. How manifest is it that baptism needs faith to make it efficacious. How can a person's *conscience* be affected by baptism where there is no faith?

Except Baptism does thus get its proper place given to it, as that which through faith in the *complete* atonement in the blood of the Son of God, does set the sinner's conscience at rest for ever, by giving him an *outward* and *visible* participation in that atonement, the ministry of the word will be apt to degenerate into discourses upon the work of the Spirit within us for the discovery of the *evidences* of salvation instead of upon the person and work, the coming and kingdom, of Christ, the Head of the

body, the Church, and thus leave the souls of believers liable to be “tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.”

Thus, I trust, we have got at the true idea of this important doctrine; and if so, it will be manifest that those are without warrant from Scripture who affirm that regeneration with the Holy Spirit is bestowed in Baptism; and equally so those who say that such and such persons who have been baptized (as far as form is concerned) have been regenerated, but not converted. Seeing Baptism is only valid where there is faith and repentance, the language of the latter has no more foundation in Scripture than that of the former.

II. I have already remarked, that I consider the doctrine of the Prayer-book of the Church of England ascribes regeneration with the Holy Spirit to baptism. By this I do not mean to say that *the members* of the Church of England hold that doctrine. I believe the great majority of those who have seriously considered the question, “What shall I do to be saved?” do *not* hold it. How they can consent to bring up their children from their earliest youth, with an *untruth* in their mouths touching their eternal salvation; and how such of them as are clergymen can, in the Baptismal services, *ask* God to do a thing that they do not believe He is in the habit of doing, and *thank* Him for doing what they have no reason to believe He does, I must leave to themselves to answer.

But I cannot drop the matter here. I believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with the Holy Spirit to be not only *unscriptural*, but also a *deadly error*. I consider those who *really* hold it, *i. e.*, who are not conscious of their having come to God in any

other way than through this baptism, are utterly deceiving themselves in thinking themselves Christians. The very first practical step towards salvation has not been taken by them; namely, a personal dealing with God, in the way of going to Him and acknowledging they are sinners, "without strength" to do anything good (Rom. viii. 7, 8; v. 6), after the manner of the publican, who cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13, 14). Others there are who hold it, who are conscious that previously to holding it, they went to God and pleaded guilty, casting themselves upon his free mercy, through the shed blood of his Son. Such, I consider, do not *really* hold it. They are not depending on it, though they profess to hold it; no, not even though they may-*now* profess to be depending on it. They have fallen into this snare of the devil subsequently to their taking refuge in the free mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

If the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with the Holy Spirit be once admitted, the whole Christian scheme is on the high-road to utter subversion; for this false doctrine does not stand by itself. If the possession of the benefit of life is made to turn upon the administration of an ordinance, without faith in the individual baptised, then, as a matter of course, the benefit must be reckoned as a thing that it is *possible* to lose, otherwise we shall have salvation without holiness. This, the possibility of the new life (that "everlasting life") being lost, is no small error. But it does not stop here. The result of the benefit being a thing that it is possible to lose, is, that the baptised are *put under a covenant of works*. It depends upon

their *conduct* whether they retain the benefit (supposed to be) conferred upon them at baptism or not. The result of being in such a position is, that a *fresh sacrificial offering* is needed to meet fresh transgressions; and, of course, a *priest* to present that offering. The sacrifice thus offered afresh, is (supposed to be) the sacrifice of Christ. Thus the sacrifice of Christ becomes a thing offered again and again; and thus the principle that a sacrifice offered many times, cannot *perfect* the conscience, is brought in,^c if not professedly yet practically, in the consciences and experience of the worshippers. And, be it remarked, that it is the great sacrifice of the Son of God which thus becomes, in the consciences of the worshippers, stamped with insufficiency. And thus *room is made* for fresh efforts to obtain peace of conscience; namely, for *priestly absolution, penances, extreme unction, and purgatory*. On the other hand, a priest being necessary, priesthood must be assumed by some in the Church, to the exclusion of the rest; which brings in the principle that some are *nearer* to God than others,—for those who offer the sacrifice must be nearer to God than those for whom it is offered. And thus, in the very constitution of this worship, the great body of the community are permanently excluded from *nearness* to God.

This perfects the picture. And where do we find

^c The *repetition* of a sacrifice implies *at least* that the efficacy of the previous offering is limited. It is the peculiar characteristic of the great sacrifice of the Son of God that its efficacy is unlimited, prospective, as well as retrospective, and everlasting. Those who are once purged by it, are "*for ever*" free from wrath. Their privilege is "*no more* conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 1—18).

ourselves? Just back again in the Mosaical economy, concerning which it is said, "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. vii. 19), and "as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse" (Gal. iii. 10). There is a covenant of *works*, and a *mediating* priesthood composed of *men*, by *sacrificial offering* ministering on *earth*, in a "worldly Sanctuary," *outside the presence of God*, that is, in the first or outer tabernacle, though, even into this, the people (the laity as they are called) cannot enter; and the sacrifice offered, a sacrifice *unable to make* those who do the service, that is, the worshippers, *perfect* as pertaining to the conscience (Rom. x. 5; Heb. ix. 1—10).

This may be fairly called Spurious Christianity. There is death in the pot. Can this be called faith in the Son of God? Awful to think that this is the religion of the majority, now increasing, of Christendom. Those who are under this system of worship are utterly deceiving themselves in thinking themselves Christians: but there is this difference between the laity and the clergy, that the clergy usurp the place of the *Son of God* as the only true *mediating Priest*, now, by *intercession* ministering in *heaven*, the true holiest of all, that is, *in the presence of God*, even for *all* those whom he *has* by one sacrifice once offered *perfected for ever*, and brought *nigh*, even into the holiest of all, as *worshipping priests* unto God (Heb. viii. 1, 2; vii. 23, 24, 25; ix. 24; x. 11—22; xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 9).

III. Seeing then that Scripture is so clear, as to the true idea of baptism, and that yet such a deadly error as baptismal regeneration with the Holy Spirit has got abroad, the question naturally arises, How could

the thought that *regeneration with the Holy Spirit is bestowed in baptism* ever have arisen?

I believe the answer to be both simple and short. It is the natural result of adopting the practice of *infant baptism*. The moment this is admitted as an unquestionable truth of God, the regeneration of infants with the Holy Spirit at baptism will be pleaded with irresistible force, on the grounds of Scripture language itself.^d If infant baptism be once admitted, *the real difficulty* is not, to shew that the Prayer-book of the Established Church does not contain the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with the Holy Spirit (which many godly men still in the Establishment are vainly seeking to do), but that SCRIPTURE does not contain it. The passage in John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," *if applicable to infants*, does not admit of any assurance concerning the salvation of infants, except on the supposition that they get regeneration with the Holy Spirit at the same time that they get the water. The passage in Rom. vi. 3, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death," must be considered, *if applicable to infants*, conclusive as to the question of the efficacy of infant baptism; and so likewise the passage in Gal. iii. 27, "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ." Thus the

^d To say nothing of consistency; for *if infants are not regenerated with the Holy Spirit when they are baptised*, then there will be either baptised persons not united to the Church, or persons united to the Church not possessing life: in other words, *nothing is effected for the infants baptised*.

only *sure* escape from this deadly error, is to be found in the question, What warrant has faith to take up an *infant* and baptise it? FAITH, all will allow, CANNOT ACT WITHOUT A PLAIN WARRANT FROM GOD, and yet there is not in all the New Testament, from one end to the other, a *single command* for the baptism of infants. This, Bishop Burnet, the celebrated expounder of the Thirty-nine Articles, admits, "There is," says he, "no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants" (*Expos. of Articles*, Art. xxvii, near the end). Neither does there occur in all the New Testament a *single instance* of the *practice* of the baptism of infants. As to tradition about the matter, Bishop Taylor affirms:—"There is no pretence of tradition, that the church in all ages did baptise all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not do it always, than that they did it in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, and St. Austin, were born of Christian parents, and yet not baptised until the full age of a man, or more." And, a little further on, the learned bishop shows how slender is the foundation of the argument in favour of an *apostolical tradition* to baptise infants:—"But that there is a tradition from the apostles so to do, relies but upon *two* witnesses, Origen and St. Austin; and the latter having received it from the former, it relies wholly upon his single testimony; which is but a pitiful argument to prove a tradition apostolical. He is the first that spoke it; but Tertullian, that was before him, seems to speak against it; which he would not have done, if it had been a tradition apostolical."—*The second*

part of the Dissuasive from Popery, by Jer. Taylor, book i., pp. 117, 118.

Thus I would hope, that I have not endeavoured in vain to set forth the true idea of the cleansing value of the waters of baptism,—a value founded entirely upon the *completeness* of the atonement, in the shed blood of the Son of God, as manifested by God's raising Him up on the third day, even through faith in the same. Where that precious blood saves *without* respect to the state of the *conscience*, and *without faith*, we may be *quite sure* that it saves *without Baptism*.