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A

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

DOCTRINE

OF

REGENERATION IN BAPTISM.

BY THE RIGHT REV.

CHRISTOPHER BETHELL, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF BANGOR.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED.

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P R E F A C E

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

SOME years have now passed away, since I was informed by my late respectable publisher¹, that this treatise, published in 1822, was out of print, and was recommended by him to publish a second edition. It is needless to assign the reasons which have hitherto prevented me from acceding to this suggestion. It will be sufficient to say that the delay has not been occasioned by any change of opinion, or any intention of altering or modifying the doctrinal statements which I then submitted to the public.

In some of the numerous tracts which have issued of late years from the press, suggesting alterations in the Book of Common Prayer, the revision of the Baptismal services, with a view to the exclusion of the opinions maintained in this work, has been

¹ Mr. C. Rivington.

strongly recommended. The Church of England however will not, I am persuaded, consent to erase from her formularies a doctrine which she has received as a Catholic verity, founded in God's word, held by the universal Church from the time of the Apostles till the days of Zuinglius and Calvin, and deliberately retained by the Fathers of her Reformation.

Of those who advocate the changes to which I am adverting, there are some who do not go the length of condemning this doctrine as unscriptural, or mischievous, but recommend this revision of our services on principles of conciliation and concession. Were this a question of words only, or of things indifferent and of little value, such a proposal might be a fair subject of inquiry and discussion. But if it relates to the very nature and efficacy of a Sacrament, and if the alterations suggested involve not merely the mode of stating a doctrine, but that doctrine itself, compromise and concession are inadmissible. If the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism is unscriptural, it ought to be abandoned without hesitation. If it is, as we are persuaded, the doctrine of Scripture, explained and illustrated by the history of the Church of Christ, we dare not expunge it from our service books, or our Articles of religion, in deference to the opinion of those whom we believe to be in error.

Those objectors, who call for this revision of our

offices for the administration of Baptism, because they conceive the doctrine contained in them to be unscriptural, must be referred to the body of the following work. How justly it is liable to this objection, and with what show of reason it has been numbered among the errors and corruptions of Christianity, I must leave to my readers to determine.

I have lying before me an anonymous pamphlet¹ which presents a striking specimen of the prejudices against this doctrine into which men are often betrayed by the course of reading which they pursue, and the language which they hear from their instructors. I do not allude to this pamphlet on account of any importance which I attach to it, because the writer, though he throws out assertions with unflinching intrepidity, is evidently unacquainted both with the state of the question, and with the history of Theological opinion. I shall merely advert to a few passages of this book, as exhibiting a sample of prevailing errors, and of the manner in which gentlemen, who know nothing of the plainest facts of ecclesiastical history, think themselves qualified to censure our service book, and to reform the doctrines of our Church.

¹ Reasons for refusing to sign the Lay Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury: in a Letter to a Friend. Hatchard, 1834.

The writer, assuming the correctness of his own views of the nature of Regeneration, and of the meaning of the word in Scripture, very naturally comes to the conclusion, that the doctrine maintained by our Church is unsound and unscriptural: and proceeds to give what he imagines to be an historical account of this corruption of pure and primitive Christianity.

He attributes, for instance, the assertion of this doctrine by the Church of England to the compromising policy of Elizabeth and her counsellors¹; who, as he informs us, in order to conciliate the Papists, were anxious to retain as much of Popery as they could in the construction of our Liturgy and Articles. In matters indifferent, it was a wise and just policy to retain those ancient and decent usages, to which the people had been accustomed. But the learned and pious Divines to whom the management of our Reformation was intrusted, while they retrenched with an unsparing hand the superstitious practices and unsound doctrines of Popery, did not renounce either the tenets or the usages of the Apostolic and universal Church, merely because they had been held, and in some cases, perhaps, perverted by the Church of Rome, in the days of its ascendancy. They were content to lop off excrescences and to remove corruptions,

¹ Pp. 16—20. 27. 54, 55.

without destroying the substance of primitive and Catholic doctrine.

Taking for granted that the doctrine of infant baptismal regeneration is a Popish tenet bequeathed to us by the policy of Elizabeth, the author brings forward, as a strong prejudice against it, and as a symptom of its papal origin, the fact that it places the spiritual condition of a human soul at the discretion of a fellow-creature¹. But he seems to forget that this is in accordance with the state and circumstances of our common nature; that the spiritual, no less than the temporal, welfare of children is deeply involved in the care and faithfulness of those to whom they are intrusted: and that whenever a duty connected with the happiness of our fellow-creatures is imposed on such frail and sinful beings as we are, it may be, and too often is neglected, at the hazard of their best interests. But the Church of England does not put any harsh construction on the case of infants dying without baptism. We hold, indeed, that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved; but we do not hold that infants dying without baptism are undoubtedly damned: and though we do not venture to speak peremptorily of their condition, we leave them without despair or distrust in the hands of a merciful Saviour.

¹ P. 27.

The writer of this Pamphlet, who seems to charge our Church, by implication, with holding the more rigid opinion, speaks upon this subject with his usual confidence and want of correct information. That infants dying unbaptized are not saved, is not, as he supposes, a Popish doctrine, but was the common opinion of the ancient Christians, long before the corruptions of Popery gained ground in the Church.

Inferring with good reason the necessity of Baptism to salvation, from the words of the institution, from John iii. 5, and from other passages of Scripture, they nevertheless made an exception, on principles of natural equity and charity, in behalf of those catechumens who suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake, and of those who before their death had expressed a resolution or a desire of receiving that sacrament. But, since infants could neither suffer, voluntarily at least, for Christ's sake, nor entertain a desire of Baptism, they did not extend this charitable limitation to their case, though they endeavoured to soften the harshness of this sentence by representing their condition as a kind of middle state, subjecting them to no positive pain, but shutting them out from such privileges and blessings as are peculiar to the elect. This opinion was held in the Church of Rome at the time of the Reformation; and the schoolmen grafted upon it the fiction of a *limbus infantium*, a kind of border,

or outground, parted off from the place of torments, in which the souls of these infants are detained. In the first formularies of faith¹, composed in the reign of Henry VIII., the necessity, in the strict sense, of Baptism was asserted. But that assertion was afterwards withdrawn; and though our Church has neither pronounced peremptorily upon the case, nor ceased to teach that Baptism is “generally necessary to salvation,” her divines have always placed the charitable latitude of construction on the precepts which enjoin it. “For grace (as Hooker² expresses their sentiments on this head) is not absolutely tied unto sacraments; and such is the lenity of God, that unto things impossible he bindeth no man.” It was this judgment of charity which induced the compilers of the “Office for the Baptism of those of Riper Years,” to qualify the conclusion drawn from John iii. 5, as to the necessity of Baptism with the words *where it may be had*; on which the writer of the Pamphlet makes this edifying reflection³. “Had they” (the divines of Charles II.) “possessed either reflection or modesty, when they felt it necessary so to qualify our Saviour’s words, in order to fit them to their own conjectural exposition of John iii. 5, they would

¹ Formularies of Faith, Oxford, 1825. Comp. pp. xix. 7. 93. with p. 254.

² Hooker’s Eccl. Pol. b. vi. s. 60.

³ P. 66.

shrewdly have suspected that they misinterpreted or misapplied the text."

The writer appears to take for granted, as a matter too notorious to need any proof, that the metaphorical interpretation of the word *water*, in John iii. 5, was the sense uniformly received in the purer ages of Christianity¹, and consequently that in those days this doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration was unknown to the Church of Christ. Having assumed

¹ The metaphorical sense usually assigned to this passage is, "Except a man be born again of the Spirit, acting like water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But in the opinion of the writer before us¹, "water" signifies Repentance, and "Spirit" faith; so that our Saviour's address to Nicodemus is equivalent to his call to "repent and believe the Gospel." In another place² he tells us that repentance and faith are sure signs of spiritual regeneration: and infers from hence that since our Catechism mentions repentance and faith as prerequisites for Baptism, it does not inculcate the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and, consequently, is inconsistent with the offices for the administration of Baptism. He evidently does not understand that he is assuming the very point in debate. For they who think that the word "Regeneration" in its strict and Scriptural sense, denotes that peculiar grace which is bestowed in Baptism, do not look upon faith and repentance as signs of Regeneration, but as necessary qualifications, in adults, for receiving that grace. This is the doctrine of our Catechism, which teaches us that faith and repentance are required of persons to be baptized; but that the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism is "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, we are hereby (i. e. by baptism) made the children of grace."

¹ P. 39, 40.

² P. 38.

this point, he proceeds to inform us, that what he elsewhere calls the conjectural exposition of the divines who compiled our "Office for the administration of Baptism to such as are of riper years," was a device of the Papists to magnify the virtue of a sacrament. "The Papists," he tells us, "always anxious to magnify a church ordinance, thought proper, upon a bold misconstruction of John iii. 5, to declare the ceremony of baptizing infants to be salvation, if they died before actual sin; and, calculating boldly upon the ignorance of the laity, supported their dogma by texts which are referrible only to the baptism of proselytes¹." "They hoped² to add to the attraction of their communion by raising a rite, highly proper in itself, to the unjustifiable pretension of a saving ordinance; and for that purpose understood the word *water*, John iii. 5, in its literal sense, and insisted that the kingdom of God meant the kingdom of glory³." "To sus-

¹ P. 41.

² P. 42.

³ The ancients maintained that the kingdom of God in these texts of Scripture¹ signifies the *kingdom of glory*, because it cannot be affirmed with truth that no man can *see the kingdom of God in this world*, "except he be born again." But I do not think that there is much force in this reasoning, because the word "see" may be taken, without any violence to the common usage of language, in a metaphorical sense. But the notion that to "see" or "enter into the kingdom of God," signifies "to become a member of the visible Church," is a very inadequate

¹ John iii. 3. 5.

tain this dogma of baptismal salvation¹, the Papists were driven to assert, that the injunction in St. Matthew to teach the Christian faith and to administer the Baptism of proselytism² to them that received it, was not the application of an old rite to a new faith, but that it was the institution of a new Baptism, foretold and described by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus. It did not suit the papists to recollect that 'water' was frequently used not instrumentally but symbolically, to signify purification or repentance; and that in

representation of our Saviour's language. If the phrase, "the kingdom of God," includes, as it well may, the state of grace, as well as the state of glory, to "see" or "enter" into it, manifestly means, to be made partakers of the peculiar privileges, blessings, hopes, and promises of the Gospel kingdom.

The writer, while he contends that to be "born of water and of the Spirit" signifies to repent and believe, at the same time tells us that "the kingdom of God" signifies the visible Church. But that none but sincere penitents and true believers, none, in short, but those who are called, in a common and familiar way of speaking, "truly regenerate," can enter into the visible Church, is probably more than he intended to affirm.

¹ P. 42.

² The writer seems to look upon Baptism as nothing more than the continuance of a Jewish rite; a simple ceremony of initiation into the visible Church. But he cannot expect that the Church of England will change her views and definitions in deference to his opinion, or forget that her Lord, when he adopted a form of initiation not unknown to his countrymen, "added," as Bishop Taylor expresses himself, "the Spirit to the water, and made it a Sacrament or saving ordinance." "Our Saviour Christ altered and changed the same (the Jewish washings) into a profitable Sacrament."—Hornily on Fasting.

some cases, (John iv. 14 ; vii. 37, 8, 9.) the word occurs without any reference to natural water at all, even as a symbol. The Papists also omit to notice, that there is an inward new birth, (1 Pet. i. 23.) wholly unconnected with water or any outward ceremonial."

It is not my intention to follow this writer through the reasonings and illustrations by which he has undertaken to prove that his own notions on this question are sound and scriptural, and that the doctrine of the Church of England is "flat Popery." I refer, as I have already stated, to this Pamphlet, only because it exhibits a specimen of popular and current errors, and of the hardihood with which men, in their eagerness to condemn opinions which they have been accustomed to look upon with suspicion and dislike, substitute conjecture and imagination for facts and history.

A learned divine, whose statements are not built upon hypothesis or fancy, but on a laborious examination of the writings of the ancient Christians, might have taught the writer, "that all the ancient Christians, not one excepted, do take the word 'Regeneration,' or new birth, to signify Baptism, and 'regenerate,' baptized; and that our Saviour's words to Nicodemus do so stand in the original, and are so understood by all the ancients, as to exclude unbaptized persons from the kingdom of heaven. And that by 'the kingdom of God,' there is meant

the kingdom of glory, is proved from the plain words of the context, and from the sense of all ancient interpreters¹."

"All the ancient Christians² do understand that rule of our Saviour³ (John iii. 5) of Baptism: I be-

¹ Wall on Infant Baptism, vol. ii. p. 451, 3d Edit.

² Wall, vol. ii. p. 260, 3d Edit.

³ The author intimates that the Papists, in order to give countenance to the literal interpretation of the word "water," (John iii. 5,) perverted another passage of Scripture by explaining "fire" (Matt. iii. 11) of the cloven tongues which sat on the disciples in the day of Pentecost.

The fact is, that when Calvin and his followers gave a metaphorical sense to the word "water," they adduced the Baptist's words in proof of the validity of their interpretation, affirming that as the one passage undoubtedly means *spiritus igneus*, so the other must mean *spiritus aqueus*. But it was replied, that this was to support one gratuitous assumption by another. Thus Hooker (Eecl. Pol. b. v. s. 59.): "By water and Spirit we are to understand in this place (as they imagine) no more than if the Spirit alone had been mentioned, and water not spoken of. Which they think is plain, because elsewhere it is not improbable, that *the Holy Ghost and fire* do but signify the Holy Ghost in operation resembling fire. Whereupon they conclude, that seeing "fire" in one place *may be*, therefore "water" in another place *is* but a metaphor—Spirit the interpretation thereof; and so the words do only mean, that *unless a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. "Must we needs, at the only show of a critical conceit, utterly condemn them of error, which will not admit that 'fire' in the words of John is quenched with the name of the Holy Ghost, or with the name of the Spirit 'water' dried up in the words of Christ?"

The ancients were of opinion that these words contain a prophetic allusion to the cloven tongues, but they did not confine the word to that occurrence, but supposed that it denoted those effects of the Spirit's agency, of which the cloven tongues

lieve Calvin to have been the first who ever denied this place to mean Baptism. He gives another

were the signs or symbols. They considered them, therefore, as a prophecy of the influence of the Spirit, consigned to the Church through our Lord's baptism, and of the powerful working and effects of that influence ¹.

There is something specious in the explanation of Matt. iii. 11. which supposes that the Baptist in the words *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, is speaking of two classes or persons, one of which, corresponding with the "wheat," (v. 12.) was to be baptized with the Holy Ghost; the other, corresponding with the chaff, was to be baptized with fire: *i. e.* the fire of calamity and destruction. But the structure of the sentence shows that, whatever may be the full meaning of the word "fire," the Baptism intended could be one only, and that the same persons were to be baptized both with the Holy Ghost and with fire. There is no force in the Author's remark, that the word "you" means only the by-standers, and therefore cannot denote those on whom the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost. The words are prophetic, extending to every age of the Christian Church.

The writer ² finds fault with the phrase used in our Liturgy, "the laver of Regeneration in Baptism." He tells us that the word "laver" does not signify washing, but the vessel in which the water is contained; and that therefore in this passage "the instrument of Regeneration, as it is called by some of our divines, is not water but stone." He does not appear to be aware that the word "laver" (*lavacrum*) or "bath," as Hooker renders it, corresponds precisely with the word of the original (*λοῦτρον*, Tit. iii. 5.) and is capable of being taken in the same latitude. That word signifies either the place of bathing, or the water contained in it, or the act of washing. In this passage it certainly does not mean, as this gentleman humorously supposes, "the stone font," but either the water which the child is baptized, or the act of washing or baptizing.

¹ See Scriptural View, Note A. p. 209.

² P. 65.

interpretation, (Inst. l. 4. c. xvi. s. ²35.) which he confesses to be new.”

After quoting a passage from Justin Martyr, in which to be born again signifies to be baptized, he states his own reasons for adducing it¹:—

“ Because it shows that the Christians in those days used the word ‘Regeneration’ for Baptism, and that they were taught to do so by the apostles. And it will appear, by the multitude of places which I shall produce, that they used it customarily, and applied it as much to signify Baptism, as we do the word ‘christening.’ Because we see by it that they understood that rule of our Saviour, (John iii. 5.) of water Baptism, and concluded from it that without such Baptism no man could come to heaven.”

So likewise Hooker². “ To hide the general consent of antiquity agreeing in the literal interpretation, they (Cartwright, &c.) cunningly affirm that *certain* have taken these words as meant of material water, when they know that of all the ancients *there is not one* to be named, that ever did otherwise expound or allege the place, than as implying external Baptism.”

These quotations from authors of unquestionable accuracy and authority, will suffice to show how little acquainted the writer is with the history of

¹ Wall, vol. i. p. 22.

² Eccl. P. b. v. s. 59.

the interpretation of John iii. 5. which he arraigns as a papistical contrivance, and a corrupt innovation on the pure and primitive doctrine of Christianity.

In another part of his Pamphlet¹ he informs us that transubstantiation and baptismal salvation, which he classes together as branches of the same corrupt doctrine, are “the two great subjects of dispute between Protestants and [Roman] Catholics.”

But the truth is, that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration or salvation, though it has been called in question by those Protestant Churches (usually called the Reformed Churches) which have adopted the sentiments of Zuinglius and Calvin, and their off-shoots, the Arminians and Socinians, is the doctrine not of the Church of Rome only, and of all the Eastern Churches, but of the Protestant Lutheran Churches, and the Protestant Church of England and Ireland. In common with the Church of Rome and the Lutheran Churches, we hold that Regeneration or the new birth, is the spiritual grace of Baptism conveyed over to the soul in the due administration of that sacrament. We hold, in common with those Churches, that in adults duly qualified by repentance and faith, the guilt of sin, both original and actual, is cancelled in Baptism; that in infants, who have committed no actual or wilful sin, and can possess no such qualifications, the guilt of original

¹ P. 54.

sin is done away; and that infants, no less than adults, are made in Baptism children of God, members of Christ, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and partakers of the privileges, and blessings, and promises of the Gospel covenant. ¹ But the Church of Rome contends that not only the guilt, but the very essence and being of original sin is removed by Baptism; the Church of England declares that “this corruption of nature remains even in the regenerate.” The Church of Rome has decreed that that “concupiscence [or fuel (*fomes*) as it is called] which remains after Baptism has not, properly

¹ Si quis per Jesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quæ in Baptismate confertur, reatum peccati originalis remitti negat, aut etiam asserit non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati vim habet, sed illud dicit tantum radi aut non imputari, anathema sit. In renatis enim nihil odit Deus, quia nihil in iis est damnationis, qui verè consepulti sunt cum Christo per Baptisma in mortem, qui non secundum carnem ambulant, sed veterem hominem exuentes, et novum, qui secundum Deum creatus est, induentes, puri, innoxii, ac Deo dilecti effecti sunt, hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi, ita ut nihil prorsus eos ab ingressu cæli remoretur. Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscentiam vel fomitem, hæc sancta Synodus fatetur et sentit, quæ cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus, et viriliter per Christi Jesu gratiam repugnantibus non valet; quinimò qui legitimè ¹ certaverit, coronabitur. Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus ² peccatum appellat, Sancta Synodus declarat Ecclesiam Catholicam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari, quod verè et propriè in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est, et ad peccatum inclinat. Si quis autem contrarium senserit, anathema sit.—Canones et decreta Concilii Tridentini, sessio quinta.—Cat. Conc. Trid. pars ii. c. 2. 43.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 5.

² Rom. vii. 7. 13.

speaking, the nature of sin ;” whereas we affirm that “concupiscence has the nature of sin,” and allege the authority of an apostle in support of our opinion. We believe that sacraments are not only signs of grace, but means or instruments through which God consigns over to the soul the grace which they signify. The followers of Zuinglius and Calvin, with whom the author of this Pamphlet agrees, contend that this is the very error of the *opus operatum*—the opinion, that is, that where there is no positive bar, sacraments produce a saving effect without suitable affections on the part of the recipient. We however affirm, as a general truth, that such affections of mind are indispensable, and that where they are wanting, sacraments produce no beneficial effects. But, as we are convinced that the Baptism of infants is a part of our Saviour’s institution, we do not conceive that, in their case, the unavoidable want of these qualifications is any impediment to the saving grace of the sacrament.

The writer of this Pamphlet, however, after finding fault with the interrogatories tendered to, and the answers given by the sureties, in behalf of infants, says that “the declaration that they have become ‘regenerate,’ however suited to the compromising policy of Elizabeth, who wished to conciliate the Romanists, has opened a wide door for disunion and controversy in the present day, when instead of looking to the authority of the Church

as conclusive, men think for themselves, and refer to their Bibles¹." That "the laity see that the clergy are divided on the subject of infant baptismal Regeneration, and are indignant when, instead of texts, they are furnished with tracts replete with arguments borrowed from the Church of Rome, and presenting specimens of logical deduction, which would be disgraceful even to children²;" that "when our Church repudiated the *opus operatum* of the Papists, it ought to have expunged the word 'regenerated,' which properly belongs to it, instead of suffering the expression to remain in its baptismal service, and cause disunion among our clergy—some of them writing and speaking as if they secretly believed in the *opus operatum*, and others straining every nerve to show that 'Regeneration' does not mean Regeneration; by which, after all, they only prove that the word ought to be changed³."

It is deeply to be regretted that differences of opinion should exist on the subject before us between members of our communion, whether of the laity or of the clergy; and we fully recognize the right of all Christians to "think for themselves, and to refer to their Bibles." But we would remind the author that the meaning and drift of certain passages of Scripture are the hinge on which this controversy turns; and we may be allowed to doubt,

¹ P. 58.

² P. 68, 69.

³ P. 76, 77.

whether he, and the guides whom he follows, are the best expositors of these passages. We may be permitted at least, till we are better informed, to adhere to that interpretation of them which the Church of England, treading in the steps of all Christian antiquity, has adopted and made her own. We are persuaded that the more the doctrine and polity of our Church are examined and sifted, the more they will be approved by fair and unprejudiced enquirers. But we cannot undertake to reform and remodel our Liturgy, in deference to the suggestions of men, however excellent and exemplary, who have departed, as we conceive, in this instance, from the form of sound words delivered down to us by our forefathers, and have embraced the opinions of another school of theology.

Whilst I was revising this work, and preparing it for the press, I was favoured with a copy of Mr. Professor Pusey's "Scriptural views of Baptism." It is highly satisfactory to me to find the views which I had long ago taken of this part of my subject, confirmed by an author not less distinguished by laborious research, and an extensive acquaintance with Christian antiquity, than by the vein of piety and high Christian feeling, which pervades his Treatise. There are, however, points in which there is an apparent difference between my state-

ments and those of the learned Professor, in regard to which, after due consideration, I cannot alter the language which I have employed, nor retract the opinions which I have espoused.

The Professor very justly observes, that “our Saviour’s words (John iii. 5.) refuse to be bound down to any mere outward change of state or circumstances or relation, however glorious the privileges of that new condition may be¹.” They who deny the connection between Baptism and Regeneration, look upon the sacrament as no more than an act of initiation into the visible church, implying a change of outward state and circumstances only; but they put no such construction as that adverted to on our Saviour’s words. But, without pretending to know who the persons are whose opinions are alluded to, or whether the remark is meant to include Waterland, I still think that the statement which I have borrowed from that eminent Divine, who speaks of Regeneration as a change not “of *outward* but of *spiritual* state, circumstances, and relations,” supplies a safer and truer account of the grace conferred in Baptism, than any definition or representation of this grace which may seem to identify it with conversion, repentance, faith, or any of those Christian virtues or holy habits which are the fruits and evidences of the Spirit’s influence.

¹ Scriptural View, p. 18.

The Church of Rome¹, indeed, affirms that “the grace bestowed in Baptism is not only that grace by which the remission of sin is effected, but a divine quality inhering in the soul; a kind of brightness and light, which not only effaces all the stains of our souls, but renders them more beautiful and shining; and that to this grace is added a most noble company of all virtues which is poured into the soul by God.” The Calvinistic divines accommodated this description of regenerating grace to their own views of Regeneration. It would appear too from some passages of the Professor’s Treatise, that he himself has no strong objections to the notion of some such change being effected in the souls of infants by the regenerating grace of Baptism. But, to my mind, such statements as these seem to depend rather on imagination and hypothesis, than on Scriptural authority or just reasoning. A translation from a natural state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ, the forgiveness of sin, adoption, a covenanted title to everlasting happiness, and a

¹ Est autem gratia (*i. e.* gratia baptismatis) quemadmodum Tridentina synodus ab omnibus credendum pœnâ anathematis propositâ decrevit, non solum per quam peccatorum sit remissio, sed divina qualitas in animâ inhærens, et veluti splendor quidam et lux, quæ animarum nostrarum maculas omnes delet, ipsasque animas pulchriores et splendiores reddit. Huic autem additur nobilissimus virtutum omnium comitatus, quæ in animam cum gratiâ divinitus infunduntur.—Cat. Conc. Trid. Pars ii. s. 50, 51. Syn. Trid. s. vi. c. 7.

new principle of spiritual life consigned over to the soul by a mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost, which we can neither describe in words nor discern by its effects, are the chief particulars which we include in the grace of Regeneration, and which we think are spoken of with much propriety as a change not of *outward* but of *inward and spiritual* state, circumstances, and relations. But we do not conceive that any actual conversion of the soul to God, or any creation or infusion of those graces or virtues which are the ordinary fruits of the Holy Ghost, takes place at that time in the souls of infants.

In support of the account of Regeneration which I have adopted from Waterland, I would observe, as has been remarked in the body of the work, that this notion of a change of *spiritual* state appears to agree better with the analogy on which the metaphor of “a new birth” is founded, than that of a change of heart, that is, of affections and inward feelings, or of a creation or infusion of moral habits or virtues. For as the *natural birth* is a change of state and circumstances, and relation to outward things, so is the *spiritual birth*, or entrance into a spiritual life, a change of state and circumstances, and relations to God and another world.

Again; it is admitted I believe by all who hold this doctrine, that the grace bestowed in Baptism is one simple act of the Holy Ghost; that “even

in this kind" (*i. e.* the participation of infused grace) "the first beginning of life, the seed of God, the first-fruits of the Spirit, are without latitude¹;" are bestowed equally on all, without degrees or variety. But we cannot conceive of repentance, or faith, or any of those religious graces which are often identified with Regeneration, as existing otherwise than with latitude. They are dispositions or habits of mind which necessarily imply in different subjects different degrees of strength and weakness, progressive improvement or gradual decay. On the other hand, such a change of spiritual state and circumstances as we suppose to take place in Baptism, is a simple simultaneous act, which cannot be better illustrated than in the language of Hooker, when arguing against the iteration of Baptism. "For how should we practise iteration of Baptism, and yet teach that we are by Baptism born anew; that by Baptism we are admitted into the heavenly society of saints; that those things be really and effectually done by Baptism, which are no more possible to be often done, than a man can naturally be often born, or civilly be often adopted into one stock or family? As Christ hath therefore died and rose from the dead but once, so that sacrament which both extinguisheth in him our former sin, and beginneth in us a new *condition* of

¹ Hooker's Eccl. Pol. l. v. s. 56.

life, is by one only actual administration for ever available ¹.”

But, in addition to these reasons for adhering to my former statement, conversion of the heart to God, faith, hope, charity, repentance, necessarily suppose some knowledge of God, and, by consequence, instruction of some kind or other in the truths of religion. But we know that infants are incapable of receiving such instruction; we observe in them no traces or symptoms of such knowledge, and have no reason to believe that it is miraculously communicated to them. We conclude, therefore, that since they are incapable of those habits and affections of mind which necessarily presuppose some knowledge of God, such habits and affections do not constitute the spiritual and inward grace of Baptism. In the case of adults, indeed, it is allowed that these good qualities or habits, which Waterland classes under the head of renovation, however they may be strengthened and confirmed by the grace conferred in Baptism, must precede that sacrament as qualifications for its due and saving reception; and consequently, as we contend, must precede their Regeneration.

For these reasons, without positively saying that that description of Regeneration which I have espoused and attempted to illustrate in several parts

¹ Eccl. Pol. l. v. s. 62.

of the following work, has fallen under the Professor's animadversion, I must retain my former statements of this matter. It is but just to observe, that I have no reason to conclude from the Professor's writings, that he has any acquaintance with my work upon this subject.

There is one other point on which my opinion differs from that of the Professor, and where I am not, I confess, convinced that I have been mistaken.

In his remarks on 1 John iii. 9¹, the learned Professor finds fault with the comment of many able and judicious divines on this passage². He doth not

¹ P. 166—171.

² Hammond, Grotius, Whitby, Doddridge, Rosenmüller, qualify the passage in this manner.

Gataker (Adv. Misc. c. 33.) has a dissertation on this passage, in which he examines and sets aside several expositions of it. He states that it does not speak of the duty of the regenerate (*i. e.* of what he *ought* to do), but of his purpose and practice. That it does not speak of the regeneration of a future life; nor of any peculiar kind of sin, nor of sin, although committed being covered by charity or not imputed; but of the manner of sinning: "He does not sin in the same way as the unregenerate."

1. Ante peccandum non peccat, quia non vult peccare.

2. Inter peccandum non peccat, quia non totus peccat: in quantum renatus est non peccat.

3. In peccato, sive in peccati praxi non peccat, quia non dat operam peccato.

4. Post peccatum non peccat, quia non in peccato cubat.

He sums up his explanation of the passage in the following words:—

Vitam peccato immunem, quantum potest sibi proponit, nec

commit sin¹; he cannot sin; *i. e.* “he is not guilty of deliberate or habitual sin;” “he does not give his mind to sin, nor addict himself to the practice of it; he cannot be living in a habit of sin.” He considers these to be “qualifying expressions, clearly tampering with the word of God, and lowering his teaching.” But, with all due respect for the feelings of reverence for Scripture, which have led him to hazard this remark, I cannot acknowledge the justice of the censure, nor renounce the exposition which I have adopted. It is agreed on all hands, that some qualification or limitation of the Apostle’s language is necessary, because Scripture teaches us that “there is no man that sinneth not,” and that “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;” and because we know by experience that the best and holiest of God’s children are not free from failings and sins. We find, however, in every part of Scripture a comparison or contrast drawn between the just and righteous, and the wicked; which amounts in fact to the same thing as the comparison drawn by St. John in this and the foregoing verses² between those who sin and those who sin not; between those who do righteousness and those who

peccato unquam sponte dat operam. Quòd si quandò præter animi propositum deliquerit, nec in peccatum totus proruit, nec in eodem persistit, sed errore agnito, ad institutum mox pristinum quàm primùm quantumque potest revertitur.

¹ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν.

² 1 John iii. 6—8.

commit sin. But it was not the intention of the inspired writers to describe God's children or saints as *perfectly* righteous and sinless. They evidently speak of the general tone of their conduct and conversation, of the bias of their minds, and of the predominance of their religious feelings and habits. It is with the same limitation that St. John teaches us that "whosoever hath been born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he hath been born of God¹." And this limitation cannot, in my opinion, be expressed more correctly or more modestly, than by saying, that the child of God "does not give his mind to sin, or addict himself to the practice of it;" or, in other words, "is not guilty of deliberate or habitual sin." I entirely agree with the view which the Professor takes of the drift and purport of this passage, which is an eloquent and impressive expansion of the concise account of it given by Waterland. But in what respect the limitation of its sense, which he has taken from Augustin—that "we cannot commit sin as far as, or inasmuch as we are the sons of God"—is less liable than the other to the charge of "tampering with God's word and lowering its meaning," I am at a loss to discover. It appears to me that both these qualifications of St. John's expressions coincide in meaning,

¹ See Chapter V. of the following work, where these passages are more fully explained.

and that neither the one nor the other is justly exposed to the censure of being a departure from the rules of sober and reverential interpretation¹. But I prefer the explanation of the passage which I have given to that of the learned Professor, because it is more simple and intelligible, and more in accordance with the ordinary language of holy Scripture.

In my Preface to the First Edition, (the larger part of which, being principally occupied with topics and allusions of a temporary nature, I have not thought it necessary to republish) I took notice of certain objections to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, similar in some respects to those which I have been now examining. I animadverted on the extraordinary assertion of a respectable writer, who had affirmed that in the opinion of those who

¹ In addition, however, to its being too subtle and far-fetched, there is an objection to the qualification of these words adopted by the Professor, arising out of the context. In this and the foregoing verse, a contrast is drawn between those who are of the devil and those who are born of God. *He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.* But as it cannot be said that the one commits sin so far as he is of the devil, so neither can it be said that the other does not commit sin so far as he is born of God. Whereas, if both passages are supposed to speak of the purpose, disposition, bias of mind and habits, the limitation of the words seems to me to be reasonable and natural, and liable to no just or solid objections.

maintain this doctrine¹, “the change which takes place in Baptism is the whole of that renovation which the soul requires.”

I stated likewise that no divine of the Church of England has maintained that God's grace is so limited to his ordinances, that it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and to inherit eternal life without Baptism; or that adults, baptized in unbelief and impenitence, derive any immediate benefit from this sacrament: and that they who hold that Regeneration, strictly speaking, is the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism, do not identify it, as has been sometimes erroneously contended, with repentance, conversion, the renewal of the whole inward frame, an entire change of mind, or a radical change in all the parts and faculties of the soul. On these points, however, I shall have occasion to speak more at large in the body of the Treatise. In fact, the real questions in debate are, whether according to the doctrine of Scripture and the Church of England², Regeneration, in the strict sense of the word, is or is not the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism? whether the word

¹ Letter to a Serious Inquirer after Divine Truth. By the late Rev. Edward Cooper.

² It should be recollected that in the discussions which led the Author to undertake this work, the sense of the Church of England on this subject was the chief matter of debate.

can *properly* be applied to any other change not considered in conjunction with Baptism? and what is the nature of that change which the word *Regeneration* denotes ¹?

In the work now submitted to the public, my intention is to take a larger and more comprehensive view of the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, than has hitherto fallen in my way. After premising some remarks on the obvious advantages of adhering as much as possible to the strict and determinate usage of words in theological controversies and inquiries ², I shall lay before my readers a statement of the opinions of the ancient Christians on the subject of Regeneration ³, and of the principles on which their usage of the word seems to depend ⁴. After this, I shall set forth the Scriptural grounds on which this doctrine of Regeneration is founded ⁵, and examine the Scriptural objections

¹ It has been said, that the controversy on this subject does not relate to the nature of the change, but to the time of the occurrence. But in fact there can be no controversy on this subject, where the nature of the change, denoted by the word "Regeneration," does not form one of the principal hinges of the debate. For if the change signified by this Scriptural term takes place in Baptism, it cannot be such a change as is contended for by the opponents of this doctrine. If it is such a radical and complete change of heart and soul as is included in their definition of the word, it does not take place in Baptism.

² Chapter I.

³ Chapter II.

⁴ Chapter III.

⁵ Chapter IV.

which have been taken to it ¹. I shall then point out the strict conformity between the views of the ancient Christians and our own Church on this head of doctrine ², and shall notice the attempts which have been made to extract a different opinion from the public writings of our Church ³. Afterwards, I shall inquire more at large into the theory of this doctrine ⁴, the principal variations which have been made from it ⁵, and the theory which has been opposed to it with the greatest confidence ⁶. In conclusion, I shall make a few remarks upon the harmony of this doctrine with the drift and principles of revealed religion, and its consistency with the internal evidence and moral tendencies of the Christian dispensation ⁷.

Laying no claim to novelty of opinion or argument, it will be needless to particularize the Authors to whose writings I am indebted. But I must acknowledge my obligations to the Archbishop of Cashel (Dr. Laurence) who has investigated the views of the compilers and the revisers of our Liturgy, and the sources from which our offices for the Administration of Baptism are derived, in two tracts in controversy with the late Mr. Scott of Hull, replete with erudition, and written in the true spirit of theological criticism.

¹ Chapter V.

² Chapter VI.

³ Chapter VII.

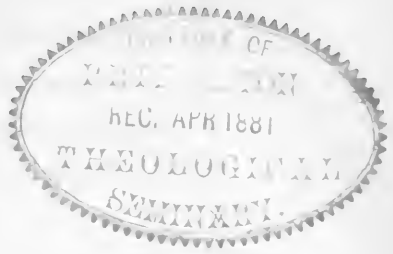
⁴ Chapter VIII.

⁵ Chapter IX.

⁶ Chapters X. & XI.

⁷ Chapter XII.

The examination of the passage of St. John's first Epistle, contained in the fifth Chapter of this work, is the substance of a Sermon preached before the University of Cambridge in March 1817.



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A

GENERAL VIEW,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION, CONTAINING SOME REMARKS ON THE
ADVANTAGE OF ADHERING, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE,
TO THE STRICT USAGE OF WORDS IN THEOLOGICAL
CONTROVERSIES AND INQUIRIES.

IT has been justly observed, that a vague and inaccurate use of words often engenders rash opinions¹, and leads to mischievous consequences. This is a truth to which the daily experience of the world bears witness. The generality of mankind are swayed by words, and led away by popular and current phrases, on the strength of which they build their opinions, and attach themselves to their respective parties, in questions, especially, of a poli-

¹ Locutiones incautas res sequuntur temerariæ.—Bishop Bull, quoted from Grotius.

tical or a religious character, without inquiring into the meaning of the expressions which they repeat, or having any just and adequate conception of the ideas which they are intended to represent. This fact shows the necessity of forming accurate and clear notions of those words, which are the hinges of opinions and actions; of adhering as much as possible to their strict sense in our different provinces of inquiry; and of endeavouring to extricate them from that capricious variety of meanings, to which, from the nature of human language and society, they are obviously liable.

In the stricter sciences, words easily obtain a fixed and determinate sense; and even in those branches of natural philosophy, where the progress of knowledge sometimes effects a change in the vocabulary, they soon acquire a steady and settled meaning, and few differences of opinion subsist upon the right explication of the terms. But in those parts of knowledge which have a direct influence upon action, and are, more or less, every man's business, they are subject to frequent changes and modifications. In religion particularly, words have passed, sometimes from a popular to a strict and determinate, sometimes from a strict to a popular and enlarged signification. New doctrines have been grounded on figurative expressions, too rigidly urged, and explained upon wrong principles. Old doctrines have been well nigh exploded in

consequence of a popular turn which has been given to scriptural phrases; and the earliest and least suspicious interpretations of those passages of holy writ, to which we appeal as authority, have become in a manner antiquated, and are sometimes condemned as rash innovations.

An instance or two will serve to illustrate these positions. The word "law" is used in several senses 'in the New Testament. Sometimes it signifies the Pentateuch, sometimes the whole volume of the Old Testament. Sometimes it is used figuratively¹, to express any thing which has the force and obligation of a law: and occasionally it seems to mean, in the way of argument and illustration, a law indefinitely, or any particular law. But with these exceptions it signifies the law of Moses, either partially, or in the gross; either as limited to some particular portion of the whole law—the decalogue, for instance, the moral, or the ceremonial law—or as comprehending all these divisions, and the whole complex body of ordinances and enactments, commandments and precepts. Hence it signifies that peculiar dispensation of religion, or code of moral and religious duty,

¹ Thus the Gospel is called the law of Christ, the law of faith, the law of righteousness, in allusion to the old or legal dispensation.—See Romans vii. 21, 23. 25; viii. 2.

to which the Jews were subject before our Saviour's Advent. In this sense St. Paul uses the word, whenever he compares the law with the Gospel, and excludes it from the office of justification.

But when the heathens set up the plea of the sufficiency of a religion or law of nature in opposition to the Gospel doctrine of salvation by grace and justification by faith in Christ, St. Paul's phraseology and arguments were readily turned against them, in the way of analogy, and by parity of reasoning. Thus the word "law" acquired in popular usage the same abstract sense in which it had been used long before by the philosophers, and designated what is called the law of nature, or that code of moral and religious duties, to which man, independently of all positive laws or particular revelations, is supposed to be subject. This sense of the word was afterwards adopted in the literal and grammatical interpretation of St. Paul's epistles, and led to a distinction between "the law and the Gospel," which, though it might have been useful as a popular distinction, if the analogical reasoning on which it is grounded had been strictly adhered to, is not scriptural, and has unfortunately given occasion to erroneous and dangerous opinions. What the Apostle says of the law of Moses, considered as an imperfect and preparatory dispensation of religion, has been applied to this abstract notion

of the law of God, and of moral and religious obligation. "The state of things," says Bishop Taylor, "in which the whole world is represented in their several periods, is by some made to be the state of every returning sinner, and men are taught that they must pass through the terrors of the law before they can partake of the mercies of the Gospel. The law was a school-master to bring the synagogue to Christ; it was so to them that were under the law, but it cannot be so to us, who are not under the law, but under grace ¹."

But this is not the worst. Others have applied what St. Paul says of the total freedom of the heathen converts from the yoke of the Mosaic law, and the emancipation of believing Jews from its obligations as a religious dispensation, to the moral law, and believers in general; and have maintained, with equal folly and impiety, that God's elect are released from the obligations of the moral law. But the world would not probably have heard of these paradoxes of Antinomianism, if this analogical sense of the word, law, had not almost superseded its proper and original signification, and exerted an undue influence upon many of St. Paul's commentators and interpreters.

The other instance, which I shall adduce in proof of my observations, is the word to which

¹ Taylor's *Unum Necessarium*, Polemical Works, p. 587. Fol. Ed. 1674.

my attention is now directed—I mean the word, Regeneration.—No reasonable doubt can be entertained that it was appropriated to that grace, whatever may be its nature, which is bestowed on us in the Sacrament of Baptism, (including perhaps occasionally, by a common figure of speech, its proper and legitimate effects, considered in conjunction with it;) from the beginnings of Christianity to no very distant era of Ecclesiastical History. In those few passages of the ancient Christian writers¹, where it bears another signification, it is

¹ Thus Clemens Alexandrinus, speaking of the injunction in the Law of Moses, that the adulteress should be stoned to death, and comparing it with what our Saviour says on this subject, Matt. v. 32; xix. 9. Mark x. 11, 12. Luke xvi. 18, undertakes to reconcile the apparent contradiction between the Law and the Gospel on allegorical principles.

Οὐ δὴ μάχεται τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ ὁ Νόμος· συνάδει δὲ αὐτῷ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐχί, ἐνὸς ὄντος ἀμφοῖν χορηγοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου; Ἡ γὰρ τοι πορνέυσουσα ζῆ μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτία, ἀπέθινε δὲ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς· ἡ δὲ μετανοήσασα, οἷον ἀναγεννηθεῖσα κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τοῦ βίου, πάλιν γενεσίαν ἔχει ζωῆς· τεθνηκυίας γὰρ τῆς πόρνης τῆς πάλαιος, εἰς βίον δὲ παρελθούσης αἰθίς τῆς κατὰ τὴν μετένοιαν γινομένης.—Stromata, l. ii. p. 507. Edit. Potter.

Here the words born again, and regeneration, (ἀναγεννηθεῖσα and πάλιν γενεσία) are professedly used in an improper and metaphorical sense; for the adulteress is represented as being, as it were (οἷον), born again by her repentance and conversion; a way of speaking never used when baptism, or its effects, are called regeneration, because the word, though originally figurative, acquired a proper and determinate sense, in ecclesiastical language. The distinction between the remission of sins by regeneration in baptism, and by repentance and absolution after baptism, pervades the canons and discipline of the Church,

evidently used in a figurative manner, to express such a change as seemed to bear some analogy in

and the writings of the ancient Christians. See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Article X. p. 368. Fol. Edit. 1692, and the authorities quoted by him.

So Eusebius, in the singular history which he gives us of St. John's treatment of a young disciple, who had abandoned his Christian profession, subsequently to baptism, and become head of a band of robbers, says, *Οὐ πρότερον ἀπῆλθεν, ὡς φασι, πρὶν αὐτὸν ἀποκατέστησε τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, διδοὺς μέγα παράδειγμα μετανοίας ἀληθινῆς, καὶ μέγα γνώρισμα παλιγγενεσίας, τροπαῖον ἀναστάσεως βλεπομένης.* Here Eusebius, in his figurative style, calls the young man's repentance and restoration to the Church a great example of regeneration, and a trophy of a visible resurrection. The learned Valesius, therefore, translates the passage *iteratae regenerationis documentum.*—Eusebii Eccl. Hist. l. iii. c. 23*.

To the same purpose he says, a few lines above, of the young man, *Εἶτα τρέμων ἔκλαε πικρῶς· προσελθόντα δὲ τὸν γέροντα περιέλαβεν, ἀπολογούμενος ταῖς οἰμωγαῖς ὡς ἡδύνατο, καὶ τοῖς δάκρυσι βαπτίζομενος ἐκ δευτέρου.* So that he seems to call his conversion a new birth, upon the same principle that he calls his godly sorrow, manifested by groans and tears, a second baptism.

In another passage, speaking of the happy effects of the patience of the Martyrs of Lyons on those Christians whose fears had led them to renounce the faith, he says,

Ἐνεγένετο πολλὴ χαρὰ τῇ παρθένῳ μητρὶ, οὗς ὡς νεκροὺς ἐξέτριψε, τούτους ζῶντας ἀπολαμβάνουσῃ· δι' ἐκείνων γὰρ οἱ πλείους τῶν ἡρνημένων ἀνεμετροῦντο καὶ “ἀνεκίσκοντο” καὶ ἀνεζωπυροῦντο. L. v. ch. i.

But passages of this kind are very rare, and so evidently rhetorical, using the words in question in an improper and metaphorical sense, that they do not at all invalidate the assertion of learned divines, that the word “regeneration” is constantly used by the ancient Christians to signify baptism and its effects.

* Eusebius has copied this story from Clemens Alexandrinus.

magnitude and importance to the change effected in baptism. At the time of the Reformation, the word was commonly used in a more loose and popular way, to signify sometimes justification, sometimes conversion, or the turning from sinful courses, sometimes repentance, or that gradual change of heart and life, which is likewise styled renovation. Hence in popular language it came to signify a great and general reformation of habits and character, and the words "regenerate and unregenerate" were substituted for the words converted and unconverted, renewed and unrenewed, righteous and wicked. But in the hands of the systematic Calvinists, the word passed from the popular to a strict and determinate meaning; and they pronounced regeneration to be an infusion of a habit of grace, or a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, taking place at the decisive moment of the effectual call. From hence the transition to a sensible change was easy and natural, and what was a theological speculation in the system of the scholastic divines, became, in the hands of less subdued and less calculating spirits, the stronghold of enthusiasm.

If, therefore, the progress of enthusiastic opinions and habits, and of other doctrines by no means honourable to the divine perfections, is connected in any degree with the changes which have taken place in the received use of the word Regeneration, it will

not be an unprofitable task to examine the grounds of its more ancient signification, and to point out its correspondence with the scriptural phraseology and doctrine. But though there is an obvious connection between the right use of words and sound doctrine, it is not the word, but the doctrine implied in it, on which I would principally insist. For it is almost needless to say that many of our Divines, who maintain the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism in its most unadulterated sense, often use the word *regenerate*, in compliance with popular usage, to signify a man living habitually under the influence of the Spirit of grace; *unregenerate*, to signify a man not living habitually under that influence¹. Still it is to be wished that they had avoided this ambiguity of language, and had kept close to the more ancient and more correct usage of the word in question.

¹ In this sense Bishop Taylor uses the words *regenerate*, *regeneration*, &c. He says, that "an unregenerate man may have received the Spirit of God." That, "to have received the Spirit of God is not the propriety of the regenerate, but to be led by him, to be conducted by the Spirit in all our ways and counsels, to obey his motions, to entertain his doctrine, to do his pleasure: this is that which gives the distinction and denomination." *Unum Necessarium*, Polemical Works, p. 787.

CHAPTER II.

A VIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION MAINTAINED BY THE FATHERS AND ANCIENT CHRISTIANS.

WHEN opinions, founded on current and acknowledged interpretations of Scripture, have been received without doubt or dispute from the earliest times of Christianity to a comparatively late age, the prejudices in their favour, and against the innovations which have been made upon them in latter days, are fair and legitimate. There seems indeed to be some presumption in setting up our private opinions and interpretations against the unanimous testimony of the early Christians; and it is evidently dangerous. For if we will not admit their unvarying and uncontradicted testimony in proof of an apostolical and scriptural doctrine, I know not how we shall convince an unbeliever that they are sufficient witnesses of the authenticity of sacred writ, or of the authority of its canon.

In modern times we have been taught that Regeneration is a thing quite unconnected with baptism: that it may indeed take place in that sacrament as well as at any other time, but that to suppose it in any proper sense dependent on it, is an unreasonable and unscriptural opinion. But, previous to a more particular inquiry, these assertions seem rather to prove that they, who speak in this manner, have affixed improper notions to the word, than that the ancient Christians universally mistook the sense of Scripture, and gave in to an opinion contrary to reason and piety.

It has been shown, beyond any reasonable doubt, "that all the ancient Christians, not one man excepted, do take the word, Regeneration, to signify baptism; and all of them do understand that rule of our Saviour, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,' of baptism¹." After what has been written on this subject, it will be needless to adduce passages of their works in proof of these positions, which are legitimate deductions from plain matters of fact, and a laborious investigation of their writings.

Their doctrine has been stated with his usual perspicuity and judgment by Waterland, in his

¹ Wall on Infant Baptism, chap. x. 3. ch. vi. 1. The reader may refer to this valuable work for the proofs of these positions of the learned author.

celebrated Sermon on Regeneration; and his statement is evidently grounded on a severe examination of their works, and a judicious induction of particulars.

He first teaches us, in conformity to the opinion of the ancient Christians, that Regeneration is a spiritual change wrought upon any person in the right use of baptism, whereby he is translated from his natural state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ. That every one must be born of water and of the Spirit; not once of water, and once of the Spirit, but once of the Spirit in and by water; of the Spirit primarily and effectively, of the water secondarily and instrumentally. That the word Regeneration is so appropriated to Baptism as to exclude any other conversion or repentance, not considered in conjunction with Baptism, from being signified by that name. That in an active sense it signifies our admission into a spiritual state in Christ, in a passive sense our entrance into it; and that it carries with it the remission of sins, and a covenant claim to everlasting happiness.

He then proceeds to lay down the distinction between Regeneration and Renovation¹. He states

¹ When we speak of renovation as distinguished from regeneration, we mean the practical and progressive renewal of the inward frame or moral habits, which is the usual sense of the word in Scripture. But the change wrought in man by the Holy Ghost in Baptism is likewise called renovation, or renewal. Such at least appears to be the meaning of the word in Titus

that they are always distinct in theory, and often, particularly in the case of infants, in fact and

iii. 5. where the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Ghost, seem to be parallel and equivalent phrases; or, perhaps, baptism is called *the washing of regeneration and renewal*.

Hence in the writings of the ancient Christians, men are said to be renewed as well as regenerated in Baptism. So Cyprian de Habitu Virginum, p. 102. Omnes quidem qui ad divinum munus et patrium Baptismi sanctificatione perveniunt, hominem illic veterem gratia lavacri salutaris exponunt, et *innovati Spiritu Sancto* a sordibus contagionis antiquæ iteratâ nativitate purgantur.

The distinction between this baptismal renewal, and that gradual improvement of the inward frame which the word *renewal* more commonly denotes, which is sufficiently apparent in this quotation, has been stated by Augustin, lib. xiv. de Trin. c. 17. Sane ista renovatio non momento uno fit, sicut momento fit uno illa renovatio in Baptismo, remissione omnium peccatorum. Neque enim vel unum quantulumcunque remanet, quod non remittatur. Sed quemadmodum aliud est carere febribus, aliud ab infirmitate, quæ febribus facta est, revalescere: itemque aliud est infixum telum de corpore demere; aliud vulnus quod eo factum est secundâ curatione sanare: ita prima curatio est causam remove re languoris, quod per omnium peccatorum indulgentiam fit. Secunda, ipsum levare languorem, quod fit paulatim proficiendo in renovatione hujus imaginis. Quæ duo monstrantur in Psalmo; ubi legitur, *Qui propitius fit omnibus iniquitatibus tuis*, quod fit in Baptismo. Deinde sequitur, *Qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas*, quod fit quotidianis accessibus, cum hæc imago renovatur. De quâ re Apostolus apertissime locutus est, dicens, *Etsi exterior homo noster corrumpitur, sed interior renovatur de die in diem*. Renovatur autem in agnitione Dei, hoc est justitiâ et sanctitate veritatis.

This distinction between renovation in Baptism, and the renewal of the habits or inward frame, is the same as the distinction stated in the text between regeneration and renovation.

reality. That regeneration is a change of the whole spiritual state; renovation a change of inward frame or disposition, which in adults is rather a qualification or capacity for regeneration than regeneration itself. That in infants regeneration necessarily takes place without renovation, but in adults renovation exists (or at least ought to exist) before, in, and after Baptism.

Regeneration, he proceeds, is the joint work of the water and of the Spirit, or to speak more properly of the Spirit only; renovation is the joint work of the Spirit and the man.

Regeneration comes only once, in or through Baptism. Renovation exists before, in, and after Baptism, and may be often repeated. Regeneration, being a single act, can have no parts, and is incapable of increase. Renovation is in its very nature progressive. Regeneration, though suspended as to its effects and benefits, cannot be totally lost in the present life. Renovation may be often repeated and totally lost.

Afterwards he illustrates this doctrine by applying it to four separate cases.

1. Grown persons coming to Baptism properly qualified, receive at once the grace of Regeneration: but, however well prepared, they are not regenerate without Baptism. Afterwards renovation grows more and more within them by the indwelling of the Spirit.

2. 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. They stipulate, and the Holy Spirit translates them out of a state of nature into a state of grace, favour, and acceptance. In their case, regeneration precedes, and renovation follows after, and they are the temple of the Spirit, till they defile themselves with sin.

3. As to those who fall off after Regeneration, their covenant state abides, but without any saving effect, because without present renovation: but this saving effect may be repaired and recovered by repentance.

4. With respect to those who receive Baptism in a state of hypocrisy or impenitency, though this Sacrament can only increase their condemnation, still pardon and grace are conditionally made over to them, and the saving virtue of Regeneration, which had been hitherto suspended, takes effect, when they truly repent and unfeignedly believe the Gospel.

This clear statement of the learned author, contains an accurate representation of the grace conferred, and the change which takes place, in Baptism; and this is what is meant by those Divines, who maintain that Regeneration is in the strict

I. Civil of Geneva, Geneva, 1750.

Hypocritical baptism therefore ⁸ repairs ^{impenitent}
 though in case of solemn prayer it was not repaired.

sense of the word, the inward and spiritual Grace of Baptism. The identity, if I may so express myself, of Baptism and Regeneration, is a doctrine which manifestly pervades the writings of the Fathers. It is moreover evident that they did not imagine that Baptism produces any saving effect in adults without faith and repentance, or, in other words, without some previous renewal of the inward frame. Nor do they appear to have supposed any positive or active renewal of the soul takes place in infants. Hence it follows that they must have maintained this distinction between regeneration and renovation, or conversion, which in the present day has been styled, by a strange fatality, a novel contrivance. Sufficient proofs however of a positive kind may be collected from their own writings, that they maintained this distinction¹.

¹ Sicut autem bono Catechumeno Baptismus deest ad capesendum regnum cœlorum, sic malo baptizato vera conversio. Qui enim dixit, *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ et Spiritu, non intrabit in regnum cœlorum*: ipse etiam dixit, *Nisi abundaverit justitia vestra plusquam Scribarum et Phariseorum, non intrabitis in regnum cœlorum*. Nam ne segura esset justitia Catechumeni dictum est, *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ et Spiritu, non intrabit in regnum cœlorum*. Rursus ne percepto baptismo segura esset iniquitas baptizatorum, dictum est, *Nisi abundaverit justitia vestra plusquam Scribarum et Phariseorum, non intrabitis in regnum cœlorum*. Alterum sine altero parùm est; utrumque perficit illius possessionis hæredem. Augustin. de Baptismo, contra Donatistas. L. iv. 21.

Sicut in Abraham præcessit fidei justitia, et accessit circumcisio, signaculum justitiæ fidei, ita in Cornelio præcessit sanctifi-

The cases of adults properly qualified, and of those who fall off after Baptism, are in strict conformity to the doctrine and discipline of the ancient Churches. Even Augustin, who first introduced into the Church the doctrine of absolute predestination, did not assert the indefectibility of true grace, nor attempt to confine the grace of regeneration to those who, in his system, are called according to God's pur-

catio spiritalis in dono Spiritûs Sancti, et accessit sacramentum regenerationis in lavacro baptismi. Et sicut in Isaac, qui octavo nativitatis suæ die circumcisis est, præcessit signaculum justitiæ fidei, et, quoniam patris fidem imitatus est, secuta est in crescente ipsa justitia, cujus signaculum in infanti præcesserat: ita et in baptizatis infantibus præcedit regenerationis sacramentum, et, si Christianam tenuerint pietatem, sequitur etiam in corde conversio, cujus mysterium præcessit in corpore. Quibus rebus omnibus apparet aliud esse sacramentum Baptismi, aliud conversionem cordis, sed salutem hominum ex utroque compleri. De Baptismo contra Donatistas. L. iv. c. xxiv.

In the latter quotation the word *mysterium* does not signify a sacrament, or sacramental sign, in the stricter sense of the word, but merely a moral sign—a sign of the duty to which Baptism obliges us. It is well known that the word *sacramentum* or *mysterium* was used by the ancients in a very different latitude from that which it has obtained in modern days—*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.* What Augustin teaches us in this passage, is, 1. That adults, though converted, are not regenerate without Baptism. 2. That baptized infants, though regenerate, are not converted or changed in heart.

pose, and endowed with the special gift of perseverance.

The Regeneration of all baptized Infants, without exception, is a doctrine likewise every where avowed by the Fathers, and established by the canons and discipline of the Church. In Augustin's controversy with the Pelagians, who denied the doctrine of original sin, it is assumed as a point universally acknowledged, and forms one of the bases of his argument.

The case of those persons who are baptized in hypocrisy or impenitence, is stated in full conformity to ancient opinion. In Augustin's controversy with the Donatists, he assumes this case as a medium of proof¹, and, of course, as an acknow-

¹ Quomodo accipienti non prodest baptismus ei qui seculo verbis non factis renuntiat, sic non prodest ei qui in schismate vel in hæresi baptizatur; utrique autem correcto prodesse incipit quod ante non proderat, sed tamen inerat. Contra Don. de Bapt. l. iv. c. iv.

Etiam Simonem Magum per baptismum ipsa *pepererat*: cui tamen dictum est quod non haberet partem in hæreditate Christi. Nunquid ei baptismus, nunquid evangelium, nunquid sacramenta defuerunt? Sed quia charitas defuit, frustra *natus est*, et ei expediebat fortasse non nasci. Contra Don. l. i. c. viii.

Aliud est enim, *Omnis qui intrabit in regnum cælorum, prius nascitur ex aquâ et Spiritu*, quod Dominus dixit et verum est. Aliud autem, *Omnis qui nascitur ex aquâ et Spiritu intrabit in regnum cælorum*, quod utique falsum est. Nam et Simon ille Magus natus est ex aquâ et Spiritu, et tamen non intravit in regnum cælorum. Contra Don. l. iv. c. xii.

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 ledged doctrine. The Donatists held, agreeably to Cyprian's opinion, that the Baptism of schismatics is invalid; and since they contended that, with the exception of their own Churches, all the Christians of their days were in a state of schism, they affirmed that none but themselves were validly baptized, and that none could enter into the kingdom of God without receiving Baptism from their Ministers. But Augustin replied that, even allowing the truth of their accusation, they who are baptized in schism are in the same situation with those, who are baptized in impenitence or hypocrisy. For as the latter participate in the saving effects of regeneration, when they repent of their sins, and believe the Gospel with sincerity, so the former enjoy the benefits of their Baptism, whenever they renounce their schism, and are received into the communion of the Church.

Having given this statement of the doctrine of

Talis baptismus, cum eo male utuntur, necat, sicut illis de quibus ait Apostolus—*Bonus odor Christi erat in mortem*. Contra Don. l. vi. c. xl.

Quod ante datum est tunc incipit valere ad salutem, cum illa fictio veraci confessione recesserit.

Neque nos dicimus quod ubicunque et quomocunque baptizati *gratiam* Baptismi consequuntur, si gratia baptismi in *ipsa salute* intelligitur, quæ per celebrationem Sacramenti confertur; sed hanc salutem multi nec intus consequuntur, quamvis Sacramentum, quod per se sanctum est, eos habere manifestum est. Contra Don. l. iv. c. xiv.

the ancient Christians, my next step will be to inquire on what grounds the change of which we are speaking appears to have been denominated Regeneration.

CHAPTER III.

ON WHAT PRINCIPLES THE INWARD AND SPIRITUAL GRACE OF BAPTISM, AND THE CHANGE OF CONDITION WHICH IT IMPLIES, HAVE BEEN CALLED REGENERATION.

SOME divines have supposed that the word Regeneration, and certain phrases of the Old Testament, which denote the spiritual renewal and improvement of the inward frame, are equivalent and synonymous expressions. When, for instance, David prays to God *to create in him a new heart*, and to *renew a right spirit within him*¹, they suppose that he is praying for the grace of regeneration; when God calls upon the Israelites to *make them a new heart and a new spirit*², or promises that he *will put a new spirit within them, and make them a heart of*

¹ Psalm li. 10.

² Ezekiel xviii. 31.

*flesh*¹, these phrases are in their opinion equivalent to the words New Birth, or being born again. It is evident, that so far as regeneration *implies* repentance and the renewal of the inner man, so far it *implies* the creation of a new heart, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh. But this renewal of the heart and spirit is described in these texts, compared with one another, as the joint work of God, or the Holy Ghost, and of man himself: as a gift or blessing bestowed on us by God, and as a duty which we owe to him and ourselves. On the other hand, Regeneration, though it requires certain previous qualifications in those who are capable of possessing them, is entirely the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit: a change in which the principle of self-action implanted in man bears no part.

In truth, there is no more than an apparent parallelism between these expressions. For those phrases, according to the customary usage of the sacred language, imply nothing more than a great change for the better, the reformation and improvement of the religious principles and behaviour. Whereas *to be born again* is a metaphor founded on a comparison of a different kind, and, on the common principles of figurative language, leads to the notion of a distinct change of condition; a passage, if I may so express myself, from one state of existence

¹ Ezekiel xi. 19.—xxxvi. 26, 27. Jer. xxxii. 39.

to another. This is the sense in which the Fathers understood it: and accordingly they speak of three births incident to Christians: the Natural Birth, the New Birth of Baptism, and the Regeneration of the Body in the last day.

In addition to the argument deduced from the etymology of the word, and the natural force of the metaphor, every research which has been made into the history of this expression, confirms the sense which the Catholic Christians affixed to it; and the illustrations which this sense has received are derived from the most unsuspected sources¹. In

¹ Non solum Judæis sed gentibus etiam solenne fuit, sacrorum initiationem regenerationis vocabulo significare. Apuleius Met. XI. "Nam et inferûm claustra, et salutis tutela in Deæ manu posita; ipsaque *traditio ad instar voluntariæ mortis, et precariæ salutis celebratur*. Quippe cum transactis vitæ temporibus jam in ipso finitæ lucis limine constitutos, quis tamen tutò possent *magna religionis committi silentia*, numen Deæ solet eligere, et suâ providentiâ *renatos ad nova reponere rursus salutis curricula*."

Apuleius diem initiationis *natalem sacrum* vocat, et Sacerdotem, a quo fuerat initiatus, appellat patrem suum—"Stipatum me religiosâ cohorte deducit ad proximas *balneas*, et prius *sucto lavacro traditum*, præfatus Deûm veniam, purissime circumrorans *abluit*." Justinianus Novell. 73. "Si quis manumittens servum aut ancillam suam cives denunciaverit Romanos, sciat ex hâc lege, quod qui libertatem acceperit, *ἔξει παρεπόμενον εὐθύς καὶ τὸ τῶν χρυσῶν δακτυλίων, καὶ τὸ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας δίκαιον*." Servus manumissus natalibus restituitur, in quibus initio omnes homines fuerunt. Ergo ex jure Romano adoptionis et regenerationis voces interpretandæ sunt. Wetstein in John iii. 3.

All these usages of the word itself, or of equivalent phrases,

the writings of Pagans the word has been used to signify the act of initiation into their mysteries, when the votary, after much previous discipline and preparation, was supposed to pass into a new state of religious being, and to contract a new relation to the Deity. In the Roman law, the same phrase was applied to the manumission of a slave, his passage, that is, from a servile to a free condition. And there is little reason to doubt that the same figure of speech was applied by the Jewish doctors to the initiation of their proselytes into their law and religious polity. It is well ascertained that Baptism formed a part of this act of religion: and it appears both¹ from the conduct of John, and from² the questions which were put to him by the Pharisees, that Baptism was understood to be a sign of initiation, and a token of entrance into a new state of life, and new professions and engagements of a religious nature. Our Saviour therefore seems to have adopted the same mode of speaking in his conversation with the learned Jew, Nicodemus; intimating to him that if he wished to enter into the

serve to illustrate the meaning of the word Regeneration. In eo (says the learned Dodwell) versatur universa ferè Novi Testamenti argumentatio, ut quæcunque essent sive apud Judæos, sive apud Gentiles, privilegia de quibus gloriarentur, ea Christianis potiori præstantiorique ratione convenire probarentur. Diss. Cyp. 13.

¹ Matt. iii. Mark i. Luke iii. John i.

² John i. 19, &c.

kingdom of God, it was no less necessary for him to become his proselyte, to be initiated into the privileges and undertake the engagements of his religion, than it was for the Gentile to be initiated into the privileges and undertake the engagements of the Mosaic law, if he wished to partake of the civil and religious advantages of the Jewish polity ¹.

Hence, though in all these cases the New Birth *implies* a change of inward dispositions and habits, both as a qualification for it in capable subjects, and as a duty to which it binds the regenerated person, the change itself is distinct in theory from that change of habits and manners. But this distinction, to which the etymology of the word, the nature of the metaphor, and the history of the expression obviously conduct us, explaining and confirming that interpretation which was put upon it by the ancient Christians, will be rendered more apparent, when we institute an inquiry into those passages of Scripture which allude to this question, and lead us to conclude that such a change as we denominate Regeneration does actually take place in Baptism.

¹ Baptism may be likewise styled Regeneration, or a New Birth, in a moral sense, because it is that point from whence we contract a solemn engagement to lead new or holy lives, and become new men by promise and profession.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY ON WHICH THIS DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION IN BAPTISM IS GROUNDED.

HAVING stated the reasons which appear to justify the appropriation of this word Regeneration to Baptism, I proceed to inquire into the Scriptural authority on which the doctrine, expressed by this term and other words of the same family, is grounded. I entertain no doubt that the ancient Christians understood these words in their proper signification, and departed neither from accurate phraseology, nor sound doctrine, when they used them in this limited and appropriate sense, to signify that sacramental and initiatory change which is described in the New Testament under a considerable variety of phrases. But the main point to be proved is, that such a change as they usually designate by the word Regeneration, a mysterious

change of religious condition and spiritual relationship to God, does actually take place in Baptism, and is described in divers passages of Scripture, both by the words under discussion, and by other phrases and figures of a similar import.

In order to present the reader with a clearer view of the passages which bear upon this question, I shall range them under the following heads:—

I. Those which speak of this change by the name of Regeneration, and connect it with water and Baptism.

II. Those which speak of it in parallel and corresponding expressions, with an evident allusion to the same ceremony.

III. Those which attribute it simply to washing and Baptism.

IV. Those which describe this change in other figures and phrases, not exactly parallel to those contained in the former classes.

I. There are only two passages of Scripture in which Regeneration and Baptism are expressly combined and identified with each other. The one occurs in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus recorded in St. John's Gospel: *Except a man be born again, or, as the phrase is explained, born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see, or enter into the kingdom of God*¹. The other in St. Paul's Epistle

¹ John iii. 3. 5.

to Titus, where the Apostle asserts that God *hath saved us by the washing* (rather perhaps the bath or laver) *of regeneration*¹. The ancient Christians, while they ground the necessity of Baptism as a mean or instrument of spiritual Regeneration principally on the former text, uniformly apply the latter to the same sacrament. Nor do they appear to have entertained any suspicion that these passages are ambiguous, or that they could admit of any other than the received and current interpretation.

I have already shown what sense was commonly affixed to the word Regeneration and other kindred words in our Saviour's days: that they signified both among Jews and Gentiles a change of religious, or, in some cases, of civil condition and privileges: and that this change was usually symbolized by an outward action, sometimes by this very ceremony of washing or Baptism. It may be asked then, whether it was our Lord's intention to perplex and bewilder, or to instruct and edify, Nicodemus? to shadow out to him in enigmatical language a change of which he could have no just conception? or to converse with him on his own principles, and in conformity to a mode of thinking and speaking to which he was habituated? If we adopt the old interpretation of this passage, the conversation seems to be suited to the person and character of Nico-

¹ Titus iii. 5.

demus, and conformable to the general tone of our Lord's instructions. For though it is, like many of his discourses, figurative and parabolical, it alludes to a well-known custom and a received opinion, and makes use of a phraseology which was familiar to the learned, and probably well understood by the generality of his countrymen.

On the same grounds there can be no reasonable doubt that *the washing of Regeneration*, mentioned by St. Paul, signifies Baptism, or baptismal Regeneration. For since Regeneration signified both with Jews and Gentiles a mystical and symbolical entrance into a new state of life, St. Paul, when he speaks of the washing of regeneration, as a mean or instrument of salvation, does not, in all probability, deviate from this usage of the word. Indeed, this sense of it is amply confirmed by a comparison of these passages with what our Saviour says in his last commission to his Apostles. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*¹. For as it is evident that to be *born again*, or *born of water and of the Spirit*, signifies the same thing as to be *saved by the washing of regeneration*, so there can be no reasonable doubt that to be *saved by the washing of regeneration* is equivalent to being *saved by Baptism*², and consequently that to be *saved by Baptism*, and to be *born again*, or *born of water and of the Spirit*, are one and the same thing.

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

² Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Much stress indeed has been laid upon a notion, that in the passage of St. John's Gospel Regeneration is spoken of as absolutely necessary to salvation, in such a sense, that without it no individual of mankind can possibly enter into the kingdom of heaven: whereas Baptism is necessary only in a restricted sense, being, as our Church teaches us, "necessary to salvation where it can be had." This distinction is principally built upon an opinion which some commentators have entertained, that the mention of Baptism was designedly omitted¹ in the latter clause of our Lord's speech, to show that it is necessary only in this qualified sense. The truth is, that the mention of Baptism in this clause would have been quite superfluous; for our Saviour speaks of Baptism as a consequence of belief, and if the men to whom the Apostles were sent rejected the Gospel, it was needless to say a syllable about their Baptism. In fact this passage is qualified, not by the omission of a few superfluous words, but by natural equity, and the proportion which the several parts of religion bear to each other. The same principles apply with equal force to our Saviour's address to Nicodemus². It condemns the wilful and

¹ *He that believeth not, shall be damned.*

² This is the very construction which our Church puts on the passage in the Office of Baptism for those of riper years:—

"Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel the express words of our Saviour, Christ, that, *Except a man*, &c. Whereby ye perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, *where it may be had.*"

culpable omission of Baptism, but cannot (so at least charity bids us presume) apply to cases where *it is not to be had*; where it is impeded by accident, or prevented by an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances.

It has been affirmed that *to be born of water and of the Spirit*, signifies to be born again of the Spirit¹, acting like water, and cleansing and purifying the heart. But this explanation is evidently forced and unnatural, and inconsistent with grammatical analogy, and the common rules of construction. It is true that two words in this construction may be conceived to express one thing. For instance, *life and breath* may signify the breath of life; *grace and apostleship*, the apostolical grace, the grace or gift of the apostleship. In passages like these, where

¹ *Per aquam et Spiritum*: quasi diceret, per Spiritum qui purgando et irrigando fideles animas vice aquæ fungitur. Aquam ergo et Spiritum accipio simpliciter pro Spiritu qui aqua est—renasci aquâ et Spiritu nihil aliud est, quàm vim illam Spiritûs recipere, quæ in animâ id facit, quod aqua in corpore. Calvin. Inst. l. iv. c. xvi. § 25.

Ex veteribus nonnullos citare licet, qui illa verba metaphoricè accipiunt. Antidotus ad Conc. Trid. Opuscula, p. 298.

This is an assertion which neither Calvin nor any of those who have copied from him, have ever verified. Hooker, who does not speak at random, positively denies it. "Of all the ancients, there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise expound or allege the place, than of external baptism." B. v. S. 58. Vol. ii. p. 244. Oxford Ed.

Grotius has followed Calvin's interpretation, and it is generally adopted by the Arminian Divines. Limborch Theol. Chris. l. v. c. lxvi. § 25.

one of the nouns substantive, connected by a conjunction copulative, assumes the force of an adjective, or, what is equivalent, of the genitive or possessive case, the words, nevertheless, in their plain grammatical construction, admit of a clear and consistent meaning. But the attempt to fetch out such an interpretation by giving to the word, *water*, a highly metaphorical and uncommon sense, is sanctioned by no usage and no examples.

With as little reason it has been urged, that the passage of the Epistle to Titus has no reference, or at the utmost only an allusion to Baptism¹, but

¹ Limborch Theol. Chris. l. v. ch. lxvi. § 26.

It is contended either that this passage merely alludes to baptism, or that regeneration is called a washing by a metonymy of the sign for the thing signified. I confess I do not understand how the sign can be used for the thing signified, when both the sign and thing signified are mentioned in the same clause, in their natural relation to each other. But at all events, since we are taught that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, and that *God hath saved us by the washing of regeneration*, we do not act very consistently, when we interpret the baptism of which our Saviour speaks in a literal, the washing or laver, which St. Paul mentions, in a metonymical sense.

At other times it is affirmed that washing is only a metaphor, and that regeneration is called a washing in the same manner that Christ is called *a vine*, and Jehovah *a shield*. Certainly if it were as unreasonable to suppose that washing in this text can mean washing or baptism, in a literal sense, as to suppose that Christ is literally a vine, or God literally a shield, we should be compelled to explain the word in a figurative manner. Or, even if we had good ground for supposing that regeneration is in no way connected with Baptism, we might perhaps have conjectured that the washing of regeneration signified the cleansing or puri-

speaks solely of that internal Regeneration which purifies the soul, in the same manner that water cleanses and purifies the body. Our old teachers, I am persuaded, saw more deeply into this subject, and judged more truly of the meaning of these passages, than our modern masters. "When the letter of the Law," says Hooker, "hath two things plainly and expressly specified, Water and the Spirit—Water as a duty required on our parts, the Spirit as a gift which God bestoweth—there is danger in presuming so to interpret it, as if the clause that concerneth ourselves were more than needful¹."

II. But though these passages, the former especially, were on account of the distinct and unambiguous manner in which they are worded, alleged by the ancient Christians as the main grounds and principles of the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration, it is amply confirmed by other texts, and by continual allusions to it, as a thing well known and thoroughly understood. For undesigned and incidental testimonies, which do not come down to us in the shape of precepts or dogmatical determinations, but of appeals to the converts, and allusions to

fyng effect of regeneration. But since Scripture affirms that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, and that *Baptism saveth us*, we should offend against the rules of just interpretation by affixing a metaphorical sense to this expression. For, as Hooker says, "where a literal interpretation will stand, the farthest from the letter is always the worst."

¹ Hooker's Eccl. Polity, B. v. ch. lix.

received opinions, are a strong confirmation of the truth and general reception of the opinions to which they allude. In fact this doctrine is alluded to in many of St. Paul's Epistles: it is plainly asserted by St. Peter: and what St. John says in his Epistles, though he views the question in another aspect, is, as I shall attempt to show in the following chapter, perfectly consistent with it. My present business, however, is to examine those passages of Scripture, which speak of the change which we denominate Regeneration in parallel and corresponding expressions.

Regeneration is spoken of in the writings of Theologians either in a larger or a more confined sense. In the works of the ancient Christians it is commonly equivalent to the whole Sacrament of Baptism, including the inward grace and the outward action. Sometimes it signifies the inward grace in its most comprehensive sense; sometimes that part of it only which consists of a principle of new life. Our Church uses it in this latter sense, when it defines the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism to be *a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness*¹; that is, the forgiveness of sin², the ceasing to

¹ Church Catechism.

² The forgiveness of sin—of original sin, and of all actual sins committed before baptism—is what the ancients principally insist upon, when they speak of regeneration in baptism.

“This death and new birth is neither the resolving to forsake

be sinners, in the divine construction, coupled with an undertaking, on our part, to mortify continually our corrupt affections, and the grant and earnest of the Holy Ghost, as a principle of spiritual life. But the death to sin and the new birth to righteousness are inseparable, and naturally imply each other, and therefore when the one is mentioned, the other is necessarily understood.

This distinction of our Catechism is founded on the writings of St. Paul, who, in allusion to the

sin and live godly ; for this is supposed before baptism, to make the person capable of it : nor the actual forsaking of sin, and living a new life ; for that is the consequent task of him that makes a right use of the grace of baptism for his whole life after, and both these an act of the man, wrought the one by the preventing, the other by the assisting grace of God. But this grace of baptism is the strength of Christ, of supernatural ability to forsake sin and live godly, and proportionally a tender of God's pardon and gracious acceptance, pardon of forsaken sins, and acceptance of imperfect, so it be sincere godliness. And that this is the intention of the Catechism may appear by what follows as the reason of it ; *for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath*, (i.e. born with strong inclinations and propensities to sin, which would certainly engage us in a course of sin, so consequently makes us worthy of wrath,) *we are hereby made children of grace* : i.e. have in baptism that strength given us by Christ that will enable us to get out of that servile and dangerous state." Hammond's Practical Catechism. Works, Fol. Vol. i. p. 115.

This is a true explanation of this passage of our Catechism, but it does not seem to me to contain the whole truth. For to be *born in sin*, &c. signifies to be born in a real state of sin and condemnation, and on the other hand, *a death to sin* includes the forgiveness of original and actual sin in baptism.

sacramental action, describes our Regeneration in Baptism sometimes as a sort of mysterious death and burial, sometimes as a mysterious resurrection. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin, whose sins have been forgiven us upon the express condition that we will mortify our own sinful lusts, live any longer therein? Know ye not that as many of you as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death? into the likeness of his death, and the participation of its benefits. Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*¹. This passage contains a plain allusion to the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, and we may infer from it the knowledge and belief of that doctrine in the Roman Church, its general reception, and its conformity to the Apostle's teaching. But though St. Paul here speaks only of the death to sin under these figurative expressions, they necessarily imply and include the new birth to righteousness, because newness of life is declared to be the legitimate and intended effect of this mystical death and burial, and the duty to which they bind and engage us.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians the same myste-

¹ Rom. vi. 1—4.

rious change, and consignation of blessings, are described under the figure of a resurrection, and the Apostle makes use of the same familiar allusion to the sacramental action. *When you were dead in sins, he quickened you together with Christ, and raised you up together with him, and seated you together with him in heavenly places*¹. But as in the passage just quoted the death to sin implies the new birth to righteousness, so here the resurrection with Christ, or, in other words, the new birth to righteousness, includes the forgiveness of sin.

In the Epistle to the Colossians the same figures are used with the same allusion. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*². In passages of this kind where a supposition is urged as a motive to duty, the hypothetical particle implies no doubt, but carries with it a strong affirmation. "Since you have received in Baptism the forgiveness of your sins and regeneration to life, remember your solemn obligations to lead a new life, to mortify your members which are upon the earth, and to seek those things which are above."

*Ye are buried with Christ in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through faith in the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead*³.

¹ Eph. ii. 5, 6.

² Col. iii. 1.

³ Col. ii. 12.

When the Apostle addresses the converts as men who *had put on Christ*, this expression likewise describes a mystical conformity to Christ, and alludes to their Regeneration in Baptism. For this phrase refers to a past, and, as it appears, a distinct and definite transaction, and not only reminds them of their own promises and professions, because the privileges and obligations of the Christian Covenant are correlatives, and mutually imply each other, but of a determinate change of spiritual and religious existence. What this change is, and when effected, we may learn from St. Paul's words to the Galatians. *Ye are all the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*¹—have been made one with him and grafted into his mystical body, and consequently have been regenerated or made *children of God through faith in Jesus Christ*.

But it must be observed that Baptism is a symbolical action, and that it not only symbolizes the mysterious change wrought in us in the Sacrament, which is its inward and spiritual grace, but the moral and practical change to which it binds us². Hence, the same class of figurative expressions,

¹ Gal. iii. 26, 27.

² Quæ symbola in pactis solennibus usurpantur, ea non significandi duntaxat, sed et obligandi etiam gratiâ sunt instituta. Dodwell Diss. Cyprian. p. 114.

which denote the mystical, frequently denote the practical change likewise. Thus we *die to sin*¹, or *die with Christ*² in Baptism because our sins are then forgiven, and we cease to be sinners in God's sight. We *rise again*³, because we are then accepted and adopted by God, and made partakers of a principle of spiritual life. We *are crucified with Christ*⁴, we *put on Christ*⁵, or *put on the new man*⁶ in Baptism, because we then become united and conformed to Christ, and are made new creatures in the eye and estimation of God. On the other hand the same, or at least similar phrases, such for instance as to *mortify our members that are upon the earth*⁷, to *crucify the flesh*⁸, to *be made conformable to Christ's death*⁹, to *put on Christ*¹⁰, to *put off the old*, and to *put on the new man*¹¹, are used to signify the practical change to which we are bound over in Baptism, and an habitual conformity to the example and practice of Christ.

When, for instance, the converts are *reminded* that they *are dead with Christ*, that they *have risen with Christ*, *are crucified with Christ*, or *have put on Christ*, as an appeal to their faith, or by way of motive to gratitude and obedience, they are referred to the mysterious change, and the grace and pri-

¹ Rom. vi. 1.² Col. ii. 20.³ Col. ii. 12.⁴ Rom. vi. 6.⁵ Gal. iii. 27.⁶ Col. iii. 10.⁷ Col. iii. 5.⁸ Gal. v. 24.⁹ Phil. iii. 10.¹⁰ Rom. xiii. 14.¹¹ Eph. iv. 21, 22.

vileges received in Baptism, or, in other words, are put in mind of their baptismal Regeneration. When they are *exhorted to mortify their members that are upon the earth, to put on Christ, or to put on the new man*, they are reminded of that practical change to which they were solemnly obliged in Baptism; or, in other words, of the necessity of acquitting themselves of their religious engagements in the renovation of their inward frame. But the mysterious change, considered in itself, is a change in the sight of God, and is the object of our faith only. The practical change is a real internal change of heart and habits, and is an object of experience and consciousness.

III. The next head of Scriptural authority to which I shall refer consists of texts of Scripture, which attribute this change to washing or Baptism, without the intervention of figurative language.

The first and most conclusive of these texts is that in which our Saviour has enjoined his disciples the use of Baptism, and given it the force of a Sacrament by virtue of his word and promise. *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*¹. The salvation, which our Lord here promises to baptized believers, is manifestly what *we* call Regeneration—a passage from a state of sin in Adam

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

to a state of grace in Christ—the first entrance into a redeemed and justified life, including the forgiveness of past sins, and a conditional grant of final and everlasting salvation.

Precisely similar to this is St. Peter's assertion. *Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*¹. The salvation here ascribed to Baptism is equivalent to Regeneration in Baptism. The text contains an allusion to the well-known comparison or analogy between this new birth and Christ's resurrection. And the answer or stipulation of a good conscience toward God, on which this salvation hinges, means in effect the same thing as the faith required by our Saviour. To the same purpose the Apostle thus addresses himself to his countrymen: *Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*². *Save yourselves from this untoward generation*³. "Use without delay the means of salvation which I have pointed out to you, faith in Christ, repentance, and Baptism." *Then, says the historian, they that gladly received the word were baptized. And afterwards: And the Lord added the saved to the Church daily*⁴. He added to the Church

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

² Acts ii. 38.

³ Acts ii. 40, 41

⁴ Acts ii. 47. τὸνς σωζομένους.

those persons who used the means of salvation enjoined them by the Apostle—received the word gladly, repented and were baptized, and so received remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Again, in the case of St. Paul, the washing away his sins, and, by necessary implication, his new birth to righteousness, are expressly connected with Baptism. *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*¹.

*We have all of us, says St. Paul, been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*². “Whether Jews or Gentiles, all we who have been baptized have been born again of the same Spirit, and incorporated into one spiritual body³.” And the same Apostle speaks

¹ Acts xxii. 16.

² 1 Cor. xii. 13.

³ The whole number of believers are represented in Scripture as being, in the order and design of God’s counsels, one body, and one Spirit—that is, one body, actuated and informed by one Spirit—*σύνψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονούντες*. Hence I am inclined to think that the two members or clauses of this passage are parallel, expressing in effect the same thing—and that in the latter clause we are to supply *ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι* from the former. *We have all of us, (whether Jews or Greeks, bond or free) been baptized by one Spirit into one body*—i. e. so as to become, or, in order that we may become, one body: *and we have all of us been watered or irrigated by one Spirit, or made to drink of one Spirit, into one Spirit*—i. e. so as to become, or, in order that we may become, one Spirit.

So in Eph. iv. 4. St. Paul, I think, speaks of believers, as forming one body and one Spirit. Either, *Ye are one body, and*

of Christ as purifying and sanctifying the Church (that is, the whole body of believers taken comprehensively, and personified as a religious society) in the water of Baptism, through faith in his word, and the powerful operation of his promise. *Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word*¹.

In the language of Theology the word Sanctification has been commonly confined to that progressive improvement which the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts and habits of Christians. But Sanctification, in a moral sense, signifies more properly a cleansing from pollution, and a separation from the world to God's service. Hence the ancients commonly gave the name of Sanctification to Baptism; and this usage of the word is justified by the Apostle's authority, who ascribes the sanctification of the Church to the washing of water. So in another passage

one Spirit, even as ye are called, &c. as there is one Lord, one faith, &c. or, there is one body, and one Spirit, in the order and design of God's counsels; in other words, you believers ought to form one body actuated by one Spirit, even as you have been called, &c. The meaning is, that since they have one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, so they themselves, though endowed with a variety of gifts, ought to form one spiritual community—*endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, unity of affections and sentiments, worship and discipline, in the bond of peace.* These two passages are parallel, and enforce the same duty.

¹ Ephes. v. 25, 26.

he connects the justification and sanctification of his Corinthian converts with the washing of Baptism. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Then, after enumerating the defilements to which the Gentiles were most prone, he adds, *And such were some of you—but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*¹. The name in which they had been baptized, the water, the Spirit, the outward sign, and the inward grace of Baptism, are here detailed and brought back to their recollection in the way of solemn warning and admonition.

When, therefore, St. Paul addresses the Roman brethren as *beloved of God, called, saints*², and the Corinthians as *sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, saints*³; when he speaks of his Ephesian converts as *Saints, whom God had chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before him*⁴; and when St. Peter addresses the strangers of Pontus as men *elect through sanctification of the Spirit to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ*⁵; they do not merely use a general phraseology, and express themselves in the language of hope and charity; but they allude to those privi-

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.

² Rom. i. 7.

³ 1 Cor. i. 2.

⁴ Ephes. i. 1. 4.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

leges which had been bestowed on the converts, and certified and assured to their faith in Baptism. For in Baptism every true convert to the faith of Christ was constituted a Saint, and publicly elected into God's household, was sprinkled as it were with the blood of Christ, and sanctified by a special gift of the Spirit, a solemn designation, and a mysterious conveyance of grace, to obedience and a blameless life. *Being born again*¹, not of the *corruptible seed* of human nature, but of the *incorruptible*² seed of the Holy Ghost *by the word of God*, (through the instrumentality of his word, and the efficacy of faith in his promise) *which liveth and endureth for ever*. For the word of God, his promises in Christ, on which the new life and spiri-

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23. 25.

² To be *born of incorruptible seed* signifies, I apprehend, the same thing as to be *born of God*, or *born of the Spirit*, and the Spirit is the seed spoken of. Ἐκ σποράς, ἐκ Θεοῦ, ἐκ πνεύματος—but we are thus born διὰ λόγον Θεοῦ, not as the principal or efficient, but as an instrumental cause. It has been argued indeed that the seed here mentioned is the word of God, because in the parable of the Sower, the seed is expressly said to be the word of God. But there is no similarity between the cases. In the parable, mankind, or the human soul, is compared to a field, into which the seed or word of God is cast, and either perishes or thrives, according to the soil on which it lights. In this passage, the *incorruptible seed* is spoken of, by a different figure, as a principle of life, communicating a sort of new existence to the human soul. But this principle is either God himself as the principal, or, more properly, the Spirit as the efficient cause of the new birth, or entrance into a new state of spiritual existence.

tual privileges of believers depend, *endureth forever*.

IV. The other passages of Scripture, which allude to the same change, and bear a collateral testimony to the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration, may be comprised under one head.

In the writings of the ancient Christians, Baptism is often called, agreeably to St. Paul's language, *a Seal*, and baptized Christians are said to have been sealed. Theologians have likewise in later times applied the same phrase to baptism, but in a sense different from the Apostle's usage. For they speak of it in a legal sense, as a seal annexed or appendant to a charter or covenant; and sometimes enter into discussions upon the virtue of seals annexed to legal instruments, and the nature of the grants confirmed by them. But though Baptism is undoubtedly a token of God's covenant, and *a seal of the righteousness which is by faith*¹ (that is, a certain sign and solemn confirmation of the forgiveness of sin, and of acceptance with God), the Apostle does not describe baptism under the figure of a seal annexed to legal instruments, but as a seal affixed to ourselves²: as a

¹ Rom. iv. 11.

² So in Ezekiel ix. 4, a mark (that is a seal or stamp) is set on the forehead of the faithful, and in the Revelations vii. 3, 4, &c., the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. This figure of speech is borrowed from the Eastern custom, where a seal is not an impression made on wax, but a stamp made with the seal worn on the finger, (on which the name of the owner is usually engraved) blackened with ink.

ceremony in which we are sealed or stamped with the Spirit, and have as it were a mark set on us inwardly in the soul, as God's peculiar property, in the same manner that the Jews, under the carnal and typical dispensation, were sealed and marked as God's peculiar property outwardly in the flesh. This baptismal consignation is likewise called *an unction*, and *an earnest of the Spirit*¹, and the Spirit then bestowed on us is called *the Spirit of adoption*, because when we are born again of water and of the Spirit, we are born of God, adopted into his family, and publicly declared his children. *He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us*², hath set his own seal or stamp upon us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts. *In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*³. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye have been sealed unto the day of*

¹ Quis autem illud dubitet, Baptismi esse proprium officium ut per illum sacris Christianorum initiemur, et in propriam ascribamur Christianorum societatem? Convenit præterea, quod qui confertur in Baptismo Spiritus Sanctus is ἀρραβὼν (quæ et *arrha* est scriptoribus Romanis) in N. T. appelletur. Erat enim in jure Romano arrha pactorum propria. Propria porrò est arrha temporis illius quo primo fœdus inimus. Inde sequitur ut de aliâ Spiritûs collatione præterquam baptismali nequeat intelligi. Dodwell, Diss. Cyprianicæ. D. 13. p. 113.

² 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

³ Ephes. i. 13, 14.

*redemption*¹. *Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*². *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you*³.

In these passages the Apostles appeal to the received doctrine of the Church, and the common faith of Christians: and though they may perhaps allude to those miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which were bestowed on many of the first believers, they speak principally of that mysterious change of spiritual condition and consignation of the Holy Ghost, which were universally believed to take place in Baptism. Such is the sense which the history and records of the ancient Church affix to these expressions, and I am inclined to think that a sober and dispassionate criticism, and a diligent inquiry into the analogies of Scriptural language and doctrine, will confirm this interpretation.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul speaks of Baptism, and illustrates the spiritual change of which it is the instrument, under another figure of the same import—the circumcision of Christ. *In whom ye have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ*⁴, by that sa-

¹ Ephes. iv. 30.

² Rom. viii. 15.

³ 1 John ii. 20. 27. *χρίσμα* that with which you have been anointed: i. e. the Holy Ghost; compare John xvi. 13.

⁴ Col. ii. 11, 12.

crament of Christ's appointment, which answers to legal circumcision, and supplies its place, in the way of proportion or analogy, under the Gospel dispensation.—*Having been buried with him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen again with him, through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead*¹.

In this pregnant passage, the efficacy of Baptism is described, and its nature explained and illustrated by the analogy between the Christian and Jewish ordinances. Circumcision was a federal initiation into Judaism, and made over to the circumcised person a *direct* interest in the blessings and privileges *explicitly* promised in the Mosaic covenant. Baptism is a federal initiation into Christianity, and makes over to the baptized person a similar interest in the blessings and privileges of the Gospel covenant. As every male Israelite was made a member of the congregation, and incorporated into God's chosen people, when he was circumcised; so in baptism every disciple of Christ, whether male or female, infant or adult, becomes a member of his mystical body, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. For Circumcision bore the same analogy to Baptism which the Mosaic dispensation bore to the Christian. It was *the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*²; and it conveyed no *direct* title to those

¹ Col. ii. 12.

² Heb. x. 1.

blessings, which were obscurely shadowed out, but not explicitly promised, in the covenant to which it was appropriated.

It has indeed been often maintained in later times, that Circumcision is the same sacrament with Baptism¹; that it preached the same doctrine, and offered and symbolized the same grace under different rites and names; that the circumcision of the heart was to outward circumcision, what Regeneration is

¹ Quando Sacramentorum utriusque Testamenti idem est auctor, eadem promissiones, eadem veritas, et idem in Christo complementum: meritò dicimus, externis signis inter se differre, in illis autem rebus, quas commemoravi, vel summatim in re ipsâ convenire. Sunt enim doctrinæ appendices. Atqui doctrinæ eadem substantia. Sequitur ergo id quoque in Sacramenta competere. Vulgare est apud Sophistas dogma: Sacramenta Legis Mosaicæ figurâsse gratiam, nostra vero exhibere. (We shall find in the following note, who these Sophists are.) Nos autem Deum asserimus semper in suis promissis fuisse veracem: nec quicquam figurâsse ab initio, quod non patribus re ipsâ exhibuerit: nam sub Moyse constabat circumcisionis veritas. Calvin. Ant. S. Sess. p. 296.

But the question is not, whether the doctrine of the Old and New Testament is, or is not, *substantially* the same? Whether God did really bestow the grace of Christ upon the Fathers? and whether they looked for something more than transitory promises? But whether any *direct* promise of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost was annexed to their Sacraments? and whether the Jews were generally taught to believe that such blessings attended upon them? Whether they were, in their plain and literal sense, instruments of spiritual blessings? or whether the spiritual promises were only typified by the temporal blessings and promises, which they made over *by covenant* to the Israelites?

to Baptism, and consequently that Regeneration and the circumcision of the heart are one and the same thing. But this opinion derives no support from Scripture, nor from the writings of the early Christians; and seems to have arisen from confounding the inward grace of sacraments with their moral import, or those duties and obligations which they imply and enforce. The Apostle indeed, alluding to the typical ceremony, calls our Regeneration in Baptism *a Circumcision not made with hands*, and the ancients often denominate it spiritual Circumcision, but there is no identity between these expressions, and the circumcision of the heart mentioned in the Old Testament. The grace, or blessing conveyed by circumcision, consisted in those national and religious privileges, which were the *advantage of the Jew, and the profit of Circumcision*¹; and these privileges were analogous to those spiritual blessings which are bestowed on Christians in Baptism, and are signified by the word Regeneration. But the circumcision of the heart, spoken of by Moses and the Prophet; the mortification of the corrupt appetites and froward dispositions, and obedience to the will of God; was the moral import of circumcision, or the moral lesson which was built upon it, and the duty to which it solemnly engaged the

¹ Rom. iii. 1.

Israelites. The same duties are implied and enforced in the Christian Sacrament of Baptism, in strict proportion to the nature and character of the dispensation; and are bound upon us by more prevailing motives and more indispensable obligations¹.

¹ It is the constant doctrine of the ancient Christians that Judaism was a typical religion: and that the Jewish sacraments, strictly speaking, did not, like the Christian, confer, but only signified and foretold the grace of the Gospel. So Tertullian—Circumcisio populo Israel data est in signum, non in salutem, in salutis figuram, non in salutis medelam.

Ambrose (rather the ancient writer whose Commentaries have been ascribed to Ambrose) in Rom. xv. Circumcisio carnis data est in figuram circumcisionis cordis, cujus minister est Christus.

Augustin Ep. 19. ad Hieron. says, Sacramenta veterum homines non justificâsse, sed gratiam, quâ justificamur, prænuntiâsse, do. In Mem. qu. 5. Si per se attendantur Sacramenta vetera, nullo modo possunt mederi: si autem res ipsæ, quarum hæc sunt Sacramenta, inquirantur, in eis inveniri poterit purgatio peccatorum.

Augustin, whose notions of Regeneration have been already stated, calls the circumcision of the heart, puram ab omni illicitâ concupiscentiâ voluntatem—de Sp. et litera Ambrose Ep. 73. Litera occidens exiguam corporis portionem; Spiritus intelligens circumcissionem totius animæ corporisque custodit, ut superfluis amputatis, id est peccatis avaritiæ libidinisque vitiis, frugalitas diligatur, et castimonia teneatur.

In the language of Augustin and the schoolmen, *res sacramenti* does not signify its inward grace, or immediate and mystical effect, but the moral and practical effect, which, according to the order of God's counsels and the design of the institution, it is intended to produce.

There are two circumstances which prove the difference between Circumcision and Baptism.

In fine, those passages of the Epistles, which distinguish between the first consignation of grace and the duties of baptized persons, or between the initiatory gift and earnest of the Holy Ghost, and his abiding influences and effects; may be considered as so many appeals to the faith of the disciples, and indirect testimonies to the truth of this important doctrine. Thus the Roman converts, whom St. Paul had addressed as men who were *dead with Christ*¹, who had been *justified by faith*, and had received the Spirit of adoption, are exhorted to *present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light*. Thus the Corinthians, who had been *washed*², *sanctified, and justified, sealed, and anointed*, and endowed with the *earnest of the Spirit*, are called upon to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in*

1. Circumcision is accompanied with no promise of forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, salvation, or eternal life. God indeed declares that the uncircumcised male shall be cut off from the congregation, which is evidently a threat of a temporal nature. It follows, therefore, that the privileges which it *directly* confers, are temporal likewise.

2. It was a ceremony, from which females were excluded. The privileges, therefore, which it *directly* bestowed were such as are peculiar to males, and consequently were not of a spiritual nature.

¹ Rom. vi. 8; v. 1; viii. 15; xii. 1, 2; xiii. 12.

² 1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; vii. 1.

the fear of the Lord. Thus the Apostle beseeches God to bestow *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*¹ on those Ephesians who had been already sealed with the *Holy Spirit of promise*, and calls upon the same men who had been saved by grace, and quickened and raised up together with Christ, to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, to put off the old, and to put on the new man. Thus to the Colossians, he says, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*².

In these passages there is an evident distinction between privileges conferred and obligations contracted; between the mystical and initiatory, and the practical and progressive change of the disciples; between the earnest of the Spirit and what are usually called his illuminating and sanctifying influences. The Apostle distinguishes between the grace which they had already received, and the duties to which they had engaged themselves, appeals to their faith, and reminds them of a change, which as appears from the tenour of his arguments and exhortations, they must have been persuaded that they had actually undergone. But this change was not that practical improvement, to which he was exciting and encouraging them: it was not a miraculous

¹ Eph. i. 17; iv. 30; ii. 5, 6, 8; iv. 22, 23, 24.

² Col. iii. 1.

transformation of heart and faculties, nor a miraculous infusion of habitual holiness: but it was a mysterious change of state and religious existence, to which every one of them could refer without doubt or self-delusion, denoted and certified by a visible symbol, exhibited in a Sacrament, received by faith, and confirmed by the promise of the Son of God.

This is that change which, in conformity with Scripture, has been called in the language of the primitive Christians, *Regeneration, a spiritual nativity, a new birth of water and of the Spirit, the washing of regeneration, a death to sin, and a new birth or resurrection to righteousness, a seal, an earnest of the Spirit, spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of Christ, a circumcision not made with hands.* It is a change which the Church has carefully distinguished from conversion, the renewal of the inward frame, and every other change, moral, spiritual, and miraculous; and has not ventured to separate from that Sacrament, with which it has been identified by Christ.

Such is the result of an inquiry into the principal passages of Scripture, on which this primitive and Catholic doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism is founded. From this detailed review of Scriptural authorities we may deduce a few observations.

1. We may observe that, according to the doctrine of Scripture, such a change as that which we

denominate Regeneration, does actually take place in Baptism. Christians are represented as receiving the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost in Baptism; as being *saved by Baptism, washed, sanctified, and justified*; as being *buried with Christ by Baptism into death; buried and risen again with Christ, in Baptism; crucified with Christ, putting on Christ in Baptism, sealed and anointed*, endowed with *the earnest of the Spirit, and the Spirit of adoption*; and *circumcised with the circumcision of Christ made without hands*. Now all these expressions terminate in a mysterious collation of grace, and a passage from a carnal state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ; or in our admission into this latter state, carrying with it the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and a covenanted and conditional title to everlasting happiness.

2. Several of the figures, by which this change is denoted, resemble the expression, Regeneration or the New Birth, and lead us to suppose that they were intended to designate the same change, and to convey the same ideas to our minds. But since these figures speak of a change to which Baptism is instrumental, we reasonably conclude that to be *born again of water and of the Spirit*, and to be *saved by the washing of Regeneration*, signify a change effected through the same medium. And this conclusion is confirmed by a comparison of these figurative passages with those texts of Scripture,

which connect salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost with Baptism, in plain and literal language. We are therefore fully justified in the use which we make of this word Regeneration, and other words of the same family, to signify in one comprehensive phrase the spiritual benefits conveyed over to us in the Sacrament of Baptism.

3. In some of the passages recited, Faith, (or that *Word*¹, which is the object of a Christian faith, and implies faith as its correlative,) and repentance, are spoken of in connection with Baptism, as qualifications for the saving use of it. But, where these qualifications are not mentioned, they are obviously implied and understood. Hence we conclude that faith and repentance are necessary qualifications for Baptism, wherever the subject is capable of them.

4. We must observe that, according to the whole tenour of Scriptural doctrine, Regeneration uniformly implies a strict obligation to newness of life, and improvement in Christian virtues. These are the duties of regenerate man; not the necessary, but the legitimate and intended effects of the New Birth, depending on the right use of the means of grace and spiritual assistance, and the right exercise of that principle of self-action, which God has implanted in

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23. James i. 18. That *faith* which is "required of persons to be baptized, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament," *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

us. For what St. Peter says of our Regeneration in Baptism, and first entrance into the Christian state, applies with equal force to every stage of the life of trial. *Baptism doth save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God*¹.

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

CHAPTER V.

A REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THIS DOCTRINE FROM PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

IT is a received maxim of Christian wisdom and belief, that there can be no real inconsistency between the several portions of Holy Writ; that they exhibit one scheme and one form of doctrine, and are parts of one great whole, issuing from the same Spirit, and ministering to the same purposes. It happens, however, that in some instances apparent contradictions occur in matters of high import to the soundness of Christian belief. We meet with passages which seem at first sight to militate against other texts, on which the universal Church has grounded established points of doctrine and discipline. We must not be surprised then, if texts of Scripture are alleged, which appear to some minds

to contradict and confute this doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism. I shall therefore review the most material of those texts, and endeavour to prove, on broad and general principles of interpretation, that they do not in any degree invalidate the doctrine for which I am contending.

Upon those passages which speak of the circumcision of the heart I have already stated my opinion¹. Though the circumcision of the heart may perhaps more properly signify cutting off its evil lusts, and removing the impediments to obedience, its meaning may be so extended as to denote, without any violence to the figure, a renewed and obedient frame of mind. In this sense it is equivalent to Regeneration, in the popular way of speaking; or, in other words², to repentance, renovation, or the change and improvement of the inward frame. This is the great business of the Christian life, the duty to which our Regeneration in Baptism obliges us, and which, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we shall be enabled to perform.

But even upon the principles of the greater number of those who dissent from this doctrine, it can scarcely be maintained that Regeneration and the Circumcision of the heart are parallel and equivalent

¹ Particularly Rom. ii. 28, 29.

² Μετάνοια—The change of mind, or inward principles of action.

expressions. For Moses exhorts the people to *circumcise the foreskins of their own hearts*¹; and therefore, when God promises that He will *circumcise their hearts*², the meaning evidently is, that He will give them grace to circumcise their own hearts, to reform themselves, to renew themselves in the spirit of their minds. But I presume that they, who are most averse to this doctrine, would scarcely exhort their neighbours to regenerate themselves, or allow that to be born again signifies to be endued with grace to reform or regenerate ourselves.

Other passages are alleged, in which men are spoken of as being sons or children of God without any reference to Baptism, and from thence it is concluded, that there is no necessary connection between Baptism and Regeneration. Sons of God, indeed, is a phrase employed in a considerable latitude, and used in a lower sense to denote those who resemble God in some quality or other. But in the stricter sense, of men taken into covenant with God, reconciled to him through Christ, and endowed with the Spirit of adoption, I certainly conceive that to *be*, or to *be made, children of God*, includes the notion of Baptism. For in this sense of the phrase the *children of God are saved*, and since our Lord has declared that *he that believeth and*

¹ Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4.

Deut. xxx. 6.

*is baptized shall be saved*¹, and since his Apostles have taught us that we *are saved by Baptism and by the washing of Regeneration*², I do not think the conclusion either forced or unreasonable, that Baptism is, generally speaking, necessary to our being *made children of God*; nor can I persuade myself that our Church teaches us, on weak and insufficient grounds, that we are *made children of God in Baptism*.

But in truth this species of negative proof, which has been so much insisted on, is utterly untenable. It is an undeniable rule of interpretation, that in passages which are plainly parallel, what is wanting in one text must be supplied from others that are fuller and more explicit. Thus, since we are taught that we must be *born of water and of the Spirit*, that *Baptism doth save us*, that we are *saved by the washing of Regeneration*, and that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*³, when we meet with passages in which Christians are said to be *sons of God*, to *become children of God*, to *have been born again*, or to *have been born of God*⁴, without mention of Baptism, it follows that Baptism is *implied*, and *virtually contained*, in these phrases. In fact, if we suppose that our Saviour's precept was strictly com-

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

² 1 Pet. iii. 21. Titus iii. 5.

³ John iii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Titus iii. 5. Mark xvi. 16.

⁴ 1 John iii. 2. John i. 12, 13. 1 Pet. i. 23. James i. 18.

plied with, and that the expressions connected with it were familiar to the Church, since such phrases as to be *born again*, or to be *born of God*, would naturally suggest the idea of Baptism to the disciples,—the express mention of the sacramental action would be unnecessary. When therefore believers are said to have had *power given them to become the children of God*, and to *have been born of God*; when God is said to have *begotten us with the word of his truth*, and to *have begotten us again to a lively hope*; and when we are said to have been *born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God*, according to this sure principle of interpretation, Baptism is *implied* in these passages, as a subordinate and collateral mean of grace; and the negative argument becomes of no value.

But the passages on which the greatest stress is laid are certain texts of St. John's Epistles, which are supposed to confute that connection which has been thought to subsist between Baptism and Regeneration. For since the Apostle teaches us that *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*¹; ² that

¹ 1 John iii. 9; v. 18; v. 4; v. 1; iv. 7.

² It frequently happens that the indefinite and past perfect tenses of the Greek verb (*γεγέννηται*, *γεννηθῆ*, *γεγεννημένος*) not only signify a past and particular action, but a permanent act consequent upon it; and imply the natural or moral effects of that action, and a continuance in the state of which it is the commencement. So the words *δικαιωθέντες, καταλλαγέντες, Χριστῷ*

whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; that every one that loveth is born of God; and that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; from hence it is argued, that they in whom these signs concur are regenerate, whether baptized or not; that they, on the contrary, in whom these signs are not to be found, though they may have been baptized with water, have not certainly been born again of the Spirit.

We may, however, suppose with good reason, that the Apostle did not intend to invalidate his Master's lesson, or to derogate from his institution. Whatever may be the true meaning of the word *Regeneration*, to *be saved* and to *be born again* are

συνεσταύρωμαι, imply a continuance in that state into which the parties had been admitted. Thus these expressions of St. John not only denote the new birth, but a continuance in that state of new life, of which the new birth is the commencement. This expression, therefore, "*he that hath been born of God,*" is equivalent to the expressions, *he that abideth in God*, and *a child of God*, even on grammatical principles. In order to express this sense in our own idiom, we must make use of a periphrasis—*He that hath been born of God, and continues to be a child of God.* We must of course decide from the nature of the argument, and a general view of the passages before us, when the past tense implies continuance, and signifies a permanent act. The grounds on which this sense is assigned to it in the present case, will be seen in the body of the work.

Rosenmuller calls this use of the past perfect tense an Hebraism: but I am inclined to think that it is a Grecism likewise. Indeed, it is an usage which, though it may be more common in a tongue which has no present tense, seems to arise out of the general nature and use of language.

parallel expressions in the texts quoted in the last chapter. But since Christ has taught us that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, it seems not very probable that St. John intended to say, that he who believes is regenerated or saved, whether baptized or not; or that those other qualifications can, according to the ordinary tenour of the Gospel Covenant, entitle man to salvation independently of Baptism.

But since these texts have been alleged with much confidence in confutation of the opinion which I am advocating, I shall not content myself with this general reply to the negative proof, but shall explain them more at large, in order to show that they are perfectly consistent with the doctrine which connects, and, in a qualified sense, identifies Regeneration with Baptism.

When we meet with texts of Scripture containing opinions apparently contradictory, they cannot both be assumed as grounds of reasoning, in their simple and literal construction, but they may usually be reconciled to each other upon general and approved principles of interpretation. For instance—If the contending passages are both of a controversial nature, an acquaintance with the opposite errors, which the inspired writers were combating, will probably bring them to an agreement. If the one is direct and dogmatical, the other controversial, it is evident that the dogmatical passage must furnish

the key to the controversial. This therefore is one simple method of reconciling such differences. We must enter into the drift and intention of the writers: we must consider, for instance, whether they are laying down and explaining any particular doctrine, or alluding to it as a well-known and received opinion; or are combating errors which had been grafted on it. And we must attend to the circumstances and positions of the parties, to whom they originally addressed themselves.

On this ground, if I mistake not, notwithstanding what St. John has written, we may safely adhere to the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, which was maintained by the ancient Christians. For those passages, which they assumed as grounds and first principles, are either intended to propound and explain the doctrine directly and dogmatically, or to remind the disciples of what they had already learned and believed, for purposes of practical improvement. On the other hand these texts of St. John are of a controversial nature, intended to combat a pernicious misconception of what our Saviour and his Apostles had taught.

Though we cannot exactly determine what persons and opinions the Apostle was combating, it appears certain, to use the words of an eminent Divine, "that he has written a large part of his first Epistle to confute some men of his own time, who boasted that they had been born of God, while

they took no care to maintain good works¹,”—Men who perverted the received and orthodox notions of Regeneration to the worst purposes, and laid claim to the privileges and blessings of the Gospel Covenant, while they were dispensing with its obligations, and despising its sanctions.

Little doubt can, I think, be entertained that this is a true statement of the general drift of the Apostle's letter, and that what he has said on this particular subject was intended to correct a dangerous misconception of a current and catholic opinion. But if Christ and his Apostles had taught that Regeneration is a radical and entire change of the mind and moral nature, and consequently, that in the eye of reason, and the nature of things, a sound faith and habitual holiness are the only evidences of a new birth, the misconception would have been almost impossible, and the heresy would have confuted and condemned itself. If, on the other hand, their doctrine was the same which we find in the writings of the early Christians, men of corrupt minds would easily be induced to separate the grace and privileges of Baptism from the qualifications which they pre-suppose, and the duties and obligations which they imply. They would endeavour to persuade themselves and their fellow Christians, that he who has been once

¹ Waterland on Regeneration.

mystically grafted into Christ, will *abide* in Christ for ever; that he who has once *known* God, will *know* him to the end intimately and vitally; and that he who has *been born of God* in a sacramental and mysterious manner, will never cease to be the child of God.

The Apostle therefore secures the sound part of his converts against the infection of this heresy, by carrying their thoughts from the blessings and privileges to the duties and obligations of Christianity, and insisting on their inseparable union. *To have fellowship with the Father and the Son, to abide in the light, to abide in the Father and the Son, to know Christ, to have, to see, to know the Father, and to be the sons of God*¹, are different phrases which express in significant language the great privilege of our religion; a mysterious union with the Deity, and a spiritual relationship to God and Christ. But since this union implies and requires a moral resemblance, it will necessarily go to decay and expire without the exercise of the corresponding duties. These are, a sincere faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God², and a resolute confession of the Father and the Son³; a stedfast attachment to the word

¹ 1 John i. 3. 7; ii. 10; ii. 24. 27, 28; iii. 6; iv. 13. 15, 16; ii. 23. 2 John 9. 3 John 11. 1 John ii. 4; iii. 24; iv. 7; iii. 1; v. 20.

² 1 John v. 1. 5.

³ 1 John iv. 2, 3. 15. 2 John 7.

of truth¹, love and fellowship with each other², walking as Christ walked³, an unfeigned obedience to the commandments of God and Christ⁴, and a life of righteousness and purity⁵.

As therefore the whole tenor of the Epistle shows that St. John is not teaching us how we are to acquire our Christian privileges, but how we are to preserve them, so it will satisfy an attentive reader that, in the passages which bear upon this question, he is not pointing out to us the tests of Regeneration, but the criterions by which we must learn whether we are indeed God's children in a practical point of view, *walking in the light and abiding in the Father and the Son*. With this clue to our enquiry we shall find that these passages are so far from contradicting the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration that they evidently imply and presuppose it.

1. It forms a strong presumption in favour of this view of the texts before us, that the points on which they insist are the substance of the baptismal engagements, which were required of Catechumens, and assented to in the name of Infants, in the earliest ages of the Church—a profession of

¹ 1 John ii. 5. 14. 22, 23. 27.

² 1 John ii. 9, 10; iii. 14. 16. 23; iv. 8. 11. 16. 20, 21; v. 1, 2.

³ 1 John ii. 6.

⁴ 1 John ii. 3, 4; iii. 22. 24; v. 3.

⁵ 1 John ii. 29; iii. 3. 7.

faith in Christ, a renunciation of the devil, and, by implication, of the world, and a promise of subjection to the will and commandments of God. But these engagements, solemnly undertaken in Baptism, extend to every portion of the Christian and probationary state. Whilst they are faithfully kept, the spiritual life, commenced mysteriously in the Sacrament, advances practically and experimentally. When they are neglected and broken, the salutary effects of the new birth cease, till they are recovered by repentance; and we are no longer numbered with the children of God.

2. It must be remarked that the same effects which the Apostle attributes in these passages to our having been *born of God*, are ascribed by him in other places of the same Epistle to our *abiding in the light, knowing God*¹, *abiding in God*², *dwelling in God, and God in us*³. If he teaches us that *whosoever hath been born of God does not commit sin*⁴, he likewise teaches us that *whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not*⁵. If he teaches us that *whosoever hath been born of God does not commit sin, because his seed* (i. e. his Spirit) *abideth in him*, he likewise teaches us that *he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him*⁶, and that *hereby we know that he abideth in us, by his Spirit*, (by the fruits and

¹ 1 John ii. 10.

² 1 John ii. 4; iii. 24; ii. 6, &c.

³ 1 John iii. 24; iv. 12, 15, 16.

⁴ 1 John iii. 9.

⁵ 1 John iii. 6.

⁶ 1 John iii. 24.

evidences of his Spirit,) *which he hath given us.* If he teaches us that *whosoever loveth hath been born of God*¹, he teaches us that *he that loveth abideth in the light*²; and that *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him*³. If he teaches us that *he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ hath been born of God*⁴, he likewise teaches us that *whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God*⁵.

Since then in this Epistle the phrase to “have been born of God” signifies the same thing as to “abide in the light,” to “know God,” to “abide in God,” to “dwell in God and God in us,” we must either so far identify the commencement and continuance of the Christian life, the spiritual birth and the spiritual life, as to affirm that the one is the inseparable and indefectible consequence of the other—a position contrary to the whole tenor of our religion, to the Apostle’s doctrine, and to the express drift and purpose of this Epistle—or we must allow that the phrase is here used in an enlarged sense, (expressing the continuance as well as the commencement of the spiritual life,) with a view to a particular controversy, and the correction of a dangerous error; that consequently the effects which he ascribes to the mystical new birth are not its neces-

¹ 1 John iv. 7.

² 1 John ii. 10.

³ 1 John iv. 16.

⁴ 1 John v. 1.

⁵ 1 John iv. 15.

sary and inseparable, but its legitimate and intended consequences; and that the tests to which he remits us are not, strictly speaking, the criterions of our Regeneration, but of our continuance and advancement in the spiritual and new life, of our abiding and dwelling in God, and of his abiding and dwelling in us.

3. But a brief explanation of the texts in question will render this assertion still more evident.

*Whosoever hath been born of God*¹, to any salutary and lasting purpose; he who has not only been born again of water and of the Spirit, but is still the child of God by a spiritual union and relationship—in other words, he who *dwelleth in God and God in him, doth not commit sin*, doth not give his mind to sin nor addict himself to the practice of it, *because his seed* (the same Spirit, whose mysterious earnest was bestowed on him in Baptism) *abideth in him*², leavening the whole lump, and transforming the whole inner man: and, when this is the case, *he cannot sin*³, morally speaking, *because he hath been born of God*. For as abstinence from sin is the duty of the new born creature, so a life of sin is contrary to the purposes and obligations of the new birth, and is a state directly opposite to the state of a real

¹ 1 John iii. 9.

² The Spirit is said to dwell in us, when he is working in or exerting a saving influence upon our souls.

³ He cannot be living in a habit of sin, or commit any such sin *as is unto death*.

Christian, and destructive of every Christian privilege.

*Whatsoever hath been born of God*¹, profitably and effectually, *overcometh the world*; is strenuously engaged in combating and overcoming the world; and *this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith*. For Regeneration in Baptism always supposes a renunciation of the world; and that victory over the world, which is wrought by faith, is the *legitimate* and *intended* consequence of having been born of God, and an obligation which the new birth imposes on every Christian.

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ*², and *whosoever loveth, hath been born of God*; he is leading that spiritual life which is the proper effect of the new birth in the order of God's counsels; or, in other words, he *abideth in the light*, and *abideth in the Father and the Son*. For, since faith in Jesus, as the Christ and the Son of God, is a main qualification for the salutary effects of Baptism, and a material branch of the sacramental profession and promise; and since the love of our brethren, comprehending one great division of God's commandments, is another part of our solemn vows and engagements; if our faith in Christ should become unsound or unfruitful, or if our love to our brethren should wax

¹ 1 John v. 4.

² 1 John v. 1; iv. 7.

cold, we cannot, with any show of reason, lay claim to the privileges, nor even to the name of God's children.

This, I conceive, is a just view of these passages of Scripture; and they are so far from contradicting the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, that they appear to me to imply and pre-suppose it, and to confirm its reception as an established article of faith in the days of the Apostle.

Upon the whole, then, we may conclude, 1. That the phrases, to be *born again*, to be *born of God*, and the corresponding expressions, are used in their appropriate sense, when applied to the Sacrament of Baptism, both as a sign, and as a mean or instrument of grace, symbolical of our mystical death and resurrection, and actually conveying over to us our spiritual nativity, the pardon of sin, and the mysterious earnest of the Holy Ghost.

2. That there is nothing in the Apostle's words which can allow us to separate Regeneration from Baptism, or to affirm of any *living* disciple of Christ that he has been *born again*, *born of God*, or *born of the Spirit*, previously to this Sacrament.

3. That in the passages which have been examined, the phrase, *to have been born of God*, is used in an enlarged sense to signify the continuance as well as the commencement of the spiritual life, in order to confute the pernicious tenets which had

been grafted on the doctrine of Regeneration, and to fix the attention of the disciples on the duties and obligations of their baptismal covenant.

For in those passages of Scripture, in which this or similar phrases are used in their appropriate and restricted sense, the doctrine is stated and explained, and the solemn rite to which Regeneration, as a covenant blessing, is tied down, is either insisted on, or plainly alluded to. In these texts nothing is said of the outward mean and instrumental cause of Regeneration, which were well known to the disciples, and were necessarily implied and understood; but our attention is drawn to the qualifications which it requires, and to the moral and practical effects which it was intended to produce; without which, as is allowed on all hands, it will lose its virtues, and become *a savour of death unto death*¹.

Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

*in him, and he cannot commit sin, because he is born of God. 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*¹.

¹ 1 John iii. 5, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

A VIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION TAUGHT
BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

WHEN our Reformers settled the discipline, laid down the doctrine, and compiled the Liturgy of our national Church, they wisely determined to make no unnecessary changes, nor to introduce any novelty in religion, but to place every thing, as much as possible, on the same footing on which it stood before the corruptions, which they were removing, had found their way into the Church of Christ. Hence they did not sit down to the study of the Scriptures with a view of extracting from them a new form of doctrine or discipline, but they brought every opinion to the test of Scripture, and allowed none to be valid and binding, but what were, as they were persuaded, fully borne out by the authority of the Sacred Volume. They likewise diligently enquired into the writings of

the ancient Christians, and having satisfied themselves upon the common principles of experience and investigation, that the doctrines *universally* received in the Churches in their days were agreeable to the truth, they were so far from refusing the assistance which they furnished them in the compilation of our Articles and Liturgy, that they avowedly acted on the principle of conforming as much as possible to their opinions and phraseology ¹.

The doctrine of Regeneration maintained by the early Christians has been already stated. That Regeneration is made over to us in Baptism, in the ordinary course of the Gospel dispensation, is an opinion which the universal Church and all orthodox writers had held without any doubt or variety of sentiment, till the era of the Reformation. We may therefore expect to find the same doctrine taught in our Articles and Liturgy: and we have reason to think that our Reformers would have rejected at once any novel opinions², “which the

¹ Accessimus autem, quantum maxime potuimus, ad Ecclesiam Apostolorum et veterum Catholicorum Episcoporum et Patrum, quam scimus adhuc fuisse integram—nec tantum doctrinam nostram, sed etiam *Sacramenta*, precumque publicarum formam ad illorum ritus et instituta direximus. Inde enim putavimus instaurationem petendam esse, unde prima religionis initia ducta essent. Juelli Apologia, p. 184, Ench. Theol. 8vo. 1812.

² Imprimis vero videbunt concionatores, ne quid unquam doceant pro concione, quod a populo religiose teneri et credi velint, nisi quod consentaneum sit doctrinæ Veteris aut Novi

Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops had not gathered from the doctrine of Scripture.” Accordingly, when we consult these documents, we find that they make use of their phraseology, and adopt their opinions, which are in fact plain and obvious deductions from Scripture, unwarped by fanciful interpretations and religious prejudices¹.

The first Article² which alludes to this doctrine, is that which treats of original or birth sin. In this Article we are taught that “this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerate:” and that “although there is no condemnation to them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence or lust hath in itself the nature of sin.” In this sentence the word *renatis* (or regenerate) in the Latin copy answers to the

Testamenti, quodque ex eâ ipsâ doctrinâ Catholici Patres, et Veteres Episcopi collegerint. Canons, 1570.

On this Canon it may be remarked—that the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops did uniformly collect from Scripture that doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, which our Articles and Liturgy appear to common understandings to inculcate: and that they never did collect from Scripture the doctrine which has been substituted for it, and which its advocates have attempted to reconcile to the plain statements of our Liturgy.

¹ Many of the prayers contained in our Service-book are the same, or nearly the same, as were in use previous to the Reformation. It appears that the compilers of our Liturgy were anxious to retain such portions of the ancient services, as were consistent with sound doctrine, and free from the corruptions of the Church of Rome.

² Article ix.

word baptized in the English, which plainly shows that our Reformers, in compliance with the ancient doctrine, identified Regeneration with Baptism. We arrive at the same conclusion from considering the state of the controversy. For this part of the Article is pointed at the doctrine of the Roman Church, established by the Council of Trent, that the whole infection of original sin is washed away and the soul rendered altogether pure in Baptism¹.

The fifteenth Article, speaking of Christ alone without sin, says, "All we that rest (although bap-

¹ Si quis per Christi gratiam, quæ in Baptismo confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti negat: aut etiam asserit non totum tolli id, quod veram ac propriam peccati rationem habet, sed illud tantum dicit radi, aut non imputari, Anathema sit.— Veterem hominem exuentes, et novum, qui secundum Deum creatus est, induentes, innocentes, immaculati, puri, innoxii, ac Deo dilecti, effecti sunt Dei hæredes, &c. Concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus peccatum vocat, Sancta Synodus declarat Ecclesiam Catholicam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari quod vere ac proprie peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est, et ad peccatum inclinat. Primum Decretum Quintæ Sessionis.

Paolo tells us that the Theologians of the Council agreed, that original sin is effaced by Baptism, which renders the soul as pure as it was in the state of innocence, though the penalties of that sin remain to serve as exercises to the faithful. l. 2. § 65.

The opinion of the ancients is conformable to the doctrine of our Church. *Lex ista peccati, quæ in membris est corporis mortis hujus, et remissa est regeneratione spiritali, et manet in corpore mortali. Remissa, quia reatus solutus est sacramento; manet autem, quia operatur desideria, contra quæ dimicant et fideles. Augustin contra Julianum.*

tized and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things :” evidently speaking of our Regeneration in Baptism.

In the next Article likewise, which treats of sin after Baptism, it is assumed, in conformity to the doctrine of the universal Church, that “we receive the Holy Ghost in Baptism.”

In the twenty-fifth Article Sacraments are defined to be “not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather certain sure witnesses and efficacious signs of grace, and God’s good will towards us.” This is precisely the doctrine which the ancient Christians held—that Sacraments are not only signs significant or symbolical, but signs accompanied with a conveyance of grace, and a saving efficacy upon the soul: and that they are sure witnesses, testimonies, pledges, and securities, of God’s present and actual, and lasting good will toward us.

In the twenty-seventh Article we are taught that Baptism is not only a sign of profession or “a mark of difference, but also a sign,” an efficacious sign, “of Regeneration or new birth,” a sign through means of which the inward grace of regeneration is actually bestowed on us, in virtue of Christ’s institution and promise; “whereby, as by an instrument,” after the manner of a legal instrument, which makes over to a man the freedom of a public body, or his

title to any property or privilege, "they that receive Baptism rightly," from the proper hands and with proper qualifications, "are grafted into the Church; 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," are openly ratified and made good to us, as it were by the signing and sealing of a deed or instrument. "Faith is confirmed and grace is increased," in those recipients who are capable of an increase of faith and grace, "by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable to the institution."

In this part of the Article there can be no reasonable doubt that the meaning of the Church is (a point never doubted among orthodox Christians previous to the time of the Reformation) that every individual Infant, receiving "Baptism rightly," partakes of those graces of which Infants are capable—the new birth, incorporation into Christ, forgiveness of sin, and adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost. For, independently of the argument for Infant Baptism drawn from the analogy between Christian Baptism and Jewish Circumcision, Baptism was instituted for the salvation of sinners; and since Infants are born in sin and stand in need of forgiveness, and are capable of grace and salvation, it is most agreeable to the institution that they should be baptized, in order

that they may partake of the Gospel promise, and be saved or regenerated, without respect of persons, in the way which Christ has appointed.

In the different offices for the Administration of Baptism, the same doctrine is taught with particularity and plainness, and a studied conformity to the language and opinions of the ancient Christians. Previous to the sacramental act, the person to be baptized is represented as not regenerate; but from the moment that the ceremony has been performed, he is pronounced regenerate, without a hint or suspicion of any reserve, or of any doubt existing in the minds of either the Minister or the Congregation. We are first told that "all men are conceived or born in sin," and that "none can enter into the kingdom of God unless they be regenerate, and born anew of water and of the Spirit;" and are therefore besought to call upon God that the Infant "may be baptized with water and with the Holy Ghost." Accordingly, the Congregation joins with the Minister in praying, "that he, coming to God's Holy Baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual Regeneration, and that God will give his Holy Spirit to him, that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation:" and God is intreated to "sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin." As soon as the Child has been baptized, and received into the Congregation, the Minister solemnly pronounces him "regenerate,

and grafted into the body of Christ," and the Congregation returns thanks to God, for having been "pleased to regenerate him with his Holy Spirit, to receive him for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into his Holy Church."

In the office for receiving Children privately baptized into the Church, instead of praying God to "give his Holy Spirit to the Infant that he *may be* born again," we beseech Him to "give the Infant his Holy Spirit, that he, *being* born again," that is, having been already born again, when he was baptized, "may continue his servant and attain his promises:" plainly expressing our firm persuasion that Baptism is the point in which the new birth takes place.

In short, these Offices, from one end to the other, unequivocally exhibit that same doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, which has been stated in a preceding chapter; and are compiled in strict conformity to the language and sentiments of the ancient Churches. Indeed, the views which they present to us of the connection between this Sacrament and the new birth, and of the opinion of our Reformers on this head of doctrine, are most clear and explicit, and appear scarcely to leave any opening for cavils and disputes upon the subject.

In the Catechism it is affirmed that we "are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven in Baptism:" that a Sa-

crament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us,” and that this sign or sacrament is “ordained by Christ himself as a means,” that is, an instrumental cause, or instrument of conveyance, “whereby we receive the same” inward grace, “and a pledge to assure us” of its collation; and that the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism is “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness;” the forgiveness of sin, implying the promise of power to resist and overcome it, and the gift of the Holy Ghost as the principle of the new life of righteousness. In proof of this, we are reminded that “being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, we are made children of grace,” children of God, and partakers of his grace, by Baptism. For if we are born in sin and children of wrath, we cannot become children of grace by Baptism, unless we receive the forgiveness of sin and a new principle of righteousness, in the right use of that Sacrament.

In the Office of Confirmation ¹, the Regeneration

¹ There are some passages in the writings of Cyprian, which would seem to imply that, though forgiveness of sin and spiritual regeneration are conferred in Baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost is, more properly speaking, bestowed by laying on of hands. But since in other passages of his works he positively states that we are born again of the Spirit, and renewed by the Spirit, in Baptism, he can only mean that the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is bestowed in Baptism, is increased and strengthened by imposition of hands. He uses indeed a phrase, which shews the

of the parties before the Bishop, and the forgiveness of their sins in Baptism, are directly and unequivocal.

great importance that he attached to this ceremony—*Sacramento utroque nascuntur*—intimating that, in his opinion, the new birth could not be deemed complete without Episcopal imposition of hands, or, as it is commonly called, Confirmation.

Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut qui in Ecclesiâ baptizantur, præpositis Ecclesiæ offerantur, ut per nostram orationem et manûs impositionem Spiritum Sanctum consequantur, et signaculo dominico consummentur.

Afterwards, expressing his disapprobation of the opinion that heretics might be received into the Church by imposition of hands only, without Ecclesiastical Baptism, he says:—Ideo baptizari eos oportet, qui de hæresi ad Ecclesiam veniunt, ut qui legitimo et vero et unico Sanctæ Ecclesiæ Baptismo ad regnum Dei regeneratione divinâ præparantur, *sacramento utroque nascantur*, quia scriptum est: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ et Spiritu, non potest intrare in regnum Dei. Ep. ad Jubaianum, 73.

The same argument occurs in his Epistle to Stephen, 72.

Dr. Hammond observes:—

Nobis extra omne dubium ponitur Spiritum Domini in Baptismo dari (nec enim aliter verum esset ex aquâ et Spiritu nasci), cujus tamen largioribus rivis homines in Confirmatione proliui ac perfundi æque non dubitamus. De Confirmatione, vol. i. p. 892.

The following passage he quotes from Eucherius de Gubernatione Dei, as expressing the common sentiments of the ancient Christians.

Spiritus Sanctus qui super aquas Baptismi salutifero descendit illapsu, in fonte plenitudinem tribuit ad innocentiam, in Confirmatione gratiam præstat ad augmentum. In Baptismo regeneramur ad vitam, post baptismum confirmamur ad pugnam. In Baptismo abluimur, post baptismum roboramur. Regeneratio per se salvat mox in pace beati sæculi recipiendos: Confirmatio armat ac iustruit ad agones mundi hujus et prælia reservandos. p. 895.

Besides

cally asserted: "Almighty God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech thee, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter." And precisely in the same manner, we intreat God in the Collect for Christmas Day, that "we being regenerate," that is, *having been* born again, and made his children by adoption and grace, "may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit." For, since our Liturgy everywhere teaches and assumes our adoption and Regeneration in Baptism, and never uses the word ex-

Besides the passages quoted in Chapter 8, from Cyprian, to shew that in his opinion the Holy Ghost is given in Baptism, the following are decisive of his sentiments:—

Per baptismum enim accipitur Spiritus Sanctus, et sic a baptizatis, et Spiritum Sanctum consecutis, ad bibendum calicem Domini pervenitur. Ep. 63. ad Cæcilium.

Peccata purgare, et hominem sanctificare aqua sola non potest, nisi habeat et Spiritum Sanctum. Quare aut et Spiritum necesse est concedant esse illic, ubi baptismum esse dicunt; aut nec baptismum est, ubi Spiritus non est, quia baptismum esse sine Spiritu non potest. Ep. 74. Pompeio.

In the same Epistle, speaking of receiving the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, he says: Porro autem *non* per manus impositionem quis *nascitur* quando accipit Spiritum Sanctum, sed in Baptismo, ut Spiritum jam natus accipiat, sicut in primo homine Adam factum est. Ante enim Deus eum plasmavit, et tunc insufflavit in faciem ejus Spiritum vitæ. Nec enim potest accipi Spiritus, nisi prius fuerit qui accipiat.

But though there is an apparent inconsistency in these passages, it was always the doctrine of the Church, grounded on plain texts of Scripture, that the Holy Ghost is received in Baptism.

cept in reference to Baptism, the supposition that in this prayer the congregation is contemplated as unregenerate, and that we are praying for some other regeneration and adoption, is totally inconsistent with sound and just principles of interpretation.

We find, then, that our Liturgy, in strict conformity to the doctrine of the universal Church, makes no mention of Regeneration except in conjunction with Baptism; and that its compilers were so far from attempting to separate what had been intimately connected in the faith and discipline of their forefathers in Christianity, that they have never introduced the word into these services even in a popular sense. The learned Archbishop of Cashel has investigated the genealogy of these Offices, and shewn that this doctrine pervades all those documents from which we can infer their true drift and import, on legitimate principles of analogy and induction. He has traced the doctrine which they exhibit to the writings of Cranmer, the two books of Homilies¹, the paraphrase of Erasmus, the

¹ In the Homilies this doctrine is evidently assumed, and often asserted and alluded to.

Insomuch that Infants, *being baptized* and dying in their infancy, are by this sacrifice washed from their sins, brought to God's favour, made his children, and inheritors of his kingdom of heaven. And they which in act or deed do sin after Baptism, are by this sacrifice washed from their sins. Homily on Salvation, p. 1, 17. London Edition, 1817. Here

works of Luther, and the public services of the Lutheran Church. As we ascend higher, the line of testimony continues unbroken, and the doctrine of Regeneration in and through Baptism, as a necessary Article of Christian faith, grounded on our Saviour's express declaration, may be traced backward without interruption from the time of the Reformation to the days of the Apostles.

Here it is assumed that Infants are, in virtue of Christ's sacrifice, washed from their sins in Baptism; and the distinction between the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, and subsequently to it, is laid down.

So again at the latter end of the First Part of the same Homily:—

And therefore we trust to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in Baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us *after baptism*, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly to him again, p. 23.

“The fountain of our regeneration (λουῦτρον παλιγγενεσίας) is there presented unto us.” Homily of repairing of Churches, p. 251.

Our Saviour Christ altered and changed the same (*i. e.* the Jewish washings) into a profitable Sacrament, the Sacrament of our Regeneration, or new birth. Homily on Fasting, p. 266.

We be therefore washed in our Baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life. Homily on the Passion, p. 385.

By holy promises, with calling the name of God to witness, we be made *lively members of Christ*, when we profess his religion, receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. Homily on Swearing, p. 62.

These passages of the Homilies present us with exactly the same view of the effects of Baptism which pervades the writings of the ancient Christians. Baptism is called the Fountain and Sacrament of our Regeneration, and we are said to be washed from the filthiness of sin, and made lively members of Christ in

It is true that we find many Divines of our Church departing more or less from the language or the doctrine of these formularies, and led by the fashion of the day, and their deference to the opinions of some foreign Theologians of eminence, to relinquish the sentiments and phraseology of Christian antiquity¹. But the greater number of those Divines, who have been most distinguished for their intimate acquaintance with the history of ecclesiastical opinion, a sound judgment, and a vigorous understanding, though they may have sometimes used the word Regeneration in an enlarged and popular sense, have adhered to the primitive doctrine, and enforced it with the whole weight of their learning, talents, and eloquence.

From a review then of our Articles and Liturgy we may derive the following conclusions.

1. They maintain the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism in the most decided manner, grounding it on the same texts of Scripture, from which the ancient Christians had deduced it; including under it forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and

Baptism. But at the same time the necessity of living in pureness of life, and of repenting truly of sins committed after Baptism, are distinctly insisted on.

¹ I would refer the reader to the 4th, 5th, and 6th Chapters of Archbishop Laurence's *Doctrine, &c.* Part 1st—especially to the 5th Chapter, in which Cranmer's opinion is stated at length.—Of the Divines to whom I allude, I need only mention, Jewel, Hooker, Andrews, Taylor, and Barrow.

the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven: and never introducing the word itself except in conjunction with Baptism.

2. They teach, in common with the writings of the ancient Christians, the necessity of faith and repentance as qualifications for the salutary effects of Baptism. But they never contemplate any person, however qualified, as regenerate, till he is actually baptized.

3. They suppose that infants, who are necessarily free from actual sin, are duly qualified for Baptism, and are looked on by God precisely in the same light as penitents and believers: and they unequivocally assert that every baptized infant without exception is born again.

4. They suppose that all baptized persons, whether infants or adults, contract a solemn engagement to holiness and newness of life: and that their continuance in a state of salvation depends on their future conduct.

5. They lay down a very plain and broad distinction between this grace of Regeneration, and conversion, repentance, renovation, and such Christian virtues and changes of the inward frame, as require the concurrence of man's will and endeavours, imply degrees, and are capable of increase.

CHAPTER VII.

A VIEW OF THE ATTEMPTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE
TO INVALIDATE THE LINE OF ARGUMENT PURSUED
IN THE LAST CHAPTER.

WE have seen in the preceding Chapter that the Church of England, treading in the steps of the primitive Christians, and of the universal Church, teaches with the greatest perspicuity the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, and confines the word to that single occurrence in her Articles and Liturgy. Some of her members, however, having adopted a notion, that Regeneration necessarily implies habitual holiness, that it is a turning point from evil to good, including an entire change of mind, a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, or an implantation of such a habit of grace as must, in the very nature of things, produce a corresponding effect upon the life and manners, and, consequently,

that it can have no immediate dependence on Baptism, have endeavoured to set aside the line of argument that has been pursued, and to reconcile their own opinions to the clear and unambiguous statements of those formularies. It may seem a difficult business to make the language, which was meant to express one theory, correspond with another of a very different kind. Yet with the aid of a few subtle distinctions, arbitrary suppositions, and seeming analogies, ingenious men will easily satisfy themselves that they have accomplished this task, and will probably persuade others, whose views and opinions coincide with their own, that they have succeeded in their undertaking.

If our theories are sound, the difficulties which seem to embarrass them must be solved on such general principles, as are strictly applicable to the cases in question. If we are obliged to resort to experiments and temporary expedients, to analogies which have no real points of agreement, or to principles which do not bear upon the matters in debate, we have good reason to doubt the soundness of our opinions, and to suspect that the difficulties may possibly originate in the faultiness of our own theories.

Several solutions have been proposed in order to get rid of this discordance between the language of our own Church, and the opinions of some Churchmen. But in the mean time it seems to

have been forgotten, that the true sense of these compositions must be ascertained by investigating their genealogy, and endeavouring to discover the opinions of their compilers, and the principles on which they were really constructed.

Some of our Calvinistic Divines¹, who maintained the doctrines of an effectual call², the implantation of a habit of grace, and the indefectibility of that

¹ *Etsi remissio peccati originalis in infantia morituro sit effectus prædestinationis, tamen non necesse est ut sit in omnibus infantibus baptizatis supravicturis effectus prædestinationis. Etsi enim parvulum non electum in eo statu ponat, ut sufficienter ordinet eum ad vitam æternam pro eo statu: tamen cum idem parvulus adoleverit, hæc sola remissio originalis reatûs non sufficit ut idem sufficienter ordinetur ad vitam pro statu adulti: nisi enim impleverit votum Baptismi, non justificatus erit pro modo adulti. Cum itaque multi baptizati infantes in adultâ ætate nunquam actu impleant votum Baptismi, ac proinde nunquam ad salutem pertingant: sequitur istius modi remissionem originalis peccati esse effectum communis providentiæ divinæ supernaturalis, et non effectum prædestinationis. Dr. Samuel Ward.*

This is quoted from a curious treatise, de Infantilis Baptismi vi et efficacîâ, inserted in the works of the learned Gataker. It contains a discussion between Dr. Ward, who was Margaret Professor, and Master of Sidney College, and one of King James's deputies to the Synod of Dort, and Gataker, upon the question, whether all infants are justified in Baptism? Large references are made in it to the writings of the most eminent Calvinistic Divines, from which I have borrowed several quotations.

To the quotations which I have borrowed from this tract, I have subjoined the letter G.

² By an effectual call is meant, in the language of these Divines, what Augustin styles a call according to God's purpose; that is, a call which necessarily implies perseverance to the end, and eternal salvation.

habit, had too much learning and candour to suppose that the services of the Church had departed from the ancient doctrine, or that they were written in a strain of equivocation and subterfuge. They therefore allowed that the Church, in common with Augustin and the ancient Christians, explicitly teaches the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism; and readily granted that every baptized infant receives forgiveness of sin, and is born again of water and the Spirit. But they endeavoured to salve their own system by maintaining that the effectual call and saving special grace are the effects of God's firm predestination, whereas Regeneration in Baptism is only the effect of his supernatural Providence. What grounds there are for this distinction, is a question which may be safely left to the judgment of my readers.

A Calvinistic Prelate¹ of some note has endeavoured to reconcile his own opinions to the language of the Church, by laying down a distinction between ecclesiastical and spiritual Regeneration. He contends that as there is an external and relative as well as an internal Sanctification, so there is an external as well as an internal Regeneration. But this analogy has no ground to rest upon. For Sanctification is a word of large compass, comprehending the outward separation of things and persons to

¹ Bishop Hopkins.

God's service, and the removal of bodily and legal uncleannesses, as well as the inward purification of the soul. But Regeneration uniformly signifies a spiritual change, and Regeneration in Baptism is expressly called by our own Church "*spiritual* Regeneration," "a new birth of water and *the Spirit*," "a mystical *washing away of sin*," "a washing and sanctifying with *the Holy Ghost*."

These expedients however are so manifestly mere experiments, that they appear to have met with little approbation or encouragement. But the favourite method of solving this difficulty consists in an endeavour to show, that when our Church pronounces the baptized person regenerate, this declaration proceeds upon the ground of charitable supposition¹, or generalized language; and we are

¹ This judgment of charity is alleged by Bishop Carleton, in his Examination of Montague's Appeal, 195.

"Israel was called to be a people of God, but all that were so called, were not so in truth: so all that receive baptism are called the Children of God, regenerate, justified: for to us they must be taken for such in charity, until they show themselves other."

But Bishop Carleton argues professedly on the Calvinistic grounds, that none but the Elect (*i. e.* those who are infallibly predestinated to eternal life) are ever truly justified and regenerate, and that the regenerate can never fall from grace totally and finally.

He afterwards admits that the objections to the Calvinistic doctrine drawn from our Service Book, may be solved by the distinction between those who are regenerate *sacramento tenus only*, and those who are so according to God's purpose and calling. P. 107.

This

taught that these principles pervade every part of our Liturgy. Here then is an attempt to get rid of this difficulty professedly upon general principles: but I apprehend that these principles, with whatever confidence they are relied upon, will fail in the application.

It is universally allowed, indeed it is plainly taught in our office for the Baptism of those of riper years, that the baptized adult is declared regenerate upon the supposition of his sincerity. But in the case of infants no such supposition can possibly be made: and consequently this principle of charitable supposition¹ fails, upon the common grounds of analogical reasoning. But it is urged, that because sincerity is supposed in the case of adults, something like sincerity is supposed in the case of infants: or, what is more tangible ground, and appears to be the upshot of the argument, that the infant is pronounced regenerate, on the presumption that his vows and promises will be performed. Here again, if I mistake not, this principle of charitable supposition totally fails. We pronounce an adult regenerate not upon a presumption that his promises will be performed, but upon the supposition that his professions are sincere. His performing his pro-

This is equivalent to the distinction maintained by Dr. Ward.

¹ In fact the judgment which we pass upon adults can scarcely be called a charitable supposition. For after they have been instructed and examined, and their motives and principles scrutinized, *we* have no right to form any other judgment.

mises and continuing God's servant are the objects of our hope, our prayers, and our exhortations: but we are too well acquainted with the weakness of our nature, and the condition of a life of trial, to act upon the presumption of such contingencies. Precisely in the same manner we pronounce the infant regenerate, not upon the supposition of an imaginary sincerity, but because we know that he cannot be insincere, and are convinced that there can be no other bar to his Regeneration: whilst, with respect to the performance of his vows and promises, we hope, we pray, we remind the sponsors of their duty, but we form no presumptions of his future conduct. The adult is bound to keep his engagements from the moment that he enters into them; the infant, when he is of an age to understand and perform them. But neither party is declared regenerate upon a presumption that he will acquit himself of his obligations.

The same plea however is brought forward in a somewhat different shape. It is contended that our Offices, when they pronounce baptized persons regenerate, merely make use of a generalized language. This, we are told, is the principle on which all public documents proceed, and on which our Common Prayers are necessarily compiled. For instance, the Confessions of the Church are couched in general terms, without leading us to suppose, that every person who joins in them really feels the

weight of his sins. The same generalized language pervades, we are taught, the whole body of the Epistles, in which all the Converts are addressed as *Saints, Elect, beloved of God, and sanctified in Jesus Christ*, though there can be no doubt that many of their number could have no just claim to these appellations. Upon the same principle, since it is not denied that some persons are regenerated in Baptism, and we cannot distinguish those who receive this blessing from those who are excluded from it, in the language of charity we declare every baptized individual regenerate.

Undoubtedly public documents addressed to, or framed for the use of, large bodies of men must employ a generalized language; and Common Prayers can be composed only on the supposition that they who join in them enter on the duty with sincerity and devotional feelings. Nor will it, I apprehend, be contended that all those who join in the prayers and confessions of our Church are truly devout and contrite: or that all the members of the Apostolical Churches were such persons as their Christian profession implied and required. But I do not perceive what analogy there is between public documents and proclamations, the Common Prayers of a Church, or the Epistles of the Apostles to considerable bodies of converts, and an authoritative declaration pronounced by the minister upon particular individuals. We know that in the case

of adults this declaration proceeds upon a persuasion of their sincerity; but since infants are not capable of insincerity, if we once allow the validity of their Baptism, it follows that the judgment which we pronounce upon them, is absolute and unrestricted. For it can scarcely be doubted on any grounds of either reason or Scripture, that if one infant is qualified to receive Regeneration in Baptism, all infants are equally qualified.

It is contended however that since all men *are born in sin*, and *children of wrath*, and since infants are children of wrath up to the moment of their Baptism, we cannot pronounce them worthy recipients without a palpable contradiction. This objection appears to be built on a verbal fallacy. For by worthiness we do not mean any kind of desert, or positive congruity to receive grace, but such qualifications for Baptism and Regeneration as God is mercifully pleased to accept. But the same objection presses with equal force on the case of adult Baptism. For the Scriptures, our own Church, and those members of it who allow that worthy adults are born again in Baptism, consider them likewise as children of wrath up to the moment of the Sacrament; and believe that faith and repentance are habits of mind, which God requires in the children of wrath, previously to their being made children of grace in Baptism. Infants, therefore, in this respect stand precisely on the same footing

with worthy adults; and there is no more reason for supposing that God discriminates between different infants, than that He discriminates between adults, who are equally endowed with faith and repentance. Our Saviour at least seems to have allowed the worthiness of young children to partake of God's grace, when He blessed them, and affirmed that *of such is the kingdom of heaven*¹. And our Church openly acknowledges it, when she exhorts us not to doubt of their being "favourably received²," in other words, "regenerated by God," on the very ground that our Saviour had "blessed them and exhorted all men to follow their innocency." Those pious writers appear to have reasoned more justly, who have argued that, if God regenerates the greatest sinners when they repent of their sins, much more will He regenerate those infants who have no actual sins to repent of, and are only involved in the consequences of another's transgression³.

¹ Mark x. 13.

² Office for Public Baptism—Exhortation upon the Gospel.

³ *Cæterum si homines impedire aliquid ad gratiæ consecutionem posset, magis adultos et provecos et majores natu possent impedire graviora peccata. Porro autem si etiam gravissimis delictoribus, et in Deum multum ante peccantibus, cum postea crediderint, remissa peccatorum datur, et a Baptismo atque a gratiâ nemo prohibetur: quantò magis prohiberi non debet infans, qui recens natus nihil peccavit, nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus, contagium mortis antiquæ primâ natiuitate contraxit? qui ad remissam peccatorum accipiendum, hoc ipso facilius accedit, quod illi remittuntur non propria sed aliena peccata?* Cyprian, Ep. 65 ad Fidum, p. 161.

Attempts have been made to defend this mode of explaining the language of our baptismal offices from other passages of the Liturgy, in which the same principle is said to be acted upon. We have seen already that examples taken from the Common Prayers of the congregation are altogether inapplicable to the case before us. Indeed the only passages alleged, which bear any appearance of analogy to the language of these offices, are taken from the Catechism and the Burial Service.

In the Catechism the Child is taught to say, that he learns from the articles of his Creed to "believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth him, and all the elect people of God." "If then," it is urged, "it is absurd to imagine that our Church deems every child who repeats his Catechism really one of God's elect people, and truly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, it is no less absurd to contend that it supposes every baptized infant to be actually regenerated. Consequently both these passages must be explained on the principle of general language." The truth is, that our Church considers every child who repeats this sentence as one of God's elect people, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, upon the assured persuasion that he was regenerated, or made a child of God, and declared one of his elect people, in Baptism: and it reasonably supposes that a Christian of that age, who is enjoying the benefits of religious instruction, has done nothing hitherto

to deprive him of that state of salvation to which he was then called, and that sanctification of the Spirit, of which he was then made partaker.

The passages quoted from the Burial Service seem to be strangely misapprehended. We yield thanks to God "that it hath pleased Him to take to Himself the soul of our departed brother, and to deliver him from the miseries of this sinful world:" and "we commit his body to the earth, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." We may, therefore, it is said, contend with as good reason, that in the opinion of our Church every brother committed to the earth has passed into a state of happiness, and will partake of the resurrection of life, as that it supposes every baptized infant to be actually regenerate. And these are produced as examples of generalized language, completely parallel to the passages that have been quoted from our baptismal offices.

But the fact is, that the Church passes no judgment whatever upon the state of our departed brother. We declare our own full persuasion of the truth of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection to eternal life, and we thank God in the language of pious and grateful submission that He has taken to Himself the soul of our brother, and delivered him out of the miseries of this sinful world: but the only allusion which we make to his present condition is a charitable hope that he rests in

Christ¹. But it will scarcely be contended that there is any analogy between a mere charitable hope, and an unequivocal and authoritative declaration, or a thanksgiving for mercies actually received.

If, indeed, the compilers of our Liturgy had thought that only some infants are born again in Baptism, they were men of too much honesty and simplicity of character to employ what cannot be called ambiguous, but delusive and dangerous language. They were not tied down to technical forms, or what has been called *baptismal phraseology*, but were at full liberty to frame these offices upon their own principles, and to couch them in such language as was best calculated to express their real sentiments. This they have done with perfect simplicity and good faith, and have set forth their own belief, and the belief of their forefathers in Christianity, without verbal ambiguity or mental reserve.

It is contended likewise that the Prayers of our Church for the circumcision of the spirit, and for the creation of a new heart, are in point of fact

¹ "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that when we depart hence we may rest in him, as our *hope* is this our brother doth." Burial Service.

If there is any ambiguity in the other expressions quoted from this Service, it appears to be sufficiently cleared up and removed by this passage.

Prayers for Regeneration; and, consequently, that it is as reasonable to maintain that the Church considers all Christians unregenerate, as that she considers all baptized persons regenerate. But it has been sufficiently shown that in Scripture and in the doctrinal language of the Church, Regeneration and the circumcision of the heart are spoken of as graces entirely distinct in theory. The word, Regeneration, in the popular sense which it has acquired, is indeed equivalent to those phrases; but the word is never used in our Liturgy otherwise than in its strict theological acceptance.

Much stress has been laid upon a passage of the Homilies, in which the words regenerate¹ and re-

¹ Homily for Whitsunday, 430.—See Archbishop Laurence's Doctrine, &c. part i. c. vi. p. 75, &c.

The Archbishop of Cashel observes, that in this passage “the word *regeneration* is used loosely and largely as blended with its usual effects, the object of the writer being to treat of *regeneration and sanctification united*—comprehending not only the commencement, but also the completion of sanctification, and even the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the Prophets and Apostles.”

The Homilies of the Church, with the exception of the Homily of Salvation, which is composed in a more scholastic form, and was intended to give a correct statement of a controverted doctrine, are popular discourses, written for the edification of the people in a rhetorical way, and therefore must be read with those allowances which are due to popular compositions.

Bishop Montague, in his Appeal to Cæsar, has some just and sensible remarks on these writings of our Church.

“First, I willingly admit the Homilies as containing certain godly and wholesome exhortations to move the people to honour

generation are introduced without any immediate reference to Baptism. But in this passage, ex-

and worship Almighty God: but not as the *public dogmatical resolutions* of the Church of England. The 35th Article giveth them to contain godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times: which they may do though they have not dogmatical positions, or doctrine to be propugned and subscribed in all and every point: as the Books of Articles and Common Prayer have. They seem, secondly, to speak somewhat too hardly, and to stretch some sayings beyond the use and practice of the Church of England: and yet what they say may receive a fair construction and mitigation. In very Scripture there are many hyperbolical sayings, that, being literally taken, will not hold weight in the balance of the Sanctuary. In the writings of the Fathers there are dogmatical conclusions for resolution in points, and rhetorical enforcements to edify affections, disposed for and according to the auditory. Now our Homilies are popular sermons, fitted to the capacities of the common people, to edify them, to work upon them, ever strong in passion, but weak in understanding. We may do well to consider them, why, wherefore, when and to what manner of men these popular sermons were made and did speak; and *not press every passage hand over head, for advantage*. I rest in that judgment which our Church has passed upon them, where it is said, in terminis—*They contain a godly and a wholesome doctrine, necessary for these times, the times in which and for which they were especially made.*” Appeal, p. 260.

It has been contended that our Church does not maintain that all infants are regenerated in Baptism, because in the same Homily all its members are directed to examine themselves whether they are regenerate or not. But this is not the fact. For though the word regenerate is used loosely in this Homily, the distinction between the new birth and the abiding influence of the Spirit is nevertheless laid down, and men are not taught to inquire whether they have been born again, but whether the Holy Ghost is dwelling in them.

“Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men,

tracted from a popular discourse, the word is used in a popular and rhetorical manner, including the miraculous and extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost upon the human soul. Nothing however will be gained in the way of legitimate inference, by arguing from the popular to the strict signification of words, and attempting to neutralize their plain and unambiguous meaning through the medium of their figurative usages.

Having now shown that the attempts which have been made to accommodate the Services of our Church to a theory which dissolves the connection between Regeneration and Baptism will not bear the test of examination, but are merely expedients to get rid of a difficulty which presses upon the advocates of another system, I will, before I close this Chapter, add a few considerations, which may be useful to my younger brethren in the Ministry, and to those who are Candidates for the Sacred Office.

The Services of our Church, connected with this question, are formed on the principles and ex-

and as it were to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men that they were before.

“Neither doth he think it sufficient inwardly to work the spiritual and new birth of man, *unless he do also dwell and abide in him.*” Then after proving this point from Scripture, it adds, “O but how shall I know that *the Holy Ghost is in me?* some man perchance will say: Forsooth as the tree is known by its fruits, so is the Holy Ghost.”

pressed in the language of the ancient Christians, and assert in the most unequivocal manner their doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism. That every baptized person, with the exception of unworthy adults, is born again of water and of the Spirit in this Sacrament, is an opinion which they affirm in a way level to every capacity. If therefore the Ministers of our Church should propagate from the pulpit opinions widely different from those which they teach, when they are ministering the Sacrament of Baptism, let them consider what confusion they will produce in the minds of their hearers; what distrust in themselves, or in the Church whose Ministers they are. But, what is perhaps still worse, the desire to reconcile these services to doctrines entirely at variance with them, will tend to impair the sincerity and simplicity of their own minds, by giving them a taste for that unnatural and artificial mode of interpretation, to which an attachment to preconceived opinions too frequently gives entertainment. We are told that these services make use of a general phraseology, or of hypothetical language, and expressions of hope and charity. But plain sense, sober criticism, and historical research, refute these artificial attempts to affix to them a meaning, very different from that which they bear at first sight, and foreign from the views and principles on which they were originally constructed. Our Liturgy speaks a plain, simple,

and ingenuous language, "adapted to popular comprehension and instruction¹:" and the attempts, to which system has had recourse, to wrest it from its genuine and native meaning, may act as beacons and warnings to the inexperienced, and teach them that it is a dangerous experiment to tamper with its literal construction. "There is nothing," says Hooker, "more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing."

Archbishop Laurence.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THEORY OF REGENERATION IN BAPTISM
CONSIDERED.

IN inquiring into the doctrinal views of our Church on the subject of Re generation in Baptism, we have seen to what conclusions we are led by the direct and unsophisticated explanation of its Public Offices, and what kind of machinery has been employed in order to invalidate these conclusions. On the one side, the construction of the Offices, and the sense which results from them, are obvious to the plainest understanding. On the other, they are subjected to the ordeal of a forced and unnatural interpretation, principles are resorted to which are inapplicable to the cases before us, and analogies are insisted on, which have scarcely the shadow of any proportion or point of agreement. We have seen likewise that the doctrine which our services contain, according to the most obvious and accustomed principles of inter-

pretation, is precisely what we might have expected from the views and professions of their compilers. For it is in complete accordance with the opinions of Catholic Christianity, from the days of the Apostles to the time of the Reformation. It came before them, not as a doubtful and disputed point, but as a fundamental and established truth; not asserted and defended by a few Doctors and Apologists as their own private opinion, but recorded or alluded to, as a doctrine received without contradiction in the Church of Christ, by the whole body of Fathers, Councils, and Ecclesiastical Historians. And we have seen on what strong and pregnant testimonies of Scripture this doctrine depends, and how little support its opponents derive from those texts which they have brought forward to controvert it.

Here then the question might well rest. For when the debate relative to the sense of our Offices has been brought to such an issue as appears to amount to a moral demonstration, and the Scriptural view of the doctrine has been investigated and ascertained, it may seem superfluous to inquire farther into the theory of this doctrine, or any other views and theories of Regeneration. Since however this opinion has been often charged with unreasonableness, and loaded with a strange variety of absurd and formidable consequences, I shall enter a little

more particularly into its theory; explaining distinctly the nature of the change implied by the word Regeneration, and endeavouring to point out some probable grounds and reasons of our Saviour's institution, and of the close connection which he has established by his word and promise between Baptism and spiritual Regeneration.

*That every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*¹, is a truth not less agreeable to reason, than plainly inculcated in Scripture. But the spiritual gifts and blessings, which we refer back to God as their author and giver, are of two kinds, distinct in theory, and separated by a broad line of demarcation. Some are pure acts of God's special grace and bounty, which, though they usually require certain qualifications on man's part to prepare him for the reception of them, exclude at once every notion of human co-operation. To these acts of grace we can assign no parts nor latitude, for they appear, at least to our judgment, to take place at some determinate point of time, and to be incapable of increase. Such appears to be the nature not only of the forgiveness of our sins, but of that justification in the sight of God which accompanies it. Faith, repentance, the renunciation of our sins, resolutions of obedience,

¹ James i. 17.

and the forgiveness of other men's trespasses, are qualifications which we must possess to prepare and fit us for these blessings. The necessity of faith is moreover pressed upon us, not only as a qualification for pardon and acceptance, but as that act of mind which closes with God's offers and terms of grace, pleads in our behalf his merciful promises, and the atonement and merits of our blessed Saviour, and renounces all other grounds of confidence and dependence. But forgiveness itself and justification in God's sight are pure acts of grace, to which the sinner can contribute nothing: for, as the Jews justly argued, *none can forgive sins but God only*¹, and none but God can place a reprieved sinner on the same footing with a righteous man. Arguing likewise from the analogy of human proceedings, we have reason to think that pardon, and the imputation of righteousness which is annexed to it, are grants of mercy bestowed upon the sinner at some particular point of time, and that though the justified person must *grow in grace*, must advance more and more in God's favour and those spiritual accomplishments which correspond to it, forgiveness itself is a simple act, without parts or latitude, and in course incapable of increase.

But there are other gifts or blessings of a spiritual kind, emanating from God, and referred upward to

¹ Mark ii. 7. Luke v. 21.

Him as their principal cause, which imply in their very nature increase and progressive advances, proceeding onward from potential principles and dispositions, to active principles and habits, and requiring in all their stages the co-operation of man with the grace and inspiration of God. They are, therefore, spoken of in Scripture sometimes as the gifts of God, sometimes as the duties of man; and this way of treating them plainly signifies that, as our endeavours to attain and perfect these Christian virtues will be ineffectual without the grace of God, so, in the ordinary course of his dispensations, he will not continue his gifts to us, unless we endeavour to make a right use of them by exercising them in their proper spheres and functions. Hence, in the language of promise and encouragement, and of devotion and gratitude, these Christian habits or virtues are spoken of as exclusively the gifts of God: in the language of exhortation and religious instruction, and in the systematic exposition of Christian doctrine, they are spoken of as duties which God, if man is not wanting to himself, will enable him to fulfil. Of this sort are faith, hope, and charity, mortification and self-denial, the circumcision of the heart, and the renewal of the spirit of the mind—in short, all those virtues or graces, which have their seat in the intellectual and moral nature of man, admit of degrees, and are capable of improvement. For these are (to use

the language of Waterland) “the joint work of the Spirit and the man :” and therefore in Scripture they are sometimes promised us as gifts, or spoken of as the issues of God’s bounty ; at other times they are expressly required of us as duties, which we owe to God and our own souls.

Such being the broad line of distinction between those blessings, which are pure and unmixed acts of God’s special grace, and those Christian habits or virtues in whose formation and increase man must bear his part, it is scarcely necessary to say that, according to the principles of our own Church and of the ancient Christians, Regeneration is a pure act of God’s special grace, immanent in Himself and terminating in man, limited and determined to a particular time, and incapable of latitude and increase. For according to these principles Regeneration consists in the forgiveness of sin, ¹ the gift,

¹ *Plane eadem gratia spiritualis, quæ æqualiter in Baptismo a credentibus sumitur, in conversatione atque actu nostro post modum vel minuitur vel augetur. Cyprian Epist. ad Magnum, 69. P. 187.*

Again, in the same Epistle, in which he is defending the baptism of those who were called *Clinici*, that is, who were baptized in their beds, when their lives were in danger, he says—*An consecuti sunt quidem gratiam dominicam, sed brevior et minore mensurâ muneris divini ac Spiritûs Sancti? Quin imò Spiritus Sanctus non de mensurâ datur, sed super credentem totus effunditur. Nam si dies omnibus æqualiter nascitur, et si Sol super omnes pari et æquali luce diffunditur, quantò magis Christus, Sol et dies verus, in Ecclesiâ suâ lumen vitæ æternæ pari æqualitate largitur.*

or earnest, or covenanted consignation of the influence of the Holy Ghost, considered independently of its moral operations, and legitimate effects; and a title to eternal life depending on the performance of certain stipulated conditions. Now, though no adult can partake of these blessings without being previously qualified by faith and repentance, it is certain that they are mere acts of free grace and mercy, which must, as far as we can judge, be made over to the soul at some determinate moment, and admit of no *immediate* exercise of the moral nature of man, and that principle of self-action which God has implanted in us. But our own Church, in conformity to the doctrine of Scripture, and the opinion of Christian antiquity¹, determines this grant of

¹ Neque enim parva res hæreticis et modica conceditur, quando a nobis baptisma eorum in acceptum refertur: cum inde incipiat omnis fidei origo, et purificandis et sanctificandis Dei servis divina dignatio. Nam si baptizari quis apud hæreticos potuit, utique et remissam peccatorum consequi potuit. Si peccatorum remissam consecutus est, et sanctificatus est et templum Dei factus. Cyp. Ep. 73. ad Jubaianum.

Et quoniam Stephanus et qui illi consentiunt contendunt dimissionem peccatorum, et secundam nativitatem in hæreticorum baptismo procedere posse, apud quos ipsi confitentur Spiritum Sanctum non esse, considerent et intelligant spiritalem nativitatem sine Spiritu Sancto esse non posse. Firmilianus Cypriano. Ep. 75.

Stephanus concedit illis non modicam sed maximam gratiæ potestatem, ut dicat eos per baptismi sacramentum sordes veteris hominis abluere, antiquæ mortis peccata donare, regeneratione cœlesti filios Dei facere, ad æternam vitam divini lavacri sanctificatione reparare. Id.

grace to the season of our Baptism, under a full conviction that when this Sacrament is administered agreeably to Christ's institution, man receives the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Ghost through its intervention and instrumentality. Theologians, indeed, both ancient and modern, sometimes describe this change in strong language, and make use of expressions which must be taken in a qualified sense. But when divested of rhetorical amplification, they will be found to convey the same notions and to exhibit the same view of the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration, as are the result of sober inquiry and dispassionate discussion.

This view of the nature of regeneration cannot be better expressed than in the words of Hooker.

Si baptismum hæreticorum habere potest lavacrum secundæ nativitatis, non hæretici sed filii Dei computandi sunt, qui apud eos baptizantur. Secunda enim nativitas, quæ est in baptismo, filios Deo generat. Id.

The argument of Cyprian and his adherents against the validity of heretical baptism, proceeds upon the assumption that Christians are born again, and receive forgiveness of sin and the Holy Ghost in Baptism. Augustin's opinion on this question has been already alluded to.

Augustin referring to 1 Cor. iii. 1. 16, says,

Vide quæ dicat mala de ignorantie malo venientia. Et puto quod non de Catechumenis ista dicebat. *Parvuli quippe in Christo quo modo essent, nisi jam renati essent?* Quod si nondum credas, quid eis post pauca dicat attende. *Nescitis quia templum Dei estis, et Spiritus Sanctus habitat in vobis?* An adhuc dubitabis vel negabis, non eos potuisse esse templum Dei, in quo habitaret Spiritus Dei, nisi baptizatos?

“Baptism is a Sacrament which God hath instituted in his Church to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ; and so through his most precious merits obtain as well that saving grace of imputation, which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life¹.” Later systems indeed

¹ Hooker's Eccles. Polity, B. v. § 60.

This passage has been sometimes quoted to prove the very reverse of what Hooker teaches: viz. that Regeneration precedes Baptism in qualified adults. Hooker, however, without excluding the preparatory action of the Holy Ghost on the soul, affirms, in common with all the ancient Christians, that his divine virtue is first infused into, or consigned over to, the human soul in Baptism. Nor does he mean by *future newness of life* the whole change of the inward frame, which must commence in adults previous to Baptism, but that newness of life, or covenanted state of holiness, which commences with the forgiveness of sin. For the new life of Christians is always supposed to date from their New Birth, that is, from their Baptism. Archbishop Laurence's observation, that the word *disposition* is a Latinism, and signifies the arrangement, or setting in order of the parts of the soul, may be illustrated by a quotation from Thomas Aquinas, which occurs in the Apology for the Augsburg Confession.

Peccatum originis habet privationem originalis justitiæ, et cum hoc *inordinatam dispositionem partium animæ*, unde non est privatio pura, sed quidam habitus corruptus. Melancthonis Opera, vol. i. folio, p. 61.

Hooker seems to be expressing himself in the same figurative way as Aquinas. He contemplates the divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, infused into the soul in Baptism, as beginning from that time to arrange and restore to order those parts of it which had been thrown into disorder and confusion by the fall. Perhaps,

have obtruded upon us very different notions of Regeneration, excluding from its definition, what the ancients principally insisted on, the forgiveness of sin, and substituting for this earnest of the Spirit or infusion of the divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, the scholastic fancy of an implantation of habits or of a turning point from evil to good, attended with a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul. But these notions are no better than fanciful speculations, inconsistent with Scriptural truth and simplicity, the experience of human nature, and the frame and constitution of the human soul.

Three things are to be considered in Baptism—
 The qualifications which it requires, the act of grace which it conveys, and the engagements and obligations which it imposes. In adults faith and repentance are required as qualifications, and these spiritual acts necessarily suppose the preventing and co-operating grace of God. It is however the decided doctrine of the Church that the convert is regenerated in Baptism, and then, and not till then, receives remission of his sins, and the covenanted grant or infused virtue of the Holy Ghost: and that infants, who can possess no positive qualifications, partake in their measure and proportion of the same blessings; receive remission of their sins by spiritual Regeneration, and are washed and

however, his phraseology may be grounded on the common ethical distinction between *dispositions* and *habits*.

sanctified with the Holy Ghost¹." But though infants are endowed with this infused virtue and mysterious earnest of the Holy Spirit, his active influences and operations appear to be commensurate with our natural faculties. In enlightening the understanding and forming the moral habits, he follows the order of intellectual and moral causes, proportioning his effects to the expanding and elastic qualities, and the corresponding exertions and activity of the human mind². In the case of

¹ Dicimus ergo in baptizatis parvulis, quamvis id nesciunt, habitare Spiritum Sanctum ; sic enim eum nesciunt, quamvis sit in eis, quemadmodum et nesciunt mentem suam, cujus in eis ratio, quâ uti nondum possunt, velut quædam scintilla sopita est, excitanda ætatis accessu. Augustin, Ep. 57.

Hæc gratia baptizatos etiam parvulos corpori suo inserit—dat etiam sui Spiritûs occultissimam fidelibus gratiam, quam latenter infundit et parvulis. De Peccat. Mer. et Remiss. C. 9.

² Having quoted a passage from Augustin—Oportet igitur ut Sacramento regenerationis, ne sine illo male de hâc vitâ exeat, etiam parvulus imbuatur: quod non fit nisi in remissione peccatorum. Dr. Ward adds,

Ex hoc loco constat juxta Augustinum primitias renovationis habere parvulos a remissione peccatorum in Baptismo ; ipsam vero renovationem, quæ gradatim perficitur, et sanctificationem non habere. Certe videtur statuere adæquatum Baptismi effectum in parvulis esse illam renovationem quæ fit solâ remissione peccatorum : alteram autem renovationem, quæ fit ad imaginem Dei, non incipere nisi eo tempore quo fit conversio cordis.

But we have seen in the last note, that Augustin holds that the Holy Ghost is bestowed on infants in Baptism, though his practical effects upon the heart and habits do not, and cannot, as it would seem, in the nature of things, commence till afterwards.

infants, therefore, the Spirit of grace, which is designed to be a principle of spiritual life, is merely a potential principle: or, to speak perhaps more properly, the Holy Ghost does not, as it would seem, begin to act upon the soul by calling into play its latent good dispositions, till there are materials on which to act; and, so far as we can judge by experience, till those means of grace are resorted to on man's part, to which his abiding and practical influences are promised and tied down. Hence, when religious instruction and moral discipline are neglected, Regeneration in Baptism is productive of no practical effects. The infused virtue of the Holy Ghost is, to speak in the mildest terms, dormant and inactive: the soul continues in its natural state of darkness and ignorance, and that infection of nature, which remains in the regenerate, experiences no check from the supernatural and remedial principle. At other times, as children advance onward in life, evil dispositions and unruly passions, or the influence of worldly customs and bad examples, counteract the effects of discipline and instruction, and that power of the Spirit, which attends upon them.

If indeed it were a self-evident truth that Regeneration is an implantation of a habit of grace, containing in it the habits of all Christian graces or virtues, or that it is a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, it might be absurd

to suppose that those infants who, as they grow up, exhibit no signs of spiritual habits or dispositions, have been regenerated in Baptism. But that sound and masculine theology, which our Church has adopted, knows nothing of these speculations. It is to be regretted indeed that those writers who have descanted on the unreasonableness of our doctrine, have not been at the pains to inquire what those opinions are, which they have taxed with so many absurdities and contradictions: and that they have never been tempted to look a little more narrowly into the reasonableness of their own theory.

We find indeed in the writings of the Fathers glowing and animated descriptions of the effects of Baptism on adult converts¹. But they contain

¹ *Ego cum in tenebris atque in nocte cæcâ jacerem, cumque in salo jactantis seculi nutabundus ac dubius, vestigiis oberrantibus fluctuarem; vitæ meæ nescius, veritatis ac lucis alienus; difficile prorsus ac durum pro illis tunc moribus opinabar, quod in salutem mihi divina indulgentia pollicebatur, ut quis renasci denuo possit; utque in novam vitam lavacro aquæ salutaris animatus, quod prius fuerat, exponeret; et corporis licet manente compage, hominem animo ac mente mutaret. Quî possibilis, aiebam, est tanta conversio, ut repente ac perniciouser exuatur quod genuinum situ materiæ naturalis obduruit, vel usurpatum diu senio vetustatis inolevit?—Sed postquam undæ genitalis auxilio superioris ævi labe detersâ, in expiatum pectus ac purum desuper se lumen infudit; postquam cœlitus Spiritu hausto, in novum me hominem nativitas secunda reparavit; mirum in modum protinus confirmare se dubia, patere clausa, lucere tenebrosa; facultatem dare quod prius difficile videbatur; geri*

nothing inconsistent with the simple Scriptural truth, nor with the moral nature and rational faculties of man. For it is reasonable to suppose that when the Spirit is consigned over to pious converts, He will exert an influence on their inward frame proportioned to their faith and charity, and the sincerity and zeal of their Christian purposes. And we may easily persuade ourselves that the convert himself, who returns from the laver under a full conviction that his sins are washed away, that he has been sealed with the Spirit as God's child and peculiar property, and that the Holy Ghost has been bestowed upon him for a helpmate and sojourner, will feel as it were a load removed from him, and a spring and elasticity communicated to his whole soul; and that he will enter on the discharge of his Christian duties with tenfold vigour and activity. But these descriptions, when stripped of rhetorical colouring, do not convey the notion of the instantaneous transformation of the moral nature, an infusion of habits, or a radical change of the parts and faculties of the soul. The maxim of these Christians was—*according to thy faith be it done unto*

posse quod prius impossibile putabatur ut esset; agnoscere terrenum fuisse quod prius carnaliter natum delictis obnoxium viveret; Dei esse cœpisse, quod jam Spiritus Sanctus animaret. Scis ipse profecto et mecum pariter recognoscis, quid detraxerit nobis, quidve contulerit mors ista criminum, vita virtutum. Cyprian ad Donatum, p. 2, 3.

*thee*¹—and they believed, with equal wisdom and piety, that the moral effects of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, both in and after Baptism, are proportioned to the faith and religious exertions of the convert himself.

As to the engagements which are contracted in Baptism, they are equally binding on all recipients, whether baptized in infancy or riper years, for they are the conditions on which our continuance in that state of salvation, to which we have been called, absolutely depends. But no one is pronounced regenerate on the presumption that those

¹ Nostrum tantùm sitiât pectus ac pateat : quantum illic fidei capacis afferimus, tantum gratiæ inundantis haurimus. Cyprian ad Donatum, p. 4.

Cæterum si tu innocentia, si justitiæ viam teneas, si illapsâ firmitate vestigiî tui incedas, si in Deum viribus totis, ac toto corde suspensus ; hoc sis tantùm quod esse cœpisti : tantum tibi ad licentiam datur, quantum gratiæ spiritalis augetur. Do. p. 3. —i. e. tantum potes, quantum credis.

Quales nos fecit secundâ nativitate, tales vult renatos perseverare. Cyprian de Or. Dom. p. 149.

Hoc etiam secundum fidem Catholicam credimus, quod acceptâ per Baptismum gratiâ, omnes baptizati, Christo cooperante et adjuvante, quæ ad salutem pertineant possint ac debeant, si fideliter laborare voluerint, adimplere. Conc. Aurisiacum. Expressing the general sense of the Christian Churches.

Sit tantum timor innocentia custos, ut qui in mentes nostras indulgentia cœlestis allapsu clementer Dominus infulsit, in animi oblectantis hospitio justâ operatione teneatur : ne accepta securitas indiligentiam pariat, et vetus denuò hostis obrepât. Cyp. ad Don. p. 3.

engagements will be performed. It has, indeed, been confidently affirmed, in opposition to the tenets of our Church and Scripture, that true grace is indefectible; that no man, therefore, is regenerated in Baptism who does not keep his baptismal contract; and, consequently, that habitual holiness is the only test of spiritual Regeneration. We, however, do not imagine, that God regenerates our infants on principles of favoritism and caprice, because Baptism is too frequently unproductive of practical and saving effects, but we ascribe this failing to human negligence and default. Though the stipulations of the sponsors, as proxies for children, are rather a pious and salutary custom of the Church, than a necessary part of Baptism, every baptized person virtually contracts the engagements which those stipulations contain; and parents and guardians of infants are bound, without any formal professions, to second and promote the good work which God has begun in them, by religious instruction and moral discipline. For the child of God is necessarily trusted in his early years to the care and institution of human parents, and it depends much on their vigilance and faithfulness to their trust, whether that Spirit which has been consigned over to him in Baptism shall remain dormant, or be brought forth into play and activity; whether he shall be spiritually born only, or shall grow up in habits of spirituality and holiness.

There are, however, persons who think that this necessary connection between Baptism and Regeneration, which results from the obvious construction of Scripture and our baptismal Offices, is untenable upon principles of reason. In their opinion, common sense forbids us to suppose that Baptism, which is the work of man upon the body, is ordinarily accompanied with Regeneration, which is the work of God upon the soul; or that the sprinkling of the human body with water can be followed by a change of this magnitude and importance. But surely it becomes us rather to accept God's boons and bounties, in the way which He has prescribed, with humility and thankfulness, than to bring His ordinances and revelations to the standard of our own reason. If a doctrine has no foundation in Scripture, or is only built on a *few obscure* passages, whilst it is contradicted by *the whole tenour and current* of Holy Writ, these are good grounds for its rejection; and we shall generally find that the support which it seems to derive from Scripture, may be removed by the aid of received and general principles of interpretation. But where a doctrine is in no sense *contradictory* to reason and experience, where it harmonizes with the whole system of revealed religion, and where the language in which it is contained is plain and intelligible, it has every claim to our assent, and ought not lightly to be called in question. For my own part, I am

at a loss to discover, why this doctrine is more unreasonable than the doctrines of original sin, the incarnation of the Son of God, atonement by his blood, or the resurrection of the body; and why it is not to be received with the same assurance of faith, and the same freedom from sceptical doubts and ambitious curiosity.

Yet it often happens, that where we are unable to penetrate into the nature of the truths revealed to us, or to trace out the connection between causes and effects, we can discover some probable presumptions and grounds of reason, which so far as our benefit is intended, and our interest concerned, furnish us with a clue to their propriety and suitability. Some presumptions and probabilities of this kind may be assigned for this institution of our Saviour, and for the close union which He has established by his word and promise between outward Baptism and spiritual Regeneration.

In the first place, this institution is founded upon known principles, and appears to be a benevolent accommodation to the weakness of human nature, and the customs of common life. In all ages and countries, the transfer of property and the conveyance of grants, privileges, and offices have commonly been attended with some outward signs or symbolical actions. Personal freedom, the freedom of cities, magistracies, and even royalty itself, have been conferred in this manner. The sealing or stamping

of public or private property, legal instruments, investitures, and inaugurations, were forms and ceremonies familiar to the minds of mankind. The same customs had been introduced into the religions of the world. External symbols were tokens of initiation into the mysteries of the pagan deities; and were used by the Jews in the reception of their proselytes: and God had sanctioned them, by admitting the Israelites to the privileges and promises of the old covenant through the medium of circumcision. When, therefore, our Saviour adopted the same mode of initiation and investiture, conveying to his disciples the forgiveness of their sins, and the privileges, blessings, and promises of the covenant of grace through means of an outward sign which was already familiar to their minds, and the import of which they well understood, this institution fell in with the views and customs of those persons for whose use it was intended, and was a merciful condescension to the feelings and habits of mankind.

In the next place, we must observe, that the leading parts and peculiar doctrines of Christianity are addressed almost exclusively to our faith. Christ's hearers were required to believe, upon the strength of those evidences that were before them, and in direct opposition to their popular prejudices and prepossessions, that he was the Messiah, or *he that should come into the world*. In the same manner, the doctrines which relate to his

person and the purposes of his mission, his Godhead and incarnation, redemption, atonement, sanctification by his Spirit, the resurrection of the body, and the circumstances of the last judgment, are proposed to our faith; and the benefit which we are to derive from them depends in a great measure upon the stedfastness of our belief in their certainty. What is the exact nature of the union between God and man in our Saviour's person; how the death of Christ atones for our sins, and purges our consciences from dead works; by what process the Holy Ghost acts upon the human soul; are questions with which we have no concern. If the truths themselves are plainly revealed in Scripture, and Scripture contains the word of God, we must receive them with the same assurance as if we could analyze and expound them with the most minute accuracy, and penetrate into the secret parts of the divine economy. But the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism stands precisely on the same footing with these weighty truths, and harmonizes with the whole scheme of revealed religion. It is proposed to our belief, and is intended to be a test and exercise of it: it demands of us the same kind of assent, which we owe to the other peculiar doctrines of Christianity; and it is our business to believe it in the simplicity with which it is taught us, without attempting to unravel God's mysterious operations on the soul, and without

being offended at the meanness of the instruments, through which pardon and grace are made over to us.

But farther. Our Regeneration in Baptism, implying this close connection between the grace bestowed and the sign which denotes it, is an act of tenderness and mercy, not less worthy of God's infinite benevolence, than analogous to the whole course of His dealings with man. Goodness, indeed, seems to be the leading feature of His government, and the key to His mysterious dispensations: and those theological systems which straiten His goodness, and depend principally on abstract views of His sovereignty and glory, will be found on investigation to have no foundation in His word, nor in the history and experience of mankind. But if man, considered as an alien from God and a child of wrath, had been left to collect the assurance of adoption into His family and restoration to his favour, in the best way that he was able, without any specific form or positive consignation of these privileges and blessings, he would have been placed, as it were, without chart or compass, in a troubled sea of doubt, suspense, and anxiety, and would have been tempted to resort to fanciful and fanatical criterions of sonship and reconciliation. But on the principles which our Church deduces from Scripture, he receives in the sacrament of Baptism such comfortable assurances of God's favour and

loving-kindness, as are sufficient, if duly prized and religiously pondered, to bring peace to his mind, and to invigorate his soul to duty. For, on these principles, the convert to the faith of Christ, who receives Baptism rightly, may assure himself, that as certainly as God is true, and his *promises in Christ are yea and amen*¹, so surely he is released from the bond and penalty of his sins, endowed with the earnest of the Holy Ghost, as a principle of new life and holy endeavour, and enrolled among the children of God, and the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. On the same principles, the parent will “not doubt but earnestly believe” that his child, who was “born in sin and in the wrath of God, is by the laver of Regeneration in Baptism received into the number of His children, and heirs of everlasting life.” Here we rest on sure ground. And the very fact that our Regeneration in Baptism, as stated and believed by the Church, is a strong evidence of God’s goodness and condescension to fallen man, amounts to a presumption of its truth, since, whilst it cannot be charged with unreasonableness, it shows that it is suitable to our wants, and analogous to the general course of the Divine economy.

Since then this theory of Regeneration, independently of the paramount authority of Scripture,

¹ 2 Cor. i. 20.

is raised on a foundation of sound sense and sober argument, and is free from every suspicion of unreasonableness and absurdity; and since, without attempting to fathom the depths of this mystery of godliness, we can discover some probable grounds and reasons of the connection which our Saviour has established between Baptism and Regeneration, we shall not act wisely if we renounce the faith of our forefathers in Christianity, upon "the mere show of a conceit;" and exchange it for any of those novel and discordant theories, which the ingenuity of modern theologians has substituted for it. Having learned that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, that *Baptism doth save us*, that we are saved *by the washing of Regeneration*, and that *except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, we shall do well to be contented with the plain and literal interpretation, which our own Church and the ancient Christians have put upon these texts, and the simple and obvious conclusions which they have drawn from them. Some minds may be captivated with the theories to which they have attached themselves, and others may find a pleasure in solving problems and difficulties of their own creation. But the plain straight-forward path of Scriptural truth, whilst it presents us with no such objects as can fascinate the imagination, or pamper the vanity of the understanding, is beset with no toils, and pre-

sents few perplexing difficulties to a believing and humble mind.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (i. e. keeping the straight path and beaten road of) the word of truth ¹.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

CHAPTER IX.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPAL CHANGES WHICH
HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE DOCTRINE OF RE-
GENERATION AND IN THE USE OF THE WORD.

SUCH is the weakness of human nature, that the greatest blessings bestowed on us through the agency of uninspired men, are commonly accompanied with a mixture of evil. The most salutary changes are often carried beyond their proper limits: and principles, which are sound and just under the control of prudence and moderation, when pushed to extremities, and acted upon without discretion, are pregnant with dangerous consequences; and sometimes produce errors almost as pernicious as those which they are intended to counteract.

We find proofs of this position in the history of the Reformation. A spirit of opposition to the Church of Rome, originating in the best causes, and

intimately connected with the vital interests of religion, was sometimes carried to an excess, inconsistent with truth and sobriety. In combating the errors of that Church, theologians lost sight of the landmarks which had been transgressed, and swept away with an unsparing hand opinions and customs, which had been universally received in the best ages of Christianity. Released from the bondage which had been imposed on the human understanding, men of pious and ardent spirits seemed to think that Scripture was a book from which every man was at liberty to deduce his theological system, and paid little regard to the testimony of their forefathers in the faith, and the most received interpretations of Holy Writ, if they interfered with their own favourite opinions. For they appear to have forgotten, that though tradition is of no value when opposed to the plain sense of Scripture, or entirely independent of Scriptural arguments and conclusions, the testimony which the primitive Church bears to the received doctrines of Christianity, and the received interpretation of Scripture, is, on principles of common sense and critical investigation, of great weight and importance.

This cause seems to have operated in alienating the minds of many Protestant Divines from those doctrinal views of the Sacrament of Baptism, which had been maintained in the Church from its earliest

days, since it led them to confound the true theory of Baptism with the errors which the Romish Church had engrafted on it. For this departure from the sound and primitive doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism was in great measure owing to an inordinate jealousy of that pernicious doctrine of this Church, that Sacraments confer Grace, (to use the language of Schools,) *ex opere operato*. For the doctrine of the Church of Rome was, that Sacraments operate upon the soul by a divine virtue communicated to the elements, and that, where there is no positive obstacle of wilful sin, they confer grace without any corresponding act on the part of the recipient. Not to mention the practical consequences of this doctrine in the case of the Lord's Supper, it gave an impress of superstition to the Sacrament of Baptism, and led to absurd and mischievous practices. For the Ministers of that Communion thought themselves justified in baptizing heathens, who were ignorant of the first truths of Christianity, even those who were compelled by violence to profess a faith, which they renounced and hated in their hearts.

But the divines of whom we are speaking, in the warmth of their opposition to this pernicious error, were induced to reject the truth on which it had been grafted. They contended that the notion, that baptized persons are actually regenerated and

justified in Baptism¹, is the identical heresy of the Romanists; that Baptism is indeed a seal of Regeneration, either already bestowed, or to be bestowed perhaps at some future season, but that none except actual believers are really justified or regenerated. But the true doctrine of the Church was, not that "Christ and the Holy Ghost are in the water or font²," nor that they are given promiscuously to all comers; "but that they are given in the ministration to them that be duly baptized in water:" that adults are not duly baptized, unless qualified by belief and repentance: that Regeneration itself is a pure act of God's grace, limited by his word to a particular rite, and connected with a symbolical action; and that though it implies and requires, it does not necessarily suppose, that future newness of life, which is the joint act of man and the Holy Spirit.

¹ Apage hunc errorem operis operati. Incipit baptismi fructus ab eo momento quo fides incipit, quæ interdum præcedit Baptismum, interdum subsequitur. Beza G.

Ad infantes quod attinet in Ecclesiâ natos et divinitus Electos, et antequam usum intelligendi nacti sunt, morituros, facilè existimârim, verbo Dei fretus, *nascendo inseri Christo*. De cæteris vero quid aliter statuere nisi apertissimâ temeritate possum, quàm tum demum regenerari cùm fide verâ ex auditu donantur? Beza G. p. 103.

This is certainly more reasonable and consistent doctrine, than that view of Regeneration which supposes that some infants are regenerated in Baptism, and others not.

² Archbishop Cranmer.

Another cause of this departure from the doctrine of the Church, was the great stress which these divines laid upon faith, as an instrument of salvation, independently of all other moral qualifications, and collateral and subordinate instruments. Arguing from those passages of Scripture, in which faith is insisted on without any allusion to Baptism, they concluded that every believer, whether baptized or not, is justified and regenerated; and that Baptism is nothing more than a kind of appendage to belief, and a certificate to the soul of the believer, of grace already received. On the same ground they contended that no one baptized in infancy is justified or born again till he has acted an act of faith, and applied Christ to himself. But they seem to have forgotten that negative arguments cannot invalidate positive proofs and testimonies. If Christ has ordained Baptism as a sacrament through which salvation—that is, pardon of sin, and the gift of the Holy Ghost—is to be made over to us, the binding force and virtue of this ordinance cannot be shaken or extenuated by passages of Scripture in which faith alone is mentioned and insisted on. Many of these passages record circumstances which took place, and sayings which were uttered before the solemn and authoritative institution of Baptism; and the preceding law must be qualified and explained by the subsequent statute. And when the Apostles insist on faith as the great requisite to

salvation, they could not intend to annul their Lord's ordinance, nor to deny the necessity or to call in question the virtue of this sacrament. "They draw very near to this error," (the error of the Valentinian heretics) "who fixing wholly their minds on the known necessity of faith, imagine that nothing but faith is necessary to the attainment of grace. Yet it is a branch of belief, that sacraments are in their place no less required than belief itself. For when our Lord and Saviour promiseth eternal life, is it any otherwise than he promised restitution of health unto Naaman the Syrian, namely, with this condition, *Wash and be clean*¹?"

Another reason which induced many Theologians of the reformed Churches to renounce the ancient doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, was their attachment to an opinion of late growth in the Church, that true grace is indefectible. The ancient predestinarians never questioned the certainty of Regeneration in Baptism, because this doctrine was consistent with their theory. For though they maintained that only the elect or predestinate are endued with the gift of perseverance to the end, and will be finally saved, yet they believed that God bestows at His pleasure every other kind and measure of grace on those persons, from whom He

¹ Hooker, Eccl. Pol. l. 5. c. 60. p. 249.

withholds this special grace of perseverance¹. They therefore held, in common with the rest of the Church, that the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Ghost are generally bestowed in Baptism, because they did not conceive that there is any necessary and indissoluble connection between Regeneration and eternal salvation. This was Augustin's doctrine, whose opinion was, that grace, however limited in its operation and duration, is nevertheless true grace, and the exact counterpart of a decree of predestination enacted before the world began. This doctrine had its defenders and opponents both among Romish and Protestant divines. It was adopted by Luther, at least in the early part of his career, but was disliked and discountenanced by Melancthon², and was rejected by the Lutheran Church. And it certainly received no favour nor encouragement from those great men who took the leading part in the Reformation of our own Church. But it was so little disliked by the Church of Rome, that it was acknowledged in the Council of Trent, that in the matter of predestination there is nothing

¹ *Mirandum est quidem multumque mirandum, quod quibusdam filiis suis, quos regeneravit in Christo, quibus fidem, dilectionem dedit, non dat perseverantiam.* Augustin *De Corr. et Gratia*, c. 9.

² *Nimis horridæ fuerunt initio Stoicæ disputationes apud nostros de Fato; et disciplinæ nocuerunt.* Melancthon *Ep. ad Cranmer*.

unsound in the writings of Luther, and the adherents to the Augsburg Confession; and the decrees of that Council are framed in such a manner as not to offend the schoolmen, who were of Augustin's sentiments¹.

But the Calvinistic doctrine of indefectible grace was incompatible with the received notion of Regeneration in Baptism. For it is evident, that final salvation is no necessary consequence of Baptism. But according to the principles of Calvin and his followers, no one, who has been washed from his sins, and endowed with the Holy Ghost, can possibly fail of everlasting happiness². They therefore re-

¹ On this head, they found nothing to censure in the writings of Luther, nor in the Augsburg Confession, nor in the Apologies and Confessions. But they found much to censure in the writings of the Zuinglians. Paolo, l. 2. s. 80.

Nemo, quamdiu in hâc mortalitate vivit, de arcano divinæ prædestinationis consilio usque adeo præsumere debet, ut certo statuât se omninò esse in numero prædestinatorum : quasi verum esset quòd justificatus amplius peccare non possit, aut si peccaverit certam sibi resipiscentiam promittere debeat. Nam sine speciali revelatione sciri non potest quos Deus sibi elegerit. Con. Tri. Sess. 6. c. 13.

Similiter de perseverantiæ munere nemo sibi certi aliquid absolutâ certitudine polliceatur. C. 14.

² Fieri non potest, ut qui Spiritûs Sancti ope ita Christo unitus fuerit, ut unus cum illo Spiritus evaserit, in Christum credere suo tempore vel negligat, vel deinceps etiam desinat. Gataker, p. 150.

Cui non Orthodoxo mirum, si non horrendum dictu, videatur, aliquem in Christi mortem sepultum, Christo incorporatum, Christo indutum, in æternum posthac exitium devenire? Do. p. 157.

jected the doctrine of the universal Church, in deference to their own theory—a theory flattering to the pride and presumption of the human heart, but manifestly at variance with the whole truth of Scripture, and the first principles of natural religion.

But besides, in their zeal for this tenet of absolute election and infallible perseverance, they were too ready to overlook the means through which the decree of predestination, whatever may be its nature, must be carried into effect; or, at least, to think little of those means which, in the opinion of sober judges, are subordinately instrumental to salvation. This is an error which has been treated with his usual judgment and good sense by Hooker. But his mode of arguing did not satisfy the zealous Calvinists. For finding no mention of Baptism in that text of Scripture, which they looked upon as the charter or golden chain of man's salvation¹,

¹ Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. This passage is evidently intended to point out not the necessary and infallible event, but the order, design, and intention of God's counsels. In fact, the aorist, or indefinite tense, often denotes the frequency and customary occurrence, and the order, design, and regular or legitimate event of things, and in the idiom of our language may be more correctly rendered by the present tense—*Whom he foreknows*, &c. So Luke i. 51, 52, 53. The words, *whom he justifies he glorifies*, have been commonly quoted as decisive of the doctrine of indefectible grace and necessary perseverance. But it seems to have been forgotten, that a large part of the New Testament is taken up in calling justified men to the performance of

they extenuated its importance, and were far from regarding it as an immediate and ordinary mean of life. "There are," says Hooker, "that elevate¹ too much the ordinary and immediate means of life, relying wholly upon the bare conceit of that eternal election, which notwithstanding includeth a subordination of means, without which we are not actually brought to enjoy what God secretly did intend. Predestination bringeth not life without vocation, wherein our Baptism is implied. For as we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men in the eye of the Church of God but by new birth; nor according to the manifest ordinary course of divine dispensation new born, but by Baptism, which both *declareth and maketh* us Christians. In which respect we justly hold it to

those duties through which they must attain to glory; in warning them of the danger to which they were exposed of falling away from grace, and exhorting them to *seek for glory, honour, and immortality by patient continuance in well-doing*. In this passage, the Apostle encourages the Roman Christians to perseverance, by assuring them that the whole plan and order of their salvation has been laid down and appointed by God from eternity; and that as their call and justification are plain proofs of their predestination to life, so they are pledges of the continuance of God's favour, and of eternal glory, if they on their part remain *stedfast in the faith*, and continue to *love God, to suffer with Christ*, and to *walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*.

¹ The word *elevate* is here used in the classical sense of the Latin word *elevo*; and signifies to *undervalue*, or *take off from the force of*.

be the door of our actual entrance into God's house, the first apparent beginning of life, a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received, but to our sanctification here a step that hath not any before it¹."

For these reasons the theologians of whom we are speaking relinquished the opinion of Catholic Christianity on this subject, and brought forward several propositions, directly opposed to the creed which had been maintained for so many ages.

1. That Baptism is not, properly speaking, a mean or instrument of grace, but merely a sign or seal of regeneration and forgiveness.

2. That believers in Christ receive remission of their sins and are born again, previous to the Sacrament of Baptism.

3. That infants, though baptized with water, are not baptized with the Spirit, till they are endowed with faith and with effectual and indefectible grace.

4. That none but the Elect are ever regenerate; that the Elect, when effectually called, are regenerate without Baptism; and that every elect and regenerate person must necessarily be saved.

5. That Infants, who are the children of believers, are not received into covenant with God in

¹ Hooker, Eccl. Pol. b. 5. s. 60. p. 247, 248.

Baptism, but are baptized because they are already within the covenant of adoption ¹.

Regeneration therefore, being thus separated from Baptism, was invested with a new character and new definitions, and a different place was assigned to it, according to the new theory, from that which it had obtained in the creed and practice of our forefathers.

But, before I proceed to inquire into the value of this theory, I shall enter a little more particularly

¹ Sancta ideo nascitur ex fidelibus progenies quod adhuc utero inclusi eorum liberi, antequam vitalem Spiritum haurirent, cooptati tamen sunt in fœdus vitæ æternæ. Nec sane alio jure per Baptismum aggregantur in Ecclesiam, nisi quia ad corpus Christi jam ante pertinebant, quam in lucem ederentur. Baptismum præcedat adoptionis gratia necesse est, quæ non dimidiæ tantùm salutis causa est, sed eam ipsam salutem in solidum affert, quæ Baptismo deinde sancitur. Calvin. Vera Eccles. Reformandæ Ratio. Opuscula. P. 325.

This is the common doctrine of the Calvinistic writers, and they ground it on God's promise to Abraham, that He would be *a God to him and his seed after him*. Infantes nostros antequam nascentur se adoptare in suos pronuntiat Deus, quum se nobis in Deum fore promittit, seminique nostro post nos. But even allowing the justness of this argument from Abraham's case to our own, God's promise to *his* seed implied and included circumcision. That the children of Christians have a title to Baptism and its benefits by birthright, as Abraham's descendants had to Circumcision, and that it is the duty of parents to see that they are baptized, is readily allowed. But I apprehend that our Church speaks more consonantly to Scripture, than Calvin and his followers, when it determines that we are *made children of God and children of grace, or made his children by adoption and grace*, in Baptism.

into the history of those variations in language and opinion upon this subject, to which I briefly alluded in an early part of my inquiry.

The word Regeneration is used by Melancthon, in his public and private writings, as equivalent to justification, in the sense which this latter word bears in the controversial parts of St. Paul's Epistles, and in the controversial writings of the early Protestants. This sense of the word represents the true theory of Regeneration, but it gives it a latitude inconsistent with the usage of Scripture, and the more correct statements of the ancient Christians¹. For, instead of confining it to that reconciliation which takes place in Baptism, the first translation from a state of wrath into a state of

¹ *Justificari significat, ex injustis justos effici, seu regenerari. Melancthon, vol. i. p. 66.*

Ex his omnibus apparet, quod sola fides justificat—et quod sola fides regenerat. Nam solâ fide concipitur Spiritus Sanctus. p. 71.

Qui hanc fidem consecuti sunt, hi renati sunt, ut bene operentur, et legem faciant. p. 78.

Fides consequitur remissionem peccatorum, et justificat nos, et regenerat, et affert Spiritum Sanctum, ut deinde legem facere possimus. p. 64.

Hæc est regeneratio, de quâ hic concionatur Christus (John iii. 5.) cum hoc modo fiduciâ Filii Dei in pavoribus sustentamur, et liberamur a terroribus peccati, et ab æternâ morte. Vol. iii. p. 94.

Disputatio est, (John iii. 3, &c.) de discrimine justitiæ legalis, et justitiæ fidei, quâ verè tollitur peccatum et mors, et fit regeneratio, et inchoatio vitæ æternæ. Do.

grace and acceptance, it makes it include the reconciliation of the sinner to God in every part of his religious life. Justification, like Regeneration, is distinct in theory from conversion, or the renewal of the inward frame, and does not, strictly speaking, consist in a change of mind, but in a change of relative condition to God, and a free grant of privileges and mercies; including in its definition the forgiveness of sin, the acceptance of the person, and a conditional title to eternal life. Thus far, therefore, it agrees with Regeneration; and every worthy recipient, according to the constant doctrine of the Church, is not only regenerated, but justified in Baptism. But in many respects Justification differs from Regeneration¹.

In Regeneration God is considered as a father, adopting us for his children, and bringing us into a state of new life. In Justification He is spoken of as a judge or moral governor, passing sentence upon us, and pronouncing us just and righteous.

Regeneration is a single act of God's grace, conveyed over to us at a determinate time, and in a form specially appointed by Christ. Its privileges and good effects may be suspended, and in the end utterly forfeited; but cannot, humanly speaking, be totally lost in this world, because every person, who has been born again of water and of the Spirit, is,

¹ See Waterland's Sermon on Justification.

till he dies, within the covenant of repentance. But, if we except the case of infants, the being accounted just and righteous in God's sight is a blessing which depends on the actual condition of the heart and habits; and no man is justified who has not forsaken his sins, and is not living in a state of habitual belief and holiness, and compliance with the will of God. Hence, as Augustin¹ has well remarked, man is justified in Baptism, and continues to be justified whilst he is contending strenuously against sin, and praying for the forgiveness of his daily trespasses. But the same qualifications that are required of adult converts, in order to their Justification in Baptism, are required of the Christian sinner who has departed from grace, in order to forgiveness and justification. Justification, therefore, is a blessing which may be lost by man's sin, and recovered through God's mercy. For as our Church teaches us, in perfect conformity to Scripture, "The grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the

¹ *Justificatio porro in hâc vitâ nobis secundum tria ista confertur. Prius lavacro regenerationis quo remittuntur peccata omnia. Deinde congressu cum vitiis, a quorum reatu absoluti sumus. Tertiò, cum nostra exauditur oratio, quâ dicimus, Dimitte nobis debita nostra—quoniam quamlibet fortiter contra vitia dimicemus, homines sumus; Dei autem gratia sic nos in hâc corruptibili carne adjuvat dimicantes, ut non desit propter quod exaudiat veniam postulantes. Augustin contra Julianum, lib. ii. ed. Paris, vol. vii. p. 1555.*

Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin : and by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend ourselves ¹.”

But though Melancthon and the Lutheran divines used the word Regeneration in this latitude, and in the more popular sense of conversion or renovation ², they maintained with steadiness the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism ³. They taught consistently with the language and doctrine of our own Church, that the guilt or formality of sin is removed in Baptism, though the material part of it, (to use the language of the schools,) that is, concupiscence, or proneness to evil, still remains : and that the

¹ Article XVI.

² Cum de tali fide loquamur, quæ a morte liberat, et novam vitam in cordibus parit, et est opus Spiritûs Sancti, non stat cum peccato mortali, sed tantisper dum adest bonos fructus parit. Quid potest dici de *conversione impiï*, seu de *modo regenerationis* clarius? Melancthon, vol. i. p. 65.

³ See Archbishop Laurence, Part i. c. 4.

Semper ita scripsit Lutherus, quod Baptismus tollat reatum peccati originis, etsi materiale, ut isti vocant, peccati maneat—id est concupiscentia. Addit etiam de materiali, quod Spiritus Sanctus per Baptismum datus, incipit mortificare concupiscentiam, et novos motus creat in homine. Mel. vol. i. p. 61.

Quod Deus approbat baptismum parvulorum hoc ostendit, quod Deus dat Spiritum Sanctum sic baptizatis. p. 83.

Deducit Christus nos (John iii. 5.) ad ministerium Evangelii, quasi dicat—Intelligo te, Nicodeme, offendi novis concionibus meis et Baptistæ, quod dicimus vestris exercitiis et disciplinâ non tolli peccatum : sed hoc prorsus affirmo, teque ad hoc novum ministerium deduco. Renasci te oportet per hoc novum ministerium Baptismi, qui fit aquâ et Spiritu. Vol. iii. p. 641.

Holy Ghost is given to us at the same time, to mortify our concupiscence, and to produce new and godly motions within us.

The opinions delivered by Calvin on this subject do not appear altogether steady and consistent. He identifies Regeneration with conversion, repentance, or renewal¹. According to this definition, Regeneration is a true conversion of the soul to God, proceeding from a sincere and serious fear of Him, and consisting of the mortification of the flesh and the old man, and of the quickening or renewal of the Spirit. This change is necessary that the image of God, which had been obliterated in Adam, may be formed again in the soul of man. And this renewal, or Regeneration, is not completed in one moment, or day, or year; but God abolishes the corruptions of the flesh in the elect, by continued and slow advances.

¹ Regenerationem dico esse veram ad Deum vitæ nostræ conversionem, a sincero serioque Dei timore profectam, quæ carnis nostræ veterisque hominis mortificatione, et Spiritus vivificatione constat. Calvin Inst. l. iii. c. 3.

Uno ergo verbo pœnitentiam interpretor regenerationem, cujus non alius est scopus, nisi ut imago Dei, quæ per Adæ transgressionem fœdata, et tantum non oblitterata fuerat, in nobis reformetur. Do.

Proinde istâ regeneratione in Dei justitiam Christi beneficio instauramur. Atque hæc quidem instauratio non uno momento, vel die, vel anno impletur, sed per continuos, imo etiam lentos interdum profectus abolet Deus in Electis suis carnis corruptelas. Do.

But he affirms, that Baptism is the ordinary instrument of Regeneration and renovation¹; that it is an instrumental cause of conferring grace; that in Baptism God washes us with the blood of His Son, and regenerates us with His Spirit; that in this sacrament he effectually fulfils what it figures out and represents. And he declares his total disapprobation of the sentiments of those persons who deny that sacraments contain the grace which they symbolize. At the same time, he strictly confines this grace of Regeneration to the elect, that is, to those persons whose salvation is secured by an absolute and unconditional decree; and asserts, that the man who does not know that the Spirit

¹ *Sacramenta nihil sunt quam instrumentales conferendæ gratiæ causæ, quæ tum demùm prosunt suumque effectum habent, cum fidei inserviunt.* Calv. Antid. C. T. Opuscula, p. 296.

Nec fideles modò astringimus ad ejus observationem: sed ordinarium quoque Dei instrumentum esse asserimus ad nos lavandos et renovandos, ad salutem denique nobis communicandam. P. 298.

In baptismo Deus filii sui sanguine nos abluit, suoque Spiritu nos regenerat. P. 297.

Hâc tesserâ voluntâtem suam Dominus nobis testificatur, neque tantum nudo spectaculo pascit oculos, sed in rem præsentem nos adducit, et quod figurat efficaciter simul implet. Inst. l. 4. c. 15.

Si qui sunt qui negant Sacramentis contineri gratiam quam significant, improbamus. Opus. p. 296.

Quum autem vera sunt quæ nobis Dominus dedit gratiæ suæ testimonia et sigilla vere procul dubio præstat intus Spiritu suo, quod oculis et aliis sensibus figurant sacramenta. Consensio Min. Eccl. Tigur. et J. Calvin. Opus. p. 753.

of Regeneration is only conferred on the elect, is totally unacquainted with Scripture¹. Yet in other passages, he seems to confine the office of sacraments to sealing and testifying; and declares, that God regenerates those who have been baptized in infancy, sometimes in childhood, sometimes in youth, sometimes in extreme old age².

This was one of the earliest attempts to separate Regeneration from Baptism; and these opinions are consequences of his favourite notions of predestination, and of the indefectibility and necessary activity of true grace. But though Calvin seems to have departed with reluctance from the received

¹ *Sedulo docemus, Deum non promiscue vim suam exercere in omnibus qui Sacramenta recipiunt, sed tantum in electis. Consensus, s. 16.*

Hoc interest in Dei vocatione, quod omnes promiscue invitat verbo suo, electos autem solos intus docet. Quemadmodum ait Christus, Quicquid mihi dedit pater, ad me veniet. Denique regenerationis Spiritum non dari nisi Electis, quisquis ignorat nescio quid in Scripturis teneat. Ant. C. T. Opus. 291.

² *Hic præcipuus Sacramentorum usus est, ut per ea nobis gratiam suam testetur Deus, figuret, repræsentet. Consensio, 753.*

Tametsi in contextu verborum Baptismus remissionem peccatorum hic præcedit, ordine tamen sequitur, quia nihil aliud est quam bonorum quæ per Christum consequimur, obsignatio, ut in conscientiis nostris rata sint. Quia autem Baptismus sigillum est, quo Deus hoc nobis confirmat, adeoque arrha et pignus adoptionis nostræ, merito dari in remissionem peccatorum dicitur. Calv. in Act. 2. 38.

Qui in primâ infantiâ baptizati sunt, eos in pueritiâ, vel ineunte adolescentiâ, interdum etiam in senectute regenerat Deus. Consensio, s. 19.

doctrine and language of the Church, the opinions, which he advanced with some caution and reserve, were avowed and defended by the great body of his followers. According to the doctrine of the Church, the sacramental phraseology is founded on the conjunction and simultaneous presence of the sign and the thing signified¹; and sacraments not only denote, but confer grace, in a subordinate and instrumental manner. But the Calvinistic divines put a different interpretation on these phrases. For they affirmed, that sacraments confer grace in a manner peculiar to themselves, not as means whereby grace is transmitted to the recipient, but as signs or seals of grace already received². They

¹ Sacramentales locutiones fundantur in conjunctâ collatione et exhibitione rei signatæ cum signo, in usu legitimo ex institutione Christi. Ward, p. 101. G.

² Baptismus filios Dei non facit, sed qui jam ante filii Dei sunt, filiorum Dei testimonium signum vel tesseram accipiunt. Zuinglius, prior to Calvin. G. p. 96.

Baptismus est obsignatio promissionis acquisitæ et sigillum jam impetratæ regenerationis. Peter Martyr. G.

Sacramenta in adultis nisi renatis jam et renovatis non applicant Christi meritum. Gat.

Consentiunt Sacramenta esse signa exhibentia id quod significant. Nam quæ diplomata in membranâ sunt, fiunt efficacia, sortiunturque effectum suum. Chamier Panstr. G. 93.

Baptismatis aqua neque ut causa efficiens, neque ut instrumentalis, requiritur, sed duntaxat ut obsignatorium sigillum. Danæus. G. p. 92.

Contrarium dogma ex fœtidis Scholasticorum lacunis haustum est, qui causativam, ut loquuntur, vim Deo principalem, instrumentalem Sacramentis tribuerunt. Beza. G. 105.

considered what St. Paul says of Abraham's circumcision as a complete definition of a sacrament¹. For as Abraham *received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised*, so, in their opinion, every believer receives the sign of Baptism, the seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being unbaptized. They did not, however, remark that there can be no analogy between the case of Abraham, whose faith, as we learn from Scripture, was counted to him for righteousness long before he received the covenant of circumcision, and of Christians, the express words of whose charter are, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*.

But since this theory and definition of Baptism could not cover the case of infants, to solve this difficulty they resorted to a distinction arising out

Adultus fidelis quivis ad fontem sacrum accedit, peccatorum retro commissorum omnium remissionem plenariam, et internam regenerationem jam consecutus. Gat. p. 95.

¹ Vix puto ullum locum extare in sacris literis, quo tam breviter et explicate natura Sacramentorum explicatur, quam his Pauli verbis ubi Circumcisio appellatur signaculum. Pet. Martyr, in Rom. iv. 11. G.

Porro hic habemus insignem locum de communi Sacramentorum usu. Sunt enim, teste Paulo, sigilla; quibus Dei promissiones cordibus nostris quodammodo obsignantur, et sancitur gratiæ certitudo. Calv. in Rom. iv. 11.

Nec vero Baptismo plus tribuere fas est, quàm Apostolus circumcissioni tribuit, quod vocat *sigillum justitiæ fidei*. Calv. Inst. l. iv. c. 14. § 25.

Non hic circumcissionis tantum, sed Sacramentorum in genere definitio habetur. Whitaker. G.

of the nature and use of seals¹. "Seals," they said, "are sometimes affixed to legal instruments in confirmation of grants already bestowed; sometimes in testimony of grants which are to be made good at some future time. It is in the latter way that Baptism confers grace on elect infants, because it is a seal of that grace which God will bestow on them in his own season." Had it, however, been true that this figurative expression, in scriptural usage, is borrowed from seals affixed to legal instruments, it is reasonable to suppose that it would not have been taken from the accidental and occasional, but from the ordinary use of legal seals. Now, though seals are sometimes affixed to grants or conveyances of property, of which the party is already in full possession, and sometimes to conveyances of reversionary or contingent interests, the ordinary use of legal instruments is to convey and give present possession of property or privileges; and these instruments have no legal validity till they are sealed. Hence, if Baptism is a seal of grace, in the sense to which we are alluding, it is more natural, and more consistent with the common

¹ *Moralis signi usus est promiscuus, ad effecta tum præterita, tum futura. Sigilla in rebus politicis confirmant tum pacta jam statuta, tum promissa in futurum. Chamier Panstr. G. 95.*

Obsignatur remissio, vel collata baptizato, vel conferenda deinceps: sive cum adultus actualiter conversus crediderit, sive priusquam hinc discesserit, si parvulus adhuc obierit. Gataker, p. 96, speaking of infants.

principles of figurative language, to consider it as a seal of grace conveyed and made over by the act of sealing, than of grace already bestowed, or only promised and contingent.

But though Calvin used the word Regeneration rather in a popular than in its strict and appropriate meaning, his notions of the thing itself were sober and moderate. For he supposes that Regeneration proceeds from the fear of God, and includes in its definition the whole conversion of the life to God, commencing either in Baptism, or in some other season, without speculating on the nature and extent of this turning point, or commencement of Regeneration. But his followers confined the act of Regeneration to a determinate time, and took their description of it from the scholastic doctrine of justifying grace¹. For, according to the schoolmen, man, when he is baptized, is endowed with a habit of justifying grace, containing in it the habits of faith, hope, and charity, and of all Christian virtues. But the scholastic Calvinists asserted that Regene-

¹ In ipsâ justificatione hæc omnia simul infusa accipit homo, spem, fidem, caritatem. Con. Trid. Sessio Sexta. S. 5. 8.

Grace is said by the schoolmen to be a *spiritual quality, created by God*. They maintained that the perfection of Adam consisted in an infused quality, which adorned his soul, and rendered it perfect; that God, through the merits of Christ, gives to those who are born again in baptism another quality, which is called justifying grace, which, by purifying the soul of all its stains, renders it as pure as that of Adam. Paulo, l. ii. c. 64.

ration consists in such a habit of grace bestowed on the elect in the moment of the effectual call. Regeneration, according to their statement, “is the implanting the habits and principles of grace, or the framing the complexion or body of grace in the heart. It is a constellation of all the several graces of the Spirit in the heart; and all these graces of the Holy Spirit are implanted in us at once in the very instant of our Regeneration, for they are all linked together, and whoever receives one grace receives them all. It is a change of the whole man, in every part and faculty thereof, from a state of sinful nature to a state of supernatural grace, whereby the image of God, which was defaced and lost by our first transgression, is in some measure restored. This image of God, which is restored to us in Regeneration, has a perfection of parts, though not of degrees, and it can never be totally lost and effaced as the other was: for though the sins of the elect may blot the evidences of their Regeneration, they cannot annul the certainty of their salvation ¹.”

In the next Chapter I shall examine particularly the grounds and reasonableness of this theory, and inquire whether it has any advantage over the

¹ This statement is taken from Bishop Hopkins, vol. ii. p. 475, &c. London, 8vo. The doctrinal works of this prelate are a kind of digest of Calvinistic common places. See Cat. Syn. Trident. part ii. c. 2. 50, 51.

theory of our Church and the ancient Christians. At present I shall only observe, that this scholastic notion of a habit of grace involves two innovations on the known and received use of words.

The ancient moralists make a just and reasonable distinction between faculties or dispositions, and habits¹. Faculties or dispositions are potential principles of action, which must be elicited by education, or opportunities, and formed into habits by use and exercise. Habits are the same principles in a state of activity, and of readiness and aptness for use. But, according to the doctrine of the scholastic divines, those principles which are said to be infused into the soul when it is regenerated, do not follow the order of moral causes, but are at once in a state of activity, and produce free acts as soon as they have an opportunity of exerting themselves. But we shall see by and by that there is no ground of reason or Scripture for supposing that spiritual causes differ from moral in the order of their operations, or in the manner in which they produce their practical effects.

The other innovation upon language consists in the sense which they have affixed to the word grace, considering it as a habit or quality inherent in the soul of man². Grace is a word used in a variety of senses in Scripture: but, whenever it is

¹ Aristotle. Nicom. Ethic. l. ii. c. 1 and 4.

² χάρις.

applied to the renewal and spiritual improvement of the human soul, it always signifies some favour or mercy proceeding from God, of which man is the object. In popular language, those virtues and good qualities which we refer upward to God, as their principal cause, are often called, by a common figure of speech, graces. But the schoolmen built a metaphysical distinction on this figure of speech, and distributed grace into real and relative, objective and subjective: relative grace, of which man is the object—adoption, for instance, and the forgiveness of sins—which alters the relation in which he stands to God: real grace, of which man is the subject, which is a quality inherent in himself, and consists in the creation or infusion of new habits, and an entire change of the inward frame and dispositions. This is what the schoolmen call justifying grace; the scholastic Calvinists regenerating grace, or Regeneration. But as this distinction has no foundation in Scriptural language, so we shall see that the doctrine which it insinuates has no foundation in the reason of the thing, experience, or Scripture.

There are some divines, who, using the word Regeneration much in the same sense, and at all events separating it from Baptism, do not think it necessary to confine the change signified by it to any turning point, or particular moment of time. But there does not seem to be any material difference of opinion between them and the divines, whose senti-

ments have been just now stated. A gradual renewal of the mind and formation of habits, a change from evil to good, or from good to better, is often called Regeneration, in an enlarged sense of the word, by theologians, who still adhere, if not to the phraseology, to the doctrine of the ancient Christians, in the matter of Baptism. But I do not apprehend that the divines, to whom I allude, consider Regeneration as a moral change, produced by causes operating in a moral manner. If by this word they denote the whole process of renovation¹, *necessarily* advancing onward, without any *material* or *fatal* interruption, from some determinate point, of which reason and conscience can take no cognizance, this notion involves the unscriptural doctrine of the indefectibility of true grace. If it is only meant that the entire change of mind, or infusion of habits, does not necessarily take place in a particular instant, but may be extended to a larger compass and period of time, this variation implies some deference to common sense, but, in the most material respects, coincides with the opinion of the scholastic Calvinists.

Some writers, indeed, who speak of Regeneration as a gradual process effected by the Spirit of God, appear, nevertheless, to make a distinction between Regeneration and conversion, and contend that

¹ This, as we have seen above, is Calvin's doctrine.

Regeneration is the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, conversion the voluntary act of the mind turning itself to God. But as neither conversion, nor any other moral and religious change, can be effected without the operation of the Holy Ghost, so I find no ground for supposing that any renewal of the inward frame takes place, in the ordinary course of God's dealings with us, without the agency of man's will and faculties. Certainly this subtle attempt to split the joint act of the Spirit and the man into two separate acts, independent of each other in theory, cannot be defended on Scriptural principles.

But though the Calvinistic theology had separated Regeneration from Baptism, and described it as an infusion of habits, an implantation of grace, or a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, it did not represent it as immediately and necessarily discernible, but left it to be discovered by its moral effects, or by certain criteria which it laid down as the best and most infallible signs of true grace. Men of warm constitutions, however, often spoke of this change as something sensible and palpable; and the definitions which were given of it, combined with those notions of faith which were entertained by many of the early Protestants, naturally betrayed them into this error. For when it is once supposed that faith is a certain knowledge and full assurance of our own individual

favour with God¹, or of our own absolute predestination to eternal life, and that Regeneration is *an infusion of* (what is called) *habitual grace*, or *an entire change of soul*, effected at some turning point, or, at the utmost, within a short compass of time, the barrier between these opinions and enthusiasm, however firm it may appear to speculative Theologians, is weak and inconsiderable. Hence the

¹ It was the common doctrine of the Lutherans, maintained even by Melancthon himself, that the faith which justifies is an assured persuasion of our own *personal* forgiveness and favour. Calvin adopted this opinion, and incorporated with it his own doctrine of the indefectibility of grace; so that according to him the faith which justifies is an assured persuasion of our *personal and everlasting* salvation. See Inst. l. iii. c. 2. Many of his followers saw the absurdity of this definition, and its palpable contradiction to Scripture, which teaches us that faith must precede justification. They therefore made a distinction between justifying and special faith, and supposed that the one depends upon the other in the way of logical conclusion. Dr. S. Ward* treats the doctrine of justification by a *special* faith, or persuasion of our own *personal* forgiveness and acceptance, as a Lutheran error.

This notion of justification by a special faith, or a persuasion of our own *personal* forgiveness and acceptance, is a leading doctrine of Whitfield, Wesley, and all the Methodistical sects, and exactly coincides with their views of regeneration; which in their system is separate from justification in theory and the order of thought, though not in fact or the order of time.

* Samuelis Ward, S. T. D. Opera nonnulla.

Tractatus de fide justificante et speciali, c. 23, p. 201.

Operæ pretium duximus eorum opinionem oppugnare, qui fiduciam de peccatorum remissione esse ipsam fidem justificantem contendunt : quæ fere est assertio Lutheranorum.

theoretical error of these divines, when it fell into the hands of the unthinking, the injudicious, and the passionate, naturally slid into a practical error and a fanatical conceit; especially when it was set off in the exaggerated colours of eloquence, or exhibited to the understanding in the incongruous form of rhetorical definitions. A new birth, distinctly perceivable by the conscience and feelings of the individual, accompanied with throes and agonies, and bearing in every respect a close analogy to the natural birth, has become, as might have been expected, the favourite tenet and strong hold of fanaticism. Indeed the theory of those who contend that this new birth is sensible, and of those who speak of it in more guarded language, is precisely the same; and there is no difference in their views of the nature or necessity of that change which they designate by this term. But the more sober-minded advocates of this opinion maintain that the change is not perceived at the very moment when it takes place, because it is not expected. Whereas, in the system of the enthusiasts, it is expected, and therefore, as they contend, is perceived. The mind of the aspirant is postured into the different stages of spiritual parturition, and he is brought to the birth (to use their own phraseology) sooner or later, if we will believe themselves, as the Spirit listeth; as thinking and observing men will probably judge, in proportion to his credulity or vanity, the live-

liness of his imagination, or the strength of his natural passions.

There is another signification of this word, to which I have frequently alluded, which speaks of the legitimate effects of the new birth, the practical change which the Holy Ghost effects in believers, by a popular and common figure, under the name of Regeneration. The word is often used in this sense by sound and orthodox divines of our Church. Maintaining in its full force the connection between the outward sign and inward grace of Baptism, they do not adhere with strictness to the phraseology of the Liturgy, and of the ancient Christians. Some writers use the word indifferently, either for the spiritual grace of Baptism, or for that inward change which is more properly denominated renovation; or, whilst they acknowledge that the former is its strict and accurate sense, use it occasionally in a more enlarged and popular manner. Some, with greater deference to the popular use of words than to accuracy of doctrinal language, style the inward grace of the Sacrament baptismal Regeneration, and give the title of spiritual Regeneration to the progressive renewal and change of the inward frame. But this distinction has no foundation in the language of Scripture, and does not appear altogether safe. For though the doctrinal views of these writers appear to be sound, and in unison with the sentiments of our Church, the verbal distinction

which they have laid down seems to imply, what was probably far from their intention, that Regeneration in Baptism is not spiritual Regeneration. Others, again, without denying the virtue and efficacy of Baptism, use the word almost exclusively in the popular signification.

But the Arminian divines contended that what is here called the popular, is the only true and proper sense of this expression¹. For, in their opinion, the figure relates solely to effects, without taking into the account the mode in which they are produced, or the instruments by which they are effected. We may, indeed, they tell us, learn from other passages of Scripture, that this moral and

¹ Regeneratio facit nos Dei filios, id est Deo similes, et, ut diximus, perficitur verbo Evangelii. Quando se componit ad vitam juxta illius præscriptum instituendam, patris imaginem sensim exprimit: at postquam actu ipso ostendit se verbo illo regi, tum totum patrem refert, seque genuinum illius filium ostendit. Ad novum itaque effectum respicitur: modus, quo ille peragitur, phrasibus illis non continetur, sed ex aliis locis petendus est. Limborch, Theol. Christ. l. iv. c. 14. § 14.

It is in this sense that Archbishop Tillotson uses the word, in his Sermons on the nature and necessity of Regeneration. But in his Sermons on the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit, he decidedly states his opinion that the Holy Ghost is given in Baptism, and defends the language of our Church, in the office of Baptism for children, as agreeable to Scripture, the ancient fathers, and the Liturgies of the Reformed Churches. And no one who is acquainted with the Archbishop's sentiments, will suspect him of supposing that some infants receive the Holy Ghost in Baptism, and others not. Sermon 200. Vol. x. p. 345, 6. Octavo edition.

practical change is effected by the Word and Spirit of God. But it is called Regeneration only when completed; and men are not said to be regenerate in the Scriptural sense, till their whole conduct shows that they are governed by God's word, and till they resemble their heavenly Father, and show themselves to be his genuine children. Hence they positively deny that there is any connection between Baptism and Regeneration¹, and find fault, not

¹ *Sacramenta in nobis operantur, tanquam signa repræsentantia menti nostræ rem cujus signa sunt. Neque alia in illis quæri debet efficacia. Limborch Theol. Chris. l. iv. c. 66. § 31.*

Contraremonstrantes valde intricatè sententiam suam proponunt, nec distinctè satis concipi potest quid sibi velint. Do. § 30.

Baptismus ritus est, quo fideles, tanquam sacrâ tesserâ, confirmantur de gratiosâ Dei erga ipsos voluntate, remissione peccatorum, ac æternâ vitâ, seque ad vitæ emendationem, et præceptorum obedientiam obstringunt. C. 67. § 5.

Baptismum non esse lavacrum regenerationis satis ex iis, quæ antea de sacramentorum efficaciâ disputavimus, constare potest. C. 67. § 10.

Contraremonstrantes affirmare non audent omnes fidelium liberos fœdere divino comprehendî, et per Baptismum fœderis divini sigillo obsignari, sed solos electos. Hinc affirmare non dubitant, infantes fidelium baptizatos, si progressu ætatis impiâ ac profanâ vitâ suâ ostendant, se non habere Spiritum regenerationis, eum non amisisse, sed nunquam habuisse: baptizari autem, quia ex judicio charitatis pro fœderatis habendi sunt. Quâ suâ doctrinâ reverâ necessitatem Pædo-baptismi evertunt, utpote qui fallax tantum fœderis divini signum sit. Quodque gravius est, doctrina hæc cum maximâ Dei injuriâ conjuncta est. Quia enim Baptismus, ut fœderis divini sigillum, solemniter administratur in nomen Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, Pater,

without reason, with their Calvinistic opponents, who pretended to maintain this connection by the help of verbal ambiguities and ingenious equivocations, while they virtually denied it in the whole tenour of their doctrines and peculiar opinions.

But here again, though their arguments are sound and reasonable, supposing their definition to be correct, the theory of Regeneration is mis-stated, and the popular sense of the word substituted for its strict and appropriate meaning: the efficacy which the Church has assigned to the right use of its Sacraments is enervated; and the language of Scripture itself is frequently subjected to such modes of interpretation as are disclaimed by a sound and judicious criticism. In these subjects, whilst we keep close to the established theory and doctrine of the Church, one passage of Scripture throws light upon another; and where different texts appear to disagree, they may be reconciled upon general and approved rules of interpretation. But error is manifold, and every error has its difficulties to encounter, and its solutions to pro-

Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus invocantur tanquam testes in testimonium, quod dubium, incertum, ac fallax est, multorumque respectu falsum. Hinc Zanchius, ut incommodum illud vitet, consentaneè doctrinæ suæ docuit, Baptismum non esse administrandum, nisi sub hâc conditione, *si electi sint*: neminemque baptizandum, nisi hâc particulâ vel expressâ vel subintellectâ. *Ego, O Deus, hunc baptizo secundum electionem et propositum divinæ voluntatis tuæ.* C. 68. § 14.

pound. The view which our Church takes of Regeneration in Baptism is in accordance with sound sense and experience, with just ideas of the reasonable faculties and moral nature of man, with the general truth of religion, and the particular theory of Christianity. But every departure from it is more or less at variance with one or other of these principles, and, consequently, with the true sense and sound interpretation of Scripture itself.

It will be needless to inquire farther into all the variations from the truth which have been detailed in this Chapter. But in the following Chapter I shall examine more at length the grounds of that theory which has been opposed with the greatest confidence to the doctrine maintained in this Treatise. If it is founded in reason and Scripture, we must retrace our steps, and endeavour to discover the weak points of our own theory. If it is built upon scholastic paradoxes, or exaggerated views of any part of Christian truth, we may be contented to tread the highway which our Church has pointed out to us, and our ancestors in the faith have trodden, without turning aside to the right hand or the left.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CALVINISTIC THEORY OF
REGENERATION.

WE have seen that according to the theory stated in a preceding chapter, Regeneration is a pure act of God's special grace, immanent in himself and terminating in man, limited and determined to a particular time, and incapable of latitude and increase. But the theory, whose merits we now propose to examine, proceeds upon totally different principles. For it represents Regeneration as a kind of general revolution in the moral nature and reasonable faculties of man, effected by the sole power of God's Holy Spirit, in the way of creation or miraculous operation; as an implantation of new qualities or habits; or as that turning point from evil to good, in which a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul takes place. Such

a change, however confidently asserted and ingeniously defended, will be found, if I mistake not, on a more exact inquiry, to be inconsistent with the reason of the thing, the experience and history of mankind, and the drift and purposes of natural and revealed religion.

That those changes which have their seat in our intellectual and moral nature, so far as they are effected through the medium of religious instruction and exercises, are the joint work of the Holy Spirit and of that principle of self-action which God has implanted in man, is a truth to which Scripture and our own reason and conscience bear a concurrent and consistent testimony. We learn from Scripture that the aid of the Holy Ghost is requisite to the illumination of our understandings, and the renewal and reformation of our hearts. But, at the same time, it presses upon us the necessity of intellectual and moral discipline, and exhorts us to do for ourselves, in our own place and proportion, the very same things of which it speaks in other passages as the work of God and the Holy Ghost. Reason and conscience likewise teach us, with an evidence which cannot be contradicted, that according to the common tenour of God's dispensations, no sensible change takes place in the dispositions and habits of the mind without our own active co-operation. Whether, therefore, we refer

ourselves to the word of God, or follow the track which reason and conscience mark out to us, there is no cause for supposing that the Holy Ghost, when he enlightens and reforms the human soul, acts otherwise than in the order of moral causes, accommodating his influences to the intellect and moral nature of free and accountable agents, not creating new qualities, nor implanting new faculties, but working upon materials which, though deranged and disordered by the fall, and impaired by our own sins, are nevertheless inherent in our constitution.

It is true that these changes take place in various ways, and differ materially in times and seasons, degrees and measures; but they present no appearances inconsistent with the usual relation between moral causes and effects. The same varieties occur in the operation of moral and intellectual causes, where the special agency of the Spirit is confessedly excluded. For though the changes effected by those causes are usually gradual and imperceptible, yet it frequently happens that the powers of the mind and the moral principles are strongly developed at particular seasons, and that important changes, so far as they come within the cognizance of our conscience and memory, may be traced back with great probability to particular occasions. These are matters of frequent occurrence, and are not thought to be miraculous; and it is natural to

suppose, that the causes which have led to these striking developments have been working their way in silence, and combining and preparing their effects. But there is no reason to think that those changes which are brought about by spiritual causes, and the supernatural and remedial power¹ of the Holy Ghost, are effected in another manner, or that they are to be referred to the class of miracles or literal creations. Indeed, such a supposition appears inconsistent with the freedom and responsibility of man, and seems to resolve religious improvement into necessity and fatalism.

But this theory, which contemplates Regeneration as an implantation of habits, or a mystical and miraculous change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, rests on a metaphysical notion, that the change which the Holy Spirit produces in the inward frame of man must commence in all its parts, at some turning point, or precise and definite moment. To analyze the workings of the Holy Spirit, and assign to him a particular time and measure of action, appears, at first sight, an imprudent and hopeless undertaking. But if this

¹ We cannot either will or do without God's help : He worketh both in us ; that is, we by His help alone are enabled to do things above our nature. But then we are the persons enabled : and therefore we do these works as we do others, not by the same powers, but in the same manner. Bp. Taylor, U. N. p. 675.

change is, as we learn from Scripture, the joint produce of divine and human, of spiritual and moral causes, and is, therefore, brought about not in the order of miraculous but of moral effects, the hypothesis is unfounded, and the metaphysical data on which it rests are necessarily erroneous.

Our acquaintance with the operation of moral causes is altogether practical and experimental, and no arguments can be valid and conclusive which are not borne out by an induction of facts and the history of human nature. But uniform experience contradicts the theory which we are examining. For it proves that we have such faculties and principles in our nature as we might expect to find in the frame and constitution of religious and responsible creatures; that they must be brought into action by instruction and moral discipline; and that habits of holiness and spiritual discernment are not infused into us, but are formed and matured in the same manner as our other moral and intellectual endowments. The same imperceptible transition from evil to good, the same fusion and absorption of habits, the same process of causes operating in silence, and elements of reformation working their way, till they acquire, we know not how, some shape and consistency, characterize those changes which are purely moral, and those which are, properly speaking, religious and spiritual. The reason is obvious. For this is the only method of spiritual

and supernatural agency which will allow man to work out his own improvement and salvation, as a free and voluntary agent. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is not bestowed on him¹ to give new properties to his soul, nor to supersede his own faculties and endeavours, but to excite, encourage, and strengthen them, to prevent and correct his will, and to give a right turn and bias to his affections. It is, indeed, generally allowed that evil is not extinguished at any turning point or decisive period, nor mastered by violent and miraculous remedies, but must be encountered and subdued by moral and religious discipline. Nor does analogy or experience justify us in supposing that good principles are developed, or good habits formed in any other manner.

¹ It has been a subject of dispute, whether the grace of the Holy Spirit is moral suasion or power. The truth seems to be that it is both. Preventing grace is that influence which the Holy Ghost exercises upon the soul, in turning it from evil, giving a right bias to the will and affections, and bringing into play the good principles of our nature; and this change must be wrought through the medium of moral instruments. Co-operating grace is that power of the Holy Spirit superadded to our natural faculties, which enables us to do those things, to which the will, when prevented and rectified, prompts and determines us, and to form our good principles into habits by use and exercise.

Preventing grace requires on man's part consent, or the yielding himself to the influence of reasonable evidences and moral arguments and persuasions; co-operating grace, the active exertion and diligent use of those faculties with which God has endowed him.

But if this theory of Regeneration is inconsistent with the reason of the thing and the history and experience of our nature, it is no less inconsistent with the genius and purposes of natural and revealed religion. For religion, whether natural or revealed, is a moral instrument of improvement and salvation, requiring a moral subject, acting by moral means, tending to a moral end, and producing moral effects. By natural religion, I mean, without any reference to the source from whence we derive our knowledge, those first truths and principles of religion which are addressed to the plain sense and reason of mankind, and when fairly stated and deliberately examined, carry with them the assent of the understanding and conscience. Such are those truths which relate to the difference between good and evil, the nature and will of God, and the duties and responsibility of man. By revealed religion, I mean those truths which are addressed principally to our faith, and depend upon testimony; those especially which are of a remedial nature, and are connected with the fall and recovery of the human soul.

It is evident, at first sight, that the moral and intellectual improvement of mankind is the end of natural religion, and that it operates by moral means, and in a moral manner. Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that revealed and remedial religion operates in the same way, and in the same

order of causes. It furnishes new sanctions to God's will and man's duty, and new motives to exertion and improvement. It gives spring and elasticity to the soul, by relieving it from the weight of guilt and the fear of punishment; and it engages to supply it with spiritual and supernatural assistance in framing and perfecting its moral habits, and working out its own salvation. But it does not supersede the obligations of natural religion, nor destroy the established relation between moral and religious causes and effects. For though revelation gives a new turn and a supernatural impulse to moral instruments, such as example, instruction, prayer, study, and meditation, it produces no effects in the ordinary and settled course of God's dispensations, without their intervention.

But the theory which we are examining assumes an entire change in all the parts and faculties of the soul as a first step to religious improvement; it supposes that habits of belief and holiness are not formed by moral means and discipline, but implanted in the soul by a literal creation, or miraculous action of the divine power; that previous to this change man is utterly incapable of any spiritual exertion, or any movement of the soul to God and holiness; that this revolution of the inward frame takes place at some turning point, or at least within some particular compass of time; and consequently, that habitual godliness is not the moral and legiti-

mate, but the necessary consequence of Regeneration. In short, it substitutes a scheme of necessity for that system of intellectual and moral discipline in which all the parts and branches of religion, whether natural or revealed, whether addressed to our faith or our reason, uniformly centre.

But the metaphysical paradoxes of this system depend on some particular views of the doctrine of the fall, and the original and inbred depravity of our common nature. Though the doctrine of original sin is plainly deducible from Scripture, it is a subject on which it touches with a moderate and sparing hand; and it certainly does not warrant the exaggerated descriptions of our natural and necessary condition as fallen creatures, which are to be found in the writings of Divines, and in some popular systems of theology. Scripture uniformly speaks of the sinfulness of man in a practical and experimental manner. It lays before us a series of observations arising out of particular facts and occasions, or out of a general view of the conduct and character of that portion of mankind with which the inspired writers were conversant. But besides the conclusions which are deducible from Scripture by means of analysis and induction, and the brief but pointed account of the fall recorded in the book of Genesis, there is one passage of St. Paul's Epistles ¹

¹ Rom. v. 12, &c.

in which the origin of evil is referred back in express terms to Adam's transgression, and the prevalence and universality of sin are accounted for upon the principle of an hereditary infection. Man is there considered as lying under a sentence of condemnation, and tainted with moral evil, in consequence of the guilt of our first parent. The Apostle speaks of this doctrine as an acknowledged truth, and infers, in the way of analogy, the universality of our recovery and redemption in Christ from the universality of our fall and condemnation in Adam, as a principle which he might safely assume for a medium of comparison and illustration. But he does not tell us what is the precise nature of that condemnation which has been brought upon us by the fall, independently of our own personal sins; nor does he attempt to define the extent and virulence of that infection of nature which has been entailed upon us by descent and derivation.

The ancient Christians handled the fall of man with the same reserve and moderation, treating this original infection of his nature not as a speculative but a practical doctrine, and resolving that state of condemnation, in which he is placed previously to his call, election, regeneration, into the just but incomprehensible judgment of God. Calvin indeed finds¹ fault with them for not delivering their

¹ Postquam in Adâ *obliterata fuit cœlestis imago*, non solus sustinuit hanc pœnam, ut in locum sapientiæ, virtutis, sanctitatis,

opinion on this subject with sufficient decision and perspicuity. But they acted soberly and wisely for they acknowledged the fact, but did not attempt to explain it systematically, or to define the nature of the evil with precision, because they knew that such an attempt was not warranted by Scripture.

But the theologians, whose theory we are now canvassing, have pronounced their judgment upon this question in a tone of dogmatism, to which neither Scripture nor experience give any sanction, and have painted out the nature and character of original sin, and the necessary and universal consequences of the fall, in tragical and aggravated colours¹. According to their system, the immediate

veritatis, justitiæ, teterrimæ succederent pestes, cæcitas, impatientia, impuritas, vanitas, injustitia : sed iisdem quoque miseriis implicuit suam progeniem ac immersit. Hæc est hæreditaria corruptio, quam peccatum originale veteres nuncupârunt, peccati voce intelligentes naturæ antea bonæ puræque depravationem. Quâ de re multa fuit illis concertatio, quum a communi sensu nihil magis sit remotum, quàm ob unius culpam fieri omnes reos, et ita peccatum fieri commune. Quæ videtur ratio fuisse vetustissimis Ecclesiæ doctoribus, cur obscurè tantùm perstringerent hoc caput, saltem minus dilucidè quàm par erat, explicarent. Calv. Inst. l. ii. c. 1. s. 5.

What their doctrine on this head was may be learned from Wall's *Infant Baptism*. It is most certain that they uniformly acknowledged this truth, and grounded upon it the necessity of redemption and regeneration in Baptism. See likewise Bp. Tomline on the 9th Article. *Elements*, vol. ii. p. 235.

¹ *Quicquid ingenium nostrum concipit, agitat, instituit, molitur, semper malum est.* Ita

consequence of the fall was the obliteration of God's image from the soul of man. Hence he became an unmixed mass of depravity and corruption, without one spark or remnant of goodness; necessarily determined to evil in every choice and action, cankered and rotten to the very core, utterly averse from God, and reduced to a state of confusion, disorder, rebellion, blindness, and impotency, without one redeeming principle, or counteracting tendency. Such, they tell us, is the extent of this depravity, that even an infant is necessarily odious and abominable in God's sight, because he contains within

Ita ex omni parte vitiata corruptaque est voluntas, ut nihil nisi malum generet—Anima non ex vitiis modo laborat, sed omni bono prorsus vacua est—Non dicit (Joh. xv. 1.) nos esse infirmiores, quàm qui nobis sufficiamus; sed nos ad nihilum redigendo omnem vel exiguæ facultatulæ opinionem excludit. Inst. l. ii. c. 3. s. 9.

Stet ergo nobis indubia illa veritas, quæ nullis machinamentis quateferi potest. Mentem hominis sic alienatam prorsus a Dei justitiâ, *ut nihil non impium, contortum, fœdum, impurum, flagitiosum concipiat: cor peccati veneno ita penitus delibutum esse, ut nihil quàm corruptum fœtorem efflare queat.* Quod si quippiam interdum boni in speciem ostendat, mentem tamen semper hypocrisi et fallaci obliquitate involutam, animum interiore perversitate illigatum manere. c. 5. s. 19.

The image of God was blotted out, so that man is no longer a free agent: hence his unregenerate state is a state of mere confusion, disorder, rebellion, blindness, impotency, and aversion from God—Not so much as one good thought could ever yet escape to heaven free from it. Bp. Hopkins, vol. ii. p. 479.

him the seeds and principles of every kind of wickedness ¹.

Sometimes they attempt to account for this depravity, and for the sentence of condemnation which has passed upon fallen man, by borrowing from the schoolmen a fabulous account of a certain compact between God and Adam, in which he was supposed to covenant for all his descendants, and to bind them down to the consequences of his own conduct, as their federal head and representative. Hence, we are told, the sin of Adam became legally and forensically their own sin, and they were, on principles of justice and natural equity, as deep in the transgression as Adam himself, and as liable to the pains and penalties denounced against it ².

Sometimes they account for this utter corrup-

¹ *Tota eorum (infantium) natura quoddam est peccati semen: ideò non odiosa et abominabilis Deo esse non potest. l. ii. c. 1. s. 18.*

² This history of imputation was proposed to the Council of Trent by Catharin, one of the most eminent of the schoolmen of those days, as a solution of the doctrine of original sin. It afterwards became a fashionable doctrine among the scholastic Calvinists*. Dr. S. Ward has a treatise on the subject, in which his arguments are avowedly borrowed from the writings of Catharin. The same scheme of imputation was maintained by Bishop Davenant on the authority of the schoolmen, (Preface to Whitby on the five Points,) and is stated with perfect confidence as evangelical doctrine by Bishop Hopkins' in his Sermons, which he entitles "The Doctrine of the two Covenants."

* *Prælectiones de peccato originali, c. 13 & 14.*

tion of our nature on principles of philosophical analysis. Man, they tell us, by transgressing the divine law, became liable to punishment: hence, he contracted a deep enmity against God, as the avenger of sin, and, in consequence, became hostile to the very principle of holiness, and tainted to the core with moral and spiritual corruption. They teach us, with a great show of metaphysical precision, but in contradiction to the history and experience of mankind, in what way the intellect, the will, and the affections of fallen man are darkened, distorted, and polluted, by the action of the intellect upon the will, and of the will upon the affections. In this state of utter depravity, natural antipathy to holiness, and deep-rooted hatred of God himself, he cannot be restored by the ordinary operation of spiritual remedies and moral discipline, but must undergo an entire change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, before he can experience any desire of improvement, or any movement of the soul to God. For if the image of God is obliterated in man, if his understanding is entirely darkened, his will altogether perverse, and incapable of choosing any thing but sin; if his affections are totally depraved, if there is no spark or relic of good in his whole inward frame¹, if he is a mere compound of

¹ From that time every man who is born into the world, bears the image of the devil in pride and self-will—the image of the beast in sensual appetites and desires.—John Wesley. Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 169.

beast and devil, if he is actuated by a real and literal hatred of God, and a fierce aversion to his holy law, man cannot be restored to his favour, nor to any capacity for holiness, without a new creation, in the strict sense of the word, and a miraculous infusion of new faculties and habits.

Regeneration, therefore, is described as that turning point and broad line of demarcation, which separates two essentially different and diametrically opposite states of mind; and is said to consist in a radical change of the parts and faculties of the soul, and an implantation of a habit of grace and holiness.

Such are the theological principles on which this theory of Regeneration is founded; and I would ask what warrant we have in Scripture or experience for these aggravated descriptions of human depravity, considered as the natural and direct consequence of the fall? or upon what basis of Scriptural truth and simplicity either that history of imputation, or that philosophical scheme and analysis of original sin, have been constructed? It is a dangerous thing to attempt to improve upon Scripture, to venture upon hypotheses, and indulge ourselves in philosophical systems and speculations, where Scripture confines itself to practical observations, and instructs us in the way of induction.

This theory confounds in one coarse and undistinguishing picture all the various degrees of wicked-

ness, which the history of mankind exhibits to us, and assumes the most corrupt and degraded state of intellect and morals, of which man is capable, as the standard and pattern of our fallen nature. Man, indeed, since the fall, is "very far gone from original righteousness," and has contracted a strong bias to evil in his will and affections, and a visible tendency to decay both in intellect and morals. But the most degenerate condition of the most ignorant and most profligate of his kind is not his natural state, nor the immediate and universal consequence of the fall. In the midst of his debasement and inherent bias to evil, he inherits many relics of his better self, principles of moral goodness, and distinct lineaments of that image of God in which he was created; and, whatever his practice may be, the judgments of his understanding, and the decisions of his conscience are usually on the side of virtue and morality, unless his intellect has been degraded by ignorance and bad education, or his conscience seared by habits of profligacy, and an universal corruption of manners.

Nothing is more evident to common sense than the progress and increase of vicious habits in individuals. So far as fallen man is acquainted with his duty, St. Paul's personification of his own countrymen¹ describes the contest which exists within him

¹ Or, as Barrow says, "He speaketh in the person of a man endowed with natural strength, abstracting from the subsidiary

in an early stage of his sinful courses, between concupiscence and evil affections, and the dictates of reason and conscience¹. But habits of sin, unless counteracted by sound instruction and moral disci-

virtue and operation of the Holy Ghost." In fact, what St. Paul is led by the tenour of his argument to say of the Jews in particular, applies by analogy to all persons who are in the same or similar circumstances.

¹ Romans vii. 7—25. It has been contended that St. Paul in this passage is speaking in his own person as a servant and apostle of Christ, or to use a popular expression, as a *truly regenerate man*.

This view of the passage, which is contrary to the main current of ancient opinion, is not the result of investigation, analysis, comparison, or any received ground and principle of interpretation; but is built on a conceit, that the man who is not living under the influence of the grace of Christ, necessarily hates the law of God, and the principle of holiness, and therefore cannot *will* what is good, nor *delight in*, that is, approve and admire, his law.

It is totally irrelevant to the Apostle's argument, and interrupts the thread and context of his discourse.

It is contrary to reason, common sense, and common experience.

It is inconsistent with one main end and design of the Gospel: which is, to deliver men from the dominion of sin, and to enable them not only to *will* but to *do* what is good; not only to *delight in*, or to approve, *the law of God*, but to *delight to do his will*.

It is in opposition to the whole tenour of the New Testament, to the drift of the Apostle's arguments and reasonings in this Epistle, and to the scope of the controversy in which he is engaged.

It is not merely irrelevant to, but overthrows and destroys the course of argument, exhortation, caution, and encouragement which St. Paul is pursuing in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of this Epistle.

pline, gain ground upon him, till he abandons himself to them without constraint or reluctance, keeps out of sight all obligations to duty, and silences the warnings and visitations of conscience. And experience teaches us that the corruption of public morals, and the increasing degeneracy of our common nature, proceed onward in the same order and analogy. Hence, those passages of Scripture which describe in glowing colours the lamentable ignorance, the idolatrous habits, and the corrupt morals of the heathen world, or the degenerate state of the inspired writers' countrymen and contemporaries, and are pictures of the increase and predominance of evil, and of the worst men in the worst times, must not be construed into descriptions of human nature in the abstract, or, to use a common phrase, of *unregenerate* man. For we are no more justified in forming our estimate of human nature from the principles and characters of the most abandoned of our fellow-creatures, than in forming our estimate of the general condition of believers in Christ from what we hear and see of the holiest and best of God's servants.

History, indeed, teaches us that the ignorance and moral corruption of the heathens were most deplorable: and St. Paul accounts for the sad state of the great mass of mankind from the natural progress of evil habits, considered not merely as the effect of the fall, but as the judicial consequence of

idolatry, and apostacy from the primitive and patriarchal religion. But even here there are some bright spots and examples of better principles and morals, sufficient to refute an hypothesis which confounds all degrees and varieties of evil, and expunges from the soul, by one sweeping sentence, every tendency to good, and every lineament of its original resemblance to God.

In fact, there are few of those good dispositions which, when nurtured by the grace of God, and formed into habits by religious instruction and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, are justly denominated spiritual accomplishments, of which we do not discover some imperfect traces in the history of the heathen world. It is easy to assert that all their virtues were sins, and equally damnable with their worst vices. Many of what they deemed virtues were in reality sins; their virtues were at the best exceedingly imperfect, and fell far short of the Christian standard; and they could have no value in God's sight, nor any claim to an everlasting reward. Still, as far as they proceeded on right principles, and aimed at good ends, and especially when they had an obscure reference to the will of a sovereign and supreme Being, they were, properly speaking, virtues, and plain indications of the purposes of our creation, and of the original fashion and tendencies of our nature. St. Paul, therefore, justly argues, that *when the Gentiles which have not*

*the law do by nature the things of the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts*¹: and seems to intimate that some of their number may have attained to peace and glory through God's great goodness and uncovenanted mercy. *Glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God*².

It is almost needless to examine that metaphysical system, which ascribes the taint and corruption of human nature to man's hostility to the principle of holiness, and then attributes this hostility to his inveterate hatred of God, as the avenger of sin; or that account of original sin, which refers back the corruption of the affections to the perverseness of the will, and the perverseness of the will to the absolute darkness and distortion of the intellect. For these notions have no colour of scriptural authority, and are contradicted by the history and experience of human nature. Man, indeed, when his conscience upbraids him with his sins, endeavours to silence its reproaches, and withdraws his mind, as much as possible, from the thought of God, and from the fear of the consequences; but he does not naturally hate God as the avenger of sin. His habits are too often directly opposed to the prin-

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15.

² Rom. ii. 10.

ciple of holiness, in consequence of the corrupt state of his affections; but he is not naturally hostile to the principle of holiness itself.

In the system of which I am speaking there are no paradoxes more common, and at the same time less conformable to the fact, or to the truth of Scripture, than that man naturally hates God, and has a fierce antipathy to his laws, or rather to the very principle of holiness. If by hating God we mean, according to the scriptural phraseology, not loving him as we ought, and preferring our own passions and devices to his will and wisdom, in this sense man may be said, with great propriety, to hate God, and his whole history bears witness to the truth of this scriptural lesson. Nor is it less true that man has an antipathy to God's laws, if by antipathy we mean an inherent unwillingness to attend to them and obey them, and a dislike to their restraints and provisions. But the theory before us speaks of "fierce antipathies" and "inveterate hatred," and represents man as hating God, and resisting his will, on principle and system: not as disliking and fretting against the restraints which are imposed upon his sensual and selfish desires, but as actuated by a determined animosity to those principles of holiness, to which God's laws are conformed: as hating God because he is God; and goodness in the abstract, because it is goodness; and loving evil for evil's sake.

But the truth is, that if man ever does positively hate God, and the principles on which his laws are grounded, this state of mind is so far from being natural, that it can only be the effect of great degeneracy, of deplorable and brutal ignorance, or of confirmed habits of wickedness and impiety. The history of our nature furnishes us with ample proofs of our weakness and vanity, our low views, our supineness and self-sufficiency, and our dislike of serious exercises and self-inquiry; of the perverseness of our wills, and the corrupt state of our affections; of our proneness to evil, and unwillingness to submit to wholesome restraints and moral discipline. But it does not bear us out in affirming that the natural man is actuated by a settled hatred of God, or a fierce antipathy to holiness. We shall therefore speak more consistently with the fact, if we allow that the corruption of human nature, when aggravated by habits of sin, leads men by degrees to an hostility to the principle of holiness, and that this hostility to the principle of holiness may, in extreme cases, end in a direct hatred of God himself; and if we affirm, generally speaking, that the passions and will of fallen man, instead of being misled by the intellect, impair the faculties, darken the vision, and pervert the judgments of his understanding.

Some of those divines, who ground the necessity of such a change, as this theory of Regeneration

exhibits, on these views of the depravity of human nature, allow, nevertheless, that there may be, comparatively speaking, different degrees of moral goodness in *unregenerate* men; but they contend that they are all equally deficient in spiritual goodness. If it is meant that man cannot of himself attain to those kinds and degrees of goodness which must, upon scriptural principles, be wrought in him by the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, this is a truism which no one will attempt to controvert. For all parties to this debate confess, with our Church, 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: and that, therefore, we can have no power to do *good works, pleasant and acceptable to God*, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will¹." But there seems to be some confusion in the notion which these divines entertain of the difference between spiritual and moral habits and actions². For this difference does not consist in the order

¹ Article X.

² Spiritual goodness is, in fact, the perfection and improvement of moral goodness wrought in the human soul by the help and instrumentality of the Holy Ghost, having God's will for its rule, and God's glory and the happiness of a life to come for its end.

and nature of the things themselves, the manner of acting, or the faculties of the agent, but in the law or rule to which they are conformed, in their efficient and instrumental, and in their final causes. Moral habits and actions, though they have not that perfection which can render them pleasing and acceptable to God, and are not necessarily conformed to his declared will, but to the rules of right reason and experimental wisdom, are, nevertheless, so far as they go, good in themselves, because they are conformed to a moral law, (and every moral law is, in a certain sense, an express of God's will,) and imply a right choice and a voluntary principle of action. But if there are still some good principles and remains of moral goodness in man's constitution, though they require religious discipline and instruction, and the preventing and co-operating power of the Holy Ghost, to bring them into play and mould them into spiritual habits, they plainly contradict the more exaggerated representations of man's natural depravity, and remove the necessity of such a change as this theory designates by the word Regeneration—a creation of new faculties and habits, and a miraculous transformation of the whole inward frame.

We are told, however, that the broad and decisive distinction laid down in Scripture between nature and grace, and between natural and spiritual men, necessarily implies and involves this spiritual

change. The distinction between nature and grace is not a scriptural but a scholastic distinction, and is, I apprehend, somewhat inaccurate. For the true distinction does not seem to lie between nature and grace, but between nature left to its own bias and counsels, and nature reformed and invigorated by God's Word and Spirit. But the scriptural distinction between spiritual and natural¹ (animal or carnal) men is altogether practical. For it does not imply any precise instant in which the understanding begins to be enlightened, the will to be reformed, and the affections to be purified, but

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14. *Ψυχικός*. The word *πνευματικός*, in this passage of Scripture, is equivalent to *τέλειος*, and signifies a Christian well advanced in the knowledge and practice of his religion, and is not only opposed to unbelievers, whom St. Paul calls here, by a comparative and degrading expression, *ψυχοίς*, but to Christian novices, or babes, whose schismatical conduct showed that they had made small progress in religious knowledge and practice, and whom he calls, by a similar figure, *σαρκικούς*.

Ψυχή properly signifies the animal principle opposed to *νοῦς*, or the reasonable principle—the *ἐπιθυμητικόν* to the *ἡγεμονικόν*. But St. Paul considers the unbeliever, who had not received the Spirit of God, as no better than *ψυχικός*—a mere animal man; and then contemplates the weak, imperfect Christian, who was not walking after the Spirit, as no better than *σαρκικός*, still walking after the flesh, the natural or animal principle of action. But he calls these converts carnal, not in the strictest sense, as men utterly devoid of the Spirit of grace, (for he afterwards speaks of them as temples of the Holy Ghost,) but in the way of comparison and reproof, on account of their intestine divisions, and the small progress which they had made in spiritual knowledge and habits.

points out the real and practical difference between believers and unbelievers, between those men who had been instructed by the Gospel and enlightened and purified by the Spirit of Christ, and those men who were following the bent of their natural passions and propensities, or, at the best, had no better guides than their unassisted reason, or the wisdom of the schools and the philosophers. It is easy to bring together passages of Scripture which describe in strong and glowing figures the lamentable state of the unconverted Gentiles, and the happy change which had taken place in the converts to the Gospel, and by the help of rhetorical colouring and comments to make them bear upon an opinion to which they have, in fact, no relation. But I am confident, that this theory receives no support from Scripture, explained on just and legitimate principles.

It has been contended, likewise, that man, being, subsequently to the fall, spiritually dead, cannot perform any spiritual acts whatever till he is spiritually regenerated. This argument is put forward in various forms. Sometimes we find it stated in the shape of a dilemma; sometimes as a postulate, which no reasonable man can call in question. For it is contended, that as no natural acts can be performed previous to the natural birth, so, on principles of analogy, no spiritual acts can be performed previous to the spiritual birth. Upon this ground

it is affirmed, that every adult recipient who is duly qualified for Baptism, must necessarily be regenerated before the sacrament, because no man can believe, or repent, or perform any other spiritual acts, till he has been born again. Thus, St. Paul was regenerated before his Baptism¹, because he prayed, and his prayer was accepted; Cornelius,

¹ This notion that St. Paul was regenerated before Baptism, though directly opposite to the plain sense of Scripture, has been strenuously maintained by Calvin and his followers, and urged as an example to prove that all believers are regenerate before Baptism.

Jam erant dimissa Paulo peccata: non igitur baptismo demùm ablutus est, sed novam gratiæ quam adeptus est confirmationem accepit. Calvin ad Act. xxii. 16.

Dicimur accipere, obtinere, impetrare, quod quantum ad fidei nostræ sensum nobis a Domino exhibetur; sive id tum primùm testatur, sive testatum magis ac certius confirmat. Hoc itaque tantum voluit Ananias. Ut certus sis, Paule, remissa tibi esse peccata, baptizare. Promittit enim Dominus in Baptismo remissionem peccatorum, hanc accipe et securus esto.—Calvin Inst. l. iv. c. 15. § 15.

Dr. Ward, speaking of the passages of Scripture to which Calvin and his followers gave this turn, (Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; Mark xvi. 16.) says, Quid ante baptismum Deus fecerat arcanâ suâ voluntate pro talibus baptizandis Apostoli nec judicare, nec præsumere potuerunt; sed in ipso baptismo dari remissionem, ac fieri ablutionem peccatorum virtute sanguinis Christi omnibus in Christum credentibus, et præsumsisse et docuisse videntur Apostoli. Atque hâc spe nixi ad Baptismum accedebant Christiani, atque in hunc sensum veteres hæc loca intellexerunt. Diss. p. 108.

This is the plain sense of Scripture; and there can be no doubt that such was not only the phraseology and apparent doctrine, but the firm belief and feeling of the ancient Christians. See Archbishop Laurence, part ii. p. 72, 73.

because he was a devout man and feared God, and his *prayers and alms had gone up for a memorial before God*. But we cannot argue from the literal to the metaphorical use of a word, any farther than the point of comparison extends. Hence this analogical argument is, to place it in the most favourable point of view, evidently inconclusive, because it assumes the very question in debate—*what is the point of comparison in which the resemblance between the natural and spiritual, or, in other words, between the literal and metaphorical birth, consists?* But, according to the established theory of the Church, grounded, as I apprehend, on plain and unexceptionable scriptural authority, this point of comparison is the passage from one state of existence to another. That passage from a state of death and condemnation in Adam to a state of life and justification in Christ, which Scripture represents as taking place in Baptism, is compared with the passage of an infant from the darkness and confinement of the womb into the light of day and freedom of motion. But according to this view of the phrase, and the doctrine which it implies, it is so far from being true that spiritual acts,—such acts, I mean, as centre in God, and are performed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—cannot take place previous to the new birth, that in the case of adult converts spiritual acts must necessarily precede Regeneration.

If by spiritual acts we mean such habits and actions as are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and have the promise of the life to come, according to the tenour of the Christian covenant, such acts, speaking in general terms, cannot be performed previously to Regeneration. For the Scriptures teach us that no man is released from his sins and reconciled to God till he is grafted into Christ, and, consequently, that no acts can be considered as Christian acts, or acts of covenanted holiness, till this change of spiritual condition has taken place. But our Church very properly concludes from the same Scriptures, that this change takes place in Baptism; that “a death to sin and a new birth to righteousness is the inward and spiritual grace of this sacrament;” and that we who “are by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, are hereby made children of grace”—or, in other words, “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.”

Having now examined at some length the theory which has been opposed with the greatest confidence to that doctrine of baptismal Regeneration, which has been explained and defended in this Treatise, I will leave it to the judgment of the reader, whether it is more consistent with reason, experience, and Scripture, than the theory universally maintained by the ancient Christians, and adopted by our own Church. But this theory,

connected as it is with aggravated notions of the depravity of our common nature, and systematic and metaphysical views of the effect of the fall, is encumbered with some difficulties and leads to some consequences, to which it will be necessary to advert.

CHAPTER XI.

A REVIEW OF SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH WHICH THE THEORY OF REGENERATION, EXAMINED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, IS ENCUMBERED, AND OF SOME CONSEQUENCES WHICH IT INVOLVES.

WE have seen that the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, in its simplest and most unsophisticated form, was universally received in the Catholic and Apostolical Churches, till it was altered and undermined, and either virtually annihilated, or openly expunged from the list of orthodox doctrines, in deference to that scheme of necessity, which superadded the doctrine of the indefectibility of true grace to the system of the ancient Predestinarians. This theory of Regeneration, therefore, is an integral part of what is commonly called the Calvinistic system, and is encumbered with the difficulties to which

that system is subject, and the consequences which it involves.

Natural and revealed religion are, as has been observed, moral instruments of reformation and improvement, and are intended to promote the welfare of man, as a rational and moral agent. A religion, therefore, which considers life and death, happiness and misery, as the consequences of different moral habits; of belief and unbelief, virtue and vice, holiness and wickedness, obedience and disobedience to the will of God; is, in the very nature of the thing, probationary, and must be looked upon as a sort of touchstone to prove and try the tempers and understandings of those men, to whom it is sufficiently propounded. Such is the drift of that religious system which the Scriptures exhibit to us; and they give us no reason to think, that the remedial and supernatural branches of religion are intended to supersede or alter its original essence and constitution. Thus, the truths and promises of the Gospel are proposed to the faith of mankind. But though man cannot believe the Gospel to any saving purposes, without the grace of God preventing him and working with him, still the grace of God and the power of the Holy Ghost suppose an honest and ingenuous use of his own faculties, and a disposition to assent to the truths and rely upon the promises, when he has sufficient evidence that they proceed from God. Thus the

Gospel presses upon him the necessity of moral improvement and obedience to God's will. But though it supplies him with motives and encouragements to well-doing, and promises of supernatural assistance, it uniformly supposes a free choice and a principle of self-action. So that the Gospel is in truth not only the salvation, but the trial and proof of fallen man; and always supposes principles of action analogous to his trial, and the right use of faculties which he already possesses.

But the theory before us contemplates man, in his *unregenerate* state, as totally devoid of all those principles and faculties, which the religion of the Gospel requires; and then supposes that the Regeneration, without which he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, consists in the creation or infusion of new habits, or a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, effected by an act of omnipotence. Thus that probationary scheme of religion which Scripture, in its plain and unsophisticated sense, inculcates, is superseded by a system of pure necessity. For in this theory, where the same word is preached, and the same sacraments are ministered, the Spirit is given or withheld, life and death, salvation and condemnation, are dealt out to the several individuals of mankind, not according to the plain terms of the charter, but according to some secret determination of the Divine counsels. The regenerate must necessarily believe and be saved.

The unregenerate, (those, that is, who live and die in a state of unbelief and impenitence) are precluded from belief and salvation by a decree which cannot be infringed, and a concatenation of causes and effects which it is impossible to suspend or interrupt.

The history of ecclesiastical opinion shows that this theory is a branch of that system of necessity, which supposes that true grace and all the qualities and virtues which it implies, are in their very nature indefectible; that when man has been once justified in God's sight, he cannot fall from this state of salvation; and that the principle implanted in him in his Regeneration cannot be suspended nor extinguished, but must necessarily produce the fruits of holiness. There are, however, some divines who reject the Calvinistic system of predestination and indefectible grace, and yet maintain this theory of original sin and regeneration. Their notion is, that in consequence of the state to which man is reduced by the fall, he cannot repent, or believe, or perform any acts of a spiritual kind, without first experiencing a new creation of habits, or an entire and radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul; and, consequently, that habitual holiness, being the necessary effect, or rather, the very essence of this change, is the sole criterion of Regeneration. But they allow, that after he has been born again he is in the same condition with Adam in his state of

uprightness, and may depart from grace given, and relinquish the habits of holiness which have been planted in him.

Yet, even under this modification, this theory of Regeneration still hinges upon necessity, and excludes the voluntary agency of man from any share in believing the Gospel, and the conversion of the soul to holiness. Where the same word is preached, and the same sacrament is ministered, Regeneration is still supposed to be bestowed on some men, and withholden from others, not according to the plain sense of the promise, but upon some unknown grounds of particular selection or special favouritism. Some men believe and are saved, because they are born again. Other men do not believe and are damned, because they are not endowed with this special gift of Regeneration.

Scripture, however, speaks of the rejection of the Gospel, not as the consequence of our hereditary impotence, and the depravity of our common nature, but as the personal sin of the unbeliever; not merely as the effect of that spiritual blindness which is derived to him from Adam, and, as is contended, can only be removed by a radical change of the intellectual faculties, but of a wilful indisposition to receive the truth, and surrender himself to sufficient evidences. When our Saviour commanded his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, he did not add that he who is born again shall believe,

and he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but only, that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved* : implying certainly, upon common principles of interpretation, that every one to whom the Gospel is preached, may, if he will, believe and be saved. He does not say, that he who is not regenerated, will not believe and will be damned ; but simply, that *he that believeth not shall be damned* : implying that unbelief is an act of personal default, and voluntary opposition to God's testimony and Spirit.

But this theory of Regeneration is not only encumbered with the difficulties which result from the substitution of necessity for probation, as the hinge and pivot of religion ; but it is built on such views of the depravity of human nature, as can scarcely be cleared from the imputation of making God, by plain and necessary consequence, the cause and author of our sins. Sober and scriptural notions of original sin are in no respect contrary to God's justice and equity, and the analogies of his moral and providential government. That fallen man should have forfeited his favour, and be lying, in some sense or other, under a sentence of condemnation, even previous to all actual transgressions, is a doctrine which, while we content ourselves with the simplicity of the scriptural statement, and do not attempt to explain the nature, and describe the particulars of this condemnation, contradicts no

principle of reason. That man's nature should have been tainted and enervated by the sin of his first parents, and should have contracted a bias to evil, and a tendency to decay, is what experience and analogy would obviously lead us to expect. These views of original sin are sufficient to convince us of the reasonableness and necessity of a dispensation, which ensures to us redemption from guilt and condemnation, and supernatural assistance to enable us to gain ground upon the infection of our nature, and to counteract our propensity to evil, and our tendency to decay. But it is not the natural effect of sin to wipe out at once all good from the soul, and to reduce the sinner and all his posterity from a state of purity and uprightness to a state of total corruption and unmixed depravity, of antipathy to God, and enmity to the principle of holiness. If then such a change as this did really take place at the fall, it must have been effected by an act of omnipotence: for nothing less than an act of almighty power could have produced at once such an universal revolution in all the faculties of the soul, and swept away from it every good principle and every lineament of its resemblance to God. But if God, by an act of sovereignty, converted all the children of Adam into a race of such corrupt and degraded beings, and rendered them incapable of any good whatever, till they are regenerated by a similar act of omnipotence, it would seem that God,

is, by plain consequence, the principal cause of all wickedness, and that man, on grounds of common sense and natural equity, is no more responsible for his sins, than a wild beast is responsible for that instinct of nature, which we sometimes call cruelty or ferocity.

Calvin indeed goes further ¹, and strenuously con-

¹ Non dicam cum Augustino, in peccato sive in malo nihil esse positivum, sed aliud mihi principium sumo. Quæ perperam et injustè ab hominibus fiunt, eadem recta et justa esse Dei opera. De Æterna Dei Præd. p. 725.

Nec vero commentum illud recipio, Deum, quia lege solutus sit, quicquid agat reprehensione vacare. Deum enim exlegem qui facit, maximâ eum gloriæ suæ parte spoliât, quia rectitudinem ejus et justitiam sepelit. Non quod legi subjectus sit Deus, nisi quatenus ipse sibi lex sit—Nondum tamen soluta est objectio : si Dei arbitrio geruntur omnia, nec quicquam homines, nisi eo volente et ordinante, designant, esse igitur malorum omnium authorem. Vera est illa, quæ in Scholis obtinuit, distinctio, malum pœnæ, non culpæ a Deo proficisci, modò dextrè intelligatur : sed imperitè quidam, quasi verbulo uno rem de quâ agitur obruere liceret, hoc ipsum, de quo maximè ambigitur, securè prætereunt : quomodo extra culpam sit Deus in eodem opere, quod in Satanâ et reprobis tam damnât ipse, quam damnatum ab hominibus pronuntiat—Quomodo igitur a culpâ eximetur Deus, ejus Satan cum suis organis reus erit ? Nempe si inter hominum facta discrimen a consilio et fine sumetur : ut ejus damnetur crudelitas, qui cornicum oculos configit, judicis autem laudetur virtus, qui scelesti hominis cæde manus suas sanctificat ; cur deterior erit Dei conditio, ne sua eum justitia ab hominum maleficiis separet?—Ergo cum justâ de causâ, licet nobis ignotâ, a Domino procedant, quæ sceleratè ab hominibus maleficia perpetrantur : etiamsi rerum omnium prima causa sit ejus voluntas, peccati tamen esse eum Authorem nego. De Æternâ Dei Prædestinatione, p. 728.

Melancthon, and the more sober and judicious Protestants,

tends that God concurs positively and directly in the sins of mankind, by ordaining their commission, and influencing the will to commit them. But he endeavours to prove that, even on this supposition, God cannot be deemed the cause and author of sin. For he maintains that those actions, which are sinful in man who performs them, are not sinful in God who ordains and concurs in them, because actions are denominated sinful in respect to their final causes, and God's end in contributing to these actions is his own glory. But surely it must be acknowledged that God is the principal cause of those actions, to which he disposes the will, and in

whilst they fully believed that God's providence disposes all human events, and over-rules the counsels of the wicked, employing them as his instruments in the execution of his righteous decrees, still maintained that God does not impel man to sin by any ordination or active concurrence, but withdraws his grace from them, and permits them to follow their own counsels. But Calvin arraigns such just and moderate sentiments as barking against God, and nothing better than pride and blasphemy. *Cœlestibus oraculis sinistras ignominiae notas inurere non dubitant. Cœlum sputis impetunt. Adversus hanc doctrinam rabido ore latrant. In cœlum evomunt blasphemias. Inst. l. i. c. 18.*

The position that actions are denominated good or bad, righteous or sinful, with respect to their final causes, is grossly incorrect, and the examples by which the author has attempted to illustrate it, are pretty plain proofs of its weakness. Actions, indifferent in their own nature, are rendered good or evil by their final causes—Actions, which are good in themselves, are contaminated and rendered evil by a bad end—but no end, however good, can sanctify an evil action, or denominate it good, either in the actor or the adviser.

which he positively concurs. If therefore we justly refer backward to God, as their principal cause and author, all holy desires, good counsels, and just works, without taking into the account any secondary or subordinate causes, it will be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of plain minds, that he is not the cause of man's sins, if he positively concurs in sinful actions, in order to promote his own glory by the punishment of the sinner; or if, as this theory of Regeneration implies, he has, by an act of sovereign and almighty power, made men incapable of doing any thing but sin.

There is another consequence resulting from this theory of Regeneration, inimical to the main purposes of religious instruction and discipline. For religious instruction is intended to operate on the inward frame and moral principles of man through the medium of his conscience, by bringing home its admonitions and reproofs, its pictures of human nature, its general views and special descriptions of sin, to the heart and bosom of the individual. But it is impossible that those tragical representations of the depravity of our common nature, which are the props and supports of this theory, can be brought home to the conscience of the sinner. When his evil habits are described and delineated, and the several specialities of his transgressions pointed out to him; when he is charged with an inherent proneness to sin, and an aversion from holiness and

moral discipline, and on these grounds is impleaded as a sinner and a fallen creature; the appeal is made to his conscience, and he acknowledges the truth of the indictment. But when he is taught that he is a compound of beast and devil, and a mere mass of depravity and loathsome corruption, that he is utterly devoid of all good principles and affections, and entertains a fierce and bitter hatred of God, and a violent antipathy to the principle of holiness; and when the necessity of Regeneration is placed upon this footing, his conscience cannot acquiesce in these charges, because they do not contain a true statement of the case. And such exaggerations necessarily tend to weaken the force of Christian doctrine, and the conviction which results from the internal and practical evidences of its truth.

But this is not the whole extent of the evil. For unfortunately these exaggerated descriptions of human corruption, whilst they fail of acting upon the conscience, have a powerful effect on the passions of the weak and unreflecting, and naturally serve to kindle and encourage the maladies of religious enthusiasm and self-imposture. For when men are taught that a sense of their own utter and unmixed depravity is the first, or rather the sole qualification for Regeneration, they endeavour to throw themselves into that posture of mind, which the lesson that they have heard seems to require. Hence they give

themselves up to certain vague and desultory feelings of unworthiness, which they mistake for religious convictions, and establish within themselves a kind of factitious conscience, which, whilst it overlooks the specialities of sin, taxes them with utter depravity and a determined hatred of God; and thus calls them off from the task of self-inquiry, and the pursuit of self-knowledge. But the transition from this state of mind to a state directly opposite to it, is easy and natural. For he who can persuade himself that he is exactly such a creature as these views of original sin represent him, will find no difficulty in persuading himself, that he has experienced that mystical change and revolution of soul, on which the corresponding theory of Regeneration insists. Such in fact is the history of the most prevalent kinds of enthusiasm; and it confirms an observation made in a former part of this treatise—that the speculative errors of Divines naturally slide into practical errors and fanaticism, when they fall into the hands of the weak, the passionate, and the injudicious.

One other consequence of this theory is, that it ministers to the pride and vanity of the human heart, by shifting its religious convictions and self-condemnation from a consciousness of personal unworthiness to feelings or confessions of natural unworthiness and necessary sinfulness. Where just views of religion are entertained, a sense of natural unworthiness is the result of clear and deep convic-

tions of personal faultiness. But in a system which contemplates every man as utterly depraved by the necessity of his nature, and devoid of every spark and remnant of goodness, the idea of personal unworthiness will be merged in a vague feeling of natural depravity. It is easy to say, what has been confidently asserted by many Calvinistic divines, that this necessity of sinning is an aggravation of man's personal guilt, and is therefore the strongest ground that can be laid for humility and self-abasement. Common sense revolts against this assertion, and experience unequivocally refutes it. With respect to pious and sober-minded men,—and many such there are among the speculative advocates of this opinion,—sound sense and the power of religious principles neutralize the effects of an erroneous theory. But, with the exception of a comparatively small and fluctuating body of novices and aspirants, the great number of those who entertain these views of human nature, imagine themselves already regenerated; and the contrast between themselves and the unregenerate part of mankind, gives an irresistible fascination to the opinions which they have adopted. And they are well contented to place their former state in the blackest point of view, in order that they may derive the greater satisfaction from contemplating their regenerate condition.

Upon the whole, then, I am persuaded, that this theory of Regeneration, resting, as it does, on these

exaggerated views of the depravity of our common nature, involves in it consequences highly unfavourable to the simplicity and genuine character of the Gospel dispensation.

But in addition to these consequences, and the opposition which the theory presents to the plainest principles of natural and revealed religion, the definition of Regeneration, which it commonly assumes, is inconsistent with those sober and just views of our nature, in its renewed and improved state, which we may collect from Scripture and experience. At all events it is not such a definition as can be propounded with safety to the great body of our Christian brethren.

A prudent divine, who understands the true force and meaning of words, will be cautious of pronouncing that change which is effected in the act of Regeneration, *an entire change of heart or mind, or a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul.* Nay, a prudent divine, though he will allow that these expressions may be applied, in a qualified and comparative sense, to highly improved Christians, will rather choose to abstain from the use of them. Well advised and humble men will not readily appropriate such terms to themselves, because, though they cannot be too thankful for the change which they have undergone, they are aware that it is far from being entire either in parts or degrees. And we are too well acquainted with the

mischievous effects of such language on weak and passionate minds, and know by experience how well calculated it is to inflame the vanity of the human heart, and to give birth to every species of enthusiasm, and every degree of self-sufficiency.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION—CONTAINING SOME REMARKS ON THE HARMONY OF THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION IN BAPTISM WITH THE DRIFT AND PRINCIPLES AND MORAL EVIDENCES OF REVEALED RELIGION.

I HAVE now pursued my researches into the grounds and theory of the doctrine of Regeneration through the several heads of inquiry, which I proposed in the outset of this treatise. After premising some remarks on the obvious advantages of adhering as much as possible to the strict and determinate usage of words, in the different branches of human knowledge, and particularly in theological inquiries and controversies, I proceeded to lay before my readers a statement of the opinions of the ancient Christians on this subject of Regeneration, and of the principles on which their usage of the word seems to depend.

After this I investigated the Scriptural authorities for this doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, and examined the principal exceptions which have been taken to it from other passages of holy writ. I then pointed out the strict conformity between the ancient Christians and our own Church on this point of doctrine, and noticed the attempts which have been made to extract a different opinion from our public writings. Afterwards I inquired more at large into the theory of this doctrine, the several variations which have been made from the language and opinions of the Church, and the theory which has been opposed to it with the greatest confidence: and I have pointed out some difficulties with which this latter theory is encumbered, and some consequences which obviously flow from it.

In the conduct of this inquiry it has been my object to show,

1. That in Scripture Baptism is considered as the commencement of a new period, as an epoch of the religious life, from whence the Christian dates a new state of spiritual existence, carrying with it new privileges, capacities of action, and expectations; or, in other words, a *state of salvation*.

2. That the Sacrament of Baptism is not only the symbol and seal, but the channel and organ of that inward grace, of which it is, in a strict and sacramental sense, the outward and visible sign.

3. That the grace conferred in Baptism, and

expressed in Scripture by a variety of phrases and figures of speech, is not, strictly speaking, a practical change, but a change of state and relative condition, accompanied with an earnest and promise of such spiritual power, as may enable the recipient to continue in this state of salvation, and to carry on that moral and practical change, which this mystical change implies and requires.

4. That the change which has been stated and described in the course of this treatise, was, in strict accordance with the language of Scripture, usually denominated Regeneration by the whole body of the ancient Christians.

5. That in this head of doctrine our Church has kept close to the language and sentiments of Christian antiquity, distinguishing the sacramental grace from the qualifications which it requires, and the effects which it is intended to produce; and using the word Regeneration, in its Articles and Liturgy, to signify solely and singly the grace conferred on Christians in baptism.

6. That the Scriptures uniformly contemplate the moral and practical change of the human soul as effected through the medium of moral instruments; and never suppose that spiritual habits are formed in another manner, or follow another order, than such habits as are purely and exclusively moral.

7. That, consequently, the theory which contemplates Regeneration as an infusion or implantation

of habits, or as a turning point from evil to good, attended with an entire change of mind, or a radical change of the parts and faculties of the soul, is not only inconsistent with the reasonable and moral constitution of man, but at variance with the nature and purposes of revealed religion. And that it is built on metaphysical positions which will not bear the test of examination, and on such exaggerated views of man's sinfulness and degraded condition, as have no foundation in experience or Scripture, and involve consequences injurious to the cause of truth, and the interests of pure and unadulterated Christianity.

Nothing now remains but to add, by way of conclusion, a few remarks on the harmony of the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism with the drift and principles of revealed religion, and its consistency with the internal evidences and moral tendencies of the Christian dispensation.

The Christian revelation, considered apart from the principles of natural religion, which it supposes and adopts, is a remedial dispensation, framed for the benefit of creatures in a fallen and diseased state: and is intended to counteract such evils as could not be subdued by the ordinary means, or did not fall within the scope of reason and natural religion. Previous to the preaching of the Gospel, and the more extensive dissemination of the knowledge contained in the Holy Scriptures, man's igno-

rance of God's nature, and his own duty, of his origin and business in this world, of the ends of his creation, and of his future prospects, showed the great need of a particular revelation, accompanied with sufficient evidence, and calculated for general instruction. For it could not be expected that reason and natural religion, which had not prevented him from falling into this state, would prove sufficient remedies for his ignorance, or relieve him from his difficulties and distresses. It is true that the human understanding was never so totally and universally darkened, as not to perceive at times the reasonableness and excellence of many of the first truths of morality and religion. Still however the uncertainty under which the wisest of the heathens laboured in their views and notions of these subjects, is a convincing argument of the necessity of a more explicit communication of religious knowledge; and is a strong internal proof of the truth of that revelation, which has brought this knowledge within the comprehension, and rendered it familiar to the minds, of the uneducated and illiterate.

The advantage, therefore, and necessity of an explicit revelation of the main truths and principles of religion, are clearly made out from the history of mankind, and from that ignorance of the truth which was universally prevalent, and was acknowledged and lamented by the wisest and most thinking of the heathens. But if this revelation had been nothing more

than a republication, or a clearer and more exact development of the truths of natural religion, it would not have corresponded with man's wants, nor satisfied his feelings and conscience. For the more clearly the principles of natural religion are explained, and the consequences of violating its obligations set forth, the more forcibly will man feel the imperfections of his own performances, the guilt which he has contracted, and the punishment to which he has exposed himself. Man, contemplating himself as a religious and responsible creature, discovers that he is a sinner, and that the principles of natural religion, and the authority of conscience, are insufficient to stimulate him to duty, and to curb his evil affections and propensities. Arguing then from his own experience, and the general appearances of the moral world, he will probably conclude, independently of positive revelation, that this bias to sin is inherent in his nature, and will from thence justly infer, that he cannot be an object of his Maker's favour, whilst he continues in this state of guilt and corruption. But here natural religion can do nothing for him, or at least offers him no sufficient means of quieting his fears, or healing his inherent maladies. He may perhaps build some hopes or presumptions of forgiveness on the supposed efficacy of repentance, or on his natural notions and revealed knowledge of God's benevolence. But these presumptions are insufficient to

quiet his apprehensions, because they do not furnish him with such a remedy against the effects and dominion of sin, as can satisfy his understanding, and compose his conscience. Hence arises the necessity, or at least the expediency and manifest advantage, of a revelation of a remedial nature, and of a promise of forgiveness, established on sufficient grounds and satisfactory evidence. But at the same time man must be sensible that the forgiveness of his sins, and his restoration to God's favour, cannot supersede the principles of natural religion, and his obligations to obey the will of God. He will therefore look to revelation for assurances of some new and supernatural powers, to enable him to resist and counteract his inherent bias to evil and tendency to decay, and to give spring and elasticity to his moral and religious endeavours. But it is a strong internal evidence of the truth of the Gospel dispensation, that it professes to supply mankind with such a remedy for sin, and such spiritual assistances, as the acknowledged and experimental evils of their situation seem to demand.

But the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism tallies and harmonizes with this scheme of revealed religion. Assuming the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the truth of every article of natural and revealed religion contained in them—particularly the divinity and incarnation of our Saviour, the atonement and satisfaction which have been made

to Almighty God for the sins of the whole world by his death upon the cross, and the infallible certainty of that promise of the Holy Ghost, which he has made to his whole Church, and to every faithful member of it—it enforces the authority of God's word, and brings home the truths of revealed religion to every man's bosom, by assuring us that God consigns over to the individual Christian his share in the saving effects of his Redeemer's sufferings, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in a form and order of his own appointment. But this doctrine contents itself with the simplicity of the scriptural statement. It does not pave the way for its own reception by such exaggerated descriptions of man's natural and necessary depravity, as are inconsistent with his history and experience, and therefore cannot be brought home to the *real* conscience of the sinner. Nor does it indulge in any such exaggerated accounts of the act of Regeneration itself, and its immediate and necessary effects, as can fascinate the understandings, and minister to the vanity of the weak and injudicious. The sum of what it teaches us is, that the forgiveness of sins, purchased for us by the death of the Son of God, the gift or earnest of the Holy Ghost, which he has promised to us, and a conditional title to eternal life, issuing from his merits, and from the free grace of God, are made over in Baptism to infants and adults duly qualified, without any distinction or

respect of persons; and that Baptism is, according to the plain lesson of Scripture, the ordinary instrument of Regeneration.

In this theory, therefore, those remedies for sin and sinfulness, which the Gospel of Christ proffers to mankind, are contemplated as made over to us individually, through the medium of an outward sign, and certified to our faith in a simple and affecting ceremony, and in a way excellently calculated to enhance the mercy and free grace of God, and to minister to our comfort and improvement. It does not presume to inform us in what way, or to what extent the Holy Spirit acts upon the soul in Baptism, nor how he stamps and seals us as God's property: but it looks upon our Regeneration as an entrance into a state of Christian life, which is a life of trial and education; and therefore considers that change of disposition and habits, and that complete renewal of the soul which some Divines speak of as the very essence of the new birth, as its legitimate and intended, but not as its necessary consequence. Man is brought into a state of salvation and a covenant of repentance in baptism, but his final salvation depends on the issue of a state of trial. But if the satisfaction of Christ appears to save the honour of God's laws, and composes and relieves the sinner's conscience, and if the promise of the Holy Ghost is a comfort and encouragement to weak and sinful creatures, we may

reasonably believe (and we are firmly persuaded that Scripture affords ample grounds for this article of belief) that our interest in these blessings is made over to us at some definite point of time, and through the medium of a sensible action, to which we can refer back with an assurance of faith, without being left in a state of doubt and suspense, or being tempted to have recourse to fallible and uncertain criterions.

It is true that many strange and lamentable consequences have been supposed to flow from this doctrine by writers, who appear to think that the essence and spirituality of religion are intimately connected with their own views of Regeneration; and have in consequence been more studious to maintain their own principles than to acquaint themselves with the merits of the opposite theory. But these consequences do not flow from the opinions and statements of the advocates of this doctrine, but from opinions, which exist no where (so far at least as any parties to this controversy are concerned) but in the warm imaginations and jealous fears of its opponents. That no man, who has not been baptized, can possibly enter into the kingdom of heaven; that hypocrites and profligate men are delivered from their sins, and endowed with the Holy Ghost in baptism, no less than true penitents and sincere believers; and that the baptismal action is always accompanied with a radical change of all the parts

and faculties of the soul, are indeed fearful propositions, and pregnant with absurd and mischievous consequences. But since they are propositions which no one has advanced, and represent opinions which no one entertains, they may be safely left to their own fate.

In fact, the question at issue has been completely shifted, and placed upon a new bottom, by the advocates of the theory of Regeneration which has been canvassed. The real question is, whether, according to the doctrine of Scripture, the primitive and constant tradition of the ancient Churches, and the decided sense of the Church of England, Regeneration is the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism. The question argued by the other party has been—whether a change of heart, an implantation of grace, an entire change of mind, or a radical change of all the parts and faculties of the soul, always take place in this sacrament. But this mode of stating and arguing the question can be productive of no good effects, nor lead to any just conclusions, for it either assumes the very point on which the controversy hinges, or has recourse to the most paltry of all sophisms, a mere verbal equivocation.

Had indeed those descriptions and definitions of Regeneration, which I have had such frequent occasion to cite, occurred in writings of an oratorical cast, or in pathetic appeals to the feelings of the

reader, though I could not have approved the Author's judgment, every just allowance would have been made for rhetorical exaggeration. But when they occur in treatises, or argumentative and controversial discourses, which profess to handle the theory and doctrinal parts of religion, and to treat the subjects under review systematically; especially when the authors substitute their own definitions for the words used by their opponents; they can have no claim to indulgence on this score: and probably the writers themselves would be the first to disclaim any interpretations, which would palliate their expressions, or soften down and extenuate their opinions.

Several reasons have induced me to pursue my inquiries, and arrange and publish my sentiments on this subject. Many excellent and orthodox statements of this doctrine have been given to the world, and it has been touched upon, professedly or incidentally, by several of our most eminent divines. But I know of no book which contains a general and systematic view of its bearings and authorities, of the objections which have been made, and the theories which have been opposed to it. I could not but apprehend that much danger must accrue to the evidences of religion, from setting up novel opinions and private interpretations of Scripture in opposition to the received doctrine and unanimous testimony of the whole Church of Christ,

from the days of the Apostles to the time of the Reformation. I perceived the evil consequences which would result both to the Ministers of our Church, and to their congregations, from the attempts which have been made to explain away the clear and unequivocal language of our baptismal offices. And I saw with regret, that the theory, which is principally opposed to this doctrine, substitutes a scheme of necessity for the probationary system of scriptural religion, removes the appeal which the Gospel makes to mankind from the conscience to the passions, fascinates the human understanding, and flatters the vanity of the human heart, and naturally slides into such a shape as generates enthusiastic notions, and leads the way to a habit of gross self-delusion.

But I have insisted the more largely on this subject, because it is closely combined with just and scriptural views of the great importance and spiritual effects of Baptism, which almost every other statement of the doctrine of Regeneration either invalidates or annihilates : and because it is of much moment to a right conception of the general scheme and nature of the Christian covenant. For according to the terms of this covenant, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*¹, and he that is baptized, must *observe all things whatsoever Christ*

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

*commanded his disciples*¹. The Gospel covenant, therefore, is a covenant of grace on God's part, and of belief and obedience on the part of man; and, consequently, it contemplates the Christian life as a real and unsophisticated state of probation, in which free grace and free obedience, justification in God's sight, and repentance and holiness of life, are correlatives, and imply each other; and man, who has been redeemed, and pardoned, and endowed with the Holy Ghost, has duties to perform, and conditions to fulfil, must continue stedfast in the faith, and must endeavour *to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless*², and *to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*³.

But the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism fixes the commencement of the Christian life in the right place, and secures the doctrine of universal grace within the pale of the Church, and the comprehension of the covenant, against every system which savours of necessity or favouritism, of absolute decrees, or capricious preferences. Without pretending to account for the gradual development of the truth, and the partial propagation of the Gospel, or for remarkable instances of God's special grace, which must be resolved into his unsearchable purposes, it teaches us, that such

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.² Luke i. 6.³ Acts xxiv. 16.

baptized adults as are believers and penitents, and baptized infants, who can present no bar of unbelief and impenitence, receive in this sacrament the forgiveness of sins, and the gift or earnest of the Holy Ghost, as a principle of new and spiritual life; and are placed in a state of salvation, of which nothing but human negligence and default can deprive them. Still, however, it teaches us that this state is not only a state of grace, but a state of discipline and trial; and that the child of God and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, if he is wanting to his own soul, or is neglected and undone by the guardians of his early days, will become the child of the devil, and the inheritor of everlasting misery.

We may collect, indeed, from the passages of St. John's first Epistle, which have been referred to in a former part of this treatise, that this doctrine was soon perverted to bad purposes, and the history of the Church will furnish us with other instances of its misapplication and perversion. And it may be asked, what doctrine has not in its turn been corrupted and abused? But I am confident that no man who really understands this doctrine, and is not prejudiced against it either by a strange misapprehension of its drift and nature, or by an attachment to some favourite hypothesis, can discover in it any dangerous or immoral tendency, or any aptness to produce formality, security, presumption, or self-conceit. With us at least, in

our public formularies, it is guarded against every misconception, and intimately connected with the probationary life, and the necessity of religious exertion and growing holiness. Such too is the use to which it is applied by the ministers of our Church in public and private, in the school, the pulpit, and all their pastoral instructions. A variety of practical lessons are built upon it in their addresses to parents and children, to the young, the old, the sinner, the penitent, and the confirmed Christian; and it is pressed on the memories and consciences of their hearers, as a motive to vigilance, self-jealousy, resistance to temptation, repentance, exertion, and perseverance. They firmly believe and thankfully acknowledge that the children whom they have baptized have been grafted into Christ's body, and constituted and declared children of God; and their labours are directed to these points—that they may be reared and educated as spiritual and immortal creatures: that the children of God may not become children of wrath and children of the devil; and that those Christians who have fallen away from God's grace, and forfeited the hopes and privileges of their calling, may be renewed again to repentance, and restored to the household and family of Christ.

Whilst the Christian minister makes this use and practical application of it, he need not fear to advocate a doctrine grounded on the sure basis

of Scripture, witnessed by all antiquity, and unequivocally asserted by our own Church. Security, presumption, self-conceit, and the other vices which have been strangely characterized as its natural consequences, he must expect to find in abundance. They are owing to the want of that religious education which forms an important part of our Christian trial, where the interests of the young are intrusted, according to the known analogy of God's natural and moral government, to the care of other persons; and their spiritual welfare, without the continual interference of miraculous causes, must necessarily be involved in the good conduct and fidelity of their parents and instructors. They are occasioned by evil habits and bad examples, by the cares of this world and the lusts of the flesh, by inattention to the concerns of religion, and by an imperfect acquaintance with the nature of Christianity, and of the privileges and obligations of the baptismal covenant; and, not unfrequently, by those fanatical notions of Regeneration, which are no uncommon fruits of a departure from orthodox opinion. But I am persuaded that he will seldom, I may almost say, will never, within the sphere of his own duties, find them grounded on any misconstruction of this important doctrine.

The minister of the Church, therefore, who has no wish to sacrifice the simple and plain meaning

of its public offices to refined speculations and subtle evasions, whilst he yields hearty thanks to God in the prayers of the Church, “that it hath pleased him to regenerate” the child that has been baptized “with his Holy Spirit,” and “humbly beseeches him to grant that he may thenceforth crucify the old man, and in the end utterly abolish the whole body of sin,” will speak the same language, and inculcate the same doctrine in his discourses. He will follow up in his ministerial labours the tenour of those sound and pious exhortations, with which he has dismissed the sponsors and guardians of the infant, and will look forward with a mixture of hope and fear to his future renovation and improvement :—“Remembering always that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living¹.”

¹ Office for public baptism (concluding exhortation).

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