

# SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

BY THE

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LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND CHAPLAIN TO  
THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY SAMUEL DREW, A. M.

AND A

DISSERTATION ON HIS CHARACTER, PREACHING, &c.

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## SERMON LXX.

### SPIRITUAL BAPTISM.

*Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—Rom. vi. 3, 4.*

I BELIEVE, my dear hearers, I may venture to tell you, that the longer you live, the more you will find that the royal preacher spoke truth when he said, “There is nothing new under the sun:” for as God is always the same, so the world, the flesh, and the devil will be always the same—frail, vile, inimical, and deceitful. New scenes will always surprise us, not because they are really new, but because they are new to us: our lives are mostly taken up with viewing only the present appearance of things. We have neither time or leisure to look back as we ought, or might, upon the events of providence, or the effects of the doctrines of grace. I will not say, my thoughts always run in a religious channel, but I will say, I wish they did. The words in our text, as connected with what precedes and follows, contain the unchangeable truths of God; nor am I any ways staggered by opposition to the vindication of what the good old Puritans, and the Dissenters of the present age, call evangelical doctrine. I do not know a man that has written in a legal strain, or that reads, or talks in common conversation in a legal strain, but discovers his ignorance of, if not his enmity to, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, by charging it with very bad consequences, and endeavouring to explode it as a dangerous doctrine, destructive of holiness, which they would seem to patronize; though if one were always to judge of them by their calumniating practice, one would imagine they had never read with proper attention, either the preceding or following chapters, nor that wherein is our text, which proves it to be a doctrine according to godliness, and therefore properly begins, “What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” You will say, I have been insisting upon the universal depravity of nature. I have been bringing all down upon an equal level; that I have not only mentioned the dreadful state of Heathens, but the equally dreadful state of the haughty Jews, and ignorant Gentiles, one only sinning against the light of nature, and the other sinning against the light of revelation, by which both, in one sense, stand on an equal footing, though the last, who thinks he stands upon higher ground, appears to be only superior in sin; why then, how must either or both be saved, since they have nothing to recommend them, nothing to plead as an atonement for their sins? Here comes in the blessed doctrine of justification by the glorious imputed righteousness of Jesus

Christ, to be received by faith as an instrument by the poor convicted sinner. If this be the case, “shall we sin, that grace may abound?” This serves as a foil, to set off the riches of grace with a greater lustre. Is not this a very unfair deduction, to say, Never mind holiness, but sin that grace may abound, that God’s grace may be more conspicuous? Pray how does the apostle treat this? with the utmost abhorrence. “God forbid,” says he; how dare you charge the doctrine of grace with such a horrid consequence? God forbid that it should enter into our hearts; for “how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, (saith he,) that as many of us as were baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death:” therefore, saith he, so far from sinning that grace may abound, we look upon ourselves as “being buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. This I thought a proper supplement to some discourses I have endeavoured to deliver you for some days last past, when treating on the credibility and authenticity of our blessed Lord’s resurrection.

I cannot make sport for the devil by railing against infant or adult baptism. It is a strange thing how bigots can set the world on fire by throwing water at one another, and that people cannot be baptized, or sprinkled as the others call it, without bespattering one another, and show that the chief thing they have been baptized into, are the waters of strife. This is catching at shadows, and making sport for the devil, while the combatants on both sides, being thus engaged in throwing the shadowy water at one another, lose the substantial of religion, while they are defending the outside of it. For my part, I do not enter into the debate about infant or adult baptism: there has been a dispute about the mode, as well as the subjects of baptism: persons equally skilled in languages, pretend to bring various texts from the original, to prove that the word βαπτίζω signifies either sprinkling or plunging; and I believe you and I might as well attempt to draw two parallel lines, and bring them to meet at some certain place, as to bring these learned combatants together; for of all disputants, religious disputants are the most fiery and obstinate; therefore, I am for those that have learned to throw water upon bigoted fire, “to think, and let think,” about the mode, and consider what it imports.

It is certain, that in the words of our text there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion, which our own church allows, and insists upon it that children should be immersed in water, unless those that bring the children to be baptized assure the minister that they cannot bear the plunging. We will allow this then, that one was plunged when he was young, another plunged when he was old; and in fact, when adults are plunged as they ought, it is backwards at once: but whether I am plunged in a great deal, or ‘buried’ with a little water, as a body is when it is said, ‘Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,’ what signifies it, if I go in and come out, and

continue just the same as before, unless you can say, 'In Heathen, and out Christian;' but we see very often they are not one bit the better. They have not one grain of Christianity more. Supposing a child when young grows up to a man, be sprinkled, or dipped as the children I saw at Lisbon, or in our font, as they are made large enough to dip in, though now they sprinkle; suppose one of these grow up a child of the devil, and says, I do not look upon what was done in my infancy to be baptism, I will be baptized really; and yet suppose also, that person takes up only the outward sign, and both of them die and go to the devil, would it give either of them satisfaction to say, I am in hell, but I was baptized when an infant, or adult? Both of them would have to lament they were tormented in the flame. Would it not be better for us to take care not to offend our brethren, not to raise one another's spirits and corruptions, but rather, when we come together, talk of the heart, and inquire whether, when we received the outward sign by sprinkling or dipping, we really received the thing signified in our hearts, and exemplify that thing signified, in our lives.

Now pray what is the thing signified? We need not go farther for an answer than our text, "As many of them as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death:" and it is worthy remarking, that our Lord told his disciples, that they were to "baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now I believe all persons that have but a little skill in scripture interpretation, must allow that the word *name* signifies Christ; "my name is in him," speaking in the Old Testament of Christ's name; and when we say, "in or by the name," it has a peculiar reference to every thing that belongs to God: and I verily believe that when the Redeemer said, "baptize them in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," he not only intended to establish the doctrine of three persons in one God, but also to point out the nature of true baptism, namely, to be baptized into the nature of the Father, into the nature of the Son, and into the nature of the Holy Ghost, and this seems to be the meaning of our text, "Know ye not that so many as were baptized:" if we had been baptized aright, have been baptized not only in the name of Christ, but have been baptized into Christ; that is, we have not only put on Christ in an outward profession, but have been so baptized by the Holy Ghost, as to be made members of Christ's mystical body, united to him by the blessed Spirit; so that in a degree, though not in every sense, we are one with Christ, and the Father, through him. This is religion common to all, whether we are Baptist or Pedit-baptist; for we may call one another by this and that name, it is no matter what we are called, the grand matter is, what God looks upon us to be; whether we are become by baptism, and with the powerful operations of the Spirit of God accompanying that

ordinance, branches of Jesus Christ, the true vine. It has been always an argument with me, and I may plead for the same liberty that I give, that I think infant-baptism is an ordinance of Christ, because if our children are not to be baptized, they are left inferior in their privileges to the Jews, their children were circumcised to God, and why should not our children be as soon initiated into Christ as they? The apostle saith, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, (but circumcision is,) that of the heart and of the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God:" so it may be said of outward baptism. He is not a Christian who is baptized only outwardly, but he that is baptized inwardly of the Spirit, "whose praise is not of men, but of God." When we get proselytes, we are so fond of them, that we hug them to 'death: I have got the praise of men, especially when religion walks in silver slippers; when a person says, I may get business, if I get into such a church, into such a society. A man may become religious, as he may go to 'Change, for trade; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; who has no worldly views, no designs but what are subordinate to the glory of God. The primitive Christians gave great proof of their sincerity, they were baptized over the dead; "what shall they do who are baptized for (or over) the dead? Notwithstanding they saw their fellow-creatures murdered, they dared to go openly to be baptized; though they knew very well, soon after, that for their baptism with water, they should be baptized with fire, yet they dared openly to avow their profession of Christ. This is being baptized into Christ; well, what then? why, then we are baptized into his death. Can you tell me what that is? I cannot fully. I do not know that myself; and we should preach according to our experience, (a man of little true grace, he will give you a little, little, little practical application; very little, because he has but little himself; a man that has a good deal of it in his heart, he will not neglect his principles, but he will give the people a good sound meal of practical religion:) though I am but a babe in Christ, though I have been in Christ four or five and thirty years, and know but little of Christ, yet I think I can tell you a little what it is to be baptized into Christ, to be baptized into his death. Am I immediately to die in the body? That does not always follow, but we are to die daily, we are to be conformed to Christ's death, which we never can till we have been baptized into Christ; we can never die, till we have been enabled by his power to die. When we talk of dying the death of Christ, we mean being crucified to the world with him. "I live, (says Paul,) yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."

Now, we all come into the world alive to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Some people say, a child must cry, in order to prove itself an heir: what do you think it cries for? I believe some people think it is because it

is in pain, but I am afraid the child cries because he is hurt. I believe he finds the air too cool for him; and the first thing he does, is giving a proof of original sin to his parents, and all the attendants about him. This is called in scripture, the old man; and however some may find fault with the church of England and its forms, (perhaps they may be mended, but I question whether we have men capable of mending them now-a-days, either for zeal or spiritual knowledge,) yet I am sure there is something in it very good, particularly there is that prayer to be put up by a child, deserves to be written in letters of gold, "Grant, O Lord, that all things belonging to the old man may die in me;" and then follows, (what I shall speak of by and by,) "and all belonging to the new man may live and grow in me." There is the whole sum and substance of religion, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning, the middle, and the end, as Mr. Ambrose's works are entitled. We want nothing but all things belonging to the old man to die in us, and all things belonging to the new to live, to make us fit for the kingdom of Christ; and if we can find this in us, God grant we may not quarrel one with another, though I verily believe young men think the old man is very troublesome.

There is one does not live very far from hence, who is a very worthy man. I remember a few years ago he came in, in his first love, saying, "he had got on the mount: the fire burnt upwards, though there were a good deal of smoke. Pray, says I, is the old man dead yet? No, said he, he is not quite dead,—but spoke as if he thought he were expiring: says I, I will speak to you three or four years hence. Some time after that, meeting him, I asked him concerning the old man; he said he thought he was alive, and worse than ever, and that he was a sly creature, would lie down as if he were asleep, that he may attack you when off your guard the better." I heard of a good man in the country, who said, he found his corruptions were a monster of a thousand heads; now this is called a crucifixion, which is a painful and a gradual death, but a certain death. God forbid any of you now should turn the food into poison, saying, this is a very good doctrine, I like it; the minister says the old man dies slow, so I will not crucify him; they tell me he will die by and by, but not yet, so I will not trouble myself much about him; why then, my dear hearer, whoever thou art, thou talkest like a stinking hypocrite, or a rank, vile Antinomian: how, how, is the old man such a pleasant companion, that you love to have him dwelling under your roof? Would you choose to have a parcel of whores and rogues to live in your houses? would you like, if you lived by letting of lodgings, two or three rooms suppose, to have a parcel of thieves, and robbers, and pickpockets, come to tell you their profession, would it not be foolish for you to let such people in, would it not? And just such fools you are to let pickpockets, street-robbers, God-robbers,

vile prostitutes, in your wicked hearts, (the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life,) stay not only till quarter-day, but long after; before you turn them out, you may be dead: no, no, it is not an instantaneous, but a gradual, progressive work.

Then we are baptized into Christ, when we study to glorify Christ; that is the reason that God Almighty sends you so many trials, that you may be baptized into his death: and generally you will find, when you have had most communications from God, that some cross trials soon follow. Hast thou been praying for resignation? Perhaps God takes away a beloved child; you have been praying for great patience, perhaps a cross wife, a Nabal of a husband, bad servants, undutiful children, or something or other, and the devil at the head of them, making you uneasy: so that you find you have not so much patience as you thought you had. You never was upon the mount in your lives, but when you came down you were tempted to break the tables: was it not so with Moses, after forty days' communion with God? down he came, and seeing the people dancing round the calf, down he throws the tables, and breaks them all to pieces; and if God were not to keep us, after all our communion with him, we should break the tables' to pieces, and be damned. After all, that person then is dying every day, who looks upon himself every morning as one that is to be crucified afresh, that looks for crosses, and at the same time walks so inoffensively as to bring no cross upon himself. I spoke to a person yesterday about the cross: pray, sir, says he, would you have me bring a cross upon myself? no, said I, only be honest, and you will find crosses enough.

Then we must be raised to newness of life, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. This points out to us in what sense Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and shows us that every thing Jesus Christ did and suffered, must be spiritually experienced in our hearts. You have often heard me say, As he was born in the virgin's womb, he must be born in our hearts; and as he died for sin, we must die to sin; as he rose again, we must rise to newness of heart and life. What is the new birth? says a great doctor: suppose any of these doctors were to come to any woman when her travailing pains were upon her, and she were crying out, and labour pains came on faster and faster, and they should stand preaching at the door, and say, Good woman, these are only metaphorical pains, this is only a bold expression of the Easterns, it is only metaphorical. I question whether the woman would not wish the doctor some of these metaphorical pains for talking so, which he would find real ones. Though she could not read, she might feel. But notwithstanding the reality of the new birth, and the pains that attend it, yet they say it is only a metaphorical thing. I am of an odd temper, and of such a temper, that I heartily wish they may be put under the pangs of the new birth, and know what it is by their own

experience, know there is nothing in nature more real than the new birth. The apostle Paul said, "I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you:" Now, do not you think the apostle had this metaphorical expression of something real? the apostle's travailing in birth must be something analogous to the natural birth; must I say there is no such thing as pangs, because I do not feel them? I am fearfully and wonderfully made, that my soul knows right well; and in respect to the new birth we may say, I am fearfully and wonderfully redeemed by Christ, and renewed by the Holy Ghost. The new life imparts new principles, a new understanding, a new will, and new affections, a renewed conscience, a renewed memory, nay, a renewed body, by making it the temple of the living God, an habitation of God through the Spirit, and walking in newness of life. If I am not mistaken, it implies a progressive motion, going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another, passing from glory to glory, for grace is only glory in the bud, till grace is swallowed up in endless glory. A person that walks, though he may not walk equally as fast as others, yet may get ground: hence, "not to go forward, is to go backward." Enoch walked with God: it bespoke the habitual tendency of his heart, the actual exercise of grace, that he was kept in a lively frame, walked with God among a very wicked generation, dared to be good when all were wicked around him, and he was so favoured as to be translated to heaven. This was the case with Elijah. "Moses, (says the Lord,) go up to the mount, and die:" God made him undress himself, and put on his own grave-clothes, gives him a sight of Canaan; but to let him know that he even to the very last would chastise his people, when he is even taking them to heaven, tells him, thou shalt not go into the earthly Canaan, but I will take thee to the heavenly one, which is far better.— Being baptized into the death of Christ, bespeaks the habitual tendency and practice of the heart and life. The old man must die, hence the new man must live. It must be emptied of self, that there may be more and more room for God. Now I appeal to your hearts, how far you have experienced this. I believe the world pretty well knows the temper of my mind, both in respect to politics and church-government, and church-principles. I am a professed avower of moderation, and I heartily wish that all who are concerned in church and state, may particularly take care to let their moderation be known to all men; for if we quarrel with one another, we shall only make sport for the devil, and occasion destruction. I do not care whether you go to church or meeting. I am, I profess, a member of the church of England, and if they will not let me preach in the church, I will preach anywhere. All the world is my parish, and I will preach wherever God gives me opportunity, but you will never find me disputing about the outward appendages of religion. Do not tell me you are a Baptist, an Independent, a Presbyterian, a Dissenter, tell me you are a Christian, that is all

I want. This is the religion of heaven, and must be ours upon earth. I say, are there any of you under the gallery, or in the green-seat, or anywhere, I will try to find you out before I have done my sermon, though you are come in the dark.

But I will just at present speak to you who understand the gospel, to you that are my brethren, though in all probability my elder brethren, in the gospel. Methinks there is something solemn in meeting in the evening, something solemn in coming to worship after we have been in the labours of the day; and I verily believe, that when weekly preaching is banished from London, that all Christianity will be banished. It cannot be very long after it, there have been such instances, you may die before tomorrow. I think a good tradesman, whether he deals largely or not, will take care to keep his day-book well. If a man will not keep his day-book well, it is ten to one but he loses a good deal when he comes to count up his things at Christmas. Now I take it for granted, a good spiritual tradesman will keep his spiritual day-book well; can you say, this day I hope I have died a little more to the world than yesterday, this day I hope I have been a little more alive to God than I was yesterday; and yet when I look upon my family, whether a man trades wholesale or retail, when he finds he has done but little business that day, great going out, and little coming in. I hope when you die but little daily, that you go to bed begging pardon, and begging grace that you may die more to yourselves and the world, and live more to God, tomorrow. For I am sure I can call you to witness, that you never lived so comfortably as when you lived near to God: you may as well pretend to say, that a person in a cold winter's day is warmest when he keeps from the fire, as to say, a soul can live near to God when he does not die daily to sin. O says one, do not tell me of your frames, do not mind them. I will tell you of them, "do not mind your frames," I do not in respect to justification, but I will to the well-being and comfort of my soul: a man that has got but very little spirits may be alive, but there is a wide difference between having a disorder that one can hardly speak, having no spirits at all, or but very few, and having solid health. God grant we may be healthy Christians. The more you live to God, the more you will have health; be not angry with me, assure yourselves a lukewarm Christian does more hurt to religion than all the open infidels in the kingdom. We have God himself asserting this, "Thou art neither hot nor cold, I would thou wert either cold or hot, but because thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spew thee out of my mouth." What an expression is that! what a nauseous thing is lukewarm water to a sick stomach! "I will come and remove my candlestick from you." Therefore, I believe, it is the opinion of all judicious men, that if we should have a severe rod of correction to stir us up, it is because of the lukewarmness of most

Christians. My brethren, God make us all alive to Christ tonight; come, come, if your soul is for Christ, to arms, to arms, put on your cockades, you that have them in your pockets for fear you should be known to be Christ's. O you cowards! many soldiers put off their cockades, as if they were not soldiers; as many of our clergy affect to dress like the laity, that they may go to plays, that the orange-women may not know them, and they do not care whether God sees them or no. I desire you will all appear in your proper dresses, let us see it painted on the breast-plates of your hearts by the blessed monitor, the eternal Spirit of God. I do not want you to wear them as the Papists, upon your faces, no; you that are for infant-baptism were signed with the sign of the cross; for what? That you might, when you came of age, "prove Christ's faithful soldiers to the end." God grant, the nearer we come to the end, the bolder we may be for Christ!

If there be any of you here that are formalists, "that have a name to live, and are dead," the Lord grant that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead by the glory of his Father, cause a stirring among these dry bones. Think what it will be to go to hell tonight, to want a drop of water, wherewith you were sprinkled, to cool your tongues in hell. Think what it will be to go to hell by the way of heaven, which is the worst way you can take. Think what it will be to be just at the threshold, and not have religion enough to take you over. My heart bleeds for you. Had you a son, a father, a mother, a relation, to be tried at the Old-Bailey this session, how would you be concerned, how carefully would you inquire when your relation would be tried, how anxious would you be to hear whether he is condemned, or no; and if somebody were to come to tell you, now he is about to be tried and cast, and now the judge is going to put his cap on, to pass sentence on him, how would you bear it? I believe some of you would drop a tear, and say, O that this poor creature should be born for this! And can you blame a poor minister of Christ, a poor sinner that has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and I humbly believe and hope has been made a partaker of the Spirit, will you blame me for being concerned for you, my brethren and my sisters, for you and I sprung from one father and mother, Adam and Eve, the common parents of us all. Can you blame me for pouring out my soul, can you blame me for speaking a little home when the Judge is just ready to mount the throne, when the books are open, when I see the elements melting with fervent heat, when I see all nature concurring to usher in the awful coming of the Son of God? Sinners in Zion, baptized heathens, professors but not possessors, formalists, believing unbelievers, talking of Christ, talking of grace, orthodox in your creeds, but heterodox in your lives, turn ye, turn ye! Lord help you to turn to him, turn ye to Jesus Christ, and may God turn you inside out tonight. May the power of the highest overshadow

you, and may that glorious Father that raised Christ from the dead, raise your dead souls! Turn the text into a prayer, go home and say, For what purpose have I lived? into what have I been baptized? I have not so much as yet been baptized into Jordan. I have never led a life one day of reformation, but when I was obliged to it. Bless God that you are not now among the damned. Bless God that you are not now howling in hell. Bless the Lord that Jesus stands with pitying eyes, and outstretched arms, to receive you now. Will you go with the man? Will you accept of Christ? Will you begin to live now? May God say, Amen. May God pass by, not in anger, but in love. May he, as he hath hitherto seen you in your blood, has said to you, live, and has preserved you in your natural state, may that same God of love, mercy, and life, pass by you, and cast the skirts of his love over you, and say to you dead sinners, come forth, live a life of faith on earth, live a life of vision in heaven: even so, Lord Jesus.

*Amen*