

BAPTISMAL  
REGENERATION

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*Yearly Report of the Theological Seminary,*

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

*Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.*

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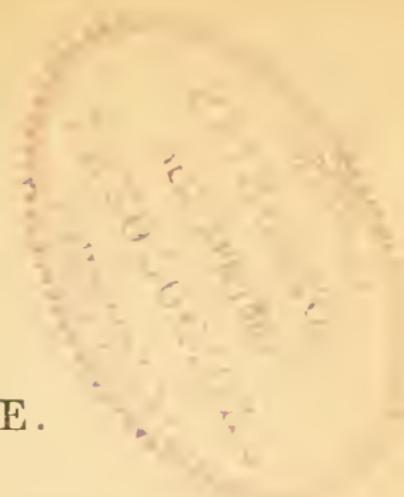


THE DOCTRINE  
OF  
BAPTISMAL REGENERATION,  
AS IT IS HELD BY MANY IN THE  
PRESENT DAY,  
CALMLY EXAMINED  
BY THE  
BIBLE AND COMMON PRAYER BOOK,  
IN  
THREE LETTERS,  
BY THE  
REV. HENRY SMITH,  
INCUMBENT OF TANSLEY, DERBYSHIRE.

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LONDON:  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.  
W. ROWBOTTOM, DERBY.  
1844.





## PREFACE.

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In sending forth these Letters to the public, the writer earnestly prays, that He "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," may use them in establishing divine truth; and he entreats all who read them, to do the same. There is a truth connected with this question, as well as with all others; and it should be our single aim to find out what that truth is. It has appeared to him, that most of the publications he has read, have had for their object rather the confirmation of a favourite hypothesis, than the elucidation of truth; this being the only way to account for the fact, that much of what the Church teaches on the subject of baptism and regeneration is altogether overlooked. Those who advocate one side, suppress the qualifications for baptism, implied in the Articles and required in the Catechism, taking it for granted, that they are necessary for adults only, and supposing, that infants, being innocent, as they say, do not need them; and this, although neither the Bible nor the Church has said a single word which leads to this conclusion. They thus make an important part of the teaching of our Church a dead letter. Those

who take the other side, speak as if the Sacraments were mere rites, and not "sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace;" and, explaining the baptismal services as best they can, make regeneration to mean not an inward but an outward work. The writer was satisfied with neither course, and determined to investigate the question for himself, taking the Bible and the standards of the Church alone as his guides. Led by these, he found that the first altogether exploded the doctrine of the necessary connection between infant baptism and regeneration, which is embraced by so many in the present day; and that the second was in exact accordance with the first; which he always believed to be the case, on which side soever the truth was. He now publishes what he considers the true doctrine of Scripture and the Common Prayer Book on this long-debated subject; and if these letters tend, in any measure, to clear away any of the difficulties with which it has been encumbered, and to throw light upon its true nature, he will be but too thankful to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. He believes the scheme here proposed is fitted to accomplish both these purposes. It fully explains all our formularies, without giving a forced interpretation to a single sentence; and he asks for it a full, candid, and impartial examination: if this is given, he indulges a hope that persons will not continue to advocate that feature, which

leaves the Church in a labyrinth of perplexities in herself, and makes her contradict the announcements of holy writ. They may, perhaps, have to do violence to their feelings, and abandon long and dearly-cherished opinions and prejudices; but nothing is too dear to give up for the sake of truth. We should "buy the truth," whatever its cost may be, "and sell it not." Let them consider that whatever advantages they propose, as attached to their scheme, belong to his also. If theirs lays the baptized party under a solemn obligation to serve God, his not less does the same. If, on their scheme, they are able to address baptized persons as having a gift which they may use to their own salvation, he, on his, can do so too. If theirs enables them heartily to return thanks for the regeneration of the child, so does his. If theirs makes baptism a sacrament, his does the same. He must be allowed to add, that his has advantages which theirs has not. It suppresses no part of the teaching of our Church. Her voice is fully heard and attended to, no less when she requires conditions, than when she pronounces blessings—no less when she instructs in the Catechism, than when she commands in the services used at baptism. It gives no license to Antinomianism, by allowing that persons may be regenerated and yet walk as heathens; nor does it flatter the self-security of human nature by saying in effect, "Peace, peace, when there is

no peace." It does not tend to undervalue repentance and faith by saying, they are not necessary for infants; but it tends to the begetting and cultivating of these graces; and also encourages a reverence for the ordinance of baptism, by shewing that none must come to it without due preparation. And let all consider that no part of the truth, as it is in Jesus, is compromised. Not a single iota of spiritual Christianity is relinquished; for it proves the Church to teach that her ministers ought to say, "ye must be born again," to all who by their lives declare that they are yet unacquainted with Christ as their Saviour, and who consequently are without God and without hope in the world.

In the first letter the reader will find the doctrine of baptismal regeneration examined on the ground of Scripture, and in the second, on that of the Church of England. The third letter, of a general character as to its arrangement, was thought necessary to substantiate the evidence given in the two preceding ones.

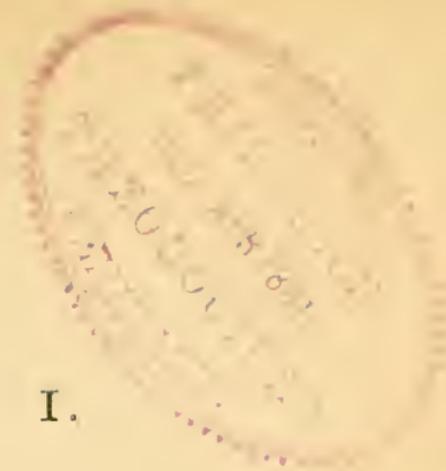
Perhaps it may be well to add, that the two works principally had in view, are DR. HOOK'S *Church Dictionary*, and a pamphlet published by the REV. R. BATHURST GREENLAW, M.A. It is scarcely necessary to say that the writer of these letters possesses no feeling towards either of these gentlemen contrary to brotherly love, though he thinks them in great error. He prays that all the members of

the Church of England, and more especially her ministers, “may be so guided and governed by God’s good Spirit, as to be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.” And if these Letters should, in any degree, promote this object, he will never cease to say, “Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name be the praise.”

HENRY SMITH.

*October 9th, 1844.*





LETTER I.

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am deeply grieved that you have embraced a doctrine which I cannot but consider inconsistent both with the word of God and our Church. All that you have written, or referred me to, has failed to convince me, that I am wrong. I am quite willing, as you supposed, to give the reason upon which my opinion is founded; and I do this the more readily in the hope, that ultimately, you will see your own, as well as that of the books and pamphlets you recommend, to be utterly untenable; and will, therefore, abandon the ground you have chosen.

Why are we friends and brothers in Christ, but to help and watch over each other, lest there should be, in either of us, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; whether as it respects the purity of His doctrine, the experience of His love, or the practice of His commands. Nor, in the event of my convincing you, will all the profit be yours. If there is any, I must share it, as the embodying of my ideas on paper will oblige me to review my principles, and afresh test them by the only infallible standard of truth, the word of God; and in some cases, as in the present,

by the book which I next esteem—the Book of Common Prayer. You must not conclude that because our friend Brown could not answer your arguments therefore they are unanswerable. Clever as he is, I am not surprised, that he meets with many, who are able to silence him in argument; the plausibility of which may, sometimes, perhaps for a moment, produce a little misgiving, as to whether, after all, he is right in his positions. It is just what I should have expected, from such a cautious, and self-diffident investigator of truth as he is. He knows enough of the generalities of the subject, young as he is in the study of Theology, to perceive that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as it is held in the present day, is inconsistent alike with the word of God, and true Christian experience—with his experience. Do not suffer yourself to despise an appeal to Christian experience, as if it were vain and futile, and proved nothing. Impartially consider Brown's case—the case of many! He was blessed with parents truly pious. They tenderly brought him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: and how many prayers they offered up for him, will not be known till the secrets of all hearts are made manifest. In them, he had an example of Godly life; for they were holy in their conduct, sanctified in their tempers, and heavenly in their conversation. They presented their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which was their reasonable service. And though they felt and deplored many defects, yet I might have challenged the most severe fault-finder to accuse them of outward sin.

Truly if any one was ever trained up in the way he should go, he was. Nor were their efforts in vain: they could not be: we saw him moral in his conduct, amiable in his disposition, and kind to all. Yet did he not become convinced, that his works could not be pleasant in the sight of God? that they had not been done as He willed, and commanded them to be done? and that therefore they had the nature of sin? Did he not see—so he has confessed—that there was within him, the carnal mind which is enmity against God? that he had no real love to His name; no delight in communion with him, and in the way of His commandments? Could he at that time have possessed the new nature, the essence of which is, to “love Him because He first loved us?” But now he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new! And surely while such a change as this clothes a man with humility, places his hopes on the merits of Christ alone, produces in him the image of his Saviour, makes him careful to fulfil all righteousness, and enables him to view the glory of God as the end of all his works, he cannot be justly charged with fanaticism, because he considers he is thus led by the Spirit of God, and is, consequently, a child of God. Manifestly, no less than a divine power can produce such a change. No being can turn the powerful tendencies of his own nature. If done at all, it must be, by an external force, more powerful than itself, and of a different inclination. It must be, in a word, the work of God. “When we were dead

in trespasses and sins, *He quickened us together with Christ. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works.*" Now if such a change as I have described, ever does take place in persons who have been baptized, and if it can be effected only by the power of God, I have antecedent evidence, in such cases, without going any further, to make me suspect the truth of this doctrine, as it is stated by yourself and many others.

I mean to go fully into the question, and in doing so shall follow your own order, which I think is the correct one. Let us then see,

I. What is the doctrine of God's word on this subject? and,

II. What is the judgment of the Church of England? You believe both teach the doctrine: I believe both oppose it.

With the Bible and Common Prayer Book as my guides, I have reconsidered the whole subject, carefully endeavouring to put away every thing, that would hinder me from perceiving the truth; and my deliberate opinion is, that the sound interpretation of Scripture, according to the analogy of faith, and the consistent exposition of the formularies of our Church, bring us to the very opposite point to that at which you have arrived.

I have no wish in this matter but to know the truth. It is far too serious to be treated lightly. Whether I am, or am not reconciled to God, is a solemn question. It concerns my everlasting welfare, and that of all others. In pursuing the enquiry, I did not, at first, seek for

counter statements, and thus endeavour to outweigh your side of the scale by putting arguments of greater weight into the other; leaving your own, without a particular answer for each. It struck me that I had better examine your own premises, and see if the conclusions drawn from them were just and fair. This course, I think, it will be well to pursue, in putting my thoughts together.

But let us understand each other. Your idea is, that Regeneration is a change of nature, wrought indeed by the Holy Spirit, but in and by baptism; that it invariably and necessarily takes place then, and at no other time. I agree with you that regeneration, *as the word is used in the baptismal services*, cannot signify a mere admission into the *outward privileges* of the church. It must there mean an internal change of heart; but I totally disagree with you when you say that baptism is the *sole* medium of communicating it. I do not say that it cannot be conveyed by that means; nor that it is not sometimes so conveyed; but I deny the *necessary connection*.

Before I enter upon the particular examination of your proofs from Scripture, I wish to observe, that the texts you produce cannot be classed with those passages whose meaning is clear and undoubted. When I read, "All have sinned;" and "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" the sense is at once caught, and two opinions respecting them can scarcely be entertained. But it is not so with those by which you attempt to support the above view of baptismal regeneration. They will bear another interpretation

besides that which you give them; and that too, with as sound criticism, and as fair exposition as yours. Whether I might not have said fairer, and sounder, remains to be judged; for on this the issue of the controversy depends.

I will now proceed to the examination of the texts; and having more than once, subscribed to an article, which does not allow me, "so to expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another," my plan shall be, to compare them with the context, and with other portions, containing similar sentiments, and like forms of expression; thus making the Bible its own expositor.

John iii. 5. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now does Jesus here teach the *necessary* connexion between infant baptism and the regeneration of the Spirit? It does appear to me strange, that you, and others, can speak and write about this text, as if there could be no question respecting it; and as if it must be sheer obstinacy, or wilful prejudice, which prevents others from seeing with yourselves. Whether baptism is included at all in this passage is, I think, sufficiently doubtful, to prevent us from asserting it too dogmatically, and glorying in it, as in armour of defence; lest a stronger than we should take from us that in which we trusted and expose our weakness. The words, "*and of the Spirit,*" may possibly be explanatory of the phrase, "*of water.*" The word "*καί*" does not disprove it; for this our Translators have in some places rendered *even*. We do not however differ on this point. It seems to me

that our Lord is speaking of the birth of water, as well as the birth of the Spirit; for how can we conceive, that he would discourse on the manner of entering into his kingdom, without mentioning that very rite—a rite too in which water is used—by which he afterwards ordered his disciples to admit members into it. But that he makes the inward grace *necessarily* consequent upon that outward rite, is assumed, and it is my firm conviction, can never be proved; and these are my reasons.\*

1. It is inconsistent with the reason which renders the new birth necessary. Without it a man cannot see

\* The argument relied on to prove this necessary connection is, that our Lord says, Except a man be born of water *and* of the spirit. And one writer, to show how obvious it is that the word “*and*” proves this necessary connection, playfully asks, “What would be thought of the acumen of a critic, who, upon being told that *a vessel was wafted by the wind and tide*, would argue that persons were thereby to understand, that the vessel was wafted *to-day by the wind* without tide, and *to-morrow by the tide* without wind?” No doubt we should think him very silly, and that the sooner he resigned the office of critic, the better. But what is gained by this example, unless it is proved to be a perfect *parallel* to the words in John iii. 5? The argument seems to me no more than this, The word “and” proves the connection of the agencies in my example, *made for the occasion*; and therefore it does the same in our Lord’s assertion. Let me give another example, from *Isaiah*. “Butter *and* honey shall he eat.” Now does this *prove* that he ate *both* butter *and* honey at the *same time*? He *may* have done so; I dare say he did; but what I mean to say is, that the word “and” does not *prove* it. The fact is, “*and*,” in the verse quoted from St. John, proves *of itself* nothing. Whether it does mark a necessary connection, must be gathered from the context, and that, as is shown below by various reasons, proves that it does not.

the kingdom of God. Nicodemus no doubt, imbibed the prejudice of the Jewish nation, and thought the kingdom of the Messiah was of an earthly nature, and came to make further enquires respecting it.\* But Jesus tells him at once, that no man can perceive its nature, unless he is born again. "My kingdom," says he, is not of this world," it is spiritual, and to see it you must have spiritual perceptions. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and its faculties can be exercised only on fleshy objects suitable to its own nature. "The natural man, says St. Paul, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Except therefore a man be born again, he

\* I have never yet seen a satisfactory reason given why Nicodemus came to Jesus *by night*. The usual one, that it was *shame*, is inadmissible; for at the time he visited Jesus, no obloquy was attached to His name. May the writer be allowed to propose the following for the consideration of others? The Sanhedrim must have heard that Jesus wrought miracles, and they knew from Isaiah that this was one mark of their Messiah, by whom they expected to be freed from the Roman yoke. May not Nicodemus have been sent by them to Jesus, as he was on another occasion, to ascertain if He really was the Messiah, and if so, to offer their influence and assistance in establishing that kingdom which they expected their Messiah would set up? The Romans were very jealous of their power, and they knew the Jews were desirous of destroying it. Now, if they were to know that a member of the Sanhedrim had held intercourse with one who had begun to excite public attention, their apprehensions would be excited, and this obliged them to caution and secrecy; and therefore Nicodemus came by night.

cannot see the kingdom of God." If then he is born again he does see it. "He that is spiritual," the Apostle continues, "judgeth" or discerneth "all things." "That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*," adds Christ. It has new powers of perception. Now I would ask, do baptized infants perceive the nature of Messiah's kingdom? If not, then they are not born again *according to our Lord's meaning*. This argument goes upon the supposition, that the *same thing* is declared in the third verse as in the fifth, which must, I think, be allowed.

But lest you should think this a subterfuge, let us apply the same reasoning to the fifth verse. I ask, is it baptism *simply* that introduces us to the kingdom of God? Is nothing to be *joined* with it? or is nothing more included in baptism than the *washing in water*? Is not faith required? We shall see, by and by, that our Church answers yes; and so says the fifteenth verse. "That *whosoever believeth* in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Faith is as much included in the birth of the spirit, as water in the birth of water. Now have infants faith? From the nature of the case you will say they have not. Exactly so; and therefore they are not regenerated in the *sense meant by Jesus, whatever* that sense may be.

2. This new birth, whatever it is, is followed by effects suitable to its nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (verse 6.) Nicodemus had said, "How can a man be born when he is old, can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answers, If he could that would not help him,

he would be flesh still. Now St. Paul teaches us, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Why? "Because the carnal," or fleshy mind, "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." These things, or works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, (Gal. v. 19--21) *All* who perform these, or any of these works are declared to be in the *flesh*. "But that which is born of the spirit is spirit." They who are thus changed possess a nature quite different, "They are after the spirit and mind the things of the spirit." They "are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, because the spirit of God dwells in them." (Rom. viii. 5, 9.) But what are the things of the spirit? The answer is supplied us. "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (1 John i. 9.) All who are born of the spirit must be of this description. I enquire, do all baptized infants or adults in after life, answer to it? Would that it were so! but alas! do not the far greater number follow the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh? If so, (and who can deny it,) are they then regenerated? What! walk after the flesh and yet be

in the spirit—bear the fruits of the flesh and at the same time bring forth those of the spirit! Can we serve God and mammon! Nay; he that *committeth sin* is of the *devil*. (1 John iii. 8). *By their fruits ye shall know them*. (Matt. vii. 20). For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit; for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (Luke vi. 43--45).

3. Your view contradicts the assertions contained in the eighth verse. “The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.” Here we learn three things; 1st That the bestowment of the Spirit is according to the sovereign will of God. The wind is not under the directions of man—“it bloweth *where* it *listeth*.” 2nd, That the *mode* of its *communication* and *operation* is *secret* and *mysterious*, “but canst not tell *whence* it cometh or *whither* it goeth;” and 3rd That its effects are open, visible, and easy to be understood,—“thou *hearest* the *sound* thereof.” But if your statement of baptismal regeneration is true, the bestowment of the spirit, the efficient cause of the change, is under the direction of man—of the officiating clergyman, who,

if he were to deny the administration of the rite, would, thereby, withhold the communication of the spirit. If the mode in which it is received is by baptism, it is not *secret* and *mysterious* but *plain* and *palpable*. And as, in the very great majority of instances of infant baptism, no corresponding effects appear, it contradicts the third assertion also: hence your position cannot be true.

4. The surprise exhibited by our Lord at the ignorance of Nicodemus is another reason against your doctrine. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" This clearly implies, that he need not have been ignorant of what Jesus taught, *whatever it was*. That is, *supposing you are right*, he might have been acquainted with baptismal regeneration. But where might he have learnt it? Certainly, not in the Old Testament. It is not even pretended, I believe, that it can be found there. Not from Christ, for this was his first interview with him. Not from the disciples, for they were as ignorant as he. If then this doctrine is not to be found in the writings of the Old Testament, and if, notwithstanding this, Nicodemus might have been acquainted with what our Saviour meant in the third and fifth verses, it is perfectly clear, that there is no *necessary* connection between the new birth and baptism.

This conclusion will appear the more just, if taken in connection with the eleventh verse. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have *seen*." Our Lord preached something which *had already been experienced*, it was no new thing. But had baptismal regeneration

been preached heretofore? No. Then it was not preached now; for he testified only what he *had before seen*; and truly religion in *its essence* is the same in all ages, although *the means* of its conveyance may be different.

I have spent the longer time over this text, because it is the one on which you principally rely; but I hope you now see that it by no means countenances, but on the contrary, positively reprobates your opinion.

Titus iii. 5. "According to His mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Here the enquiry is, does the Apostle mean one thing by the "washing of regeneration," and another by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost?" or does he mean one and the same thing by the two clauses; the latter merely explaining the former? Some would say, the context rather inclines to the last supposition. St. Paul observes, they would argue, that "we are not saved by works of righteousness, which we have done." By works of righteousness, he obviously means, actions which are enjoined, and which we consequently perform. Now baptism is enjoined, therefore, *in this view*, it is a work of righteousness; and Jesus submitted to John's baptism to fulfil all righteousness. But we are not saved by works of righteousness, therefore, not by baptism; and so the washing of regeneration cannot mean baptism. They would say too, that if different things are meant by the two clauses, baptism is put on a level with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, making the one as necessary as the other. It cannot be denied

that the latter is absolutely and universally necessary to salvation, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" the former therefore must be the same. But this contradicts our Church, which teaches that the sacraments are only "generally necessary to salvation." I believe, however, with all ancient and modern Commentators, that baptism is meant; but what has been said, is enough to shew, that it is *prudent* not to be too *confident* in our assertions, and that those who disagree with us on this text, *may have some reason* on their side. I will take part of your own interpretation and suppose that the first clause means baptism, and the second the purifying powers of the spirit, and observe,

1. That we have here an instance of the use of the *word* regeneration, as applied to baptismal privileges. But this admission does not benefit your cause; for

2. It must be *such* a regeneration as altogether excludes the idea of inward purification; for what occasion was there to add, "and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," if that idea was already included in the word "regeneration?"

3. If what is included in the word regeneration is distinct from the renewing of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be proved, from this text, that when the outward rite is administered, it is *invariably* and *necessarily* followed by the inward regeneration of the heart. Should you be inclined to change your mind, and hold that the Apostle meant but one thing by the two clauses, you will do well to consider, that in that case baptism cannot be proved to have been even thought of when the

text was penned; for *then*, the words, "washing of regeneration," must be figurative; and if figurative, they can be explained only by the succeeding sentence, "and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." You will now perceive this passage does not serve you.

Your next is, 1 Peter iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth *also* now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." I fancy you have not maturely considered the meaning of this text, or you surely would not have produced it; for fatal it assuredly is to your cause. What does the Apostle St. Peter assert?

1. That baptism doth save us. Had nothing else been added, you would, I acknowledge, have made out a strong case; but,

2. What *kind* of baptism is it, that, he says, saves us? "*Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.*" Baptism, by immersion, is, no doubt, referred to, which would, of course, take away the filth of the flesh. It seems to me quite evident, that St. Peter supposes it was *very possible* to be baptized, and do no more than put away the filth of the flesh; or why the *implied* denial of the salvation of those who *go no further*? Why make the observation at all, if the inward grace *always* accompanies the outward rite? Perhaps there were some in his day, who bore no fruits of the spirit, although they had been baptized. Indeed St. Peter himself, reprov'd one who was of this character, viz. Simon Magus. "Thou hast neither part nor

lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. For I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Alas how numerous are such at this time. To see the lives of many professing Christians, is enough to make rivers of water run down our eyes, because they keep not God's law. They have been born of water, but not of the spirit; they therefore fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and are children of wrath even as others who have not been so privileged, and indeed much more so. It is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh"—not submission to the rite—"but *the answer of a good conscience*"—inward repentance and faith. You well know that the catechumens in ancient times were carefully prepared for baptism, and that at the time of baptism, they were strictly questioned concerning their faith in Christ, their renunciation of Satan and his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. If they answered sincerely, with a good conscience, they were saved, pardoned, justified, and sanctified, because they possessed "repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." That this explanation is in exact accordance with the standards of our Church, I shall prove in the proper place. Meanwhile is it not clear, that the Apostle refers only to adults, for in such alone can the answer of a good conscience be found. How can you, then, with so much assurance, gather from this text, that in all cases of infant baptism, the regeneration of the heart by the Holy Ghost is sure to be the result. It is

not so in all adult cases even, although the profession of faith and repentance is made; much less can we depend upon it in those instances where there is no personal profession at all.

Acts ii. 38. Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now observe,

1. That these words are addressed to adults, and you cannot take a promise which applies only to them and then draw from it a conclusion which has reference to infants, unless you can shew there is a parallel between the two cases, which cannot be done.

2. That the promise of remission of sins and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, is not fulfilled except on the condition of *repentance* as well as baptism. As the promise would not be fulfilled without *baptism*, so neither without *repentance*. That there *can* be baptism *without repentance*, St. Peter, as we have seen, takes for granted, and the above instance—that of Simon Magus, clearly proves. If there is the answer of a good conscience, as already observed, no doubt he who makes it does receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. But how does this prove, that when infants are baptized, they are, therefore, regenerated and justified? To find out similar expressions, I took down Cruden's Concordance, and by it discovered some texts on this subject which never before struck me. In Luke i. 76, 77, it is said, that John the Baptist was sent to give the knowledge of salvation *by*

*the remission of sins.* How did he do this? The answer is found, chapter iii., verse 3. He came into all the country about Jordan preaching the *baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.* The very sentiment, and almost the words themselves, contained in the above address of St. Peter, to the Jews. Now do you say, that the baptism which John preached conveyed the remission of sins, and consequently the gift of the Holy Ghost? If not, why from this text maintain that it is so in Christian baptism, when the terms used in reference to both are the same. This does not contradict the XXVII Article, for that says only that the *promises* of forgiveness, &c. are then *visibly* signed and sealed. Should you, however, not think so, I must beg you to suspend your judgment till we come to that Article.

Acts xxii. 16. "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Here again, the person addressed is an adult, and moreover he is directed to pray—to call upon the name of the Lord. It is evident that St. Paul had both repentance and faith before he was baptized; for the Lord had said of him, *before* Ananias addressed him in the above words, "*behold he prayeth.*" He prayed too, so as to be *answered*, that is clear; and how could he have done this without *faith*? "Whatever ye shall ask in my name, *believing* ye shall receive;" are the terms of the promise. Faith is *confirmed* and *grace increased* by virtue of prayer unto God, says the Article on baptism. Call upon the name of the Lord, says Ananias.

On the passage in Eph. v. 26, I will give you the note in the Bishop's Bible, published by authority in 1568. "Baptism is a token that God has consecrated the church to Himself, and made it holy *by His word*, that is, *the promise of free justification* in Christ."

The passage in Heb. x. 22, speaks of our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. This implies repentance and faith in the blood of Christ, which alone can cleanse from the guilt of sin. After that it mentions our bodies washed with pure water, but says nothing about the certain dependance of the inward grace upon the outward ceremony.

I have now investigated the question as far as Scripture is concerned, and in so doing, have shewn that your texts, not only are not to be relied upon, but that they are proofs against you. How it is they have been pressed into this service, I cannot tell. Their connection must have been utterly disregarded, and the doctrine you advocate brought to them and not built upon them. They have been made to speak not their own language, but one that has been put into their mouth. Is not this handling the word of God deceitfully? Can He, who desires truth in the hidden part, approve of this? Will He not rather condemn it? Let us, my friend, keep to the law and to the testimony; for if we do not speak according to this rule, it is because there is no light in us. You have, I believe, advanced all the portions of God's word, which are usually quoted as evidences of the truth of the doctrine I am opposing; and if these do not support it—and I hope it has been proved they

do not—I may fairly conclude, it is no where to be found in the Bible. Then I say it is your plain duty to abandon it; and I exhort you to do so. In my next letter I intend to shew that it can be no more supported by the Prayer Book than by the Bible.

When I had arrived at this point, previous to putting my thoughts together, and was satisfied that your texts did not favour your doctrine, it struck me that many others might be found, absolutely inconsistent with it, and upon searching, I met with the following.

Col. iii. 10. “And *have* put on the *new* man which is renewed in knowledge after the *image* of Him that created him.” Have all the baptized put on the new man? Do they bear the image of God? No; they walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the *children of disobedience*. They cannot therefore be regenerate.

2 Cor. v. 17. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” Can this be said of the baptized? If not, then they are not born of the Spirit.

1 John iii. 9, 10. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In *this* the children of God *are manifest* and the children of the devil: *whosoever* doth *not righteousness* is *not of God*.” Do all baptized persons not commit sin—voluntary, open, wilful sin? Would that we could say so; but in truth we cannot. Are they then notwithstanding born

of God? No! He that *committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, nor known Him.* (1 John iii. 6, 8). Substitute *baptism* for *born of God*, which is perfectly lawful, if it is identical with regeneration, or *necessarily connected* with it—and then hear how it reads: Whosoever is baptized doth not commit sin, and he cannot sin because he is baptized. Is this true? Plainly not. Then regeneration is not the *necessary* result of baptism.

1 John v. 4. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” Is it true that baptized persons do this? Ah, no! they love the world, and the things of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—the love of the Father is therefore not in them. (1 John ii. 15, 16). They cultivate the friendship of the world, and consequently are the enemies of God. (James iv. 4). Can they be regenerate? Pray hold not a doctrine which contradicts such plain practical portions of holy writ.

I will quote one text more from St. John (v. 18). “We *know* that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” This text one of the Homilies quotes, to prove the same point as that I am endeavouring to establish, and I intend in the proper place, to make several extracts from the Homilies, to shew that I am not giving my own opinion only, but that of the Church, whose doctrines I conscientiously and heartily believe; as I am in duty bound by my subscription.

I have now both negatively and positively proved, that your opinion is wrong. Do not say, "then no man can *ex animo* subscribe to the Common Prayer Book, if he *views this* as the teaching of Scripture." Many, I know, do say so, and accuse those who see with me, of insincerity, and little less than perjury. Here is the rock upon which many have split. They set out with supposing that it is undeniable, that the Church of England holds this doctrine. They, rightly, I think, cannot believe, that the Church of England opposes Scripture, and so come to the conclusion that it holds this doctrine too. If, therefore, any one denounces it, he is thought not to be an honest, upright churchman, to be on the road to Dissent, and to belie his conscience every time he baptizes a child. Now I enter my protest against all this, and say, in behalf of my brethren holding similar sentiments with my own, we yield to none in our *bona fide* attachment to the church as she is. We fully preach her doctrines and carry out her design. Our opinion, on the subject of these Letters, shrinks not from investigation. We are as ready to stand upon Church of England ground, as upon Bible ground, with this view of the doctrine in our hand. Our hearts echo to all that the Articles, and catechism, and the services of baptism, and confirmation say on the subject. We have no wish to contort any of them. We take them as they are, we take them as a whole, and are willing to abide by them. In my next letter I will endeavour to shew that our cause is not so groundless according to the standards of our beloved church, as it is by some thought to be.

L E T T E R    I I .  

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I now enter upon the most difficult part of the question ; and feeling this, I have given more than common attention to it ; and great satisfaction do I find in the conclusion to which I have come. You endeavour to support your opinion by referring to the formularies of our church. I shall proceed to examine the reasons you produce, drawn from that source, and trust you will be convinced that the Church of England no more favours you than the Bible.

The first is, the definition of the Sacraments in the XXV Article. Sacraments, ordained of Christ, be not only badges and tokens of Christian mens' profession : but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of God's good will towards us ; by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

As baptism is one of the Sacraments thus defined, you infer that it must necessarily convey the grace of regeneration to infants when they are baptized ; for that otherwise it cannot be a *sure witness* and an *effectual sign*

of grace. But how is this proved? Only in a way which makes the Sacraments, and that of Baptism in particular, an *opus operatum*, which is very far from being the doctrine of the Church of England. According to your interpretation, the Article says, The child is baptized, and *consequently* regenerated. But, happily for the cause of truth, nothing of the sort is affirmed. Nothing whatever is said about *infants*, nor are they regarded, *in this Article*, as the recipients of either sacrament; but adults only; and in neither party can either sacrament be effectual without the requisite *moral qualification*; and it is on this account I say, infants are not herein regarded. I shall soon have the proper opportunity of explaining and defending myself. One of your authors intimates, that when *we* quote a certain passage from Hooker, we cannot do it with fairness and candour. Recollect, I do not say that the Sacraments do not convey grace: I only say that they do not convey it to *unworthy persons*; and by unworthy persons, I mean those who do not come to the Sacraments with those qualifications which the *Catechism* demands, from “persons to be baptized,” and from “those who come to the Lord’s Supper.” I have, therefore, great pleasure in observing, that Hooker supports me. He says “that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural, is not, in all respects, as food unto natural life, because they contain *in themselves* no vital force or efficacy; they are not physical, but *moral* instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship, which unless we perform *as* the Author of

grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For *all* receive not the grace of God, which receive the *Sacraments* of his grace." I wish to say no more than this, nor can I be content with any thing less. I am quite willing to add the observation of this author: "The argument is, that there is an *inward* grace besides the *outward sign*, and that therefore a Sacrament is to be received *as* the Author of grace requireth."

The Sacraments are "*in themselves*" sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace; but in *their application to us*, they are not so *unless* we exercise what the church demands, namely, repentance and faith. Nor need we be surprised at this, for even the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and the mighty operations of the Spirit, are ineffectual without our co-operation. How much more, then, the Sacraments! In no part of salvation—and the sacraments are intimately connected with salvation, generally necessary, as the Catechism has it—are we treated as machines, but as agents, capable, by the help of God, of joining with Him in working out our salvation, while He works in us, to will and to do, of His good pleasure. To view it in any other light, would be to make the sacraments an *opus operatum*, and the church inconsistent, not only with herself, but also with the Bible, the foundation of her faith. You seem to me altogether to mistake the meaning of the words "witnesses" and "signs;" or at least the application of them. You take it for granted, that no grace exists, prior to the reception of the sign. But this is incorrect, as I shall show. Whence did the Articles

derive these words; and the figure involved in them? The natural answer is, from the Scriptures! Or, if this is not admitted, I suppose it will not be contended that the words are used in a sense opposed to them. The words "witnesses" and "signs" refer to a contract or bargain, entered into between two parties. This, one of your authors admits. I will quote his words, for to my mind he has beautifully expressed it. "Perhaps we shall be excused for stating, for the advantage of general readers, that in the Latin, the language in which the Articles were originally drawn up, a word (*obsignantur*) is used, which signifies, that the bargain or contract for the forgiveness of sins, and adoption to be the sons of God, is then and thereby *concluded*; that a mark is then set, to which on all future occasions an appeal may be made." Many examples of this use of the words are to be found in the Bible. God entered into covenant with Noah; and the rainbow, when it was seen, was a *sign* that God had not forgotten His promise. He entered into covenant with Abraham also, and circumcision was the *sign*. Abraham bought a field of Ephron, and the sons of Heth were the *witnesses* that the condition of its transfer had been fulfilled—that the money had been paid. Jeremiah bought a field of Hanameel, and paid the money, and subscribed the evidence, and *sealed* it, and took *witnesses*. In all such transactions, the one party makes over certain property, on the payment of a certain sum; or, as in the case of a covenant, bestows certain privileges and blessings on the *fulfilment of certain conditions*. In the

Sacraments, then, we enter into a covenant with God ; or renew it. He then and there secures to us many saving blessings ; but he *demand*s the fulfilment of the conditions. If these are not forthcoming, the blessings are not bestowed. I mean to apply this observation to *both sacraments*, for both are referred to. I ask, therefore, does the Article teach us that the Sacraments are sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, *to be* given, and in a sense which implies that no grace has been received till the Sacraments are administered ? Does it not *imply* grace—preparing grace, repentance, and faith, as well as convey grace ? And can the Sacraments perform the latter, unless the former exist in those that receive them ? Let the Article speak for itself ; and, in addition to what has been quoted, read the last paragraph. “ And in such only as *worthily* receive the same have they a wholesome effect or operation ; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith.” Three things we plainly learn,

1. That the sacraments are sure proofs of God’s grace and good will—“ they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God’s good will.” Among the many ways in which He shows His loving-kindness towards us, the sacraments are the chief ; and this was one design of their institution. But further,

2. That by these sacraments He doth work invisibly in us. Our hearts exult in this. They are not mere rites meaning almost nothing, as I fear many esteem them. But how does He work in us by their means ?

and what does He accomplish? It follows. And doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him. Now certainly faith must have previously existed to be either quickened, strengthened, or confirmed by them when they are administered to us. I ask—to connect it with the particular point in hand—have infants faith to be quickened, strengthened, or confirmed? Clearly not. Then infants are not contemplated in this Article, and consequently it does not prove, that when they are baptized, they are therefore regenerated.

3. That they have not a wholesome effect or operation unless we receive them worthily. What is it to receive them worthily? No doubt to possess those qualifications before mentioned, viz. repentance and faith. I refer you to the catechism. Can these be in infants? No. Then they are not here included. In adults are the sacraments effectual without them? Assuredly not. Then do not the sacraments *necessarily* produce any saving effect in either party. On the contrary, they that receive them *unworthily* purchase to themselves damnation. The XXIX Article is to the same purpose. The wicked and *such* as are *void* of a *lively faith*, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise partakers of Christ, but rather, to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so holy a thing. I instance also the exhortation at the time of the communion. I speak of this Article here

in reference principally to the Lord's Supper, because I shall presently have to notice it in reference to the other sacrament.—But let us stop a moment, and see what has been proved.

1. That adults only are contemplated in this Article because they only can fulfil the conditions.

2. That even they receive no benefit, but a curse, if they receive the sacraments unworthily.

3. That as infants cannot possess the indispensable qualifications necessary for the worthy reception of baptism, their regeneration, at that time, and by that means, cannot be proved ; how then does this Article serve you ?

How in consistency with this, our church defends infant baptism, shall be considered in due time. Meanwhile I will venture to assert, that the experience of every true penitent believer bears out the most scriptural sentiments of this Article. View it again in reference to the Lord's Table. What are the feelings of the humbled believer when, at that time, he pours out his sorrowing soul, in that most devout and penitential confession which we then use?—When he acknowledges and bewails his manifold sins and wickedness, which he, from time to time, most grievously has committed in thought, word, and deed, against the Divine Majesty ; and says, that the remembrance of them is grievous unto him, and the burden intolerable ? Is not his faith almost ready to expire when he thus feels so acutely the inconceivable number and unknown aggravation of his sins ? But Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified before him. He sees the sure tokens of his Saviour's

love. He remembers, that that compassionate Saviour Himself ordained them, and said, "do this in remembrance of Me;" and he is comforted and encouraged. He draws near, partakes of the precious emblems of his Redeemer's death, as "certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's goodwill towards him;" his faith is quickened, and he feeds upon Him in his heart by faith with thanksgiving. A heavenly calm, a sweet peace, fills his soul, and a holy reverence, his mind. He mourns not less, nor is he less humbled; but he, nevertheless, rejoices in Christ his Saviour. He has a delightful sense of his acceptance with God, through the blood of the cross; and his love is afresh shed abroad in his heart. What a spur does he thus gain to obedience! How careful is he to follow Christ's example, and to be holy as He is holy! How watchful is he, and how does he exercise himself in prayer, lest he should loose the comfort he feels! O that we could always enjoy such blessed seasons; always thus show forth the Lord's death till He come! And wherefore not? The promises of God are always the same, and so is the sacrament; but we do not always come in repentance and faith. When, however, we do, we are Christian churchmen indeed; and who will say then that it is not a sacrament in its fullest sense—not only an outward and visible sign, but a sign too of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same and a pledge to assure us thereof. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ?

The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?

The XXVII Article "Of baptism," comes next under review. "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from those who are not christened, but is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the church ; the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed ; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." From these words you thus argue : that if baptism is a sign of regeneration, an *effectual* sign, as we learn from the XXV Article, the latter must be conveyed by the former. That if in baptism the promises of forgiveness and of adoption are visibly *signed* and *sealed*, forgiveness and adoption are always conveyed at that time. You will find yourself greatly mistaken ; for on this supposition the Article cannot be consistently explained, with either itself or the XXV Article, (with which you acknowledge it must be associated) or the Catechism, or the Scriptures. This is saying a great deal, but I hope to make my words good. I have already given the right key to the consistent interpretation and will apply it here.

I. "It is a sign of regeneration or new birth." As far as I can gather, your notion is, that when baptism is administered, regeneration is sure to follow ; the one is the cause, the other the effect ; one the means, the other the end. I am deeply grieved that so many

represent the matter in this way. It appears to me to make the standards of our church a mass of confusion, and her doctrines utterly irreconcilable with each other. You again mistake the meaning of the word "*sign*." A sign is that by which any thing is shewn or manifested, and not prefigured. You reason upon the supposition that a sign is a representation of what shall be given when the sign is received. The sign in the case of baptism is an outward washing with water, and the thing it represents is an inward purification; and you argue as if the latter cannot exist until the former is received. I wish to be understood, that I do not affirm that baptism does not convey grace *when rightly received*; but I do say that when it is so received, the word refers to an inward purification *already possessed*; though, from the nature of the case, it cannot be called regeneration, till baptism is administered. I must add, that unless this inward purification exists before baptism it—baptism—cannot be a sign of regeneration. By this inward purification I mean what the catechism calls repentance and faith. Here lies all the difference; and that this is the designed sense of the word, I will shew from the Article itself, from other parts of our formularies, and from the Scriptures.

1st The Article itself obliges us to this sense. "Whereby they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church." It is plain then, first, that a person *may* receive baptism *wrongly*. If not, why restrict the blessing of being engrafted into the church, to those who receive it *rightly*? Why say rightly at all if we cannot receive

it wrongly? Secondly, That if he does not receive it rightly, he is not grafted into the church. What is this but saying that baptism does not *necessarily* convey regeneration? The only way to avoid this conclusion is, to say that a person may be regenerated and not grafted into the church, which I suppose you will not allow. Pray ponder this. But what is it to receive baptism rightly? To receive it, say some, by water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It cannot be, for this is baptism itself; and the Article says, "they that receive baptism *rightly*," and not they that receive a *right* baptism. Indeed there is no wrong baptism. If it is not administered in the above way, it is not baptism at all. To suppose otherwise, would be to make the Article deny the privileges of baptism, to what is *not* baptism. But this as a matter of course. Such a thing required no declaration. There is no question on that subject. What then is meant? The Article *intimates* the answer, and the catechism gives it in *plain terms*. The first says, "Faith is *confirmed* and grace *increased*." Faith and grace, then, are already present in the candidate for baptism, or supposed to be present, for otherwise they could not be increased and confirmed. One of your authors is very particular in shewing, that the Article teaches that it is by the *act* of baptism, as by an instrument, that faith is confirmed, and that the expression "by virtue of prayer unto God," is applied solely to the clause, "grace is increased." I grant it; but what is got by this, at least as far as I am concerned? As the Article is on *baptism*,

it must refer to prayer used *at that time*; and if so, grace must have previously existed, in order to be increased by virtue of prayer then offered up. But if this is not conceded, my position is just as good; for he grants that faith is *confirmed* by the *act* of baptism; and it must, therefore, have pre-existed, and, indeed, without it we cannot receive baptism rightly. Now, I ask, are not grace and faith the very essence of regeneration? As far as I can learn, this is not denied. Then the Article must mean, that baptism is a sign of regeneration *to those who possess the requisite qualification to receive it rightly*. Observe, I do not say it is a sign of regeneration to those who are *already regenerated*; that is not accurate language; but to those who receive it *with the requisites demanded by our Church*, and in no other case. But in connection with this, hear the Catechism: "What is required of persons to be baptized? Repentance, whereby they *forsake sin*; and faith, whereby they *steadfastly believe* the promises of God, made to them in that sacrament. This will be the place in which to advert to a note of one of your authors: "We think it quite consistent with Scripture to believe that grace to a certain degree, and faith in a certain sense, are vouchsafed before the baptism of adults." This seems to me to be saying very little. By grace in a "certain degree," does he mean a *low* degree? I wish he had told us to what degree. And when he says "faith in a certain sense," does he refer to *degree* or *quality*. If to the latter, there can be but *one* faith. A spurious faith is not faith. If to the

former, then in whatever degree it exists, it is faith—faint and feeble, perhaps, but it is faith. And then, only quite *consistent* with Scripture to believe it. He ought to have said “Scripture *requires* us to believe it,” unless he holds that our Church requires more than the Scriptures. The above answer, however, settles the matter. It could scarcely be clearer. That kind of repentance is required, by which we *forsake sin*; and that kind of faith by which we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament. These graces are true and genuine, and such as the spirit of God alone can produce. And let me add, they are required of *all* persons to be baptized. I infer from the above note, that the Author who wrote it, thinks the case of infants is an exception, but it cannot be so, for this would be making *two* baptisms, one for adults, and another for infants; and we know there is but one. As the Bible requires these qualifications and as it makes no exception in the case of infants, our church, according to her VI Article, has no right to make any in their favour. Nor does she, as the next question in the catechism shews. “Why *then* are infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?” Now if infants were not included in the preceding answer, there could be no reason whatever to ask such a question. Infants are admitted to baptism on precisely the same ground as adults, that is, because they profess repentance and faith. “*Because* they promise them *both* (repentance and faith) by their sureties.” You will ask here, whether I believe the

church pronounces the child regenerate, on condition of what it shall bring forth at a future period? Certainly not; but upon what it has already done, or, (which comes to the same thing as far as the question is concerned) professed to have done. It is important to observe that the church, as well as Scripture, requires repentance and faith previous to baptism in *all cases*. At the expense of repetition I ask, are not repentance and faith the essence of regeneration? They are. And are they required before baptism can be administered? Yes. Then baptism is a sign of regeneration to those only who possess the requisite qualification. But to bring a proof from Scripture, let me refer to that part which, I cannot but think, supplied the language used in the Article under consideration. We meet with the following incidents in the life of Abraham. About a year before the birth of Ishmael the Lord God appeared to him, and gave him a certain promise concerning his seed. That he should have seed, was not, according to nature, likely to occur; but "he believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 1--6). When Ishmael was thirteen years old, that is about fourteen years after the Lord's appearance, he was allowed and commanded to enter into a visible covenant with God by means of circumcision. He obeyed the command, and the rite became to him an outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace. But whether or not it was what we call a sacrament, does not concern me to enquire, (though I suppose it will not be denied,) nor is it necessary to my argu-

ment that it should be so. I refer to it as an illustration as well as a proof, and I do it with the greater confidence, because the Apostle Paul comments upon these circumstances in this way. "We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in *uncircumcision*. And he *received* the SIGN of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he *had, yet being uncircumcised.*" This, for my purpose, is remarkable language, and I beg your particular attention to it. Circumcision was a sign to Abraham of what he had in his possession for fourteen years, and not of what he received by it. Now when we consider, that baptism under the new dispensation has taken the place of circumcision under the old, that our church founds all her doctrines and statements upon the word of God, that she teaches her members to pray for the true circumcision of the Spirit, and that, associated with the collect where this petition is found, is placed for the Epistle, that very portion of the Romans above quoted, is it not most natural to believe that these verses supplied the expressions of the Article under consideration? But whether or not, my proof is equally conclusive. We have the use of the word *sign*, in a transaction which answers as nearly as possible to our idea of a sacrament, not in reference to what was received by that sign, but to what was enjoyed long before it was submitted to. I produce the Scriptural proof last here, because it is barely possible, abstractedly speaking, that the word may

mean one thing in the Article and another thing there; but having before proved my position from the Article itself, I may well be allowed to support it by revelation, and in so doing, to shew how it harmonizes with the sentiments therein contained.

II. The Article further says, "The promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed." From these words you contend, that justification and adoption are communicated to the infant by baptism. "The infant," says another of your authors, "is justified as well as sanctified at baptism." But can this be the true construction of this language? I think not. It says only that the *promises* of these blessings are *visibly* signed and sealed, not that the blessings themselves are conveyed by baptism. I refer you again to the example in the case of Abraham. "He believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he *received* the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the *faith which he had.*" St. Paul writes to the Ephesians thus, "*After* that that ye believed ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of *promise.*" I have already proved that a person cannot receive baptism rightly *without faith.* Now it is certain that wherever faith exists, justification and adoption are also present; for St. Paul declares "that we are justified *by faith* without the deeds of the law;" and that we are the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus." Now if we are justified by faith only, and if faith is one of the requisites which the church demands in order to be baptized, justification is

not conveyed by baptism. It is not then given, but visibly signed and sealed; or, as one of your authors expresses it, "The bargain or contract for the forgiveness of sins and adoption to be the sons of God is then and thereby *concluded*." This, he says, is the meaning of the word *obsignantur*, which is used in the Latin Article. But hear the church on this subject. She says in her XI Article, "We are accounted righteous before God *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ *by faith*, and *not* for our own works and deservings." Wherefore that we are justified *by faith only* is a *most wholesome* doctrine. Here is the very premise whence I drew my conclusion, and I say again, as we are justified by *faith only*, and as faith must exist *before* baptism can be *rightly received*, and as an infant cannot have faith, therefore the child is not justified at baptism. Do you think, that such wise men as our Reformers, would have said in one place that we are justified by *faith only*, in another that infants cannot perform the condition of faith, and yet teach in a third that they are justified at *baptism*? I can never believe it. No; they tell us it is *declared*, not *bestowed*, at baptism; and so are consistent with themselves and God's word too.

Additional evidence may be gained from the XIII Article, which says, "Works done before the grace of Christ and inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God." I must beg you to observe that the title of this Article is "Of Works *before Justification*." From these words two things are evident. First, that infants are

not contemplated, for they can do no works of any kind whatever. Secondly, that remission of sins, the grace of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, are not necessarily conveyed at baptism. Here are persons grown up and able to perform works apparently good, who have none of them. Nothing can be plainer, than that this Article supposes that persons may be baptized, and yet not possess any of those blessings which you say are always conveyed by baptism. Indeed your principle of interpretation involves the church in endless difficulties and perplexities; and I may add that the one advocated in these pages extricates her from the whole and shews her to be both consistent and scriptural.

Let us see again what has been proved?

1. That baptism is a sign of regeneration only to those who possess a certain *qualification*, namely, *repentance* and *faith*.

2. That as infants cannot have repentance and faith, they cannot receive baptism rightly *according to this sense*.

3. That therefore this Article does not support but positively disproves your notion of infant baptismal regeneration.

Perhaps you will now say to me you prove too much; for if what has been stated is true, infants ought not to be baptized at all. This truly is the conclusion many have come to, and they act accordingly; and perhaps we should have fallen into the same error if we had not had the Church to guide us. Who can help admiring her wisdom and moderation in this matter?

She had opposite errors to contend against,—the Popish error of regeneration as the necessary consequence of infant baptism on the one hand, and the Anabaptist error of not allowing infants to be baptized, on the other. She firmly and discreetly opposes both, rejecting the one, and yet retaining the other. I say rejecting the one, for at the Reformation a great change was made in this Article of faith, upon which change I shall build an argument in the proper place. This brings me to the last paragraph to be noticed.

III. “The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.” You see they felt your own difficulty and made provision, lest it should drive us away from any part of the truth. But why was this added if your doctrine of baptismal regeneration was still intended to be taught? On this supposition it cannot be accounted for, and it is both unnecessary and absurd; as well as a similar addition in the catechism. It plainly proves that adults only were contemplated; and of them, those only who were duly qualified. It is very likely that some of the Anabaptist objectors said, “you have expunged the doctrine of baptismal regeneration from your articles of faith; you require repentance whereby sin is forsaken, and a steadfast faith to be in the candidate for baptism; and yet you allow infants to be baptized although you acknowledge they cannot perform them.” Here was a difficulty—an apparent inconsistency. But how did our Bishops avoid it? Did they reinstate the Article they had abolished, and thus

again embrace error to avoid a supposed incongruity? Or did they yield to the clamour, and forbid infants being brought to Christ? Or did they say, we will give up the qualification and then infants may be consistently baptized? Any of these alternatives would have sufficed to silence the objection urged. But no, they chose none of them. All disagreed with their avowed guide, the word of the living God. They calmly viewed the whole question, and, in doing so, said, we may suppose thus: "We will not re-adopt the article of faith which teaches infant baptismal regeneration—what we have altered we have altered; that shall stand. We must not forbid children coming to their only Saviour. Forbid any one coming to Him! Grievous even to think of! Our office is to invite—not forbid. Infants too were brought into covenant with God by circumcision, when eight days old, under a dispensation, the privileges of which were *far less* than those of our own. And beside this, Christ himself said, 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' No, this must not be entertained for a moment. We dare not lower the standard of qualification. St. Peter said "*Repent* and be baptized;" and St. Philip, 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest' be baptized. That, too, would be making baptism the mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, and not the answer of a good conscience towards God; and also reducing this sacrament to one part only, the outward and visible sign, omitting the inward and spiritual grace."

With what substantial satisfaction may we contemplate the course they pursued in this difficulty. They were as cautious as firm. Theirs was no puny intellect, leading them to take a one sided view of the subject. They grasped it in all its parts. Truly the Great Head of the church endued them with heavenly wisdom and prudence. While others went astray they were kept in this narrow path of truth. The Spirit of God dwelt in their heart, and His word on their tongues, and England reaps the benefit of their gifts and graces. How thankful ought we their descendants to be! They examined every inch of their way, and felt as they proceeded, that they stood on firm ground. In the paragraph therefore I am examining they say, Children have ever been baptized from the earliest ages, therefore "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be"—not *brought into*, but "*retained* in the church." Jesus commanded the children to be brought unto Him, therefore it is most agreeable to His institution, for He does not say any thing in one place that contradicts what He orders in another. But here begun their difficulty. They had demanded qualifications for baptism which they knew infants could not bring; and yet, as we have seen, they could not relinquish them without opposing the Bible, which they would not do let the consequences be what they might. What did they do in this dilemma? We may suppose they went to their usual guide in perplexities; nor did it fail them. They must have found that Christianity itself is founded upon the *principle of substitution*. Christ stood in the place of

sinners, and why not introduce the same principle here? Is there any thing in the nature of the case to forbid it? Nothing. Does Scripture either directly or by implication prohibit it. They could answer, No. They went further, and found that the principle had always been acted upon from primitive ages—that Godfathers and Godmothers were ever admitted to stand sureties for children. In this they possessed all they desired. All apparently conflicting doctrines were reconciled by this practice, and it became the key stone of the archway they had erected. They kept up their high standard of qualification, making no exceptions in the case of any one. Children shall be brought to the ordinance of Christ, said they, but they must come in the character of penitent believers; and to ensure their being trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we will require sureties who shall be responsible for that right training. Here they stood, and wrote, “What is required of persons to be baptized? Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament. Why then are infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them? Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.” Thus they took the Bible for their guide and the primitive church for their model; and we, as a consequence, have a constitution the nearest of any to Apostolic usage, some of our enemies themselves being judges. I hope you see that children are allowed to

come to the sacrament of baptism only on the ground that they are properly qualified. They are baptized on precisely the same account as adults: namely, because repentance and faith have been professed. I say *professed*; for we are able to take cognizance of nothing else. From the nature of the case, whether they are regenerate *in fact*, remains to be proved as opportunity serves.

But you will say the office of baptism declares the baptized child regenerate by the Holy Ghost. This may seem at variance with me, but it is not really so. I do not see how the church could consistently order any thing less, after requiring the child to make a true confession of faith and repentance. I will, however, shew you that there is no inconsistency between the baptismal services, and my way of explaining the Articles and Catechism. Remember it is no question of ours whether the profession is sincere. If it is made at all, either personally or substitutionally, we are bound to receive it as sincere, and act accordingly. God alone can judge the heart. Bearing this in mind consider,

1. That I have proved that repentance and faith are required of persons to be baptized, and that these graces are the essence of regeneration. But then repentance and faith are not complete or perfected until baptism has been submitted to. Repentance is not repentance unless it brings forth its appropriate fruits—leaving off sin and practising Christ's commands. Now suppose a man were to cease from doing evil, and were to keep all Christ's commands but one, could we consider him a true

and complete penitent believer? Could we declare him regenerate? Of course not. He is so far defective. There is one fruit of repentance he does not bring forth, one command he wilfully breaks. It may arise from ignorance or obstinacy. No matter; his repentance is not *scriptural*. He holds fast one sin and "whosoever offends in one point is guilty of all." Transfer these ideas to the point in hand. Suppose a person works no iniquity, and keeps every command of Christ but that one to be baptized; is he regenerate? No! He is not *far* from the *kingdom* of God but he is not *in* it. He does not bring forth *all* the fruits of repentance and faith *in his power*. He breaks one command. Christ said to His disciples, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to *observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*. If indeed he *cannot* procure baptism, he shall be saved without it, for the sacraments are only *generally necessary* to salvation. But if he can and refuses to do so, I acknowledge I do not see how he can be saved. He breaks Christ's command, and how can this be done with impunity? If however he obeys, he produces the deficient evidence of his sincere attachment to Christ. He brings forth the last required fruit, so to speak, of his repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ—he is baptized and regenerated. Mark, he is regenerated in baptism. The top stone is then brought on, and the building so far complete. From the nature of the case, *all* the fruits of repentance cannot be brought forth

*except at and by baptism*, and thus we may be said to be then regenerated. In this sense I have no objection to hold that baptism conveys regeneration, and in this sense alone can our church be proved to hold it. I know that in the early church they applied strong language to baptism; and perhaps they had good reason—reason which we, in these days of peace, cannot have. When persecution raged, none would be baptized but those that were attached to Christ and His cause. *They must* have had repentance and faith. At such a time nothing was got by their profession but outward disgrace and misery, and perhaps loss of property, and even life. Now when, notwithstanding this, persons were found who dared to be baptized, thus giving a bold and decided, an open and clear proof, to a wicked generation, of not being ashamed of Christ and His words, it must be admitted, that before they took such a step the grace of God wrought powerfully in them. Under such circumstances, too, baptism was specially important. If it was shunned, there was some sinful reserve. But when, in the midst of opposition, it was sought and submitted to, we need not be surprised if they did apply strong and endearing language to an act, by which they gave conclusive evidence of their love to the Jesus. It was a rite in which they left all for Christ, taking Him for their God, and His law for their rule—a rite in which He took them for His people, therein making over to them all the rich blessings of the gospel, and visibly signing their forgiveness and adoption. But in our days the mere act of being baptized is no proof of inward grace,

and consequently we cannot speak of the result with such confidence as they. Baptism is the same as ever, but we do not come to it with such earnest and devoted hearts; and it is not a *sacrament*, unless there is the inward and spiritual grace, as well as the outward sign. We are far too apt to magnify the latter and forget the former, so that we are reminded of Bishop Burnet's words, "Oh! that men had not so soon confused the divine thing, and the sign which represented it; and had not wished to bind the work of the Spirit on the outward sign."

You will not forget, that infants are received upon the ground of their being, as far as we can judge—and we can judge no farther than the profession—penitent believers. If, then, they are presented for baptism in that character, and they there bring forth the only remaining fruit of repentance and faith, is there not great propriety in declaring concerning each one, Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is by baptism regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, &c. &c.? There is no inconsistency, here, then, either in the church, or in my way of explaining her formularies. But this will be more evident if you consider,

2. That the priest and congregation present pray that the child may be regenerated. And they are encouraged to this by that precious promise of Christ, blended in the second prayer: "Ask and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find." Now you must know, that while I firmly deny the *necessary* consequence of regeneration upon infant baptism, I do not say that re-

generation in such a case is impossible. There is nothing to make it so. God can as well regenerate a child, as an adult; for the wind bloweth where it *listeth*. Now, as this is the case, and as the required qualification is substitutionally present, and as the gift itself has been asked for, why should we not believe that God has heard prayer, and blessed His own ordinance; and praise Him for it? saying, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church?" To direct otherwise would be to say that we might pray, and pray too in faith, and according to God's will,—for all this is supposed—and yet not be answered. It would be encouraging unbelief; a sin which requires to be rooted out, and not fostered. The church, in a word, would be most inconsistent with herself; but as it is, she is beautiful and harmonious; and I love harmony, especially church harmony, too well to wish to produce a discordant note in the song of praise which we sing to our heavenly Father, at the joyous time of dedicating our dear little ones to Him. I am not like some who would alter our baptismal service. I would not alter a word. Something like a license would then be given to the carelessness and want of devotion which we are so often pained to see during the administration of baptism. Our Reformers were men of faith, and framed the service in faith, and intended that we should use it in faith; and they silently condemn us if we do not.

But you will still say, is it not a manifest contradiction to pronounce a child regenerate, when at the same time we believe it is possible, and, perhaps, probable that he is not so? I think not; but you shall judge when you have considered,

3. The inconsistency of the opposite course. Here is the child presented in the character of a true penitent. We have prayed for his regeneration, and God has promised whatever we ask according to His will. The act of baptism is performed, and then what shall we say, or do? There are but three alternatives: either we must declare him regenerate, or not regenerate, or we must be silent. Shall we take the second, and declare the child is not regenerate? What! after we have prayed to the contrary? Would it not be rash in the highest degree? Shall we presume to limit the Holy One of Israel? How can we know that He has not regenerated the child? Has he said He will not? We cannot take this alternative. Shall we, then, take the third? This is but a shade better than the second. We are driven to the first. It is the only consistent course; though the positive proof of it, as a *matter of fact*, cannot yet be given. Add one consideration more, namely,

4. That this is not the only instance in which our church pronounces the bestowment of blessings upon the profession of the required conditions. I say upon the *profession*; for this is all we can take cognizance of. We are not able to judge whether the inward and spiritual grace corresponding to the profession is pre-

sent. If it is not, the sin lies at their door; not at ours. In the daily service, the congregation are supposed to confess their sins, with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart. Here repentance and faith are professed; and, undoubtedly, if they really exist, pardon is bestowed. The minister, consequently, is instructed "to declare and pronounce to God's people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." But is every one who joins in the confession forgiven? Nobody believes it. Yet what is done here more or less than in the baptismal service? Take another example more to the point, if possible, than this, from the visitation of the sick. The sick man professes his repentance and faith; and upon that, absolution is pronounced in a more direct manner than in the daily service. But is he forgiven? Yes, indeed, if he is sincere—not because pardon is pronounced, but because he repents and believes the Gospel. But who will take it upon him to say, that every sick man, with whom this service is used, is sincere? You will say, with this we have nothing to do. Just so. Absolution is pronounced upon the supposition that the profession is true and faithful. We must, however, perceive, that our knowledge of pardon being *really* given, is no more *certain* than is our *knowledge* that the person is a true penitent. So in the case of the child. He comes in the character of a sincere penitent, nor can we, with any propriety, pronounce a decision except in accordance with the profession. When Philip the Deacon baptized Simon Magus, no doubt he thought him sin-

cere; and when, after his baptism, he continued with him wondering at the miracles and signs which he saw, Philip must have looked upon him as an upright disciple of Christ; and have treated him as such. And if he had to make any declaration concerning him to Peter, when he presented him for confirmation, we are obliged to suppose it was, that he had been born of God. But did it turn out so? It did not. When certain circumstances arose, he shewed himself in his true colours. Peter said to him—going upon the principle “By their fruits ye shall know them”—“Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. For I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” I trust I have said enough to show, that there is no inconsistency in my scheme, nor any impropriety in thanking God that the child is regenerated, upon the supposition only that he is so. Whether he is really so, remains to be proved or disproved by his conduct in after life. Whether the sick man is forgiven must be shewn by his conversation upon his recovery. If he was, he will love God in proportion to what was forgiven; and the love of God always leads to the keeping of His commands. If he was not, he will be as bad as before, perhaps worse. The wicked lives of the vast majority of baptized persons, prove they were not regenerated; and to address them as such while they follow, and not renounce, the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, is, it appears to me, taking measures to send them to the grave with a lie in their

right hand—is antinomianism in its worst forms, and most delusive to the souls of men.

Another thought strikes me. The Scriptures throughout denounce sin, and enjoin a perfect conformity to the law of God; and yet they every where suppose that this will not be done, and make provision accordingly. “My little children,” says St. John, “these things I write unto you that ye sin not.” This is tantamount to an injunction. But did he believe it would be obeyed? Not so. “But if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Sin is not allowed but forbidden; yet if, notwithstanding this, we should sin—should be overtaken in a fault,—there is no cause for despair. Cause there is for shame and godly sorrow, but not for despair; for we have still an Intercessor: God is still willing to forgive. In this passage a *supposition* is made, which is not believed to be *real*. You are told not to sin, and yet it is taken for granted that you will sin. Indeed if there is any incongruity in my way of explaining the standards of our church, it belongs to the Bible as well as to me. We have seen that it does not teach what *you* call baptismal regeneration; that *it* requires such conditions from persons to be baptized as infants cannot fulfil; and yet it *commands* that children should be brought to Christ. How we can obey the *command* and yet demand the *conditions* in such a case I do not see, except in the way in which our church has done it; and how we can demand the conditions and

obtain them (as far as we can judge) either substitutionally or personally, and not pronounce the blessings promised through the merits of Christ to the performance of those conditions, I do not know. If the church had omitted any thing she had enjoined, she would not have been, in this matter, such a perfect whole. As it is, all the parts are beautifully adapted the one to the other, and I shall never cease to adore that wisdom and goodness which kept our Reformers from going astray where the liability to it was so great, and the temptations so many; and at a time, too, when many did go astray, either on the one side or other.

We next examine the Catechism. I have already been obliged to intrench upon this ground; so that the less need be said now. The second answer is as follows: "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." If you apply the principle already laid down, no difficulty will be seen here. Every child who repeats this answer, was presented at baptism as one professing repentance and faith. If he is yet so young,—and the Catechism was made for young children,—that we are not able to discover any thing contrary to what was pronounced at baptism, we have no right to alter our judgment respecting him. But if he is grown up, and gives *positive* evidence that he is in the flesh, and not in the spirit, then, I humbly conceive that it is our duty, as good stewards of the mysteries of God, giving unto all the household their portion of meat in due season, and bringing out of our treasury things new

and old, to address him in the spirit and words of the first of those texts at the beginning of morning and evening prayers, “*When* the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” If you ask me upon what ground I, as a Clergyman, come to this conclusion, the answer is, upon that of the XI and XIII Articles. To see the force of them, you must consider, that our Reformers could not, with scripture on their side, forbid children to be baptized; nor could they, in consistency with the same scriptures, allow them to partake of this sacrament except as persons who had fulfilled the required conditions. And this being the case, they could do no less than pronounce the bestowment of the blessings attached to their performance, and treat the baptized party as having them in his possession. So far all is clear; and it is equally clear to my mind that, although, on the ground above mentioned, they pronounce every baptized child regenerate, yet they did not expect it would be so in fact; and this I consider is proved by the two Articles I have named. The first says, that we are justified by *faith only*, and refers us to the “Homily of Justification,”\* where this is conclusively proved. Now, if we are justified by faith only, then we were not justified at our baptism; for being then infants, we could not exercise the faith without which no flesh living can be justified. Is it not plain that this Article is framed

\* Its title on the Book of Homilies is, “On Salvation.”

upon the supposition that we were *not* regenerated, and consequently *not* justified at baptism? The XIII Article is still clearer if possible than this. It speaks of works done *before* justification, and *before* the grace of Christ, and also *before* the *inspiration* of the Spirit. But can it mean works done before our baptism in infancy, when, you say, these blessings are always bestowed? It is impossible to believe it! Most evident it is, that our Reformers took it for granted, that although we are baptized in our infancy, yet many of us would grow up without either the grace of Christ, or the inspiration of the Spirit, or justification; and therefore, not the children of God. Now when persons give evidence by their wicked lives that this is the case, I am no more than carrying out my ordination vows, and obeying the directions of our Church, when I tell them not to marvel if I say, "ye must be born again." It is necessary that you should become new creatures in Christ Jesus. "Old things must pass away; behold, all things must become new."

The definition of a sacrament comes next: "I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." Here, you observe, baptism is a means by which we receive the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, viz. regeneration. Apply my principle again. Let a person come prepared in the way the church requires, (and this preparation is implied in all her formularies) and I do not deny that he is regener-

ated, in baptism, *in the sense above laid down*. Indeed it is the key which opens, without any force whatever, all the difficult locks I have yet found. By its means I can easily enter all the spacious apartments of the building of our church, and see their richness and beauty; and I assure you as I walk through them, I experience great satisfaction from the discoveries which are every where made.

But I find there is another way of answering you—Mr. Faber's way. I must recall to your mind what it is I oppose—that baptism is the *necessary, certain, and only* conveyer of regeneration. I do not say that it *cannot* convey regeneration, nor that it *never does* so. In the bestowment of grace, God is a Sovereign, whether it respects the person, means, or time. Now it is very observable, and I dare say you have noticed it, that this definition does not say, *the* means, but *a* means. If it had affirmed more it would have contradicted St. Peter where he writes, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I have no doubt but it is *a* means by which some receive it. Have we not known children, who from their infancy have exhibited a heavenly, Christ-like disposition, delighting in communion with God and every other holy exercise? But to say that it is *the* means, the means *exclusively*, is not taking the catechism as it is. I do not forget that one of your authors objects to this construction. But when I stand upon the same ground with Mr. Faber, I am in very respectable company, and this perhaps may lessen

the odium of opposing his judgment; for I willingly acknowledge he is clever, and that his argument is ingenious. He comes to the conclusion that, "baptism is by the church declared to be *a*, or *one of the* means of grace; but *the*, or, *the sole* appointed means of that particular grace designated regeneration." The strength of his reasoning is here, that, according to him, "the answer alludes to grace *not conveyed through the sacrament.*" His argument, in short, is this; "As *a* means and *a* pledge implies *other* means and *other* pledges, why should not *an* inward grace imply *other* graces too?" For this plain reason, that there *is* a word which makes the *grace* definite, but *nothing* which makes the *means* so. Read the answer again. "I mean an outward and visible sign of *an* inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the *SAME.*" The word *same* definitely fixes what grace is meant; namely, that one represented by the ordinance, and that one is, *he tells us*, regeneration. This answer, then, *does* teach us, that baptism is *a* means by which we receive *regeneration*, but *not* the *sole* means. This author so often hints at the lack of critical acumen, and fair exposition in his antagonist, and so frequently enjoys, apparently, a triumph over him, that I had almost caught the same spirit; but I forbear, remembering that he is a Christian brother, and a clerical brother too. I forgot in the right place to notice the private service of baptism, but that is of no consequence. I will do it here. On it, you remark, that although there are no sponsors, yet the child is pronounced

regenerate. I answer whether the child be baptized in public or private, it can be received only in the character of one possessing the required qualifications. The question in the catechism is not, What is required of persons to be baptized *when they bring sponsors*; but it is put in the abstract, without any adjuncts or accidents whatever; "*of persons to be baptized.*" Plainly, under any circumstances, in private or public, with or without sponsors, in childhood or in riper years. The church does no more relax her requirements in the case of a child privately baptized, than in that of one publicly baptized. She does not say, that it is the presence of sponsors, or of any one else, which makes the baptism of infants valid; nor do I; but it is, that they are brought upon the ground of their having true repentance, and a steadfast faith. It is true we cannot be sure that infants have these graces, and as in the event of their not having them in due time, our holy vocation would be disgraced, the church takes security of the sureties, that they shall, in proper season, be forthcoming; and these sureties are responsible, if not for the actual appearance of the fruits of righteousness, yet for their having used every possible means that they may appear. There is nothing therefore in the fact you notice which militates against my view of the subject.

You refer me to the Nicene Creed. "I believe in one baptism *for the remission of sins*;" and the interpretation you give of it is, that when the child is baptized his sins are at the same time forgiven. This is contrary to what I have shewn is the plain meaning of the church

in other places ; and certainly she does not intend to contradict herself in any of her authorized formularies. The creed is necessarily short, and therefore ambiguous. I say ambiguous, for it says nothing about the *application* of baptism ; and, as far as *it* is concerned, the *opus operatum* question could not be disproved. We must seek for information some where else ; and where but in the Articles and Catechism ? From them we learn that they who receive baptism rightly, with repentance and faith, are grafted into the church ; (to such) the promises of forgiveness of sins are visibly signed and sealed. Our church is most wise and prudent and strictly follows the example of the Bible. In those parts where she lays down her doctrines, she says nothing at all about particular persons, nor does she order us to say that this one, or that one is fit for baptism ; but describes the *character* of those that are fit. All persons knowing the conditions, must not present themselves, or others, unless they are fulfilled, or professed to have been fulfilled ; and she takes a solemn promise of them or of their sureties to this effect. I say again, it is not for us to judge them. If they say they are sincere, we are bound so to believe them, *until* they give *undoubted* evidence to the contrary. If they really possess what they profess, their sins are remitted ; or, as the creed expresses it, they are baptized for the remission of sins ; or, to use the words of St. Peter, which include the qualification, the rite itself, and the blessedness of it, “Repent and be baptized every one of

you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Before I conclude, there is an argument against you of a general nature, which I must not fail to urge. I allude to the change which took place in this doctrine at the time of the Reformation. No one will deny, that the doctrine of infant baptismal regeneration, which you and many others now advocate, was held by the Papists before the Reformation. The question is, was this one of the things which were rejected? If I can shew you that it was, and this I hope to do, it will be a conclusive proof that the Protestant Church of England does not embrace it. Now in 1816 Dr. (afterwards Bishop) LAURENCE, Professor of Hebrew, and Canon of Christ's Church, undertook to *defend* Bishop MANT, who had written on your side of the question, and who was answered by, I think, SCOTT. LAURENCE quotes, in *his favour*, as he thinks, from the "Book of Articles," published by royal authority in the year 1536; and which was composed in Convocation, and signed by the Members on the eleventh of July of that year. His quotation, he says, is from Vol. III of Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britanniæ*, page 819; in which a copy of these Articles may be found. No doubt he quotes the strongest passage he could find for his purpose; but I think you will see it substantiates the view advocated in these pages. The following is the quotation.

"In the directions there given, all Bishops and preachers are required, among other things, to teach the people, "that *men or children* having the *use of*

*reason*, and willing and desirous to be baptized, shall by virtue of that holy sacrament obtain the grace and remission of all their sins, *if they shall* come thereunto *perfectly* and *truly* repentant, and contrite of *all* their sins before committed; and also *perfectly* and *constantly* confessing and believing *all* the articles of our faith according as it was mentioned in the Article before, OR ELSE NOT. And finally, *if* they shall also have *firm credence* and trust in the promise of God adjoined to the said sacrament, that is to say, that in and by this said sacrament which they shall receive, God the Father giveth unto them, for His Son Jesus Christ's sake, remission of all their sins and the grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby they be newly regenerated and made the very children of God according to the saying of Christ and His Apostle St. Peter, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

LAURENCE also says, "There are also extant in the Cottonian Library, certain Articles drawn up in Latin, and in one or two instances, corrected by Henry himself, which Strype, in his Ecclesiastical Memorials, refers to the year 1540, but which, from their great resemblance to the foregoing, might perhaps have been of an earlier date. They are upon the following subjects: De Ecclesia, De Justificatione, De Eucharistia, De Baptismo, De Pœnitentia, De Sacramentorum Usu. They seem to be merely extracts from the preceding Articles translated into Latin. From some of these, a

considerable part of the XXV, XXVI, and XXXIV Articles of our Church was copied almost verbatim.— I shall quote from them a passage upon adult baptism applicable to my present purpose. It is there said, “De adultis vero docemus, quod ita consequuntur per baptismum remissionem peccatorum, et gratiam, se baptizandi attulerent pœnitentiam *veram*, confessionem articulorum fidei, et credant *vere* ipsis ibi donari remissionem peccatorum et justificationem proptur Christum sicut Petrus ait in Actis ; Penitentiam agite ; et baptizetur unusquisque vestrum in nomine Jesu Christi in remissionem peccatorum, et accipietis donum Spiritus Sancti.”

These quotations are from pages 47 and 48 of Laurence’s work, which he entitles “The Doctrine of the Church of England, upon the Efficacy of Baptism, vindicated from Misrepresentation.” I need not stop to show how exactly these quotations accord with the sentiments contained in this letter. The Papists said, All the blessings contained in regeneration, are given to infants when they are baptized. No! said our Reformers in Convocation, at which Cranmer must have presided, they are given to persons who bring *true repentance and faith*.

I have now taken away all the proofs by which you imagined your opinion was upheld. I brought it to the test of the Bible ; and there it was found lamentably deficient. When weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it was found wanting. Had it been gold, it would have endured the furnace ; but it proved dross.

Heaven's blest Book, the bulwark of Protestantism, disowns your doctrine; and this made me more than suspect that it would not stand the next test to which it was to be submitted. Then it was brought to the touchstone of the Prayer Book, and there again it could not endure examination. I have taken no advantage of the sophistry of words, but have considered every expression in the "literal and grammatical sense." My cause has not been that of a wily Counsel, advocating a bad cause, who, in supporting it, uses all manner of tricks and contortions, suppressing the essential facts, and advancing others which have little or nothing to do with the matter. I have, as far as I know, hidden nothing; nor have I lightly passed over, what are supposed to be difficulties on my side of the question, and expatiated on those which we consider as supporting it. I have made a full and true statement of the case; and it has been a sufficient proof of the justness of my cause. The church has spoken for herself; and my work has been to dispel the mists in which she was enveloped; and, be it remembered, to do this by means of her *own light*, and then to exhibit her in her own heaven-born beauty. I am persuaded she has but to be known and *understood* to be loved. "She is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold;" and it grieves me to see her arrayed in any of the distinctive garments of Popery. *Apostolic* and *primitive* garb, I have no objection to, but I have a most decided objection to modern fashions. Take her as she is, she will be found all that a man, having the Holy Spirit for his

teacher, and the Bible for his guide, can wish for. She is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. And as the Great Master Builder, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, has not given us direction in every particular respecting the rearing of the building—leaving this to those whom His providence places in authority—she proceeds on this delicate ground with great caution. She first, most properly, denies to herself the authority “to ordain any thing contrary to God’s word written;” and then goes to primitive times for direction in matters which that word has left indifferent; and her wisdom and judgment ought to be admired by every one. She has avoided all extremes; neither burdening us with a number of ceremonies on the one hand, nor treating us as if we were all spirit on the other. “As we walk around our Zion, and go round about her, telling her towers, and marking well her bulwarks, can we help exclaiming in heartfelt gratitude, “Great is our Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. May God establish it for ever!” And when we enter her sacred enclosure to view her internal arrangements and economy, can we help saying, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!” “Of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, and the Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord

shall count, when he writeth up his people, that this man was born there. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee." Much has been lately said about submission to the teaching of our Church. I hope it will be seen from this letter who they are that do this. I readily acknowledge that unless we can *bona fide* subscribe to her doctrines and practices, we have no business to enter within her pale as ministers. But then they who talk of obedience assume that they alone submit to her—that they alone with a true heart make the required subscription, and that all others who hold not their opinions, are little less than perjured. But did it ever occur to them, that as they are not infallible, it is very possible for them to be mistaken? that therefore they should not speak as if *they only*, without doubt, were right, and all others *certainly wrong*. They seem to discover no difference between these two propositions: This is *our judgment* of what the church teaches; and, This *is* what the church teaches. They identify the two, and proceed upon the supposition, that their judgment is the correct expression of the mind of the church; as if they were her oracle. But, no; it is their private opinion of that mind, and nothing more. One who is eminent among them, speaks of those who preach their views on the subject as "orthodox," and of them that oppose it, as I am doing, as "heterodox." I must say, without any feeling contrary to brotherly love, I call this arrogance in the extreme. The Apostles themselves never spoke with greater assurance, even

when they were under the guidance of inspiration. But when St. Paul gave his *private judgment*, he did it with *modesty* and *caution*. It does not become me to speak dogmatically, even though I had not condemned such a practice; but I trust you have, by this time, learnt what weight is to be attached to such assertions. As to submission to the church, (I do not wish to be uncharitable, nor do I say they wilfully do it; but) it has often been forced upon my judgment, whether I would or not, that it is merely this in many cases, persons adopt their own system, attempt to engraft it upon the church, and then put it forth as the church's teaching. But is it so? Judge you. Let us lay aside all prejudice, and allow no preconceived notion to darken our mind. Let the question simply be, "what *is* truth?" and not, "what do we *wish* to be the truth?" and then let the church be heard indeed; standing, as she does, upon the broad, firm foundation of God's word, and I have no fear as to the result. Let what has been written in these Letters be brought to this test, and if it does not stand the trial, reject it.

In my next, I will answer your miscellaneous objections, and also, as far as is necessary to substantiate my own positions, review those parts of your favourite pamphlet which have not come under notice.

## L E T T E R   I I I .

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I intend in this letter to answer some general objections which you bring against me, and to make some observations on that pamphlet upon which you principally rely. The first is stated in these words,

“The importance of this doctrine” (the one I am combating) “must be at once apparent to those who reflect, that the whole moral education of a Christian people is altered, if instead of teaching them, as we ought to do, that God *has* given them a gift which they may use to their own salvation, but for losing which they will be awfully punished;—if instead of this we tell them to wait and expect the gift of grace, before receiving which they cannot please God. The orthodox would preach to all baptized persons, telling them that they may and can serve God if they will: the heterodox would address baptized persons as heathens, and warn

them that until they have an effectual calling they can do nothing."

It is here implied that until a man has received baptism he has no gift which he may use to his own salvation, and that baptism is the beginning of salvation. But this is not the truth, nor does the church hold such a view as that presented in the above extract. Baptism is the *door* into the church if received *rightly*, not if a *right* baptism is received. Now to receive baptism rightly there must be qualifying grace, which the catechism calls repentance and faith. It is quite true, that "the condition of man after the fall is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God." Quite true that he cannot *begin even* to work out his salvation *without divine* grace; but it is not true that he is unable to do this *without baptism*, for repentance is the beginning of salvation, and this the church requires *before* baptism can be administered. In consequence of the death of Christ, every man, when the gospel calls him to it, has the power to begin to repent: he can, if he will, pray in Christ's name, and continue to do so; and if he pursues this course, further help will be afforded. If this is not true, what can we say to the heathen in our plantations and colonies? Would you baptize them at once without preparation? I trow not. You would instruct them; and if they shewed any concern for salvation by enquiring, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" you would, I doubt not, answer, "The church requires repentance and faith from all candidates

for baptism; repent therefore, and *then* be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Such an address as this, delivered before baptism, is not treating them as if they had no "gift which they might use to their own salvation." It implies that they *have* a gift; and we ought to tell such that they are responsible for its use. And if we do so, can it be said of us, with any truth, that we—the heterodox!—"warn them, that until they have an effectual calling they can do nothing?" No, we tell them that God calls them, and that if they will, they can, by His help, make that call effectual, for He willeth not the death of a sinner. If then addressing them in our colonies as unbaptized heathens does not imply that they have no "gift which they may use to their salvation," how can it be proved that addressing them as baptized heathens at home implies it?

You say that in some parts of my first letter I speak as if there were greater difficulty in the regeneration of an infant than in that of an adult. You assert it is not so, and quote the following passage from WATERLAND: "As to infants, their innocence and incapacity are to them instead of repentance, which they do not want, and of actual faith, which they cannot have; and they are capable of being born again and adopted by God, because they bring no obstacle." I am sorry to differ from such a man as Waterland, but remembering that I have subscribed not to his works but to the Articles, &c., I must take the latter as my guide and standard.

1. I have proved that the qualifications mentioned

in the catechism, as necessary for baptism, are required no less from infants than from adults. And as infants cannot have them, the church demands them from their substitutes, and from themselves as soon as they are able. On the supposition that the church does not require them from infants, her order to bring sponsors is unmeaning and without foundation. If the qualifications are not necessary for infants, why do the sponsors make such a solemn promise of repentance and faith in the name of their godchild? Why bring sureties at all? It cannot be to make the ordinance effectual. It is effectual without them. Christ's appointment made it so: "His work is perfect." Not as witnesses to the fact which then takes place. The congregation are in that capacity. They are there to promise and vow three things in the child's name, viz. repentance, faith, and obedience. If these sentiments are true, then,

2. The above quotation is not so. It speaks of the *innocence* and *incapacity* of infants as the ground upon which they are presented for baptism; and as serving them instead of repentance and faith. That this is not the teaching of the church will be evident if we reconsider the catechism. "Why then are infants baptized when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them?" If Dr. Waterland is right, the answer will be, "Because their innocence and incapacity are to them instead of repentance, which they do not want, and of actual faith, which they cannot have." The answer, however, which the Catechism gives is totally different. "Because they promise them *both* by their sureties, which

promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform." They promise "*both*" repentance and faith by their sureties, and it is "*because*" they do this that they are baptized. Now repentance and faith imply sin in those who exercise them. The church knows nothing of the *innocence* of infants, neither does she anywhere recognize anything of the kind. The IX Article settles this point ; but I make the following extracts from the baptismal service and catechism. "Forasmuch as all men are *conceived* and *born in sin*." "That he being delivered from *thy wrath*," "O merciful God ! grant that the *old Adam* in this child may die." "Grant that all *carnal affections* may die in him." "For being by nature *born in sin*, and the *children of wrath*, we are hereby made the children of grace." These quotations shew that we are to regard children as sinful, and if so they are no more capable, *in themselves*, "of being born again and adopted by God" than adults, who have no greater obstacles to the working of God's Spirit and the exercise of his favour than infants. If you object that, in the baptismal service, Christ is represented as exhorting all men to follow the *innocency* of children, it will be sufficient to answer, that the word as there used cannot mean anything inconsistent with the above extracts, much less can it imply that *innocency* in them can supply the place of repentance and faith.

You object to my proof against your doctrine which, in my first letter, I drew from the wicked lives of baptized persons : I still depend on that argument although I have again read what Mr. Greenlaw says on that sub-

ject. He tells us\* in one place, that to be regenerate is to receive the Holy Ghost, to have our sins pardoned, to be adopted into the family of God, and to have our faith quickened and confirmed; and yet he maintains that a man may be thus regenerated, and notwithstanding this, that he may resemble, in life and practice, those who have not received such blessings. I will shew that this is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures, and of the church.

1. Let us hear what the Bible says on this subject.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Here two classes of persons are mentioned: those born of the flesh and those born of the spirit. Now, as they that are born of the flesh follow the desires of the flesh and of the mind, so they that are born of the spirit, walk after the spirit; or the difference which our Lord marks, has no foundation.

“For a *good* tree bringeth *not* forth *corrupt* fruit, neither doth a *corrupt* tree bring forth *good* fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit.” Here again there are two classes essentially differing from each other. On the one hand, a corrupt tree does not bear good fruit, and on the other, a good tree does not bear corrupt fruit. It is a flat contradiction therefore to say, that a tree may be good—may be engrafted as we are engrafted into the church by baptism—and yet bear evil fruit. If a tree does bear evil fruit, it is proved by that very fact to be evil, for it is as much a law in theology

\* Page 36.

that "by their fruits ye shall know them," as it is in mathematics that "the whole is greater than its part."

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Two classes are here also spoken of. The first cannot please God because they are in the flesh, and the fleshly mind is enmity against God: the second are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. They are the very opposite to the other, because the Spirit of God dwells in them. The above quotation compared with other parts of the pamphlet, declares that a man may have the Holy Spirit, and yet follow the flesh, but St. Paul says we are *not in the flesh, if so be* the Spirit dwells in us. Now as they that are in the flesh cannot please God, and as they that are in the Spirit are not in the flesh, therefore the latter do please God, or the text utters an absurdity, and there is no difference between those in the flesh and those in the Spirit.

We now come to the principal texts,—those found in St. John's 1st Epistle,—and as they speak strong language, special pains are taken with them by Mr. GREENLAW; and I never saw any thing so ingenious, to prove that a man may be a child of God, and yet act as if he were a child of Satan.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world."

He says these words must be taken in connection

with our Lord's discourse in the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel; and argues, "that if the phraseology of the Epistle be in any of its expressions ambiguous, its explanation and right meaning must be gathered from our Saviour's words;" for that it is not likely that the "beloved disciple would in his own teaching set himself up in opposition to his Master." Opposition between the two is quite out of the question: the Spirit of the Master rested upon the servant. But suppose I were to say, that Jesus told his disciples, he had many things to say to them, but that they could not bear them now; and that he promised the Holy Spirit should be given to them, after his departure, to lead them into *all* truth. Suppose I were to infer from this, that what was obscurely laid down in the gospel was fully explained in the epistle; and that therefore, as far as clearness and fulness were concerned, the latter must take the priority; who could say that I had not reason on my side? Who could say that I had not as much right to choose the epistle for my standard, as he the gospel for his? The question then would come to this, that if there is any apparent difference between the two, we must take that side which presents the fewer difficulties. Let us examine St. John first.

In many places he positively asserts that whosoever is born of God doth not sin; and this not in one form of speech only, but in many. I quote the other instances besides those given above. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not *seen* Him nor *known* Him. He that committeth sin is *of the devil*;

for the devil sinneth from the beginning. In *this* the children of God *are manifest* and the children of the devil: whosoever *doeth not righteousness* is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is born of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not."

But Mr. Greenlaw endeavours to set aside the two passages at the head of this section in this way: "The context appears to us to explain sufficiently, that St. John is speaking as our Saviour does, *not* of every one who is born of God, but of *every one* who (having been born of God) *abideth in that state.*" I must be allowed to say that there is not the least foundation for the distinction here made. If the question were, whether a man will get to heaven, there would be some reason for it; for to arrive at that state of perfect blessedness, it is necessary not only to be born again, but to *abide* in that state; but when the question refers to the *fruits* of regeneration, it cannot exist. The question may be asked, "If our not sinning depends, not upon our *being born* of God, but upon our *abiding* in that state, how long must we abide before we can arrive at what is so desirable? Abiding in the state of the new birth does not imply a *change*, which it must do if his explanation is right. It may imply *increase*, but not *change*. After a man has been abiding a long while in the state of the new birth, he is in the *same* state as at the beginning, with this difference only, that he has *grown in*

it. If therefore a person *abiding* in the new birth sinneth not, he that is *born* of God sinneth not. As an illustration, take the two verses which gave rise to these observations, and alter them a little. He observes that while the ninth verse says, Whosoever is *born of God* sinneth not, the sixth verse says, Whosoever *abideth* in Him sinneth not, and he considers this proves that it is not he that is merely born of God who does not sin, but he that abideth in that state. I say then alter the verses thus, “Whosoever is *born of a woman*, breathes.” “Whosoever *abideth* in that state, breathes.” Evidently it is not said that he who is born of a woman breathes, but he who *abideth* in that state. Would you dignify this by calling it reasoning? Yet this is exactly what Mr. Greenlaw does; so at least it appears to me. But even *supposing* there was room for the distinction, nothing is gained by it; for St. John observes, that the seed *does remain*, or *abide*, as he renders it, in whosoever is born of God. Read the verse again. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin *for* His seed *remaineth* in him.” St. John’s testimony, then, concerning the fruits which *invariably* follow regeneration, is decisive and unequivocal. What then shall we say of our Saviour’s words, “every branch *in me* that *beareth not fruit*?” That he portrays the case of many in the present day, who make a profession of His religion, but who do not obey His precepts; who call Him “Lord Lord, but do not the thing which He says,” who bear His name, but imbibe not His spirit. He says no more here than He does in all those parables, in which He

teaches, that in the visible church, there would ever be the tares and the wheat, the sheep and the goats, the wicked and the righteous ; but to speak of *both* classes as regenerate is confounding what the Scripture makes as opposite as the poles. It will not be necessary now to notice what is said on the other passage until I come to make some general observations on the pamphlet. But having promised to shew that the opinion here combated, is contrary to the teaching of the church, I will now do so,

2. By making some extracts, and if they are rather long I hope to be excused. “ Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God’s judgment ; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.” (XII Article).

“ Forasmuch as faith without works is dead ; it is not now faith, as a dead man is not a man.”

“ Of this faith three things are specially to be noted.— First, that this faith does not lie dead in the heart, but is lively and fruitful in bringing forth good works.”

“ For the first, that as the light *cannot* be hid, but *will shew forth itself* at one place or other ; so a true faith *cannot* be kept *secret* : but when occasion is offered, *it will break out* and will *shew itself by good works.*”

“ Many that professed the faith of Christ were in this error ; that they *thought* they knew God and be-

lieved in Him, when in their life they declared the contrary: which error, St. John in his first Epistle confuting, writeth in this wise: "Hereby we are certified that we know God, *if* we observe His commandments. He that *saith* he knoweth God and observeth *not* his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." And again he saith, "*Whosoever* sinneth doth not see God nor know Him. *Let no man deceive* you, well-beloved children." And moreover he saith, "Hereby we know that we be of the truth, and so we shall persuade our hearts before Him." And yet further he saith, "Every man that believeth in Christ is born of God; and *we know* that whosoever is born of God doth not sin: but he that is begotten of God, purgeth himself and the devil doth not touch him." And finally he concludeth and sheweth the cause why he wrote this Epistle; saying, "For this cause have I written to you, that you may know that you have everlasting life, which do believe in the Son of God. And in his third Epistle, he confirmeth the whole matter of faith and works in few words; saying, He that doth well is of God, and he that doth evil knoweth not God."

"And as St. John saith, that as the lively knowledge and faith of God bringeth forth good works; so saith he likewise of hope and charity, that they *cannot stand with evil living*. Of hope he writeth thus: "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is: and whosoever hath this hope in Him doth *purify himself* like as God is pure." And

of charity he saith these words: "He that doth keep God's word and commandment, in him is truly the perfect love of God." And again he saith, "This is the love of God that we should keep His commandments." And St. John wrote *not* this as a *subtile saying*, devised of his *own fantasy*, but as a *most certain and necessary truth*, taught unto him *by Christ Himself*, the eternal and infallible verity: *who in many places* doth most clearly affirm, that *faith, hope, and charity, cannot consist or stand without good and godly works*. Of faith He saith, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life: but he that believeth not in the Son, shall not see that life, but the wrath of God remaineth on him." And the same He confirmeth with a double oath; saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Now forasmuch as he that believeth on Christ hath everlasting life, *it must needs consequently follow*, that he that hath this faith must have also good works, and be studious to observe God's commandments obediently."

"Some peradventure fancy in themselves that they belong to God, *although they live in sin*: and so they come to the church and shew themselves as God's dear children. But St. John saith plainly, "*If we say we have any company with God and walk in darkness, we do lie.*"

These extracts are from the "Homily on Faith," and if you think them garbled, I desire nothing more than that you read the whole Homily, and the more you consider it the greater will your conviction be, that

MR. GREENLAW'S exposition of the passages in St. John, and his opinion generally on the subject, are in direct opposition to the teaching of the church. I am sure had he known it he would not have written such sentiments as those contained in his pamphlet. But I may be allowed to express a hope that you, and others like you, will look at home before you give any more hints about sincerity in subscribing to the Articles, Homilies, &c. In these observations I have been careful to keep the enquiry distinct from the doctrine of final perseverance. I have not assumed the truth of that doctrine to prove my position, but have simply shewn what the Bible and the church say on the subject. I will now pass on to notice another objection brought against me from the IX Article.

The fact that the word "*renati*," which occurs twice in the Latin Article, is rendered in the English Article, in one place *regenerated*, and in the other *baptized*, may seem at first sight to be decisive on your side of the question; but apply the principle already so often laid down, and there will be no difficulty. I acknowledge, that when a person comes to baptism prepared with repentance and faith, his regeneration is then and there effected; and you may thus, as far as *practice* is concerned, use the words *baptized* and *regenerated* as convertible terms. But if you theorize on the matter, you cannot do so, unless you make regeneration to mean no more than the outward form of the ceremony. If you take baptism as the outward sign, and regeneration as the thing signified, then these words do not

represent the same thing. Nevertheless if a man comes prepared in the way the church requires he is regenerated in baptism. Now you will remember that in the early ages of Christianity, *when the meaning of theological terms was fixed*, they did come prepared. No one, in such times of persecution, would come without being so, and *practically* baptism was to them regeneration; and it is in this sense that the word *renati* is rendered in one instance regenerated and in the other baptized, for in no other can you make all the formularies of our church consistent. To make the sacrament of baptism necessarily effectual in the case of infants, or indeed in the case of any one is very little, if any, removed from the *opus operatum* of the Romanists.

As for the office of confirmation it was through forgetfulness that I did not notice it in my second letter, not because I saw any difficulty in it. All the candidates are called regenerate, and that most properly. I have shewn why they are so pronounced at baptism, and it would be most strange if the church were to order them to be looked upon in any other light at confirmation, and that more especially when they there make a good profession.

I now proceed to make some general observations on MR. GREENLAW'S pamphlet, and I do this for two reasons, first, to defend some of my own arguments; and secondly, to dispel any doubt which may remain in your mind, if he is not ful'y answered as far as my purpose requires it. His first part, I trust, has been

fully discussed ; the second part therefore is that which must principally come under review.

It is asked, in page 43, "Where in the Scriptures is the term *regenerated*, or any other word bearing the least resemblance of meaning to it, applied to those who became followers of Christ during His life?" This is asked in opposition to his opponent, who wished to maintain that it was the practice of Christ to regenerate souls without the use of baptism. Mr. G. attempts to disprove this in two ways ; first by making the above enquiry, and secondly by observing on John vii. 39, that the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. Now if it comes to a question of *words*, I am quite willing to allow that the "*term* regenerated was not applied to those who became followers of Christ during His life time ;" but if we make it a question of *things*, then I say with the church, that all the holy men who preceded Christ possessed it. He tells us in pages 36 and 40, *what* our church *means* by regeneration. That it is by the act of baptism to receive the Holy Ghost, to have our sins pardoned, to be adopted into God's family, and to have our faith quickened and confirmed. I may observe that in the present feature of the case the medium through which these blessings are given, is not included in the enquiry, but it is, whether the thing itself meant by the term was ever given before the day of pentecost.

The Holy Ghost was given under the Mosaic dispensation, for Stephen says the Jews resisted it. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do

always resist the HOLY GHOST ; *as your fathers did*, so do ye." Forgiveness of sins was bestowed : David says, (Psalm ciii. 12,) " As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Jesus said unto the sick of the palsy, " Son, thy sins be *forgiven* thee." And those words to Simon, and to the woman who washed His feet, " Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven." " And He said unto her, thy sins are forgiven." They were adopted into God's family ; for it is written " Thou Lord art our Father and Redeemer ;" and be it remembered, that this text the Church quotes to prove the *very thing* I am endeavouring to prove.\* And, not to forget the last particular, Abraham's faith was strengthened and confirmed on many occasions. Now, if Mr. G. is right in saying these are the things included in regeneration, and if the above examples are true, all which are taken from times before the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, how are we to understand him where he says, (page 46) " that in every age persons have been accepted of God in Christ, though the particular *grace* of regeneration was not vouchsafed till the redemption was fully accomplished." I am the more perplexed, because he reasons so differently in pages 50 and 51. He there shows that the antitype is far superior to the type, and thus concludes : " Another sacrament was ordained of Christ, corresponding with the sacrament of circumcision, and therefore analogy

\* See page 93.

would lead us to consider it to be endued with spiritual qualities resembling *in kind*, but in a far superior *degree*, the blessings communicated at circumcision ; and such in fact is *the doctrine of the Church of England.*" The difference, then, between the blessings communicated at circumcision, and those given by baptism, is not one of KIND, but of DEGREE ; and he is quite right in saying, that this is the doctrine of the Church of England. I will make two extracts which relate to this point, from the Homilies : "All these fathers, martyrs, and other holy men whom St. Paul spake of, (in Heb. xi.) had their faith surely fixed in God when all the world was against them." This is the Christian faith which these holy men *had*, and we also ought to have. And although they were not *named* christian men, yet was it a *christian faith* which they had : for they looked for *all* benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, *as we now do*. This difference is between them and us,—that they looked when Christ should come ; and we be in the time when he is come. Therefore St. Augustine saith, the *time* is altered and changed, but not the *faith*. For we have both *one* faith in one Christ. The same Holy Ghost also that we have, had they, (2 Cor. iv. 13.) saith St. Paul. For as the Holy Ghost doth teach us to trust in God, and to call upon Him as our Father, so did he teach them to say—"As it is written, thou Lord art our Father and Redeemer, and thy name is without beginning, and everlasting. (Isa. xiii. 16.) God gave them *then* grace to be his children, as he now doth. But

now by the coming of our Saviour Christ, we have received more abundantly the Spirit of God in our hearts; whereby we may conceive a greater faith, and a surer trust than many of them had. But in effect, they and we be all *one*: we have the same faith that they had in God; and they the same that we have." "The thief that was hanged when Christ suffered did believe only; and the most merciful God justified him."

What, then, shall we say of the words of St. John? That he must refer to the receiving of the Spirit, not in His *ordinary* gifts, but *extraordinary* operations; for it is certain, that in the former sense He had been received in all ages: so at least our church teaches.

It will now be necessary to defend the use I have made of the case of Simon Magus in my second letter. Mr. GREENLAW says, "There is not even the shadow of a peg on which to suspend the thought, that his faith at the time was less sincere than that of others: on the contrary it is added of *him* that he *continued* with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. As the scriptures declare the same, though in stronger terms, of Simon that they do of others,—if *they* were regenerated, then was *Simon*,—if *he* was not regenerated, then were not *they*." I suppose Mr. G. must know that almost all Commentators and divines, ancient and modern, are against him; and as he attaches considerable importance to this fact, when urged against his antagonist, I have no doubt he will attach the same importance to it, although brought against himself. So universal, indeed, has been the feeling,

that his name is given to a certain great sin, which we call Simony. There is one mark which decidedly proves that he was not regenerated, although baptized. When a man is regenerated, he receives the Holy Ghost; and wherever He is, He enlightens the mind. Now, if Simon's mind had been enlightened, he never would have conceived that most absurd thought and wicked sin, "that the gift of God could be purchased with money." If Mr. G.'s regeneration does not dispel such ignorance, and destroy such a sin as this, sure I am it is not the regeneration taught by the Church of England. St. Peter was completely shocked at the proposal of so great and dreadful a sin; and yet it seems, it may be committed by one who is, according to Mr. G., regenerated. I cannot think he considered what he was writing. It is but too evident that Simon was, after baptism, the same as he ever had been; and that he applied for baptism to regain the influence over the Samaritans which he had lost through the preaching of Philip. Mr. G. further says, "that we need not be informed that it was the impious proposal that he made to St. Peter that brought him into the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." This cannot be. It was the proposal by which he *shewed* he was in the gall of bitterness, and by which Peter detected the hypocrisy of his heart; or as Beza intimates, by which he dragged this "hypocrite from his lurking place." The fact that he begged the Apostles Peter and John to pray for him, does not invalidate this conclusion. It was in itself an act of disobedience to the holy Apostles. *They* had

told *him* to pray, but said he, "pray *ye*." What for? That the wickedness of my heart may be taken away? This was far from his object. "That none of these things" (judgments) "which ye have spoken come upon me." He herein followed the example of another wicked man—Pharoah, who often begged Moses and Aaron to pray for the removal of God's judgments, but never that his sins might be taken away. It may be very amiable to try to give a good character to a man whom almost every body, in all ages, has justly loaded with infamy, and to call in criticism to aid in the work; (which criticism, I must say, is opposed to the wisdom of our translators) but when this is done to prove that a man may be regenerated, and yet walk in sin and wickedness, it can scarcely fail to excite one's indignation, and that more especially when it contravenes every thing connected with our best and holiest feelings—when it opposes the doctrines, both of the Scriptures and our church; which doctrines have, by the blessing of our merciful God, put us into the possession of an ever-flowing spring of happiness and purity here, and has imparted a sanctifying hope of glory hereafter. Ever dear to a Christian's heart must these doctrines be, and that church too which places such an impregnable barrier around them as is contained in the Common Prayer Book, Articles, and Homilies. May I ever be kept in my present mind, to prize them above gold and silver, and to draw from them strength and consolation amidst the various infirmities, afflictions, and cares of

of this life ; and may the same mind, my dear friend, be given to you.

It now only remains that I support the use I have made of 1 John v. 4. I will quote Mr. G's words which contain the strength of his argument. "It appears to escape the observation of those who allege that St. John represents certain effects as invariably attending regeneration, that in the two chapters where he speaks of the ability with which the sons of God are endued, he says in one case, "*ye have overcome,*" in the other, "*overcometh,*" not *hath overcome*, his intention being to signify,—in the former case, that those born of God, had successfully withstood the false prophets who denied that Christ was come in the flesh,—in the latter, that whatsoever has been born of God is of power to overcome the world." According to this, then, when St. John said "*overcometh,*" he did not mean what we usually understand by the word. He meant that we have the *power* to overcome, not that we *do* overcome. It is not *hath overcome* but *overcometh*. It is not in the perfect tense but present, I suppose he means to say. I really find it difficult to defend this text. The defence is supposed to be clearer than the thing defended. Now it seems to me that the text is as clear as it can be, and that to hold a light to it, has the tendency to lessen, its brightness. The Apostle says, Whatsoever is born of God *overcometh* the world. It, or he *does overcome*, as the present tense is sometimes rendered. Suppose he had said *hath overcome*, would that have been true? It cannot be said of any one that he *has overcome* the

world till he is in heaven.\* But it may be said of every true child of God that he *overcometh* it. He does it day by day. Let me quote another text from the writings of St. John and then apply Mr. G's criticism to it. He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death. That is, not he that *overcometh*, but he that hath the power to overcome, shall not be hurt of the second death. I cannot believe therefore, that the Apostle when he said *overcometh*, meant *not overcome*, but *only* the *power* to overcome. In this way you may make the Scripture speak anything. He does teach, and let it be solemnly laid upon our consciences, that if we are born of God we *do* overcome the world, and that because we have the same faith as those worthies mentioned in the 11 chapter of the Hebrews, and by which they overcame it. This is the victory that *overcometh* the world even our faith.

I think I have now said all that is necessary to establish the arguments I used in the other letters. And now let me exhort you to give up a doctrine which you cannot hold consistently, either with Scripture or the Prayer Book. These are authorities to which we are bound to submit. Not that I put them on a level with each other; but the first affects us as Christians, the second as churchmen. It is infidelity if we oppose the one, dissent if we oppose the other. I wish you to be a true Christian first, and then you will be a true churchman; and I must maintain that you cannot be a

\* Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off. 1 *Kings* xx. 11.

true son of the church while you hold this doctrine. As long as you hold it you make her contradict herself, setting one part of her formularies at variance with another. I know that most consider there are difficulties in the question ; but the scheme here laid down explains every one, and shews our doctrines and practices as purely scriptural and primitive. It shews that the scriptural edifice of our Establishment is firm in its foundation, beautiful in its proportions, substantial in its structure, capacious in its dimensions, and glorious in its appearance. Every other destroys part of its foundation, or removes some of its stones, thereby either weakening the one or spoiling the symmetry of the other. Most sincerely shall I rejoice if you are led to see this, and to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, set forth alike by the Bible and our Church.

THE END.









