

cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

The promise of God is,—“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.” Isa. xlv: 3. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezek. xxxvi. 25—26. As a *sign*, baptism is especially emblematical of that effusion of the Spirit which is peculiar to the Gospel dispensation. This is, probably, one of the principal reasons why it was substituted for circumcision; for in baptism by *affusion*—the New Testament mode of baptizing—we have a natural symbol of this heavenly gift. Accordingly, the pouring out of the “spirit upon all flesh,” which is spoken of by Joel, is in the New Testament called a *baptism*. Indeed, when baptism is administered by *affusion*, we have a true representation of the *pouring out* of the Spirit, the *descending* of the Spirit, and the *falling* of the Spirit upon men.

As a *seal*, it is on the part of God, a visible assurance of faithfulness to His covenant stipulations. Thus, He condescends to bind Himself by a perpetual ceremony, to which the weak and wavering may ever appeal, as a sensible pledge of his unwavering fidelity.

It is our *seal* also. It is that act whereby we make ourselves a party to the covenant, and thus “set to our seal that God is true.” In this respect it binds *us*, as, in the other, *God* mercifully binds Himself, for the stronger assurance of our faith.

How sacred are the obligations of baptized persons! The vows of God are upon them. How guilty if they do not keep the covenant.

(3) *Baptism is not regeneration*.—Here let it be understood,—we regard “the new birth” and “regeneration” as synonymous expressions—we mean that great change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus, when it is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. 2 Cor. v. 17. John iii. 3.

We read in Acts x. 46—48, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” This passage clearly proves, that men may receive the Holy Ghost, and consequently may be regenerated without being baptized. Baptism, therefore, cannot be the *regenerating act*—that is affected by the power of the Almighty.