

**A THEOLOGICAL ENQUIRY INTO THE
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM, AND THE
NATURE OF BAPTISMAL
REGENERATION: IN FIVE DISCOURSES,
PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE, IN APRIL, 1817**

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A Theological Enquiry into the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Nature of Baptismal
Regeneration: In Five Discourses, Preached Before the University of Cambridge, in April, 1817
by Christopher Benson

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CHRISTOPHER BENSON

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BY

CHRISTOPHER BENSON, M.A.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

My attention was first more particularly directed to the subject of the following Discourses by the request of an individual, whose Baptism had been neglected in infancy, and who, after having grown up to years of maturity and attended the service of the Church, felt dubious with regard to the necessity and advantages of receiving that Sacrament. In the course of the extended and serious enquiry to which this circumstance gave rise, I was naturally led to consider the present controversy upon Regeneration; and, after having formed a mature and deliberate opinion, I drew up my sentiments in the following form, and delivered them before the University of Cambridge, as one of the Preachers for 1817. The reception which they then met with has induced me to lay them before the public.

I should not have entered upon so immaterial a statement, as the origin of the present publication, had I not been anxious to show, that I did not sit down to the investigation as the determined advocate of a preconceived opinion, but as an impartial enquirer, and for the purpose of satisfying, if possible, the conscientious scruples of an individual upon the nature and efficacy of Baptism. The result, whether true or false, in which the enquiry has issued, was unpremeditated; and if I had any prejudices to combat, they certainly would have led to a conclusion considerably different from that which I have ultimately adopted.

To this statement I shall only add, that whatever may be the fate of the following pages, I trust, they will at least be found to be written in a tone of inoffensive moderation. Personal controversy upon any subject, but more especially in sacred things, cannot be too much, or too carefully avoided. Even in reading it, I have often felt my temper irritated and my judgment misled,

and I therefore hope, that through life I shall have the virtue to form, and the strength to maintain, a decided resolution to resist the propensity, and pursue the conduct recommended in the following passage of Cicero: "Neminem nominabo, genus hominis signasse contentus."

C. B.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
June 10, 1817.



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