

Baptism, as we have before shown, is the appointed emblem, of the great change, effected by the Spirit's agency upon the soul, in preparing it for admission into the pure regions of heaven. It is on this account that our Lord connects together in his discourse with Nicodemus, *being born of water and born of the Spirit*. John iii. 5.—the one the sign, the other the gracious change which it signifies.—the *former* is necessary for an entrance into *the kingdom of God on earth*, i. e. the visible Church of Christ,—the *latter*, for our admission to *the mystical Church*, the blessed company of all faithful people on earth and in glory. It is on this account that St. Paul speaks in the same connection of "*the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*." Titus iii. 5.

The great apostle unequivocally asserts that this inward change does not consist in any external rite, and that no outward act can be substituted for it. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, *but a new creature*." Gal. vi. 15. To assert that the sprinkling of water is the renewing of the Spirit, is to undermine the whole scheme upon which the doctrine of regeneration is founded, viz., the atonement of Christ, the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost, and the economy of grace.

It is true we read, Acts ii. 38, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*."

Now this passage, so far from supporting the idea that "baptism," and "the gift of the Holy Ghost" are synonymous terms, rather proves that baptism, as an act whereby we publicly profess faith in Christ, when connected with evangelical repentance, is, to a certain extent, instrumental in regeneration.

II. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. *All believers in Christ who have not been baptized.* That faith in Christ is a prerequisite—in the case of an adult—in order to baptism, will appear from the language of Philip; the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip responded, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts viii. 36, 37. In the present day, no pedobaptist would administer baptism to a Heathen, Mohammedan, or Jew, till he had first "preached unto him Jesus;" then, upon the profession of his faith in Christ, he would baptize "himself and his household." That believers are proper subjects for this