

"HE SAVED US, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION
AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST"
TITUS 3:5

BY
CHARLES T. BUTRIN

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PREFACE

A Roman Catholic Church background in the early life of the writer prompted a vital interest in the doctrine of regeneration. In his early years the writer gave himself to a study of the dogmas of the Catholic Church under the tutorship of priests and nuns. So often he yearned to understand clearly the way of salvation, not knowing what he hungered after. Instead of learning salvation according to the "simplicity which is in Christ," he only received half truths and doctrines which were clouded and confused by clever sophistry and non-sequitor reasoning, and totally without the offering of assurance of sins forever forgiven or of personal, eternal salvation secured. There was indeed a "zeal for God but not according to knowledge."

It is no wonder that a study of doctrine in the Scriptures became precious to the writer upon his conversion. It is still with this same delight that the writer has undertaken this study of Tit. 3:5, which touches on one of the greatest doctrines of Scripture, knowing that he can explore it to the full and know exactly what is meant by the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Prof. Ralph W. Gilbert, the writer's adviser, for his time and wise counsel. The writer is also grateful to Dr. Herman A. Hoyt for his valuable assistance in certain phases of the Greek grammar. Especially is he indebted

to the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating him and instructing him in a new way to understand the manner in which sinners can be saved "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

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INTRODUCTION

Regeneration as a doctrine occupies a central position in the theology of the New Testament. It is the grand focal point at which all the important doctrines relating to man's salvation converge. The importance of a correct interpretation of this doctrine to the theologian or to any individual lies in the fact of this central relationship to all other doctrines. Any man who correctly interprets the Biblical meaning of regeneration is not apt to find his place in the camp of the liberals or agnostics, nor yet among the false cults of our day. Not only so, but more than any other doctrine, this of regeneration has the most vital and personal application to the human heart. The regenerated man has the assurance of eternal life as a present possession and has no fear of eternal punishment.

Dr. Bernard Ramm makes note of the vital importance of this doctrine in the Bible, as well as in experience, when he says:

The Bible accentuates one remarkable experience in particular, regeneration, and thousands of Christians will testify to its reality in their own lives. From Paul to Evangelist Billy Graham is one huge swollen river of testimony to the transforming power of the grace of God as it regenerates the soul.¹

Sacramentarianism has so obscured this doctrine of the Scriptures that many persons who give no evidence of being re-

¹Bernard Ramm, Protestant Christian Evidences (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 31.

generated are quite convinced they are Christians. Therefore, many who are working for the testimony of Christ have learned not to ask a stranger the question, "Are you a Christian," but always, "Have you been born again."

There are many passages of Scripture which treat of this subject in one way or another. The writer shall refer to some of these throughout this monograph. There are only two, however, which mention the word "regeneration" by name, using the Greek word, παλιγγενεσία. They are Mt. 19:28 and Tit. 3:5. It is the writer's opinion that the passage in Matthew does not relate to the time of the inception of new life in the believer but rather has a millennial setting. The one in Titus does have reference to the new birth and the doctrine of regeneration as it relates to salvation in this life. Therefore, this paper is confined to that aspect of regeneration which this verse presents and not to a study of the whole of the doctrine of regeneration.

Historically there have been three main interpretations of the phrase, "washing of regeneration," so that it is necessary to treat of each one of these views and try to ascertain which is the true teaching of this phrase. Secondly, the phrase, "renewing of the Holy Spirit," accompanies the "washing of regeneration" in a close tie in the text and therefore the writer endeavors also to explain its true meaning.

When these two problems have been solved, it is the hope of the writer that the answers will prove profitable in a spiritual and likewise a practical way to every reader.

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ
 ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ
 ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγ-
 γεनेσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου.

Variant Reading in Nestle's Text 16th ed.

There is one variant reading of no importance: διὰ is inserted between ἀνακαινώσεως and πνεύματος ἁγίου. This variant is found in two less important manuscripts, Codex D (Claramontanus) (cf. superior asterisk) and Codex G (Boernerianus), in a number of Old Latin versions, and given by Ambrosius, a church father of the fourth century.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

Wiclif Version, 1380

...not of werkis of riztwisnesse that we diden, but bi his merci he made us saaf bi waischyng of azenbigetinge and azen newyng of the holi goost;

Tyndale Version, 1534

...not of the dedes of rightewesnes which we wrought but of his mercie he saved vs by the fountayne of the newe birth, and with the renuyng of the holy goost,

Authorized Version, 1611

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;

Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible, 1897

Not by works which we had done in righteousness but according to his mercy he saved us—through means of the bathing of a new birth and the moulding anew of the Holy Spirit,

Twentieth Century New Testament, 1898-1901

...not as a result of any righteous actions that we had done, but in fulfilment of his merciful purposes. He saved us by that washing which was a New Birth to us, and by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit,

American Standard Version, 1901

...not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Weymouth's New Testament, 1903

...not in consequence of things which we, as righteous men, had done, but as the result of His own mercy He saved us by means of the bath of regeneration and the renewal of our natures by the Holy Spirit,

Basic English New Testament, 1941

...not by works of righteousness which we did ourselves, but in the measure of his mercy, he gave us salvation, through the washing of the new birth and the giving of new life in the Holy Spirit,

Williams' New Testament, 1937

He saved us, not for upright deeds which we had done, but in accordance with His mercy, through the bath of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

The Revised Standard Version, 1946

...he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit,

Rheims Version, 1582

...not by the vvorkes of justice vvich vve did, but according to his mercy he hath saved vs by the louter of regeneration and renovation of the holy ghost;

Confraternity Version, Revised 1941

...then not by reason of good works which that we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us through the bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit;

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

Old Testament Allusions To Regeneration

The word "regeneration" does not appear in the Old Testament Hebrew nor in the Greek Septuagint, translation of the Old Testament. However, in the Old Testament we find some basic truths without which there could be no full understanding of this great New Testament teaching but with which the doctrine of regeneration becomes clear and vital.

Jesus was talking to Nicodemus one night and made the statement to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jno. 3:3) Later, he added, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jno. 3:5) Then Nicodemus asked how these things could possibly be and Jesus' answer was significant: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (Jno. 3:10) The question naturally arises, how Nicodemus could know this concerning "being born again" and concerning "water and Spirit." Of course, the only answer would be found in the Old Testament, of which Nicodemus was a teacher. All he had was contained in those scrolls of holy writ and he above anyone else among the Jews, Jesus said, should know of these things. Let us see what there was in the Old Testament for Nicodemus to know about the subject of regeneration.

The record of God's dealing with Adam, the federal head of the human race, describes clearly man's need of regeneration. Adam

was a son of God, created in the image and moral purity of God. (Gen. 2) However, Adam failed to obey God in all His commandments and thus he fell from that original state of moral purity. (Gen. 3) He thereby became a sinner, guilty, condemned, and his very nature became spiritually corrupt and defiled. Adam's progeny also, being born after his image (Gen. 5:3) was spiritually dead (Rom. 5:15), condemned (Rom. 5:16), and defiled by sin (Rom. 6:19). Man's understanding about God became darkened and his very life alienated from the life of God. (Eph. 4:18) No longer is man a son of God but a son of Adam and his race.

Dr. McClain lucidly outlines the condition of the unregenerate man in this four-fold way:

1. Man is dead spiritually.
2. Man is not God's child spiritually.
3. Man is blind to spiritual things.
4. Man of himself is totally unable to change his spiritual condition.¹

These are basic truths found in the Old Testament which are necessary to an understanding of the doctrine of regeneration.

While the third chapter of Genesis records the fall of man into sin, the rest of the Old Testament is a record of God's restoration of fallen man. This is seen in the provision of temporary coverings for sin and in types and symbols, all of which looked forward to their fulfillment in the person of Christ and His work at Calvary. There was the brazen altar, a type of the cross of Christ, where the burnt-offering was made as a sacrifice for sin. The blood of the sacrifices was taken by the high priest within the

¹Alva J. McClain, Unpublished theology classnotes, Salvation (Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind.: n. d.), p. 46 (Mimeographed).

Holy of Holies and there it was sprinkled on the mercy seat for a covering for sin because of the "transgressions of the law."

There was not only the application of the blood to cover sin in the Old Testament but there was the laver with its ceremonial and cleansing water. The priests had to wash at the laver prior to doing their special service in behalf of the people unto the Lord in entering into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. The people too needed cleansing by the "waters of separation" (Num. 19), which waters gained their cleansing virtue by being mingled with the ashes of the red heifer which had been burned on the day of atonement.

These two, the covering of blood and the cleansing water, are prominent in the Old Testament ceremonies which God commanded the children of Israel to perform at regular times. They represented not only an expression of the need of the chosen people for a cleansed life but they also represented God's provision at that time for this need.

It should be observed here that the New Testament fulfillment of this Old Testament ritual was accomplished by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. So that under the New Testament economy the clear teaching is that justification which was provided by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:8) does not simply cover sin but provides a "remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25) and makes it possible that the believing sinner may be declared righteous. A child of God may now exclaim: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. 1:5) This is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament shedding

of blood.

Finally, we find in the Old Testament passages which express the heart-cry of the believer for the renovation of his nature by divine energy, and a large number of passages which promise a future regeneration. David cried: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10) Again David cried: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." (Ps. 19:12)

Concerning the promises of a future time when God would satisfy the heart of his people and create a new life within them, we find such passages as Ezek. 11:19: "I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." Is: 55:3 reads: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." We find in the Old Testament still other passages which speak of a "new covenant" promised to Israel, with the inference that the old will be done away. This covenant, besides promising a reign of peace and righteousness for Israel, is in the main concerned with a promise of internal blessing to the heart, a regeneration. In Jer. 31:31-34 are contained promises to Israel of regeneration, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, teaching of the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness of sins:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers. . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their

iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The New Testament believer, Gentile or Jew, experiences a similar blessing as a pre-fulfillment of the Old Testament promise, but under the new covenant which the Lord instituted for the church. Luke 22:20 says: "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." The real fulfillment of the promise to Israel is yet future, as can be seen from the context of Jeremiah 31. This promise relates to the houses of Israel and Judah. These are the very Old Testament allusions which Nicodemus should have recalled when the Lord spoke to him of being born of "water and spirit" and being "born again." These Old Testament allusions, though imperfect and typical, all fell short of bringing regeneration to the Old Testament believer but they anticipated the New Testament teaching concerning "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

There is a contrast to the New Testament use of the word. There are two kinds of regeneration by fire, the other by the Spirit. The one physical, the other spiritual; the one subject to physical rebirth and renewal, the Biblical conception of regeneration is that it occurs instantaneously, once for all, and results in an endless life. As Isaiah says it:

While the word is frequently used by the pagan writers and appears also in the mystery cults, the gulf between Paul's meaning and the pagan meaning is absolute; for pagans had no concept of the generation of a spiritual life by a divine, a *Zoe*, imparted by the Holy Spirit, to make eternally alive a life that is unharmed through physical death unto glory and blessedness with God and Christ.

A. C. H. Lewis, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, To the Thimotheans, To Titus and To Philemon*, (London, John Loder's Book Concern Co., 1907), p. 10.

New Testament Teaching Concerning Regeneration

As we pass from the Old Testament to the New we find more than mere allusions to the doctrine of regeneration. The word παλιγγενεσία appears for the first time in Mt. 19:28 and again in Tit. 3:5. The word was not coined by either Matthew or Paul. It had been used for years by the great Greek and Hebrew writers and statesmen before Christ. The Pythagoreans used the word in their doctrine of the transmigration of souls for their reappearance in new bodies. Philo, the Hebrew philosopher, employed the word metaphorically of the postdiluvian epoch, of the earth as a new world. In the philosophy of the Stoics παλιγγενεσία was used to describe the periodical restoration of the world after its periodical destruction by fire. Thus we see that prior to the New Testament this word was used to denote a restoration, a recovery, or a change for the better.

What a contrast to the New Testament use of the word. The one speaks of regeneration by fire, the other by the Spirit of God; the one physical, the other spiritual; the one subject to periodical relapses and renewal, the Biblical conception of regeneration is that it occurs instantaneously, once for all, and issues in an endless life. As Lenski says it:

While the word is frequently used by the pagan writers and appears also in the mystery cults, the gulf between Paul's meaning and the pagan meaning is absolute; for paganism had no concept of the generation of a spiritual life in a sinner, a ζωή implanted by the Holy Spirit, to make spiritually alive a life that is unharmed through physical death unto glory and blessedness with God and Christ.²

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, To the Thessalonians, To Timothy, To Titus and To Philemon (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern Co., 1937), p. 946.

Trench also observes this same thought when he says of the word

παλιγγενεσία :

. . . one of the many words which the gospel found, and, so to speak, glorified; enlarged the borders of its meaning; lifted it up into a higher sphere; made it the expression of far deeper thoughts, of far mightier truths, than any of which it had been the vehicle before.³

Thus, while the Old Testament reveals the doctrine of regeneration as a future promise of God for His saints, the New Testament contains on almost every page the precious reality, fulfillment of the promise, presented to the heart weary of sin.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

³Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: MacMillan and Co., 1865), p. 59.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The Major Problem

What is meant by the phrase "washing of regeneration?"

The Minor Problem

What is the "renewing of the Holy Ghost?"

The two problems will be considered in the order in which they appear in the text.

Since the predominant interpretation of the major problem down through the centuries has been a false one, the discussion of this problem will occupy the major part of the writer's interpretation.

The solution of the minor problem is not necessary to the solution of the major problem, but rather completes the meaning of the latter. Therefore, it will be considered only in the writer's interpretation after the major problem.

The Baptismal-Regeneration View

Most of the leaders in christendom from the middle of the second century to the present have held to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Those who adhere to this view believe that the baptismal waters contain a spiritual efficacy for the recipient in bringing about the remission of his sin and the new birth. Not the water alone but the Holy Spirit and the water are necessary to effect regeneration. Without the water the Spirit cannot accomplish regeneration and vice versa. All such leaders have found in the phrase, "washing of regeneration", of Tit. 3:5 and the phrase, "born of water and of the Spirit", of Jno. 3:5 a proof-text that Christ instituted water baptism as a sacramental grace which brings regeneration to the soul.

Almost without exception the early church fathers believed this doctrine. Thomas Aquinas of the thirteenth century was the standard-bearer for the middle ages of the doctrine of baptismal-regeneration in his momentous work Summa Theologica. Middle-age theologians from Pelagius to Erasmus held on tenaciously to this position. This tying in of regeneration with water baptism persisted so long as the standard teaching of the church that Strong states the fact very frankly when he declares:

The doctrine of regeneration, aside from sacramentarianism, was not apprehended by Luther or the reformers, was not indeed wrought out till Wesley taught that God instantaneous-

ly renewed the affections and the will.¹

This interpretation is best expressed in the words of Augustine who said:

. . . being born again in Christ, . . . which He meant to be effected through baptism, at the very time when such a sacrament was purposely instituted for regenerating in the hope of eternal salvation. Whence the apostle says: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the laver of regeneration.²

The baptismal regeneration view is still held by the Catholic Church, Anglican churches, most Lutheran churches, Campbellite church bodies, the old order Brethren, certain Baptist groups, Jesus-Only Pentecostals and other smaller denominations with varying twists to the interpretation of baptism and its connection with regeneration.

Individuals down through the years who have held this view are: Justin Martyr,³ Aquinas,⁴ Luther,⁵ Lange,⁶ Lenski,⁷

¹A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1953), p. 809.

²A. Augustine, "On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism," The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Philip Schaff (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1887), V, 23, 24.

³Justin Martyr, First Apology, Chap. 61, cited by Henry Albert Newman, History of Anti-Pedobaptism (Philadelphia: Baptist Publication Society, 1896), p. 4.

⁴Thomas Aquinas, cited by Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 671.

⁵Martin Luther, Smaller Catechism, Part IV, Sec. 3, cited by Philip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), III, 86.

⁶John Peter Lange, A Commentary On The Holy Scriptures, trans. Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), XXIII, 20.

⁷R. C. H. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 947, 948.

H. A. W. Meyer,⁸ Marvin Vincent,⁹ William Wall,¹⁰ and many others.

⁸H. A. W. Meyer, A Critical and Exegetical Handbook To The Epistles To Timothy and Titus (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889), p. 315.

⁹Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 349.

¹⁰William Wall, The History of Infant Baptism (Oxford: University Press, [1835]), II, 208.

The Symbolic of Baptism View

Those who hold this view may be divided into two groups:

1. Those who believe the "washing" to be a symbol of baptism, a seal of regeneration.
2. Those who believe the "washing" to be a symbol of baptism, a picture of regeneration.

Of the first group it can be said that they see in the expression "washing of regeneration" an allusion to the rite of baptism. In the main, those who hold that Tit. 3:5 is symbolic of baptism believe that most of the work of regeneration in behalf of the believer is inwardly performed by the Holy Spirit who washes the soul of its guilt by the blood of Christ prior to baptism. Nevertheless baptism as a sacrament is believed by this group also to seal the work of regeneration to the believer. This school of interpretation does not go as far in making baptism an agent in regeneration as those who believe in baptismal regeneration, for they give much more prominence to the necessity of an inward cleansing of the soul by the blood, and emphasize the inworking of the Holy Spirit, implanting the divine seed within the believer, thus making him a new creature. But, nevertheless, this group believes that the grammar of just such a passage as Tit. 3:5 shows the necessity of water baptism to seal (complete) the work of regeneration.

This interpretation is most clearly represented by Matthew Henry whose comment on Tit. 3:5 is self-explanatory:

Here is the outward sign and seal thereof in baptism, called therefore the washing of regeneration. The work itself is inward and spiritual, but this is outwardly signified and sealed in the ordinance. Water is of a cleansing and purifying nature, does away with the filth of the flesh, and so is apt to signify the doing away of the guilt and defilement of sin by the blood and spirit of Christ; though

this aptness alone, without Christ's institution, had not been sufficient.¹¹

Others who hold this view are: John Calvin,¹² William Jenks,¹³ and most Reformed Church theologians.

The second group of interpreters of the symbolic of baptism view also admit the phrase "washing of regeneration" has reference to the rite of baptism as a sign but they make haste to disassociate any saving efficacy from baptism, either as a means or a seal of regeneration. They still believe regeneration to be an instantaneous work in the life of the believer prior to baptism. The only relation which baptism holds to regeneration in the eyes of this group is as an outward picture of a previous inward work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

A. H. Strong, in commenting on Tit. 3:5, most clearly expresses this view when he says:

The word "washing" more properly refers to the rite of baptism, and regeneration to the moral change signified thereby. . . . The Scriptures represent baptism to be not the means but only the sign of regeneration, and therefore to presuppose and follow regeneration. . . . In other words, the entire change, internal and external, spiritual and ritual, is referred to in language belonging strictly, only to the outward aspect of it.¹⁴

The following are representative of those who hold to

¹¹Matthew Henry, A Commentary on the Holy Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n.d.), VI, 1231.

¹²John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 332, 334.

¹³William Jenks, Acts Revelation, The Comprehensive Commentary (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1849), p. 504.

¹⁴A. H. Strong, op. cit., pp. 821, 822.

this view: Albert Barnes,¹⁵ Joseph Benson,¹⁶ George Williams,¹⁷ A. T. Robertson,¹⁸ and others.

¹⁵ Albert Barnes, Notes on the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), p. 321.

¹⁶ Joseph Benson, The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour (New York: T. Carlson & J. Porter, 1815), II N.T., p. 474.

¹⁷ George Williams, The Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1949), p. 968.

¹⁸ A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), IV, 607.

The Spiritual Cleansing View

Those scholars of the Bible who adhere to this interpretation do not believe that the Tit. 3:5 passage has any reference to baptism in any sense. It is simply a phrase, either literal or figurative, expressing a spiritual experience which occurred instantaneously at regeneration, and prior to baptism. The "washing" is an inward, spiritual one whereby the Holy Spirit, or the Word, or the blood of Christ, or all three, act as a cleansing agency upon the sinner's soul to cleanse it from the pollution and power of sin. Immediately following, or simultaneously with, the "washing," the soul is renewed as the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life.

There is diversity of interpretation among those of this group as to what is the agent of the cleansing and what is the use of the genitive παλιγγενεσίας as related to λουτροῦ. H. A. Ironside believed that the "washing" was figurative of the Word of God when he said:

The washing is the application of the Word of God to the heart and conscience, thus producing thru the Spirit's power the new nature. Having been washed from our old behavior, we are daily being renewed by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

Those who have held to this view are: Harvey,²⁰ Gaebelein,²¹

¹⁹H. A. Ironside, Hebrews and Titus (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1932), p. 271.

²⁰H. Harvey, Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, First and Second Timothy and Titus and the Epistle to Philemon (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1888), p. 143.

²¹A. C. Gaebelein, Philippians to Hebrews, Vol. III, The Annotated Bible (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope", 1917), p. 214.

The Spiritual Cleansing View

Those scholars of the Bible who adhere to this interpretation do not believe that the Tit. 3:5 passage has any reference to baptism in any sense. It is simply a phrase, either literal or figurative, expressing a spiritual experience which occurs instantaneously at regeneration, and prior to baptism. The "washing" is an inward, spiritual one whereby the Holy Spirit, or Word, or the blood of Christ, or all three, act as a cleansing agency upon the sinner's soul to cleanse it from the pollution and power of sin. Immediately following, or simultaneously with the "washing," the soul is renewed as the Holy Spirit baptizes spiritual life.

There is diversity of interpretation among those of this group as to what is the agent of the cleansing and what is the use of the positive regeneration as related to baptism. A. A. Troskie believed that the "washing" was figurative of the Word of God when he said:

The washing is the application of the Word of God to the heart and conscience, thus producing that the Spirit's power is new nature. Having been washed from our old behavior, we are daily being renewed by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

Those who have held to this view are: Harvey, Gabel, and Troskie.

¹⁹ A. A. Troskie, Hebrews and Titus (New York: Loizeaux, 1932), p. 271.
²⁰ H. Harvey, Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, 1932.
²¹ G. Gabel, Philippians to Hebrews, Vol. III, The Associated Bible (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope", 1932), p. 271.

Clark,²² Gill,²³ Wuest,²⁴ and Chafer.²⁵

²²Adam Clark, The New Testament (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1833), V, 375.

²³John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament (London: William H. Collenbridge, 1853), II, 670.

²⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, The Pastoral Epistles in the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), p. 200.

²⁵Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas: Dallas Publishing Press, 1948), III, 242.

Major Problem: What Is The Washing of Regeneration

The Spiritual Cleansing View

That the "washing of regeneration" must refer to a spiritual cleansing, accomplished by certain agents which God has ordained, and having no connection with christian baptism, is the carefully considered view of the writer of this monograph. This view best fits any and all passages parallel to this one of Tit. 3:5 and relating to the doctrine of regeneration as taught in the Scriptures. The writer will attempt to prove that this is the correct interpretation by means of some positive arguments in this section and then refute all other interpretations by means of negative arguments in the next section.

The positive arguments for the spiritual cleansing view shall be considered under the following two subjects:

1. What is the "washing?"
2. What relation does the "washing" bear to the "regeneration?"

What is the "washing?"--Thayer defines the word in the Greek as : "a bathing, bath, i.e. as well the act of bathing . . . as the place. . ." This is not all he says for he adds, "used in the N. T. and in ecclesiastical writings of baptism. . . ."¹ In the first quote Thayer is giving as close as possible

¹Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), p. 382.

the root meaning of the word λουτρόν but in the latter he is giving an interpretation of its usage, that is, that the church fathers thought it to be used in connection with baptism, and Thayer agrees with this view.

Let us focus our attention for a moment on the root meaning of the word. Two things are to be noted about this word. The first is that the emphasis is upon the process, the bath, the act of bathing. The Authorized Version brings this out in translating it everywhere "washing" or "washed" which speaks of a process or its effect and never of a place or of a manner. This is significant because if one tries to bring baptism into the picture, he at once disturbs the pattern, giving the idea of both place and manner.

We find λουτρόν so used in the Old Testament in verses S. Sol. 4:2 and 6:6 as distinguished from the word λουτήρ, "laver," the place of ceremonial cleansing. In the first, it is the simple process of a bath; in the latter, it is the laver of the tabernacle and ceremonial rite. The New Testament does not know the use of the word λουτήρ and rightfully so, most especially the epistles, which speak of the doctrines of grace pertaining to the church, not the ceremonies of the law in which the laver played so important a part. Anderson brings this out when he says: "To render it [λουτροῦ] 'laver' would suggest a false exegesis, for a different, though kindred word, is used for 'laver' in the Greek Bible."²

²Robert Anderson, For Us Men (New York: Gospel Publishing House, n. d.), p. 135.

Secondly, besides speaking of the process, this word λουτρόν speaks of a whole bath or the bathing of the whole person. Its stem is found in the verb, λούω, meaning to bathe the whole person as distinguished from νίπτω, to bathe a part of the body, and πλύνω, to wash a garment. The word λούω is used six times in the New Testament and each time in connection with the bathing of the whole person. We conclude, therefore, that the word λουτρόν carries the idea both of the process or act of bathing and secondly, the completeness of the process. Since some take this word to have reference to baptism, we might add here that there is a distinction between the meaning of the stem in λούω and that in βαπτίζω. Dr. Hoyt expresses it when he says that the first "describes the effect, namely, that of complete cleansing," while the second "describes the method, namely, that of complete dipping."³

What cleansing process, then, is this to which λουτροῦ is referring? Two things are important to note here. First, the word "washing" is in the genitive being emphasized by the preposition διά of which λουτροῦ is the object. That is, λουτροῦ is an intermediate agent in some other process or verbal idea, namely, ἔσωσεν, "he saved." This verb is in the aorist tense indicating an action completed once for all in past time. Its stem or root is the word σώζω which means, according to Thayer, "to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue

³Herman A. Hoyt, unpublished "Notes On Denominational Beliefs and Practices" (Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind.: n. d.), p. 10 (Mimeographed).

from danger or destruction."⁴ The context of the verse as well as the use of ἔσωσεν clearly indicates that the reference is to eternal salvation. Alford in speaking of this says:

But this ἔσωσεν, being contemporaneous with ὅτε ἐπεφάνη above cannot apply to our individual salvation alone. At the same time, standing as it does in a transitional position, between God's objective act and the subjective individual application of it, it no doubt looks forward as well as backward . . . to individual realization of salvation, as well as to the divine completion of it once for all in Christ.⁵

Undoubtedly, in using the word ἡμᾶς, Paul had reference to himself, Titus, and those believers in the Cretian church, as well as to all believers who receive salvation from God "according to His mercy." λουτροῦ must have reference then to a spiritual cleansing.

It follows then that the "washing" is a complete spiritual cleansing and it is the writer's opinion that it has direct reference to the cleansing or washing of justification. It is not that Paul is elaborating on the whole of the doctrine of justification, which he does in the Roman and Galatian epistles, but rather that he is referring to that aspect of justification which is the washing away of the guilt of sin in the heart. Logically this is the first step in the order of our salvation.

There are a number of Scripture passages which demonstrate this. Rev. 1:5b says: "Who loved us [loveth] and washed us [having washed us] from our sins in his own blood." The brackets give the better rendering of the Greek tense. The word "washed" is

⁴Thayer, op. cit., p. 610.

⁵Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1865), III, 424.

here λούσαντι, the very stem from which our word λουτρόν comes. This was written to "his servants" and therefore to those who were eternally saved. They had been first justified by the washing of their sins in the blood of the lamb. It was the blood that washed them, not a laver or baptism.

Another passage in point is Jno. 15:3. Jesus said to His disciples: "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken to you." This meant that they had already been cleansed and the agent of the cleansing was the "word." Having been cleansed, they were admonished to abide in Him that they might bear more fruit.

Still another passage is that found in Eph. 5:26. The American Standard Version best renders the Greek here when it reads: "that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with [ἐν, in] the word." This is another significant verse because it is the only other place in the whole New Testament where the word λουτρόν is used besides the Titus passage. The word "cleansed" is here the aorist participle, again denoting a completed act prior to the time of the preceding phrase, "that he might sanctify it." The dative λουτρῷ is the dative of means, expressing that the cleansing was through a washing. The word "water" is the agent of the washing but can not be taken apart from the phrase ἐν ῥήματι. This phrase qualifies the water to be water in the realms of the word. Undoubtedly the word is the word of God spoken through Christ and the same word that has the power to cleanse according to Jno. 15:3. The water can not, therefore, be literal water but is figurative of the cleansing power of the word. The prepositional phrase limits the water to

"water in the word" and can not be construed to be baptismal water or water in a laver.

This Ephesians passage, if we had no other, is an excellent one to show the relation of the use of λουτρόν to the cleansing which is justification. The apostle says the Lord's purpose is to sanctify that which has already been cleansed. This could only be speaking of the cleansing from sin at salvation, which is justification.

Thus we conclude that the "washing" mentioned in Tit. 3:5 is a spiritual cleansing which is the justifying of the sinner from his sins as an intermediate agent in the process of his salvation. We would not have to go outside of the Titus passage to see that the Holy Spirit had justification in mind here. Reading on to the end of this same sentence in verse seven we find these words: "that being justified [having been justified] by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The other related passages which we have brought in amplify this fact and also show the agents in the process of justification, namely, the blood and the word.

In summary, let us reiterate that the "washing" of Tit. 3:5 is figurative of a spiritual, cleansing process, which is justification, brought about in the life of the believing sinner through the blood of Christ and the word of God, as an initial step in the process of salvation and paving the way for another, equally important one, namely regeneration.

What relation does the "washing" bear to the "regeneration?"
—Specifically, the word παλιγγενεσία means re-birth, again—

born, or as Thayer puts it, "new birth, reproduction, renewal, re-creation, . . . hence, the production of a new life consecrated to God."⁶ As we have noted before this is the only place in the New Testament where it is used to refer to the beginning of new life in the believer, the other passage in Matthew having reference to some future event.

The grammatical relation which this word bears to λουτροῦ can best be understood in terms of the doctrinal relation which the meanings of the two have. It is unfortunate that the word "of" appears in the English translation of παλιγγενεσίας for it gives the immediate impression that regeneration does some kind of washing. The simple use of the genitive does not afford much help here and as Robertson says:

It is that the case does not of itself mean all that one finds in translation. The case adheres to its technical root-idea. The resultant idea will naturally vary greatly according as the root-conception of the case is applied to different words and different contexts.⁷

Doctrinally we can say that nowhere in Scripture is regeneration or the new-birth said to "wash" or do any "washing." Therefore this is not a subjective genitive. The relation that justification seems to bear to regeneration is that it logically follows it, not in terms however of being produced by it. We will see in a moment what are the agents of regeneration. But logically justification must come before regeneration, though in experience they are simultaneous.

⁶Thayer, op. cit., p. 474.

⁷A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (4th ed.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), p. 493.

That justification logically precedes regeneration can be demonstrated both from the writings of the apostle Paul and those of John. In the book of Romans, where there is a definite progression followed in the doctrines of salvation, it can clearly be seen that regeneration follows justification. In the first three chapters man is shown to be a guilty sinner and under the condemnation of God because of his unrighteousness. From 3:21 to chapter 5 the book deals with God's manner of making guilty sinners righteous, which is justification. Then follow chapters 5-8 which tell of the vitalizing power of the new life, even the Holy Spirit, in the life of the justified man. Such is the pattern developed in 1 John which epistle deals at length with the subject of regeneration. The first chapter deals with the process of justification by the blood, while the nature of the new-born believer is discussed in the following chapters of the epistle.

Doctrinally, this is true and grammatically this fits the construction διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας. As we have already stated διὰ with the genitive expresses an intermediate agent or step between. The "washing" is the intermediate step or path in initiating salvation and "regeneration" is the goal of salvation. Therefore, we may render this "he saved us through the washing which is unto regeneration," or "he saved us in order to regeneration." In this way we see clearly the relation of the one to the other. The first precedes and of necessity leads into the second. Dr. Chafer comes closest to this view, though he does not state the logical relation of the two, that is, that

justification precedes regeneration rather than that it merely accompanies it.⁸

What then are the means of regeneration? Justification is not, in the sense of a direct cause. (This refutes the argument of the baptismal regenerationists in their interpretation of the use of λουτρόν.) Again, looking to other portions of Scripture will prove helpful. We look to related passages which use synonyms for παλιγγενεσία. Dr. Berkhof observes that the beginning of the new life in the christian is more commonly expressed by the verb γεννάω, "to beget" (sometimes, along with ἀνωθεν as in Jno. 3:3) or else the closely related ἀναγεννάω, "to beget again." Thus are they used in Jno. 1:13, 3:3-8, 1 Pet. 1:23, 1 Jno. 5:1, etc. Also the thought of the production of new life is expressed by the word κτίζω, "to create" (Eph. 2:10) The product of this creating is called a καὶνὴ κτίσις, a "new creature." (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15)⁹

Looking at some related passages using synonyms, we find that there are two agents expressed in Scripture—the Word and the Spirit. These two contain a vitalizing, efficacious, life-producing quality. The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of regeneration and the Word of God is the instrument.

1 Pet. 1:23: "Being born again, [ἀναγεννάω] not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God."

⁸Chafer, loc. cit.

⁹L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), p. 465.

Here the Word is expressed as the medium (διά) through which the process of being born-again is accomplished.

Jas. 1:18: "Of his own will begat [ἀπεκύησεν] he us with the word of truth . . ." Here again the Word of God is the means of the new birth.

1 Cor. 4:15: ". . . for in Christ Jesus I have begotten [γεννάω] you through the gospel." The gospel can be taken to apply to the Word here, for Peter says in 1 Pet. 1:25: ". . . And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Other passages show that the Spirit is also the agent in regeneration.

Jno. 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

2 Cor. 3:6: ". . . for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Gal. 4:29: "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

In conclusion, we may say then that the Word and the Spirit are the two agents of regeneration. It is not surprising that the two are found working together in this way for as R. A. Torrey has put it:

Whatever work you find attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible, you will also find attributed to the Word. This is due to the fact that the Spirit works through the Word. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:17)¹⁰

There is one further passage which should be noted in connection with the agents of regeneration. That is Jno. 3:5:

¹⁰R. A. Torrey, What the Bible Teaches (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898), p. 326.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Can this mean that water is another agent of regeneration? We have already demonstrated that "water" is sometimes used in connection with the Word of God. (Eph. 5:26) We believe that wherever it is used in connection with regeneration and the new life, it is used symbolically of either the Word of the Spirit. Even in the Old Testament, in Is. 44:3 for instance, water was used to illustrate the coming work of the Holy Spirit. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty . . . I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Coming again to the New Testament, we find Jesus saying in Jno. 7:37-39: "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 . . .)" This verse clearly relates the symbol of water to the Spirit. One other passage which shows the water to be symbolic is found in Jno. 4:14b: ". . . but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This too must have been a reference to the Spirit. We can hardly take the passage in Jno. 3:5 other than that the water is symbolic of the Word or of the Spirit.

Concerning the Word being an agent in the process of regeneration Sir Robert Anderson is very suggestive as he states:

Even as the ashes of the red heifer gave the "water of purification" its ceremonial efficacy to cleanse the Israelite, it is by the "word" that the believing sinner obtains the blessing of Calvary in the New Testament. Just as the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from the guilt of sin, the same sacrifice gives efficacy to the word to cleanse from the guilt and defilement of sin. Thus Jesus said, "Now ye

are clean thru the word I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3)¹¹

By way of summary let us conclude this section on the 'washing of regeneration.' We may say that this has reference to the complete cleansing process of justification accomplished through the blood of Christ and the Word of God and that this justification is itself an inevitable path leading to regeneration, the production of new life, accomplished by means of the Holy Spirit as the efficient cause and the Word of God as the instrumental agent.

¹¹Anderson, loc. cit.

Refutation of Erroneous Interpretations

Against the Baptismal-Regeneration View

The writer of this critical monograph rejects this view on the following grounds:

1. From the standpoint of exegesis.
2. From the standpoint of doctrine.
3. From the standpoint of context.
4. From the standpoint of experience.

The Exegesis.—In the section called "Various Interpretations" we saw that the proponents of this view take διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας to mean "through the 'laver' of regeneration." They connect this with the passage in Eph. 5:26 which is the only other place where λουτρόν appears in the New Testament and where it is used in connection with the word ὕδωρ. Since it is so used in Eph. 5:26, they say it can easily be taken to have reference to literal water, and thus the baptismal font, parallel to the laver of the Old Testament. They also bring in the passage in Jno. 3:5 where the synonym for regeneration, γεννάω is used. Since there again water is used in connection with being born-again, surely, they say, it is a proof-text for baptismal regeneration.

Such is the reasoning of A. C. Hervey when he says:

. . . the laver of regeneration (λουτρόν) found elsewhere . . . only in Eph. 5:26 in exactly the same connection, is the laver or bath . . . παλιγγενεσίας, therefore, very fitly describes the new birth in holy baptism. . . and the laver of baptism is called the "laver of regeneration."¹²

¹²A. C. Hervey, "Titus," The Pulpit Commentary, ed. by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1909), pp. 44, 45.

We reject this reasoning entirely as faulty exegesis. Already the passages in Eph. 5:26 and Jno. 3:5 have been dealt with exegetically in the "Writer's Interpretation" under the positive discussion of the major problem. It was shown that "water" in both places must be symbolic of the Word of God. In the first passage it is directly connected within the verse with the Word and in the second, it can be demonstrated by a study of other passages relating to the water, salvation, and being born-again that water there is most likely the Word of God, though the writer is aware that some see through parallel argument that it may be symbolic of the Spirit. Added to this is the fact that the Titus passage in no sense mentions either water or baptism. If either is read into the passage, it must be brought in from other passages of Scripture. From where is it brought in?

Certainly, then, to use Tit. 3:5 as a proof-text for baptismal regeneration is to strain the imagination considerably. One marvels at the ease with which such a scholar as Lenski puts aside all this when he says: "this is the bath with actual water, no other liquid."¹³

Doctrinal Argument.—For convenience' sake we will tabulate arguments which show that the New Testament doctrine or "divine teaching" is not in harmony with identifying "the washing of regeneration" with a baptismal regeneration view.

1. Modisett poses a weighty argument against the view of the baptismal regenerationists when he says:

¹³R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 633.

βαπτίζω or one of its cognates, is the only word selected by inspiration to specify baptism. . . . The explosive force of βαπτίζω in connection with Christian baptism is an external physical act, to immerse, to plunge, at the hands of men γεννάω or παλιγγενεσία wherever used carry an internal signification, an unseen spiritual work.¹⁴

Conversely, then, we can say that the word "water" can never be understood to mean Christian baptism apart from the use of

βαπτίζω or one of its cognates. In Tit. 3:5 if λουτρόν is understood to mean water, one thing is clear, it is not used with βαπτίζω but with παλιγγενεσία which is not even a cognate of βαπτίζω. So we conclude with Modisett:

Since neither ὕδωρ nor βαπτίζω nor a single cognate of either word is in the Greek of Titus 3:5, it is absurd to find any reference to baptism there.¹⁵

2. If water baptism were requisite to regeneration, certainly it would appear more specifically with one of the cognates of regeneration somewhere else in Scripture. Not even in his first epistle, dealing so variously with the nature of regeneration, has John mentioned baptism once.

3. Paul's classic argument against the Jewish ritual affecting any change in a man inwardly holds true also for the rite of baptism. This argument is found in Rom. 2:28, 29:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

This is a potent argument, clearly demonstrating that a rite

¹⁴M. M. Modisett, Born of Water (Louisiana, Missouri: Journal Book Office, 1870), p. 21.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 22.

has no power either in itself, or as a means in effecting a change of heart toward God. Gal. 6:15 says this even more strongly: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

4. R. A. Torrey points out that Paul's epistle to the Corinthians proves that the gospel which he preached did not bring any necessity of baptism in order to regeneration. In 1 Cor. 4:15 Paul says: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." If baptism brought about the new birth, Paul would surely have had to baptize them, if he had "begotten" them. Yet we find him saying in 1 Cor. 1:14, 17: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Clearly, as Torrey says, this is sufficient to show that baptism is not connected with regeneration.¹⁶

5. The Lord Jesus Christ directed His disciples first to make disciples and then to baptize them. This order is never reversed in the New Testament. Faith in order to regeneration precedes water baptism in the Scriptures and cannot be the effect of it. Examples of this are found in: Ac. 2:41 where the three thousand persons at Pentecost believed, then were baptized; Ac. 8:12, just so the Samaritan converts; Ac. 8:35-37, likewise the Ethiopian eunuch; Ac. 10:43-48, the household of Cornelius; Ac. 19:2, the disciples at Ephesus.

6. The New Testament everywhere teaches that the one con-

¹⁶Torrey, op. cit., p. 335.

dition of regeneration is personal faith in Christ, a spiritual, not a ritual, condition. Jno. 3:16 says: ". . . that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Rom. 1:17 says: "The just shall live by faith." Ac. 16:31: ". . . believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved . . ." Eph. 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith."

Again we conclude that there is no room for baptismal regeneration in the Scriptures.

Contextual Argument.—From the standpoint of context this phrase can not refer to baptismal regeneration. The context is mainly concerned with two things which are directly opposed to each other: first, that salvation is "not by works of righteousness" (which baptism is); second, our salvation is of divine authorship, (which baptismal regeneration is not).

In Mt. 3:11 we find Jesus confirming that baptism is a work of righteousness. "But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it [His baptism] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." If the Lord saved us "not by works of righteousness which we have done," then He has not saved us by baptism.

Secondly, the emphasis of this passage is upon the divine authorship of our salvation, in contrast to our works.

J. M. Frost has well said:

Baptism is a physical act, while the new birth is spiritual; the one is performed by man and concerns the body, the other is of the heart and is wrought by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

¹⁷J. M. Frost, The Moral Dignity of Baptism (Nashville, Tenn.: Marshall and Bruce Co., 1899), p. 136.

The emphasis of the Titus passage is: "He saved us, according to His mercy" and this, the apostle says, stands absolutely opposed to any thought of works of righteousness on the part of the believing sinner being effective in his salvation. John, the apostle, emphasizes this same thought in Jno. 1:13: "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν) He also says it in Jno. 3:6: ". . . that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος) The preposition "of" in both verses is ἐκ, "out from," that is, having its source in God, in the Spirit. This is the second birth, the ἀνωθεν, birth from above. This is divine sovereignty, divine will, divine action, and man has no part in this process.

It is natural then to find that God who initiates salvation also works through His own means to accomplish it—justification and regeneration. How else would these doctrines be understood in other portions of Scripture except in the light of God's absolute sovereign will and grace in them? The only part man is ever said to have in his salvation is the initial act of faith and this is to be understood only as a condition prerequisite to regeneration; not as a work of righteousness, but as a trust in the righteousness of Christ. Even our faith is only to the end that grace may abound. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." (Rom. 4:16)

The Facts of Experience.—Many a baptized person gives no evidence of a regenerate character after the baptismal ceremony, but shows every evidence to the contrary. A Biblical ex-

ample of this is Simon, the sorcerer of the eighth chapter of Acts. He had been baptized along with the others, yet Peter later rebuked him for his perverted knowledge of the ways of the Holy Spirit and the new life as he said to him: "Thy heart is not right with God."

One need only have a superficial knowledge of church history to see to what excess this false teaching concerning baptismal regeneration has led men like Constantine, Clovis, Ethelbert and Francis Xavier. These men led thousands of soldiers and citizens en mass into baptismal waters in the name of Jesus Christ, sincerely believing that such an act made Christians out of sinners. Historians bear witness that for all this passing formality there was not manifest the fruits of repentance and of a changed life. The pagans simply went in one side of the river, dry sinners, and emerged from the opposite side, wet sinners.

The writer also has noticed that the churches in Christendom today which hold to baptismal regeneration are churches where the most worldliness and spiritual lukewarmness prevails. In his own boyhood in the Catholic Church he witnessed how elaborate ritualism in such a church has replaced the fervent preaching of God's Word. There was little, if any, evidence of real Holy Spirit regeneration in the lives of the communicants.

Bishop Ryle, one of the most outstanding commentators on the four Gospels, suggests a few of the evils which arise out of the practice of baptismal regeneration. What happens when we preach baptismal regeneration?

We pour contempt on the whole work of the Spirit, and the doctrine of regeneration. We bring into the church a new and unscriptural kind of new birth, a new birth that cannot be seen by its fruits. We make out that people are "born of God"

when they have not one of the marks of regeneration laid down by John. We encourage the rankest antinomianism. We lead people to suppose that they have grace in their hearts while they are the servants of sin . . . last but not least . . . we lead people to suppose that it matters nothing in what spirit they bring their children to baptism, and that if water is sprinkled and certain words are used, an infant is, as a matter of course, born again. Worst of all, we induce people secretly to despise baptism, because we teach them that it always conveys a mighty spiritual blessing, while their own eyes tell them, that in a multitude of cases, it does no good at all.¹⁸

Newman, church historian, in a well documented book cites case history after case history, to demonstrate that from the second century until after the Reformation period, almost to a man, church leaders considered baptism the act which brings about regeneration and forgiveness of sins. He traces the disposition of the ante-Nicene fathers to attach magical significance to baptism and surround its administration with mystery and ceremony, to the influence of gnosticism in the church. Where did the gnostics derive their ideas of baptism as an initiatory rite? Newman answers:

The gnostic mysteries themselves were derived from those that had long prevailed in pagan systems. We need only mention the elaborate initiatory rites of the Eleusians, Pythagoreans, Orphic, and Delphian mysteries.¹⁹

He then proceeds to document his statement by citing examples from the pagan mysteries which held to baptismal regeneration.

The writer of this monograph has searched diligently for the first creedal statement which clearly and entirely divorced baptism from regeneration and was unable to find one prior to

¹⁸J. C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, St. John (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1872), II, p. 133.

¹⁹A. H. Newman, History of Anti-Pedobaptism (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1896), p. 6.

"The New Hampshire Baptist Confession" of 1833 A.D. Undoubtedly some churchmen down through the years have taken this view, but the author knows of none of them.

No wonder Paul warned the Colossians:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. 2:8)

Peter also warned:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. (2 Pet. 2:1)

In the New Testament, a single part of a complex action, which is not unique to the church, is often mentioned. For example, in this case, the whole action of baptism is designated by the external symbol.²¹

Large groups are wrong with this view. First, it is not correct to say that we are saved by means of a ritual, be it baptism or other, in contrast to our dead works of righteousness. Paul had to be referring to the actual accomplishment by God of what we have appropriated to make it clear that salvation is not by our works. It may be that in Scripture, "a part of a whole" action is often mentioned for the whole.

Against The Symbolic of Baptism View

While some would find it impossible to go along with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, still they can not become free from the thought that λουτρόν must have something to do with baptism. Therefore they see in it a symbol of baptism, a seal of regeneration or else a picture of regeneration.

What then is Tit. 3:5 saying? It would be paraphrased this way: "he saved us through the baptismal picture of regeneration." It hardly seems likely that the apostle was saying this. Nevertheless Strong believes this, when he explains such an interpretation in this manner:

Texts like . . . Titus 3:5 are to be explained upon the principle that regeneration, the inward change, and baptism, the outward sign of that change, were regarded as different sides of the same fact . . .²⁰

Elsewhere he says:

In Scripture language, a single part of a complex action, . . . which is most obvious to the senses, is often mentioned for the whole of it, and thus in this case, the whole solemn transaction is designated by the external symbol.²¹

How can Paul be thought to say that God saves us through a mere picture of regeneration!

Three things are wrong with this view. First, it is not true doctrinally that God saved us by means of a ritual, be it a symbol or actual, in contrast to our dead works of righteousness. Paul had to be referring to the actual accomplishment by God alone when he was endeavoring to make it clear that salvation is "according to his mercy." It may be that in Scripture, "a single part of a complex action is often mentioned for the whole

²⁰ Strong, op. cit., p. 821. ²¹ Ibid., p. 946.

of it" but not here. Here it is the whole act, the justification of the believing sinner in order to his regeneration.

Second, this portion of the verse is speaking of a "washing," a "cleansing," which Strong does not take into account, if he calls λουτρόν a picture of regeneration. Moreover, he calls this an external symbol of the whole transaction. Well, this verse says λουτρόν not βαπτίζω, so this must be a symbol of a symbol.

Third, the picture portrayed by Christian baptism is not that of regeneration, but of justification, identification with Christ's work at Calvary in justifying the believing sinner. It is a picture of a cleansing process whereby we are justified of all sin.

We conclude then that to interpret λουτρόν in any sense to mean baptism is to read into the verse something which is not there and to miss the explicit teaching which is present. Since there is no reference either to water or to baptism, it is safer to take the verse literally as it is.

The Minor Problem: What Is The
Renewing of The Holy Ghost

The Instantaneous Regeneration View

What is the meaning of the phrase "renewing of the Holy Ghost?" Almost without exception, commentators understand the word ἀνακαινώσεως to refer to a daily process of sanctification in the life of the believer. Thus says Lenski:

The difference here between "regeneration" and "renewing" as here used is that the former kindles the new life by an instantaneous act, the latter continues and develops this life by a constant growth and progress.²²

Trench also agrees with this interpretation when he refers to ἀνακαινώσεως and says:

This is the gradual conforming of the man more and more to that new spiritual world into which he is introduced, and in which he now lives and moves; the restoration of the divine image.²³

In spite of the fact that this is the interpretation of almost all commentators, the writer sees in the word "renewing" as it is used here, not a process, but an instantaneous act of the new birth, that is, the incoming of new life. This is regeneration. There are several facts in support of this view which take the passage in its simplicity and setting and which answer some of the weaker arguments of the commentators.

In the first place, a good balance of the Greek structure requires ἀνακαινώσεως to be the direct object of διὰ, as well as λουτροῦ. Then the verse would read:

²²Lenski, The Interpretation of . . . Titus, op. cit., p. 947.

²³Trench, op. cit., p. 63.

"through the washing of regeneration and through the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Hervey states that Bengel followed by Alford takes this interpolation while Huther, Bishop Ellicott, the Vulgate and others do not.²⁴ Vincent believes ἀνακαίνωσεως is more probably connected with λουτροῦ rather than διὰ.²⁵ It appears to the writer that most baptismal regenerationists take this view with Vincent, which interpretation, of course, would fit in with their doctrine concerning baptism. The writer feels that διὰ should be inserted for the above stated reason.

Not only would this make for a good balance of the Greek structure, but as Winer says, διὰ does not have to be explicitly expressed in order to be understood here, since the two substantives joined by καί fall under the same category, are two aspects of the one operation, namely, regeneration.²⁶

Now if it be true that διὰ is understood in this position, we have the adverbial prepositional phrase (διὰ) ἀνακαίνωσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου as an adverbial modifier of ἐσωσεν. This verb appears distinctly in the aorist tense. The use of the aorist here is typical, that denoting punctiliar action, a single act whereby the believer is brought as it were instantaneously into the position of "being a saved man," of being a "renewed man." Any adverbial modifier of this aorist

²⁴Hervey, op. cit., p. 44.

²⁵Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), IV, 349.

²⁶George Benedict Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Smith, English & Co., 1877), p. 420.

would be impossible of being a continuous process, but would occur simultaneously with the action of the verb. This is why the word "renewing" here can not refer to a renewing process throughout the life of the believer.

The Greek word for "renewing" is a compound of ἀνά, "denoting motion from a lower place to a higher;" and the word καίνωσις, having its root in the adjective καίνος, meaning "of a new kind; unprecedented, unheard of." It is not new in the point of time, which is the word νέος, but new in quality.²⁷ From this combination of two words we get the word ἀνακαίνωσις, which therefore carries the idea of a complete newness of quality which has come about by a change from a lower quality to a higher. This noun, formed from the verb ἀνακαίνω, is a noun peculiar to the apostle Paul.

We may conclude then that Paul is saying that the Lord saved us instantaneously through a complete newness of quality, by a change from a lower to a higher quality. This is speaking of none other than the new life implanted by God in the life of the justified man. He saved us by justifying us from the old life of sin and this prepared the way for the process of regeneration. Then He instantly implanted the new life within us. The first, λουτροῦ, looks on the old life of sin which has been washed clean; the second, ἀνακαίνωσις looks upon the new life which says, "behold, all things are become new."

This does not deny the fact that there is a daily re-

²⁷Thayer, op. cit., pp. 34, 35.

newing of the believer's walk with the Lord. This latter truth can be plainly seen in passages where ἀνακαίνω is used, 2 Cor. 4:16 and Col. 3:16. Also the passage in Rom. 12:2 which is the only other place where the noun ἀνακρίνωσις appears. In the first two cases the verb is used in the present, continuous tense. In the latter, the noun is connected in an adverbial prepositional phrase with the verb μεταμορφοῦσθε, which is a present imperative denoting continuous action.

In all three passages the continuous "renewing" is related in the context to the Christian walk. In the Romans verse it is a continuous renewing of the mind, to the end of discerning what is the will of God for the individual life which has been presented as a living sacrifice. In the Corinthian verse the contrast is made between the outward man which is decaying and the inward man "which is renewed day by day." Here Paul is speaking of his ministry for Christ's sake which continued growing and bringing glory to the Lord though he met constant physical persecutions and afflictions. The third passage, in Col. 3:10, carries a contrast between the old man "with its doing" and the new man which is being renewed "unto knowledge according to the image of Him who created him." Note here that the word for "new" is νέος, not καίνος. The contrast is in the point of time and not quality of natures. Paul makes this same temporal contrast in the preceding verses 7 and 8, "wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things but now do ye also put them all away, anger, wrath, . . ." The new man here has reference to the present walk of the believer

wherein he is "renewed unto knowledge according to the image of God, where there cannot be Greek and Jew, . . . but Christ is all and in all."

While "renewing" is so used in these three portions of Scripture, it is still the writer's contention that it is not so used in Tit. 3:5 but rather has reference to the initial creation of new life in the believer. This is regeneration. Who could better have used the word in this way than Paul, the great apostle of the gospel of salvation? We find other references to this new life in such places as Eph. 4:24 where it is the "new man" (καὶνὸν ἄνθρωπον) which has been created (aorist tense). Here it is not the new man in his walk but the new creature. Elsewhere there is reference to the new creation (καὶνὴ κτίσις) in 2 Cor. 5:17 and Gal. 6:15. These three verses bring out clearly that there is an instantaneous creation of new life and Tit. 3:5 says that it is this new life which is a medium through which "he saved us."

It remains then to establish what is the relation of the Holy Spirit to the "renewing." It is the simple genitive of πνεῦμα ἅγιον. From the fact that it is the designation of a person and not a thing, and from the only logical relation which the Holy Spirit could have to the new life, we conclude that this is either a subjective or an appositive genitive. That is, the Holy Spirit is either the author of the new life or He is the new life. From the Scriptures we could prove that both are true facts. In the positive arguments concerning the major problem we saw that the Holy Spirit

is the author or generating source of that new life.

The many passages which deal with the indwelling Spirit also prove that He is that new life. Paul says in Rom. 8:11:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Other passages speak of Christ dwelling in the believer as the new life. Col. 3:4 says: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, . . ." 1 Jno. 5:11, 12 says: ". . . that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life. . ." Is the Spirit the "new life" or is Christ the "new life?" Both! Mainly, however, that Christ dwells in us through His Spirit, whom He promised to send when He ascended into heaven. That is, it is the third person of the trinity who comes to take His abode in the life of the saved man. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:10) The apostle adds in verse 6 of our chapter in Titus that the Spirit has not only been given but given "abundantly."

In summary, we may say then, that by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is meant that he saved us through the creation of a new life in the believer, eternal life, and that life is the indwelling Holy Spirit. By virtue of this life, we were made at the same time heirs of God through Christ, "that we might receive the adoption of children."

In conclusion, to further verify our interpretation of Tit. 3:5, we turn our reader's attention to Paul's own commen-

tary which he gives in this Titus passage:

. . . 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;
That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

THE ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

It was not on the basis of any deeds which we had done, though we attempted to do them in righteousness, that God reached down to rescue us from eternal punishment; but, because by nature His own heart was full of pity, He saved us through two mediums in which He alone had any part: first, a pathway leading inevitably into regeneration, namely, a washing away of all guilt of sin, on the grounds of the shed blood of Christ, so that God could declare us as righteous as if we had never sinned, the Word of God being the instrument through which this washing was accomplished; second, through the imparting of a new life, even the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is our eternal life and whom God made to be the more abundant life to us.

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