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ON BAPTISM.

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No. III. *Of Baptism, as it regards the Subjects of it.*

THIS is the proper place to put the question, Of what use is baptism to an infant? Before giving a direct answer, it may be proper to take notice of two very general opinions on this point, both of which are extremes, and both are erroneous,—the former, pushing the words of Scripture beyond what the analogy of faith or the common use of the language of the Bible will allow; the other, not amounting to what the Scripture plainly teaches; the one, obviously intended to aggrandize Church power; the other, favourable to the neglect of parental duty.—The one, corrupting the doctrine of the Scripture; the other, unfavourable to the interests of morality.

1. There are who assert that, to baptize is to regenerate a child,—that the baptized are translated from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ,—that in baptism original guilt is washed away and actual sin forgiven,—that the baptized become partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal life; and that all this is true of every one who is rightly baptized. To be rightly baptized, according to those who hold these opinions, is to be baptized by a Clergyman who has received Episcopal ordination, and by none other. This doctrine is founded upon the assumption that baptism by water is the regeneration spoken of in the New Testament: that all such expressions as, “regeneration,” “born of water and the spirit,” “begotten again to a lively hope,” “born of incorruptible seed,” relate to the one simple act of being baptized by one who has been episcopally ordained.

We know of no task more irksome than to write a regular refutation of palpable nonsense; and at present we shall not attempt it. We think it sufficient to state, that according as we read the Bible, and according as it is explained by a great majority of the orthodox, *Regeneration* describes a great spiritual change effected by the spirit of God; by which change a man becomes a new creature—is raised out of a state of death into a state of life—becomes a partaker of a divine nature, and is justified so that he cannot come into condemnation. To assert that all this either means simply water baptism, or is effected in, or by, water baptism, would lead to some startling consequences. It would lead to a belief that every “rightly baptized” person is truly a believer and has received power to become a child of God;—that he does not commit sin; for the Apostle John asserts that, “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;”—that he overcomes the world; for the same Apostle says that, all “who