

the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition.” Else we would not baptize them. We baptize an adult person who has not previously been baptized on a profession of his faith in Christ, believing he has been already regenerated or born again. We do not believe the water baptism regenerates him ; we regard it merely as the “outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” The very words imply that there should first be the inward and spiritual grace before there is the outward sign of it. Surely there must be the existence of the thing itself, before the “sign” signifying its existence. As the “inward grace” is “invisible” we have to rely on the profession of the responsible subject, but in the case of an infant we make use of the “sign” with the utmost assurance of the “inward grace,” believing as we do from Scripture in the universality of Christ’s atonement, and bearing in mind the precious words of Jesus in regard to “little children,” that “of such is the Kingdom of God.” But we believe those words of Christ refer to each and every infant, baptized or unbaptized, otherwise He would most assuredly have made a distinction. Where God has not put any we will not dare to do it ; nor have we any desire to do so, for as “it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish,” we rejoice in the confidence that no human—nor inhuman invention can overrule *His will*.

But as Layman has so much to say about Mr. Wesley let us look at his writings again. In the sermon on the New Birth, already referred to, he says : “The expression, ‘being born again,’ was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus ; it was well known before that time, and was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among

them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized he was said to be born again ; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. This expression, therefore, which Nicodemus, being a ‘Teacher in Israel,’ ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him ; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to.” Farther on in the same sermon occurs the language already quoted over and over again, clearly stating that “baptism is not the new birth ; they are not one and the same thing.” And also, “that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism ; they do not constantly go together.” Could anything be more conclusive ?

But as Layman does not seem to like our quoting from this “chosen authority,” the New Birth sermon, I will quote one complete paragraph from a letter written by Mr. Wesley to a Rev. Mr. Potter, Church of England clergyman, in the year 1758. He says : “You proceed : ‘Our holy church doth teach us, that, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, we are received into the number of the children of God—this is the first part of the new birth.’ What is the first part of the new birth ? *Baptism* ? It is the *outward sign* of that inward and Spiritual grace ; but no *part* of it at all. It is impossible it should be. The outward sign is no more a part of the inward grace than the body is a part of the soul. Or do you mean, that *regeneration* is a part of the new birth ? Nay, this is the *whole* of it. Or is it the *laver of regeneration* which