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AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
EFFECT OF BAPTISM,
ACCORDING TO THE
SENSE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,
AND OF THE
Church of England :

IN ANSWER TO
THE REVEREND DR. MANT'S TWO TRACTS
ON
REGENERATION AND CONVERSION,

CIRCULATED WITH THE LAST ANNUAL PACKET OF THE SOCIETY FOR
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

BY THE REV. JOHN SCOTT, M. A.

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Gratia sacramentum aliquando præcedit, aliquando sequitur, aliquando nec sequitur. THEODORET.

Omnibus commune est lavacrum regenerationis, sed ipsa gratia....non communis est omnibus. AUGUSTINE.

All receive not the grace of God which receive the sacrament of his grace. HOOKER.

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

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INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

WHEN a writer under ordinary circumstances lays his sentiments before the public, he makes his way to attention as his talents, his previous reputation, and the force of his arguments may enable him. But it is under no ordinary circumstances that Mr. Mant is presented to our notice, in the publication on which I intend to offer some animadversions. Independently of his distinctions as Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, a Bampton Lecturer at Oxford, and one of the two persons selected to compile and publish a commentary on the scriptures, under the patronage of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; the single fact of his tracts having been adopted by that society, and circulated throughout the kingdom with the annual packet sent to all its members, must draw peculiar attention to them; and make every one, who feels concerned for the interests of true religion, and the welfare of the church of England, somewhat solicitous respecting the spirit

which they breathe, and the nature of the sentiments which they are calculated to disseminate. In this view, especially, I have been led to examine them: and sorry I am to report, that, according to the best judgment I am able to form upon the subject, their contents are such as the conductors of the society can never justify to a great number of its supporters, to the church of England, and to the Christian world at large, their having employed the funds and influence of the institution to render current amongst us.

Not to prejudge the question, hereafter to be investigated, concerning the character of the doctrines maintained in these tracts, is it for a society which has been by high authority styled 'national,' and which at least aspires to be the society of the church of England, without respect to subordinate distinctions, to espouse and circulate among 'the community at large,'* writings which continually speak of 'a party,' 'a sect,' 'in the very bosom of the church;' who 'arrogate to themselves the distinction of being 'her only faithful sons,' but 'whose preaching 'nevertheless is in *irreconcilable hostility* to her ' *unequivocal and numerous* declarations: ' on whose banners 'regeneration is, as it were, in-

* Title-page of the Tracts.

‘scribed’ as a ‘watchword,’—‘regeneration, not
 ‘the fruit of Christ’s holy ordinance of baptism,
 ‘but the effect of their declamation:’ whose
 principles ‘in some sense do despite unto the
 ‘Spirit of grace:’ and who ‘would fain fasten
 ‘THEIR HERESY upon our church, and sedulously
 ‘labour to propagate it as her’s?’ * I have
 much respect, in many points of view, for Mr.
 Mant, and I would fain hope that he is not, on
 the whole, a man of an uncharitable and un-
 christian temper: but, on all which I have here
 quoted,—to say nothing of the charges brought
 against Whitefield, of ‘inconceivable effrontery,’
 and ‘uncharitableness equal to his effrontery,’ I
 cannot refrain from asking, is this conciliatory?
 is it healing? is it salutary? is it adapted to
 the exigencies of the times? is it calculated to
 serve the church? is it what it becomes ‘the So-
 ‘ciety for promoting Christian Knowledge,’ to
 use its power and resources in circulating?—I,
 for one, feel myself entitled to remonstrate against
 what I so much disapprove, not only as sub-
 scribing to the society, but as having collected
 money for it, and having publicly recommended
 it to support. And, might I hope to be ho-
 noured with a hearing from my superiors, I
 would earnestly entreat those of the heads of

* Tracts, p. 15, 21, 23, 28, &c.

our church, who take part in the proceedings of the institution, seriously to consider the tendency of such things as have been cited: it is not impossible that they may act more forcibly in the way of *recoil*, than in that of direct, straight forward movement.*

But I proceed to the more particular consideration of the contents of the tracts, — their doctrines and their arguments.

* From what I know of the sentiments prevailing among no inconsiderable bodies of people, I am persuaded, that the enemies of the church have not, for a good while past, had a more powerful instrument put into their hands for her injury, than these tracts. In fact, I know that they have already been used against her, by persons willing, for this end, to assume that Mr. M. correctly exhibits her doctrines.

CHAPTER I.

On the Effect of Baptism.—Language of the Church.—Mr. Mant's Language. His Sentiments still undefined.—Nature of Regeneration.

IT is well known, that, in very early times, strong language came into use, in the Christian church, concerning baptism, and the blessings connected with it. On what principles it was thus used may hereafter, in some degree, appear.*

It is likewise well known, that the church of England has seen good to retain a portion of this language, particularly by speaking of every one, whom she has admitted to baptism, as 'born again,' and 'regenerated by God's Holy Spirit.' But it is by no means sufficient merely to quote this language: it remains to be inquired, in what sense, and especially, as it appears to me, upon what grounds, the church uses it. Different modes of explaining it have been adopted by high authorities.

Many have attached to the terms 'regeneration' and 'new birth,' in this connexion, a lower

* Close of c. ix.

and qualified sense. This was done, in particular, by the able and excellent Bishop Hopkins, whom Mr. M. quotes for the assertion, ‘ that
 ‘ baptismal regeneration must be acknowledged
 ‘ by all, that will not wilfully shut their eyes
 ‘ against the clear evidence of Scripture ;’* at the same time, however, that he makes the quotation, intimating, that the bishop has ‘ qualified the
 ‘ proposition’ by ‘ a limitation.’ This limitation, it may be collected from the next page but one, is no less important than the following, that he
 ‘ considers this baptismal regeneration, as merely
 ‘ admitting us members of the visible church,
 ‘ and not as entitling us to eternal life ; and contends for another regeneration, independent of
 ‘ the washing by water, and identified by him
 ‘ with conversion, renovation, and the like.’ †

Had Mr. M. used the term baptismal regeneration in such a sense as this, there might have been no dispute with him. He, however, admits of no such qualified interpretation. His language upon the subject is as follows :

* P. 40. The quotation is not very fairly made. The bishop’s words are, ‘ *such a baptismal regeneration as this* must needs be ‘ acknowledged by all,’ &c. Works, 8vo. Vol. ii. p. 423. He is speaking of an ‘ external, ecclesiastical,’ and merely ‘ relative ’ sanctification ; in short of ‘ admission into the visible church.’ Mr. M. however, as I have said, intimates ‘ a limitation.’

† P. 42.

—‘ *That supernatural grace, which was there-
 ‘ by to be conferred’—namely by the sacrament
 of baptism, — ‘ through the instrumentality of
 ‘ water, and by the agency of the Holy Ghost.’*
 P. 8.

‘ Baptism is a new birth, by which we enter
 ‘ into the new world, the new creation, the bless-
 ‘ ings and spiritualities of the kingdom.’—‘ From
 ‘ this time forward we have *a new principle* put
 ‘ into us, the Spirit of grace, which, besides our
 ‘ soul and body, is a principle of action ;’ &c.*
 P. 9.—So also ‘ a new principle of life infused,’
 &c. P. 50. ‘ By that sacrament we are made
 ‘ Christians, and are born anew of water and of
 ‘ the Holy Spirit.’ P. 10.

The church ‘ *supposes, in strict conformity*
 ‘ *with the scriptures, not merely that all real*
 ‘ *Christians are regenerate by God’s Holy Spirit,*
 ‘ by which I understand all those, who live a
 ‘ Christian life ; but that those also are so rege-
 ‘ nerated, to whom baptism is rightly adminis-
 ‘ tered, notwithstanding by their future conduct
 ‘ they may forfeit the privileges of their new
 ‘ birth.’ P. 10, 11.†

* Quoted from Bp. Taylor.

† The words in italics, in this passage, are noted as a quotation
 from Mr. Overton’s True Churchman, &c. p. 109.

‘ That the sacramental character of the institution should be steadily kept in view, we are reminded of the regeneration conveyed by it to the baptized.’ P. 16.

‘ We maintain the regenerating efficacy of baptism to those who die before they commit actual sin.’ P. 22.

‘ To deny the regenerating effect of baptism is in some sense to do despite unto the Spirit of grace.’ P. 28.

‘ When it may be satisfactorily argued from the highest authority, that baptism is the vehicle of regeneration, why should we look for any other?’ P. 29.

‘ It is the doctrine of the holy scriptures, that we are by baptism made heirs of salvation through Christ; &c.—If then we cannot become heirs of salvation, except we be born of water and of the Spirit, and if we be made heirs of salvation by baptism, I see not how we are to evade the consequence, that the outward washing of baptism is attended by *the sanctification of the Spirit*, and that we are born of water and of the Spirit, when we are baptized.’ P. 29.

—‘ Which confirms an opinion presently to
 ‘ be insisted on, that no other than baptismal re-
 ‘ generation is possible in this world.’ P. 32.

‘ *Sanctification and purity*, unspotted and un-
 ‘ blemished *holiness*, are here* attributed to the
 ‘ church of Christ as the effect of the washing
 ‘ of water.’ P. 33.—He adds, of course, by ‘ the
 ‘ operation of the Spirit.’ But I here quote the
 passage for the terms with which it opens.

‘ We argue for baptism being the vehicle of
 ‘ regeneration, because it is the vehicle of salva-
 ‘ tion.’ P. 35.

‘ To deny the regenerating influence of baptism,
 ‘ is to deny its sacramental character.’ P. 36.

‘ If ever the new birth be not conveyed by
 ‘ baptism rightly administered; or if, when once
 ‘ regenerated, it be (I will not say necessary, but)
 ‘ possible for any one to be born again, doubtless
 ‘ there is scriptural authority to that purpose.’
 P. 40.

Supposing it to convey no ‘ effectual regenera-
 ‘ tion,’ he makes a person to affirm, ‘ It is desti-

* Viz. in Eph. v. 25—27.

‘tute of an inward and spiritual grace ; it is no
‘ sacrament ; it is a non-essential.’ P. 51.

—‘ Ordained as it was by Christ himself, with
‘ a promise of salvation annexed to its legitimate
‘ administration.’ P. 51.’

It appears, then, that by ‘ the regeneration of
‘ baptism ’ Mr. M. understands ‘ a supernatural
‘ grace conferred’—‘ a new principle put into us,’
‘ —a new principle of life’ and ‘ of action ’*—
‘ even the Spirit of grace’—‘ the sanctification of
‘ the Spirit’—which ‘ makes us heirs of salvation’
—and ‘ entitles us to eternal life.’ † And he be-
lieves, that all this extends to every one, to whom
‘ baptism is rightly administered :’ that to deny
this is ‘ to deny its sacramental character’—is
‘ heresy’—is ‘ in some sense doing despite to the
‘ Spirit of grace.’ And, finally, he holds, that
‘ no other regeneration is possible in this world.’

In the above citations, if I have not collected
every term by which Mr. M. describes the effect
of baptism, yet I trust I have omitted nothing by
which his views of the subject might be elucidated.
And truly, after such accumulated and diversified
phraseology, to complain of the want of expla-

* P. 9, 50.

† P. 42.

nation may seem a little unreasonable. Yet this is the complaint which I am constrained to make. The whole of this language appears to me indefinite, indistinct, and not very consistent with itself, and with other parts of the work. Far from being calculated 'to convey correct notions of regeneration;'^{*} it by no means indicates the writer to have entered into the consideration of the various questions which belong to his subject.

For instance, it might be asked, Is baptism itself regeneration? or does it 'convey' regeneration? or is it only 'attended by' regeneration? Each of these questions suggests an idea distinct from the others. Each sentiment has had its abettors; and each might claim the support of Mr. M.'s authority: the first on the ground of the quotation from page 9, beginning, 'baptism *is* a new birth;' the last on the ground of the second quotation from page 29; and the intermediate one, on the ground of several of the quotations which have been made, and of his prevailing language.

Again: does baptism convey its regenerating influence only to infants, or to all 'to whom it is 'rightly administered?' Certainly we should not

^{*} Title-page of the Tracts.

hesitate to pronounce the latter to be Mr. M.'s opinion, from various passages above cited,* and from the general tenor of his tracts. What then shall we say to the following sentence, in page 22? 'We maintain the regenerating efficacy of baptism to those who die before they commit actual sin.' Has it then no 'regenerating efficacy,' at the time, to those who live afterwards to commit actual sin? If so, Mr. M. can never know whether to return thanks for the regeneration of an infant whom he baptizes, unless he can first know that it will not live to commit actual sin!—Has it, again, no 'regenerating efficacy' to adults, 'rightly receiving it?' And do both the classes, which have been named, need, or, at least, *may* they need 'another regeneration' distinct from that of baptism? † This must be the case, if with them baptism be attended with no 'regenerating efficacy.'

But the main question is that which relates to *the nature* of regeneration. Unless it be settled what we mean by the term, there is no end to the dispute.—Mr. M. charges Bishop Hopkins, and other more modern divines, with confounding it with 'conversion, renovation,' 'a change

* See quotations from p. 11, 12, 16, 28, 32, 36, 40, 51.

† P. 42.

‘of heart,’ ‘and the like.’* Certainly he is *not far* from the truth, in supposing that many of us do pretty closely connect it with conversion: yet from a work, with which so near a follower of the bishop of Lincoln ought not to be unacquainted, he might have learned, that even here he is not quite correct, when he asserts, that we ‘identify regeneration with conversion †.’ Waving that point, however, in what does Mr. M. suppose regeneration actually to consist? As the former of the two prelates just mentioned observes, The ‘grace, that concurs unto the ‘great change,’ that a sinner undergoes, ‘when ‘he is translated from a state of nature unto a ‘state of grace—is of two sorts: either such as ‘alters *the relations*, wherein we stand unto God; ‘or such as alters *the dispositions* and habit of ‘our souls.’ Of the former sort is *justification*, which does not express ‘how our heart is ‘changed towards God,’ but that our sins are put away, and that we are accepted to God’s favour. Of the latter kind is *sanctification*, which declares a purification of our ‘moral habits and principles.’ ‡ These two things, though inseparable, are essentially distinct, and must be

* P. 41, 42.

† Scott’s Remarks on Bp. Tomline’s Refutation of Calvinism, vol. i. p. 177 and 209.

‡ Bp. Hopkins’s Works, vol. ii. p. 475, 476. 8vo.

carefully distinguished by him who would write with any precision upon theological subjects. Of which kind, then, does Mr. M. understand the change of regeneration to be? Is it an internal and moral change, turning fallen man from the love of sin to holiness, the *commencement* of “the sanctification of the Spirit,” by which he is to be restored to “the image of God?” or is it a change of state and circumstances? Is it the remission of sins? If the former, then why does he censure those who identify it with ‘a change of heart?’ But if not, what are we to understand by his own language, when he speaks of ‘*a new principle of life* being infused’ into us, the opposite of being ‘dead in trespasses and sins’*—of ‘the outward washing of baptism being attended by *the sanctification of the Spirit*’ †—of ‘*sanctification and purity, unspotted and unblemished holiness,*’ being ‘attributed to the church of Christ, as the effect of the washing of water,’ under ‘the operation of the Spirit’ ‡—and of ‘dying unto sin in baptism?’ § If all this do not mean a moral change, ‘a change of heart,’ what does it mean? But if it do, what, again, are we to understand by the following extraordinary passage concerning St. Paul? ‘Where is St. Paul de-

* P. 50 and 9.

† P. 29.

‡ P. 33.

§ P. 39.

‘scribed as regenerated, until Ananias baptized
 ‘him and washed away his sins? That he was
 ‘converted, and that his heart was renewed, is
 ‘evident from the language, which he uttered
 ‘when he had fallen to the earth, and from the
 ‘obedience which he paid to the voice from
 ‘heaven. That he was not regenerated until a
 ‘later period is evident; for when Ananias called
 ‘on him to be baptized, he was still under the
 ‘pollution of his sins.’ *

On the mode of reasoning, adopted in this passage, I at present offer no remark. But I must ask, what is here meant by ‘the pollution of his sins,’ which the regeneration of baptism was to wash away? Does it mean depravity,—corrupt disposition? If so, had not his ‘conversion,’ and the ‘renewal of his heart,’ removed it? Or does it mean guilt,—liability to punishment? If so, are we to suppose a man ‘converted,’ ‘renewed,’ ‘obedient,’ and consequently penitent and believing, yet unpardoned? Is this compatible with the explicit and acknowledged doctrine of scripture?—And, further, the question recurs, If regeneration signify the removal of guilt by pardon, where was the propriety of all the language so recently quoted,

* P. 43.

which describes it as the removal of depravity by ‘ sanctification ?’

Our views of regeneration (if, without any pretensions to be the ‘ accredited advocate’ of a party,* I may presume to speak on behalf of many of my brethren as well as myself,) are surely more definite, and more consistent with themselves, whether they be more ‘ correct’ or not. We consider the term as equivalent, or nearly so, to other scriptural phrases, such as the “ quickening of those who were dead in “ trespasses and sins,” “ a new heart,” “ a new “ creature.” The necessity for this change is laid in the corruption and depravity of human nature ; which are such, as to make a moral renovation of the whole man indispensable to his “ seeing the kingdom of God,”—whether our Lord meant, and whether we are to describe this change, by the term regeneration or not. The effect of it is, to turn man from sin to God and holiness. It is the commencement of that “ sanctification of the Spirit,” which must restore us to “ the image of God,” “ make us “ meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the “ saints in light.” The Holy Spirit of God is the author of the change : the word of God the

* Tracts, p. 65.

ordinary means of effecting it.* Baptism, we consider as ‘the sign of regeneration;’ † as ‘a pledge’ ‡ of it ‘to those who receive baptism ‘rightly;’ and also as ‘a means’ ‡ by which the blessing *may* be conveyed, in answer to the devout prayers of the several parties concerned in the administration and reception of this sacrament. But as to its ‘*entitling* us to eternal life,’ this we think, in all cases, a misapplication of terms. We make a marked distinction between our *title* to eternal life, and our “*meetness*” for it. Christ, and his “obedience unto death” in our behalf, embraced by a living faith, constitute our only *title* to heaven, the sole ground of our admission to that blessed state; though personal holiness is the necessary preparation for it, “without which no man shall see the “Lord.”

Such, I believe I may venture to state, are the sentiments of those, who are reproached as ‘the self-denominated evangelical party.’ § Whose

* James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23. Eph. v. 26.—‘Christ saith, *Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.....* Saith St. Peter, *We be born again. How? Not by a mortal seed, but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? By the word of the living God; by the word of God preached and opened. Thus cometh in our new birth.*’ Bp. Latimer.

† Church Art. xxvii.

‡ Catechism.

§ I gladly refer to Bp. Hopkins on ‘the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration,’ for a more enlarged statement. Works, vol. ii. p. 468.

views, their's or their opponents', best agree with scripture, and the authorized writings of our church, is to be the subject of further inquiry.

CHAPTER II.

The Argument from Scripture.—Mr. Mant's scriptural Authorities.—His Observations on them examined.—His negative Argument from Scripture.

MR. MANT observes, that he is well aware, that 'no authority is admissible for the foundation of a doctrine, except that of the inspired writings.'* He proceeds, therefore, 'to state several scriptural authorities, on which the notion of our being regenerated by baptism may be incontrovertibly maintained.'†

Let us then examine what is the decisive testimony of scripture, by which he imagines, that he thus 'incontrovertibly' establishes his views of the subject.

The first passage is part of our Saviour's discourse with Nicodemus, which he uses as a text. I shall place the words entire in the reader's view.

John iii. 1—12: "There was a man of the pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the

* P. 37.

† P. 30.

“ Jews : the same came to Jesus by night, and
 “ said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a
 “ teacher come from God : for no man can do
 “ these miracles that thou doest, except God be
 “ with him. Jesus answered and said unto him,
 “ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man
 “ be *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of
 “ God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can
 “ a man be born when he is old ? Can he enter
 “ the second time into his mother’s womb and be
 “ born ? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say
 “ unto thee, Except a man be born *of water and*
 “ *of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom
 “ of God. That which is born of the flesh is
 “ flesh ; and that which is *born of the Spirit* is
 “ spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye
 “ must be *born again*. The wind bloweth where
 “ it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,
 “ but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whi-
 “ ther it goeth : so is every one that is *born of the*
 “ *Spirit*. Nicodemus answered and said unto
 “ him, How can these things be ? Jesus an-
 “ swered and said unto him, Art thou a master of
 “ Israel, and knowest not these things ? Verily,
 “ verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do
 “ know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye
 “ receive not our witness. If I have told you
 “ earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall
 “ ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ?”

The other passages adduced are the following.

St. Mark xvi. 15, 16: “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

“ Tit. iii. 4—7: “ But, after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

1 Cor. vi. 11: “ And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Col. ii. 12, 13: “ Buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you,

“ being dead in your sins and the uncircumci-
 “ sion of your flesh, hath he quickened together
 “ with him.”

Rom. vi. 3—5, 8—11: “ Know ye not that
 “ so many of us as were baptized into Jesus
 “ Christ, were baptized into his death? There-
 “ fore we are buried with him by baptism into
 “ death; that, like as Christ was raised up from
 “ the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we
 “ also should walk in newness of life.....Now,
 “ if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we
 “ shall also live with him: knowing that Christ,
 “ being raised from the dead, dieth no more;
 “ death hath no more dominion over him. For,
 “ in that he died, he died unto sin once: but, in
 “ that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise
 “ reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed
 “ unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus
 “ Christ our Lord.”

Eph. v. 25—27: “ Christ loved the church,
 “ and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify
 “ and cleanse it with the washing of water by
 “ the word; that he might present it to himself
 “ a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle,
 “ or any such thing; but that it should be holy
 “ and without blemish.”

1 Cor. xii. 13: "By one Spirit are we all
"baptized into one body."

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

Acts x. 47, 48: "Can any man forbid water,
"that these should not be baptized, which have
"received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And
"he commanded them to be baptized in the
"name of the Lord."

Acts xxii. 16: Ananias to Paul: "And now
"why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and
"wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the
"Lord."

These, with an allusion to 1 John iii. 2, and 1
Peter i. 3, 23, which will be noticed hereafter,
constitute Mr. M.'s scriptural authorities: and
' from them he apprehends it to be established,
' as the general doctrine of the gospel, that the
' new birth or regeneration, which is pronounced
' by our Saviour to be necessary to salvation, or
' (as he expresses it) to seeing or entering into
' the kingdom of God, is effected by the ope-

‘ration of the Holy Ghost at baptism’ *—at baptism ‘*exclusively,*’ † and *always* at baptism where it is ‘*rightly administered.*’ ‡

Now let the reader once more look over these passages, with a view to ascertain what demonstration he finds in them of Mr. M.’s doctrines, that ‘*spiritual regeneration,*’—‘*a supernatural grace,*’—‘*a new principle of life*’ and ‘*of action,*’—‘*the sanctification of the Spirit,*’ which ‘*makes us heirs of salvation,*’ and ‘*entitles us to eternal life,*’ always accompanies baptism; and is ‘*exclusively*’ confined to baptism; so ‘*that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.*’ No unprejudiced reader, I think, can make this examination, without feeling astonished, that such an edifice should have been raised upon such a basis; such a system spun out of so scanty materials! He must, I conceive, feel no small surprise at observing what passes with Mr. M. for ‘*incontrovertible*’ proof!

But let us hear Mr. M.’s comments on his scriptural proofs.

On John iii. he observes, ‘It should appear,

* P. 35.

† P. 32, 33.

‡ P. 40.

‘ that our Saviour was here alluding by antici-
 ‘ pation to the sacrament of baptism, which he
 ‘ intended to ordain ; and to that supernatural
 ‘ grace, which was thereby to be conferred
 ‘ through the instrumentality of water, and by
 ‘ the agency of the Holy Ghost ; adopting not
 ‘ only the ceremony itself,’ which had been used
 by the Jews, and ‘ which he meant to exalt to
 ‘ more noble and spiritual purposes ; but also the
 ‘ very term, by which the Jews had described
 ‘ the change wrought in the baptized.’ *

The last clause is explained by what he had previously said, that ‘ proselytes, purified and
 ‘ admitted into the Jewish church by baptism,
 ‘ were said to be regenerated or born again.’ †
 If so, and if this were established and customary phraseology, it must have been familiar to Nicodemus, “ a teacher of Israel ;” and familiar to him, though in a lower, yet in ‘ a similar sense’ ‡ to that in which our Lord used it. But who can possibly read his astonished reply, and for a moment believe this ? “ How can a man,” he exclaims, “ be born when he is old ? Can he enter a
 “ second time into his mother’s womb and be
 “ born ?” Is this the language of a man accustomed to the idea, and to ‘ the very term,’ of being
 “ born again ?”

* P. 8.

† P. 6.

‡ P. 8.

The rest of the passage may be suffered to pass for the present, with the remark, that it is opinion only, and not argument.

In a subsequent part of his work, Mr. M. observes, with reference to the same passage of scripture: ‘ If spiritual regeneration be not conferred by baptism, when, (we may reasonably demand,) and by what means is it conferred? In what other ceremony, and at what other season, shall we find that joint operation of water and of the Holy Spirit, of which Christ affirms we must be born? I say that joint operation; for surely those, which Christ himself hath joined together, it is not for man to put asunder.’ He adds, ‘ I am the more disposed to press this argument, and to bring it forward in the most prominent point of view, not only because it appears to me decisive on the question; but also, because the importance of the argument seems to be recognized by the silence of our opponents, who in their zeal to enforce regeneration, the being born again, the being born of God, the being born of the Spirit, studiously keep out of sight the instrument, whereby Christ says we must be born again.’ * And shortly after: ‘ For the purpose, therefore, of regeneration, we conceive this union of

* P. 25, 26.

‘ water as the instrument, and of the Spirit as
 ‘ the efficient principle, to be absolutely neces-
 ‘ sary.’ ‘ We are justified in contending, that
 ‘ for the express purpose of regeneration, not
 ‘ only is his (the Spirit’s) operation necessary,
 ‘ but that it must also (humanly speaking) be
 ‘ administered through the mediation of water.
 ‘ It is not for man to dispense with the ordi-
 ‘ nances of God.’

Such are Mr. M.’s reasonings upon the dis-
 course with Nicodemus. I can believe him to
 be very sincerely convinced by them : but I must
 wonder if to others they should appear very con-
 clusive.

We will admit that, in the expression “ born of
 “ water,” our Lord alludes to baptism, though, as
 Mr. M. observes, it must have been ‘ by anticipa-
 ‘ tion,’ since that sacrament was not yet ordained :
 and I conceive the same language might, without
 impropriety, have been used, had the appoint-
 ment of baptism never been intended. My rea-
 sons for such an opinion will appear as we pro-
 ceed.

Mr. M., indeed, speaks of ‘ water ’ as ‘ the in-
 ‘ strument, whereby Christ says we must be born

‘ again.’* But it is not very conceivable how *water*, literally taken, being applied to the body, should be instrumental to the regeneration of the soul. Nor does our Lord’s language necessarily, or even naturally, convey such an idea. It might mean more : it may mean less. The expression is precisely the same respecting water, as respecting the Spirit : “ born of water and of the Spirit.” Yet Mr. M. himself will not go the length of interpreting it of both in exactly *the same* sense. He lowers its meaning, as it is applied to the former, to the notion of instrumentality : I see not, therefore, what right he has to condemn us, if we consider it as expressing only that of sign, or emblem. I speak here of the *water*, that which alone our Lord names, and that which Mr. M. calls ‘ the instrument :’ not of the sacrament of baptism, which we consider as more than a mere sign.

Mr. M. lays great stress on what he calls ‘ that joint operation of water and of the Holy Spirit, of which,’ according to him, ‘ Christ affirms we must be born.’ He is ‘ disposed to press this argument, and to bring it forward in ‘ the most prominent point of view.’ He talks, in this connexion, of ‘ putting asunder those

* P. 26, 27, 28.

‘ things which Christ himself hath joined together; of ‘ dispensing with the ordinances of ‘ God ;’* and other things of serious import. But, before this has any weight, he must prove much more decisively than by the mere citation of the words, that such ‘ a joint operation, and such an ordination of God, inseparably connecting regeneration with the use of water, are implied in the terms “ born of water and of the Spirit.” I would venture to ask, Are they even so clear upon the point, that any one would have inferred from them *alone*, that Christians were to be baptized at all? I readily allow, that ‘ a single text ‘ of scripture, properly understood, may serve ‘ for the foundation of a doctrine:’ † but, to serve for the foundation of such a doctrine as Mr. M.’s, it must be much more decisive, and the interpretation much more clearly ‘ proper,’ than what is now before us.

Let me beg the reader’s attention to a very observable circumstance in the passage of scripture, under consideration, which Mr. M.’s remarks upon it would not have prepared him to expect, and which is by no means undeserving of notice in the argument. It is true, that, in his *second* assertion of the necessity of being born again, (v. 5.) our Saviour does introduce the men-

* P. 25, 28.

† P. 30.

tion of “ water :” but not only had he said nothing of it in the first, (v. 3.) which, indeed, was more concise and general ; but he drops all notice of it, all allusion to it, in every one of the three subsequent instances in which he speaks of the same thing, in the same discourse, insisting only upon being “ born of the Spirit” as the great essential matter intended. (See v. 6, 7, 8.) As it has been justly remarked, in the whole passage ‘ *one word* intimates the outward sign, all else relates to the thing signified.’ * If any of us, therefore, ‘ in our zeal to enforce regeneration, the being born again, the being born of God, the being born of the Spirit,’—not ‘ studiously keep out of sight’ † what Mr. M. calls ‘ the instrument,’—but attribute a less necessary efficacy to it, than he does ; I trust we do not ‘ put asunder what Christ hath joined together,’ but rather imitate his example, and comply with his instructions, both as to the letter and the spirit of them.

Let me further ask, while the expression “ born of water and of the Spirit” is under consideration, does Mr. M. recollect no other instance, in which, and that in speaking of the self-same subject, the operation of the Spirit is connected, in a very similar manner, with another

* Scott’s Remarks, &c. Vol. i. p. 187.

† P. 26.

material substance? I allude to the words of St. John the Baptist concerning our Saviour: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and **" WITH FIRE."** Might we not from this passage argue 'the joint operation' of the Holy Ghost and of fire, much in the same way, and with pretty much the same degree of force, as Mr. M. has argued that of the Holy Ghost and of water, from our Lord's words? Might we not proceed, in language resembling his, to observe upon the presumption of 'putting asunder' what he, whose baptism and whose commission were "from heaven," hath 'joined together,' and joined together in speaking expressly of what Christ should do for his people? Yet no one would hesitate to pronounce such arguments misapplied in this case: no one imagines that "the fire" is more than an emblem in St. John's address: * what proof then is there, that "the water" is more than an emblem in our Lord's discourse? † —Accordingly a further analogy is observable in the two cases. Just as our Lord once mentions

* It is true, that, when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples at the day of pentecost, "cloven tongues like as of fire" appeared "sitting," as it were, "upon each of them." But I suppose no one will take TONGUES, "LIKE as of fire," resting upon a few of our Lord's disciples, as a literal BAPTISM with fire, or as that "baptism with fire" which was promised to his disciples generally.

† I again beg it may be observed, that I am not calling *the sacrament of baptism* a mere emblem: I am here simply treating of the one expression "*born of water* and of the Spirit." John iii. 5.

water, and then drops the allusion, so, while two of the evangelists give us John's testimony with the sign expressed, as well as the thing signified, the other two omit all mention of the sign, and notice only that which was represented by it.*

We see from this instance, that a purifying element may be properly named in connexion with the Holy Ghost, 'the Sanctifier,' even when there is no intention that that element should be at all employed as 'an instrument,' or even actually used as a sign of his operation: and so our Lord might have named "water," even if he had had no intention of instituting the sacrament of baptism. I admit, however, that he did allude to that sacrament; but I believe, that Mr. M. would find it no easy task TO PROVE, that "the water" of baptism was alluded to, as any other than what our church expressly says it is, 'an outward and visible sign;' † or that the opinion of a reformer, whom Bishop Horsley pronounced one of the most valuable of commentators, is so erroneous as he thinks it: namely, that, in this passage, 'water and the Spirit mean only the Spirit, who cleanses after the manner of water.' ‡

* See Matt. iii. 11. Lu. iii. 16. and compare Mar. i. 8. John i. 33.

† Catechism.

‡ P. 41. So also Bp. Hopkins, '*To be born of water and of the Spirit* may admit of a double interpretation: for either, first, by 'water is meant baptism;'—or, secondly, it 'may denote to us the

But it is little less than painful to spend time in discussion, which may have the appearance of being contentious, if not also trifling, concerning a portion of the divine oracles, of so solemn character as the discourse with Nicodemus. Let us take a general view of the passage as it lies in the gospel, and try what impression it makes, and surely was designed to make, upon the serious reader's mind. In proceeding to this view, however, it may be well to recollect, that, if the passage relate to baptism, or what necessarily or inseparably accompanies baptism, then it means, as one somewhat awfully said, 'nothing, —nothing at all to us,' who have received baptism. Whatever our character, we have then nothing to do with being born again, but, as Mr. M. expresses it, to be 'filled with all joy and peace in believing that we partake of it.'* Nay, further, if baptism and the concomitants of bap-

'manner of the Spirit's proceeding in the work of regeneration. *Ex-cept a man be born of water and of the Spirit* : that is, except he be renewed by the Holy Ghost, working as water ; leaving the same effect upon the soul in cleansing and purifying it from sinful defilements, as water doth upon the body in washing off contracted dirt and filth. Nor, indeed, is this manner of expression strange to the holy scripture : for John Baptist, speaking of Christ, tells them, that he should baptize them *with the Holy Ghost and with fire* : that is, he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, working as fire, which eats out and consumes the rust and dross of metals,' &c. Works, vol. ii. p. 468, 469.

* P. 24.

tism were all, it was *for the time then present* 'nothing' to Nicodemus; for our Lord only 'intended to ordain' * the sacrament of baptism, and had not yet ordained it.

The interview between Nicodemus and the Saviour is understood to have taken place, at the first passover after the latter had commenced his public ministry. Nicodemus was a man of rank, "a ruler of the Jews;" a man of learning, "a master," or teacher "of Israel;" and a man of religious seriousness. Solemnly impressed with what he had seen and heard concerning Jesus, and convinced that he was a "teacher come from God," since "no man could do the miracles that he did, except God were with him;" he breaks through the prejudices of his education, of his rank in life, and of his associates, and visits our Lord "by night," to learn what his doctrines really were, and what he was commissioned to teach mankind. We may naturally suppose him desirous of knowing, especially, what Jesus had to communicate, of which the Jewish instructors were not already in possession. To this man, thus circumstanced, our blessed Lord addressed himself with an apparent abruptness, which only marks the importance of what he

* Tracts, p. 8.

delivered. With a twofold solemn asseveration, used only by himself, and by him only on the most important occasions, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" he can neither be a true member of the church under the Messiah's government here on earth, nor come to heaven hereafter.

Now suppose our Lord to intend, by this figure, an internal and radical 'change of heart,' wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, and making a man "a new creature," conformed to "the image," and fit for the kingdom of God; but without which fallen man can neither serve God acceptably, nor be saved: suppose this, and the address is evidently, by its weight and importance, worthy of the speaker, and worthy of the occasion. Then indeed our Lord, as we should have expected him to do, fixes at once upon a great, essential, and distinguishing doctrine of true religion; a doctrine which had been taught as he intimates,* in the Old Testament, and which is taught in every part of scripture, but which was overlooked by Jewish teachers, as it has too often been by others also;

* V. 10.

and which it was one design of his coming to place in due prominence. Then, indeed, he did begin, with this “master of Israel,” with what is fundamental to all true and spiritual religion among men. Then, as in the latter part of his discourse he delivered the doctrine, which relates to the JUSTIFICATION of sinful man, through the redemption of ‘God the Son;’ so, in the former part he delivered that, which relates to OUR SANCTIFICATION by the power and grace of ‘God the Holy Ghost.’

But now put the case, that our Lord here speaks only of baptism and what baptism conveys, and we can hardly forbear asking, What was there so suitable to the occasion—especially considering that Christian baptism was not yet appointed? What, that was of a nature so superior to pharisaical instruction? What, indeed, that was calculated very clearly to convey the idea intended? In the language of one, whose words I gladly adopt, ‘I desire profoundly to reverence the divine wisdom’ of my Saviour, ‘and to be silent in humble submission, when he proposes instruction,’ either in substance or ‘in language, such as I should not previously have expected. . . . Yet it is impossible for me to admit,’ that baptism is, in

‘the present case,’ even a *principal subject* of which he treats, ‘without far stronger proof than has yet been adduced.’*

Let us proceed with the discourse, and see to which view of its design the sequel affords countenance. Nicodemus having expressed his astonishment at what he heard, and how much he was at a loss to comprehend its meaning, the divine teacher replies by a repetition of his assertion, attended, however, by considerable explanation. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Here occurs the only mention of water. It has been sufficiently considered, and we will not again dwell upon it. But here also the author of the change intended is repeatedly declared: the “Spirit,” the Holy Spirit of God. The

* Scott’s Remarks, &c. Vol. i. p. 183.

ground of its necessity is shewn: “that which is born of the flesh is flesh”—carnal and corrupt.* The design of it is pointed out, which is to correct and remedy the corruption of human nature: “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”—partakes of the nature of its author, and is spiritual, holy, and divine. Can this be said of every one that is ‘baptized?’ In the manner of its production, and in its various circumstances, like “the wind,” it is ‘out of the reach of our rules and calculations:’ but, like the same powerful agent, in its effects it is perceptible to all observers. In what follows, our Lord intimates, that it was what “a master of Israel” might have been expected to be well acquainted with. Compared with the mysteries of his person and his redemption, (of which he proceeded to speak,) it was an “earthly thing,” and was continually taking place among men; it was abundantly taught in the scriptures already in existence; it was as much represented by circumcision under the Old Testament, as it is by baptism under the New;† and the necessity of it might be evinced from principles of reason, only by comparing together the nature of fallen man, and the nature of “the kingdom of God.”

All this perfectly agrees with the ideas of rege-

* See Rom. viii. 5—9. Gal. v. 19—21.

† See close of c. iii. below.

neration above explained: but how it can be applied to baptism, or to any thing which constantly accompanies baptism, I have yet to learn.

We proceed to Mr. M.'s other scriptural authorities.

His notice of Mark xvi. 15, 16, is thus connected. ' It is the doctrine of the holy scriptures, ' that we are by baptism made heirs of salvation ' through Christ; and it is the declaration of our ' Saviour, that we cannot enter into the kingdom ' of God, which is equivalent to the expression ' that we cannot become heirs of salvation, except we be born anew of water and of the ' Spirit. If then we cannot become heirs of salvation, except we be born of water and of the ' Spirit, and if we be made heirs of salvation by ' baptism, I see not how we are to evade the consequence, that the outward washing of baptism ' is attended by the sanctification of the Spirit, and that we are born of water and of the Spirit, ' when we are baptized. Thus when our Saviour, ' on giving his commission to the Apostles *to go, ' teach all nations, baptizing them*; accompanied ' it with the promise, that *he that believed and ' was baptized should be saved*, it must clearly be ' understood, that the communication of the Holy ' Spirit and spiritual regeneration were to attend

‘ on baptism, which is here expressly represented
‘ as the means of salvation.’*

The last clause in this paragraph may serve as a key to the whole. Our Saviour has said, “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” By a remarkable, and evidently a designed, omission in the second member,† he not only avoids making baptism essential to salvation, but shews his intention in this, as in all other places, to lay the main stress upon believing. Baptism, as an appointed means of grace, and the prescribed method of professing our faith, must not be omitted : it is ‘ of great necessity where it may be had.’‡ But faith, true and lively faith, is the weighty and essential qualification, which whoso hath shall be saved, and whoso hath not shall be damned. Now how marvellous is it to see Mr. M., under these circumstances, and by means of this very text, turning all our attention to baptism ! He *totally drops* the latter clause, which is distinguished by the studied omission of baptism : and, in the former clause,—“ he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—he finds nothing to remark but being baptized ! He takes no more notice of the “ faith,” without which (in subjects

* P. 29, 30.

† See Whitby.

‡ Liturgy.

capable of faith,) baptism itself, as appears from this passage, shall avail nothing to salvation, than if it had never been mentioned! His deduction, his only deduction from the text is, “baptism is ‘here expressly represented as the means of salvation!’ On so sandy ground, rather we may say, on no ground at all, rests one of the fundamental propositions of this paragraph, and all the reasoning built upon it!

We may now see what authority Mr. M. has for asserting, ‘It is the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, that we are by baptism made heirs of ‘salvation.’* And, again, for ‘*arguing for baptism being the vehicle of regeneration*, BECAUSE ‘IT IS THE VEHICLE OF SALVATION.’ † And yet again, for asserting, ‘that baptism was ordained ‘by Christ himself, with a *promise of salvation annexed to its legitimate administration.*’ ‡ We now find, that all this is ‘expressly represented’ to be the case in the words, “He that believeth “and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned”—whether he be baptized or unbaptized! Christ promised salva-

* I do not forget the expression in our Catechism, which may seem nearly equivalent to this. It shall be considered in its proper place. See c. viii.

† P. 35.

‡ P. 51.

tion to faith and baptism : *ergo*, baptism, whether accompanied by faith or not, is the vehicle of 'salvation,' and 'a promise of salvation is annexed 'to its legitimate administration !' *

Let us apply Mr. M.'s mode of treatment in another and not dissimilar case. In Romans x, St. Paul says, "With the heart man believeth "unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now should we, on the ground of this text, pass unnoticed "the believing with the heart," and insist only on "the confession of the mouth," as the thing required "unto salvation," the absurdity would be apparent: but it would be more excusable than overlooking faith, and noticing only baptism, in the passage of St. Mark ; both because the connexion and dependence of the things specified is less close in this instance than in that, and because there is no such omission, as was there noticed in the second clause.

* Let it not be pretended, that by 'legitimate administration' Mr. M. meant, administration to penitent, believing subjects. If such were his meaning, the controversy would be at an end: and the point would be conceded, that baptism might be administered, in due form and order, to thousands, and no spiritual regeneration conveyed. But it is perfectly evident that throughout his work he uses the term 'rightly' or 'legitimately administered,' in the same sense as the Church appears to do, to signify administered in due form and order, and by an authorized person.

But Mr. M. may probably refer me to the passage of the epistle to Titus, which is immediately to come under consideration, as a proof that baptism ‘conveys salvation:’ “He saved us by the washing of regeneration.” But, allowing “the washing of regeneration” to be baptism, it would be as unwarrantable to stop at those words, and to omit “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” which follows, as it is to pass by faith, and to notice only baptism in Mark xvi.; or as it would be to stop at the words “born of water,” in John iii. In either case we should rest in the outward sign, and neglect the inward grace.

Perhaps, again, he may adduce 1 Peter iii. 21: “The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us.” And it may, indeed, appear extraordinary, that Mr. M., instead of omitting it altogether, should not have brought forward that passage in the very body of his argument. But, in fact, it is clogged with such an explanation, as must make it ill serve his cause, on any occasion. In the very same breath, and in language somewhat disparaging, as to the effect of baptism where not ‘rightly RECEIVED,’ the apostle adds, “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” by the mere outward observance of the rite, “but THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

“TOWARDS GOD.”* What can this “answer of a good conscience” mean, but sincerity in the professions made, in the repentance and faith avowed, in baptism? These are ‘the means’ of saving us, and not the mere sacrament of baptism, which, without these, the apostle considers as no more than “putting away the filth of the flesh;” a mere washing of the body, or, at best, only an ‘external and relative sanctification.’

On Tit. iii. 4—7., Mr. M., substituting, for “the washing of regeneration” “the laver of regeneration,” observes, ‘By comparing together the several parts of this passage it is evident, that baptism is here represented as the mean through which, or the instrument by which, the Holy Spirit of God regenerates us; and thereby makes us heirs of that eternal life, which the mercy of God our Saviour hath provided for those, whom he justifies and saves.’ †

We will allow that the expression “washing of regeneration” alludes to baptism; but much in the same way as “born of water” does in John

* It is remarkable that the Bp. of Lincoln, in quoting this text, takes only the beginning and the end: “baptism doth now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:” entirely omitting the explanation, which occupies the middle between these two clauses!—*Refutation*, p. 84.

† P. 31.

iii. And it may safely be conceded, that baptism is ‘ a means’ of regeneration, without its at all following, that spiritual regeneration must always accompany baptism, and can never be conveyed by any other means.—The marked distinction, now attempted to be established, between “ the washing of regeneration,” and “ the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” in this passage, as if the one referred to what takes place at baptism only, and the other exclusively to subsequent improvement,* seems to have little foundation. The two things are connected together in the text, as closely, as “ born of water and of the Spirit ” are in John iii. 5 : and it would seem that there is no authority for thus separating them. If the former refer to baptism as ‘ the outward sign,’ the latter, I should conceive, expresses ‘ the inward and spiritual grace.’ The profoundly accurate Bishop Pearson seems to have had no idea of any such distinction of the clauses. ‘ The second part of the office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of man,’ he says, ‘ is the regeneration and renovation of him.’ And then, having quoted this text, he presently adds : ‘ If we live in the Spirit, QUICKENED BY HIS RENOVATION, we must also walk in the Spirit.’ He applies the term *renovation*, taken from this very text, to the first ‘ quickening,’ or regeneration of

* See Tracts, p. 27, 28, 41, 42.

men.* So likewise Bishop Bradford, in his discourse from this text, which till lately was circulated by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge: The inquiry, he says, ‘ will lead us to the ‘ true notion of REGENERATION, both when ‘ it is applied to baptism, (as it frequently is,) ‘ and when it particularly denotes *the* RENEWING ‘ *of the mind* by the Divine Spirit.’ †

On 1 Cor. vi. 11, “ washed, sanctified, justified,” Mr. M., having remarked, that the ‘ washing of baptism is mentioned as the instrument ‘ by which both the blessings’ of sanctification and justification ‘ are conveyed,’ adds, ‘ It is true, ‘ that in this passage there occurs no such expression as regeneration, or the being born ‘ again ; but, as it was before argued, if a person ‘ must be born again, in order to be saved or justified, and if by baptism he is saved or justified, ‘ it then necessarily follows that by baptism he is ‘ born again.’ ‡

The premises and the conclusion here hang together by a very loose and illogical connexion. ‘ In order to be saved or justified’ a man must be born again. Of course his being ‘ born again’ must, in order of nature, at least, precede and

* On the Creed, Art. viii.

† Society’s Edit. 1810. p. 11.

‡ P. 31, 32.

make way for his ‘being saved or justified.’ But by baptism, it is here said, the latter blessing is conveyed: and hence it is inferred that by baptism also the antecedent blessing is conveyed! Let us illustrate this reasoning. In order to being elected a member of parliament, a man must possess a certain qualification: but by the suffrages of the voters he is elected a member of parliament: *ergo*, by the suffrages of the voters he possesses the qualification! Such appears to be the logic of the passage: nor is its theology, I conceive, much better. But the remarks already made, in treating of Mark xvi., may suffice for the present occasion also.

From Col. ii. 12, 13, Mr. M. says, ‘the argument is more direct.’ ‘What can be plainer or stronger to the point. Dead in their sins, and buried in baptism, by baptism also they were raised and quickened by God.’* The apostle’s words are, “risen with him BY THE FAITH of the operation of God.” But this Mr. M. quite overlooks, as he had before done the whole subject of faith, in Mark xvi. 15, 16. Suppose, then, baptism administered to an adult who had no true faith, would he be “raised and quickened” by it? —The real question between us, and it is needful frequently to re-state it, is this, Does baptism ne-

* P. 32.

cessarily or always convey spiritual blessings, irrespectively of the state of mind, the ‘repentance and faith,’ of the receiver?

‘To the Romans,’ Mr. M. says, (referring to Rom. vi. 4, 11,) the apostle ‘employs the same figure, describing baptism as a burial, wherein they were dead unto sin and alive unto God: adding withal a particular, which confirms an opinion, presently to be insisted on, that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.’ What is ‘the particular’ which confirms so momentous a conclusion? It is, that Christ “died unto sin once” and ‘no more,’ and that we are “to reckon ourselves likewise,” ‘*in a like or in the same manner,*’ to be dead indeed unto sin, “but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” ‘Does not the language of the apostle,’ Mr. M. asks, ‘warrant the argument, that we are born anew in baptism, in baptism exclusively?’* I reply, *Does it warrant any such argument?* I beg the reader to pause, and judge of this for himself.—On the ground of Christ’s having “once died unto sin,” and ever after “living unto God,” the apostle exhorts Christians “to reckon themselves in like manner dead unto sin, and alive unto God,” and therefore not to suffer “sin to reign in their mortal body, that

* P. 32, 33.

“ they should obey it in the lusts thereof.” No commentator, I apprehend, before Mr. M., ever imagined, that the point of comparison was, the ONENESS of Christ’s death, and the ONENESS of the mystical death of Christians! Surely had this been the point of comparison, it should have been noticed in the application of the case to Christians. “ Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be ” ONCE “ dead indeed unto sin,” &c.—However, I have no wish to contend for a second death unto sin, where ‘ a death unto sin and a new birth unto ‘ righteousness ’ appear really and practically to have taken place. But ‘ the death unto sin ’ of many, who ‘ call themselves Christians,’ has been merely *in profession*, and not in fact :* and accordingly the church very wisely considers it rather as matter of admonition, that ‘ we who are ‘ baptized should die from sin,’ than of assumption, that we are dead to it. †

* See Bp. Bradford’s Tract on baptismal and spiritual regeneration.

† ‘ Exhortation to the Godfathers and Godmothers,’ at the close of the baptismal service.—I do not feel myself called upon to notice any of Mr. M.’s authorities, except the scriptures and the church I may here however just observe, that he quotes St. Austin for the assertion, that there is ‘ no one who does not die unto sin in baptism.’ P. 39. He gives us no reference for the passage : for aught, therefore, that appears, it may mean no more, than that every one does this *by profession*. ‘ Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, ‘ which is,’ &c. &c. In this sense it is true. But he must be a hardy believer, indeed, in, I must call it, the *opus operatum*, who will maintain, that a wilful hypocrite, coming to baptism from secular motives, and returning from it to his former sins, does *actually* “ die

I subjoin a quotation on these two passages of the epistles to the Romans and the Colossians, which appears to me much to the purpose.

‘ Here three particulars are mentioned, in allusion to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; to whom believers are, in a figurative sense, conformed. They become *dead to sin*, as he *died unto sin once*. They are *buried*, as he was buried: they arise from among *the dead in sin*, as he arose from the dead. It is evident, that ceasing from sin, and becoming incapable of *living any longer therein*; that entire separation from the former course of ungodliness, and from the pollutions of this evil world; and the beginning and progress of a new and holy life, from *newness of heart*; are signified by this death, burial, and resurrection. Of these things baptism is the outward sign: and, in adults, it is an open profession of them. Whether any reference was intended to the outward administration by immersion, in the word *buried*, it is not needful here to determine. However that be decided, it is manifest, that neither outward baptism, nor any thing inseparably connected with it, can be exclusively meant;

“unto sin” in his baptism! Sure I am that our church holds no such doctrine. ‘In such only as *worthily* receive the same have’ the sacraments ‘a wholesome effect or operation.’ Art. xxv.

unless all, who are baptized with water, are so
 dead to sin, and so buried from it, as not to
 walk any longer therein.—New converts pro-
 fessed these things, at their baptism; and if,
 with the washing of water, there was also the
 answer of a good conscience towards God, they
 would thenceforth walk in newness of life: but
 not otherwise. For if we have been planted
 together in the likeness of his death, we shall
 be also in the likeness of his resurrection.
 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified
 with him, that the body of sin might be de-
 stroyed; that henceforth we should not serve
 sin.—Even true Christians need exhorting to
 act consistently with their profession; and,
 much more, collective bodies: so that the sub-
 sequent exhortations do not at all invalidate
 this conclusion, which is drawn by the apostle
 in the most decided language. When the
 apostle said, *As many of you as have been bap-
 tized into Christ have put on Christ:—for ye
 are all one in Christ Jesus; and if ye be
 Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs
 according to the promise; did he mean that
 hypocrites, receiving outward baptism, became
 one with Christ, the children of believing Abra-
 ham, and heirs of the promised blessings? or
 did he not rather intend to express the same,
 as when he said, *By one Spirit we are baptized**

‘ *into one body?* The outward baptism admits
 ‘ men into the visible church: but the baptism
 ‘ of the Spirit alone constitutes them living
 ‘ members of the body of Christ in heaven.’ *

On the passage from Eph. v. 25—27, Mr. M.
 says, ‘ Sanctification and purity, unspotted and
 ‘ unblemished holiness, are here attributed to the
 ‘ church of Christ, as the effect of the washing
 ‘ of water. But what water could produce such
 ‘ an effect without the operation of the Spirit?
 ‘ And what rite is performed by their joint ope-
 ‘ ration, but the sacrament of baptism? And by
 ‘ what appropriate scriptural term is the effect
 ‘ of their united influence to be denominated,
 ‘ but by that of regeneration?’ †

Not to urge, that this ‘ unspotted and unble-
 ‘ mished holiness’ seems rather to refer to the
 heavenly state, when the redemption of the
 church shall have attained its consummation, † I
 observe, that the apostle appears here, in con-
 formity with many other scriptures, to ascribe it
 rather to the instrumentality of “the word,”
 than to that of “water.” The sentence is,
 “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the
 “washing of water BY THE WORD.” So we are

* Scott’s Remarks, &c. vol. i. p. 206, 207.

† P. 33.

‡ Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. ix.

exhorted in our homily on the sacrament, 'Wash yourselves with the living waters of God's word.' Mr. M., however, entirely passes over the terms "BY THE WORD," just as he had done FAITH in Mark xvi. and Coloss. ii.—But, in point of fact, is the whole visible church of Christ brought to a state of actual holiness, either by the washing of baptism, or by that and the ministration of the word united? If not, it will not follow from this text, that 'the sanctification of the Spirit' always accompanies any outward means.

The subject of 'the joint operation' of water and the Spirit has been before considered. Mr. M. here asks, 'By what appropriate scriptural term is the effect of their united influence to be denominated, but by that of regeneration?' Who would not imagine from this, that the term *regeneration* was of frequent occurrence in scripture, and that it was, with sufficient distinctness, appropriated to express this effect? Now the fact is, that the substantive itself occurs but twice in the whole New Testament: and, in one of those two instances, there seems sufficient reason to conclude, that it refers to quite a different subject.* And, with respect

* See Matt. xix. 28. Tit. iii. 3. and Parkhurst on *παιδαγωγικη*: also quotation from Bp. Hopkins, close of c. vii. below.

to the verbs of kindred import, we shall ere long see how rarely they appear to be used with any allusion to baptism. So little authority is there for speaking of “regeneration” as the ‘appropriate scriptural term’ for ‘the effect of the ‘united influence’ of water and the Spirit!

‘Similar questions,’ to those which he has pressed from the foregoing passage, Mr. M. says ‘arise from’ 1 Cor. xii. 13: “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”* His inference seems to be, (for it is not very clearly stated,) that every one who is baptized is a partaker of the Holy Spirit. Now, in the conclusion of this same verse, the apostle adds: “and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” In which words he is understood to allude to the sacramental cup, as he had before done to the baptismal water.† The same reasoning, therefore, which shews from the beginning of the verse, that every one in baptism partakes of the spiritual grace, would shew, from the conclusion of it, that every one does the same in the Lord’s supper, without respect to the state of mind in which he receives it: a doctrine in direct hostility to that of the church of England.—That we ‘divest’ baptism ‘of that which gives it its value,’ (as Mr. M. goes on to

* P. 33.

† Locke, Doddridge, &c.

charge us with doing,*) by denying that it uniformly conveys spiritual regeneration, is just as true, as that Mr. M. divests the Lord's supper of all that renders it valuable, when he declares, as I presume he does, that only 'the faithful,' in that sacrament, receive 'the body and blood of Christ.'†

The simple fact appears to be, that in this, as in innumerable other passages, the sacred writer addresses persons according to their professions. They were members of the visible "body" or church of Christ; they were made such by baptism: and they professed to be true members of his spiritual church:‡ and, supposing them to be what they professed themselves, then indeed they were "baptized into that one body," by the "one Spirit" which 'governs and sanctifies the whole,' and they "did all drink into that one Spirit."

* P. 34. † Catechism, Communion Service, &c.

‡ I intend no other distinction here, than what Hooker (B. iii.) and Pearson (on the Creed, Art. ix.) have laid down. 'The *visible* church of Christ on earth, is a sort of people who profess the name of Christ, and own his doctrine; joining together in a holy society and communion of worship, where it can be enjoyed. The *invisible* church of Christ on earth, is a number of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with Jesus Christ, by their faith and his Spirit. The visible church is of a much larger extent than the invisible: for it comprehends hypocrites, and too many ungodly persons,' as well as holy characters, &c. Bp. Hopkins, vol. ii. p. 419.

With respect to Acts ii. 38, and x. 47, 48, from which Mr. M. says ‘ the same inference is ‘ to be drawn,’* we may observe, that no one doubts, that he who believes in Christ is to profess his faith in baptism : and that baptism is the appointed external ‘ seal ’ † of “ the remission “ of sins ” to him who “ repents and is baptized.” But does it follow, that every one who is baptized is regenerated and pardoned, whether he repents or not?—All the instances thus adduced are instances of adults receiving baptism, and must be discussed as such, without reference, at present, to the case of infants.

Finally, some observations of Mr. M.’s on ‘ Ananias’s admonition to Paul, after his miraculous conversion,’ to “ arise and be baptized, “ and wash away his sins, calling on the name “ of the Lord,” ‡ have been before remarked upon. It may be sufficient here to observe, that, as Paul was already, by Mr. M.’s acknowledgment, ‘ converted,’ ‘ renewed in heart,’ and ‘ obedient,’ § he must also have been in a state of pardon and acceptance: unless a man can be penitent, believing, and obedient, and yet unfor-

* P. 34.

† Art. xxvii.

‡ Acts xxii. 16. Tracts, p. 34, 35. Compare p. 43.

§ P. 43.

given.* All, therefore, that he could want was ‘the visible sign and seal’ of forgiveness; † and to have his sins “washed away,” according to Hooker’s language ‘in the eye of the church.’ ‡ But, supposing that the words bore any other sense, would it follow from the sins of the ‘converted’ and ‘renewed’ Paul being “washed away” in baptism, that the sins of an unconverted, unrenewed Jew, for instance, hypocritically receiving baptism, would also be washed away? Who can believe this? Yet such must be the case, if baptism rightly administered must always convey spiritual grace.

Such then is the amount of Mr. M.’s direct evidence from scripture, by which it was to be ‘incontrovertibly’ proved, that baptism rightly administered always conveys regeneration, and ‘that no other than baptismal regeneration is ‘possible in this world.’ If ever Mr. M. should have an important cause to maintain, in any court accustomed to receive and appreciate evidence, I hope he will have something of more weight to bring forward: otherwise I will venture to foretell the issue of his suit.

* See Acts ii. 19 : xiii. 39 : John iii. 14—18, 36 : and innumerable other places.

† ‘The promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be ‘the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed’ in baptism. Art. xxvii.

‡ Tracts, p. 43.

But besides his direct proofs from scripture, Mr. M. has a *negative argument*, of which he makes a considerable use. Reasoning of this kind, which infers that a thing *is not*, merely because its existence is not declared; or that *it is*, merely because it is not denied to be; is always of a very suspicious character. It is well known how serviceable it has been found by infidels, who have chosen to construe the omission of a fact by one evangelist, into a denial of it as recorded by another; the silence of Josephus, or some other ancient historian, into a refutation of scripture history. The argument, therefore, is to be viewed, *à priori*, with some distrust, though it may not always be fallacious. Let us, however, hear Mr. M.

‘ If ever (he says) the new birth be not conveyed by baptism rightly administered; or if when once regenerated, it be (I will not say necessary, but) possible for any one to be born again, doubtless there is scriptural authority to that purpose. Let the authority then be adduced.’—Of ‘ the new birth not being always conveyed by baptism,’ proof may, perhaps, be adduced hereafter: and, as to a person ‘ once regenerated’ being regenerated again, those, at least, who hold with Calvin the doctrine of final perseverance, will agree with Mr. M., that it

cannot be ; but that such a person evermore continues regenerate.* But to proceed : Mr. M. demands ‘ Let it be shewn from holy writ, that
 ‘ any person, to whom baptism was rightly administered, was not regenerated ; let it be shewn,
 ‘ that any person, having been once baptized,
 ‘ is described under any circumstances whatever
 ‘ of repentance, reformation, renovation, or conversion, to have been again regenerated ; let it
 ‘ be shewn, that the apostles, who are perpetually exhorting their Christian converts to
 ‘ changes such as these, do once exhort them to
 ‘ become regenerate ; do once enforce the necessity of it ; or even affirm, or at least insinuate,
 ‘ its possibility ; and we may then perceive some
 ‘ reason for wavering in our belief.’ †

Here the unfairness of the negative argument discovers itself. Perhaps it will appear, that some of the things demanded admit of being done. That others cannot be done, may be owing to mere omissions in the concise histories of scripture ; and particularly to the very sparing use of the terms “ regenerate ” and “ born “ again,” in the sacred writings. From the above passage, as well as from what was before said of ‘ the appropriate scriptural term,’ it might be imagined, that nothing was more com-

* See also p. 48.

† P. 40, 41.

mon than to find the apostles, in addressing *unbaptized* persons, insisting upon regeneration, *totidem verbis*. But how far this is from being the case has been already, in some degree, shewn. So seldom does this language occur, on any occasion, that one of our assailants pronounced the passage in John iii. to be perfectly ‘unique,’ and unparalleled in scripture! The sacred writers do, indeed, continually insist on what is equivalent to regeneration, according to our views of its nature; but generally under other terms: while they say so little of baptism, as must constitute a much more remarkable omission, according to Mr. M.’s views, than any with which he has endeavoured to embarrass us.

But to confine ourselves, for the present, to the passage just quoted.—It is not true, that the apostles ‘are perpetually exhorting their ‘Christian converts to changes such as’ ‘conversion:’ the reason of which, and of much of that omission from which Mr. M. argues, is,* that they generally assume such persons to be both “converted,” and “walking in newness “of life,” as well as baptized. And to the demand, ‘Let it be shewn, that the apostles do ‘once exhort them to become regenerate,’ it may be replied (the proper sort of reply to an argu-

* See c. ix. below.

ment of this kind,) Let it be shewn, where they exhorted them to become ‘regenerate,’ even before they were baptized.* They exhorted them, it is true, “to be baptized;” but it would be begging the question at issue, to assume that this is the same thing with being regenerated.

In a subsequent passage Mr. M. proceeds in a like strain. ‘Simon Magus, *who* (as Bishop Wilson says) *had received the washing of regeneration, and so was entitled to pardon upon his repentance,* was exhorted by the apostle to ‘repent of his wickedness, and to *pray God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven:* and all of us are instructed to pray, agreeably to apostolical language, that, *being regenerated and adopted for the children of God, we may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit.* But where are we instructed to pray ‘after baptism for regeneration?’ † And where,

* ‘The apostles never called on the unbaptized Jews or gentiles to *regenerate themselves*; any more than on professed Christians, who had acted contrary to their profession.’ Scott’s Remarks, &c. vol. i. p. 176, 177.

† P. 42. It seems that the same society, which now circulates Mr. M.’s tracts, could, till lately, have answered this question. In a tract intitled ‘Directions for a devout and decent behaviour in the public ‘Worship of God,’ very commonly prefixed to the Prayer Books issued by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, there is given an Alphabetical Table of the Collects, reduced under proper heads. And as late as 1812 the following was one article:

‘REGENERATION. A *Prayer* for it. Collect for Christmas-day.’ Since that period, it would seem, the conductors of the society’s

(it may be answered,) in scripture at least, are we in terms, instructed so to pray before baptism? 'Where,' Mr. M. proceeds, 'where is it intimated that the (incestuous) Corinthian was 'born again subsequently to his fall?' And where, I rejoin, is he spoken of as 'born again' at all? 'Where,' Mr. M. asks, 'was Simon Magus admonished of the necessity of undergoing another 'new birth?' And where, I ask in return, is it said that he had undergone 'a new birth' at all? or even that he had ever been admonished concerning a 'new birth?' 'And where,' Mr. M. adds, 'is St. Paul described as regenerated, until Ananias baptized him and washed away his sins?' And where, it may be asked again, is he so described at that time? But the fact is, baptism and regeneration are so completely identified in Mr. M.'s mind, that he can no where read of a person's being baptized, but he seems to think that he also *actually reads* of his being regenerated.

We see, then, of how much force and value are these negative arguments, which (reversing a received maxim) assume, that *silence is equivalent to denial!*

affairs have become better informed, and have, in consequence, as I understand, changed the term *regeneration* for *renovation!*—See Christian Observer, Sept. 1815. p. 586.

The case of Simon Magus deserves a little more distinct notice. It is said, indeed, that he “believed,” and that, “when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” But he soon shewed what was the worth of his faith, and what were the motives by which he was influenced. “When Simon saw, that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me this power also, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.” He seems to have conceived, that this was a new and more powerful way, and that it might consequently be made a more gainful way than he had hitherto practised of fascinating, or “betwitching the people,” and establishing his character as “some great one.” Peter therefore said unto him, with holy indignation, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money ! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”—Yet this is the man who is to be held forth as a regenerate character ! that is, as

one who was a partaker of ‘supernatural grace’—of ‘a new principle of life, and of action’—of ‘the sanctification of the Spirit’—which ‘makes ‘us heirs of salvation,’ and ‘entitles us to eternal ‘life!’ We are to believe all this, and moreover that he had not lost the blessing, so as that it should be ‘necessary or even possible’ for him to receive any further regeneration ‘in this ‘world;’ though St. Peter pronounces him to have “neither part nor lot” in the gift of the Holy Spirit, but to be “in the gall of bitterness “and in the bond of iniquity!” We are to believe it all, because he had been baptized, and because, forsooth, he is not positively recorded to have been ‘admonished of the necessity’ of any further regeneration—a term which is never once used with respect to him!

I remember a controversy being carried on, in a periodical work, concerning this same Simon the Sorcerer, in which one of the parties undertook to prove, that he was a converted and good man, because St. Peter exhorted him to repent and pray. The pseudo-Calvinist argued that he was, in a high sense of the word, converted, because he was exhorted to *so much* as repentance and prayer: Mr. M. argues that he was, likewise in a high sense of the word, regenerate, because he was exhorted to *no more* than repentance and

prayer ! I must say that I could as soon agree with the one, as with the other.

How much more rational, and surely more scriptural also, is it to believe, that in his case baptism, not being ‘worthily received,’ was attended with no ‘wholesome effect or operation !’* that, being UNACCOMPANIED WITH “THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARDS GOD,” it was no more than, as St. Peter speaks, “the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” † a mere washing of the body, or at most only a ‘relative, external, and ecclesiastical sanctification.’ ‡

The case of Simon Magus, however, is one, which may furnish salutary admonition to many of those, whom Mr. M. teaches to consider themselves as regenerate; and who might be disposed, on that ground, to draw more favourable conclusions concerning their state, than their habitual temper and conduct would warrant. If one, who is by baptism regenerate, may yet be “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,” and “without part or lot” in the gift of the Holy Spirit; it certainly behoves us to beware of placing too much dependence on our baptismal regeneration. And, again, were it

* Art. xxv.

† 1 Pet. iii. 21.

‡ Bp. Hopkins.

always distinctly admitted, that so great a change may be necessary for us, notwithstanding our baptismal regeneration, as it would have required, to set "the heart" of Simon Magus "right in the sight of God;" there need not be much dispute about the name by which that change should be called. It is, however, I am satisfied, the change itself, and not merely the name, that is in dispute.

CHAPTER III.

The Subject continued—Another Series of scriptural Passages concerning Regeneration—Circumcision, and the Jews under the Old Testament Dispensation.

IN the preceding chapter, I have examined the scriptural authorities, which Mr. M. has adduced in support of his sentiments concerning the effect of baptism. In the present, I intend to bring forward a number of passages, which bear pretty directly upon the subject, but which he has either wholly passed over, or only just alluded to.

I observe, then, that he admits the terms, “be-gotten again,” “born of God,” “the sons of God,” to be equivalent to one another, and to regeneration.* He asks, indeed, how these terms can be applied ‘to large societies of believers,’ ‘unless their regeneration was the effect of an ordinance, of which all Christians in general partake? and if so, of what ordinance but of baptism;’ We shall see hereafter, I trust, that the application of these and similar terms to ‘large societies’ of Christians, admits of a much more

* P. 35 and 44.

satisfactory explication, than the one here proposed. But for the present we are concerned only with the admission, that the expressions, “sons of God,” “begotten of God,” and “born of God,” mean, for substance, the same as regeneration.

Let us then examine the passages in which these terms occur, and see *whether they appear to refer to baptism.*

No expression of the kind, I believe, occurs in the first three gospels. Among the beatitudes, indeed, we read, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the *children of God.*” * But I will not urge this.

John i. 11—13. may, therefore, be considered as the first place in which this language is used. “He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the **SONS OF GOD**, even to them that believe on his name: which were **BORN**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **OF GOD.**” Here “receiving” Christ by “believing in his name,” and also the will and power of God, are mentioned in connexion with being “born of

* See also Luke xx. 36.

God," and "becoming the sons of God:" but not a word of baptism. To imagine even an allusion to it* is perfectly gratuitous. Indeed it has been argued with some force, that this studied exclusion of "the will of man" is totally inapplicable to the case of baptism, where the will of the minister, and of other parties concerned, must concur.†

The next instance is Rom. viii. 14: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the SONS OF GOD." Whether this comports with the idea, that all baptized persons are "the sons of God," every one must judge for himself. If to be "the sons of God" be the same as to be regenerate; and if none be the sons of God but they who are "led by the Spirit of God;" I fear this will prove, what Mr. M. demands to see proved, that even many persons 'to whom baptism has been rightly administered, have not been regenerated.'‡

Another passage is 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, saith the Lord Almighty." What,

* Tracts, p. 8.

† Vid. plura, Scott's Remarks, &c. vol. i. p. 193.

‡ P. 40.

again, do we find concerning baptism in this passage? I fear it must furnish similar inferences to the last.

Gal. iii. 26, 27: "Ye are all the CHILDREN OF GOD by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Here, indeed, baptism is mentioned. Yet, even here, it is to their "faith," rather than to their baptism, that their being the "children of God" is ascribed.

James i. 18: "Of his own will BEGAT he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Here "the word of truth," not baptism, is pointed out as the 'instrument of our regeneration:' as it is also of our sanctification in Ephesians v. 26, before noticed.

1 Pet. i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN US AGAIN to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," &c.

Ibid. 23: "Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Here "the mercy of God" and "the resurrection

“ of Christ ” are noticed, and “ the word of God ” is again assigned as the ‘ instrument ’ of regeneration. Mr. M. alludes to these verses : * but not a hint do they contain concerning baptism, unless it is to be *taken for granted* that “ born again ” means, of course, “ baptized.”

We come now to the epistles of St. John. And we may observe, that the same apostle, who, with such evident seriousness and impression, records our Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus on being born again, himself employs similar language more frequently than all the other sacred writers together.

1 John ii. 29 : “ If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is BORN OF HIM.” This is establishing a very different criterion of regeneration, than the simple fact of having been baptized. And does not the apostle intend it to hold negatively, as well as positively—that whoever doeth not righteousness is *not* “ born of God ? ” If so, this is another passage which will assuredly answer Mr. M.’s challenge, by proving from holy writ, that even many ‘ persons, to whom baptism has been rightly administered, are not regenerate.’ † —This is confirmed by the next passage.

* P. 35.

† Tracts, p. 40.

1 John iii. 9, 10: "Whosoever is BORN OF GOD doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is BORN OF GOD. In this the CHILDREN OF GOD are manifest and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is NOT OF GOD, neither he that loveth not his brother." "NOT OF GOD:" that is, evidently, from the connexion, is not "a child of God"—is not "born of God."

I must except this passage from the number of those, which Mr. M. but slightly notices. He employs no less than three pages upon the former of the two verses.* As, however, his effort is to obviate any conclusion, which might be drawn from it to the prejudice of his sentiments, not to convert the passage into a confirmation of those sentiments, it is properly reserved for this place.

Mr. M.'s labours upon the passage evince nothing, in my judgment, but the impossibility of reconciling it with the notions, that all baptized persons are born of God, and 'that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.'

He first mistates the argument drawn from the passage. It is hence contended, he says, 'that as baptismal regeneration does not secure a

* P. 44—47.

‘ man from sin, another greater and better new birth must be added to supply the deficiency.’ And he then cursorily alludes to the doctrine of ‘ sinless perfection.’ Now, I apprehend, that not even those, who hold sinless perfection to be attainable in this life, (of whom I certainly am not one,) do understand the apostle here to speak of such perfection, and to declare that no one is born of God, who is not thus ‘ secured from sin.’ But I conceive that every one, who will allow the apostle to speak for himself, must admit, that he does affirm, the “ being born of God ” effectually to secure a man from *living in sin* as others do—from *practising sin*—from “ not doing,” or *practising*, “ righteousness.”* And this is all that our argument requires. If no man who is “ born of God ” can *live in wickedness*, then many who have been baptized are not even yet “ born of God.”

* It is true, that, in the latter clause of ver. 9, the simple verb *ἀμαρτανειν* is used: but in the former part the expression is *ἀμαρτιαν ου ποιει* *doth not do, or practise, sin*: and in ver. 10. this is illustrated by the contrast of *ποιων δικαιοσυνην*, *doing or practising righteousness*. So that the “ sinning ” or “ committing sin ” is sufficiently proved to refer to a man’s *habitual practice*—‘ the trade of his life,’ as one of the homilies terms it.—The expression *ποιειν ἀμαρτιαν* occurs also in John viii. 34: but still in the same sense of habitually practising sin. *Πας ὁ ποιων ἀμαρτιαν, δουλός ἐστι τῆς ἀμαρτίας.*

‘ Those words in St. John, that *a man born of God doth not and cannot sin*, must be understood in a larger sense, of their not living ‘ in the practice of known sin; of their not allowing themselves in ‘ that course of life, nor going on deliberately in it.’ Bp. Burnet, *on Art. xvi.*

In the next place, in treating of this text, Mr. M. has recourse to a most sophistical argument, to evade its force. ‘ In the passage before us,’ he says, ‘ the apostle affirms, that *whosoever is born of God cannot sin*; and a few verses before he affirms, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God*; so that connecting the two assertions together, he will be made to affirm, that all the persons, to whom his epistle was addressed were incapable of sinning; a hazardous affirmation this, if it be considered, that the epistle was certainly addressed to large societies of Christians;’ &c. Nothing, I conceive, can be more unfair than the whole of this passage. By the terms ‘ incapable of sinning,’ Mr. M. takes advantage of the idea of the apostle’s meaning ‘ sinless perfection,’ though he has just discarded that interpretation of the words. He assumes that what is said in such general expressions as, “ *Beloved, now are we the sons of God,*” is to be applied to every individual of the society to which the epistle may be addressed: than which, as I hope to shew, no more fallacious principle can be assumed in the interpretation of scripture. And then, as the basis of his argument, he puts this general language, in which people are spoken of *according to their own professions*, and the writer’s *charitable hopes* concerning them, on a footing with the strict and universal affirmatives and nega-

tives * of the passage under consideration. By such reasoning, what is there which we might not prove? Will Mr. M. undertake to affirm, that such passages as iii. 20, “Ye have an uncertainty from the Holy One, and ye know all things,” were true of every individual of ‘the large societies of Christians—dispersed throughout the greater and lesser Asia,’ to whom he supposes the epistle to have been addressed? Will he undertake to say, that every one of them having (according to him) “that hope” of which the Apostle wrote in iii. 1—3, “purified himself even as God is pure?” Upon these principles, from v. 20, “We are in him that is true,” compared with iii. 6, “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not,” we might prove that all these persons lived without sin—the very conclusion which he so justly pronounces absurd.

Mr. M. next says, “The truth appears to be, that St. John intended to give a description of those persons, who having been regularly adopted for the sons of God by the appointed

* Ver. 9. “WHOSOEVER is born of God doth not commit (practise) sin.” Ver. 10. “WHOSOEVER doeth not (practiseth not) righteousness is NOT of God.”—Mr. M., in quoting, passes from the opening words of v. 9, “Whosoever is born of God,” to the concluding ones, “cannot sin.” It would have been more fair, perhaps, to take those which stand immediately connected with the former—“doth not commit (practise) sin,” as they suggest that interpretation of the others, in which we all agree.

‘ means, continued to act in a manner worthy
 ‘ of their adoption, by striving to profit by the
 ‘ grace of God, which would then effectually pre-
 ‘ serve them from the grosser sins.’—St. John de-
 clares that he speaks of all, “ whosoever are
 “ born of God :” Mr. M. says, that he ‘ intended’
 to describe ‘ those, who, having been regularly
 ‘ adopted for the sons of God, . . . continued to act
 ‘ in a manner worthy of their adoption.’ Whose
 word is to be taken, the reader will decide. But,
 supposing Mr. M.’s interpretation to be admit-
 ted, how nugatory does it make the apostle’s
 solemn declaration ! Let us put it in Mr. M.’s
 way. “ Whosoever is born of God,” and ‘ con-
 ‘ tinues to act in a manner worthy of his adop-
 ‘ tion,’—“ doth not commit (or practise) sin.”
 What is ‘ acting in a manner worthy of our
 ‘ adoption,’ but abstaining from sin ? Does not
 this interpretation, therefore, make the apostle’s
 words to amount to this, ‘ Whosoever is born
 ‘ of God, and continues to abstain from sin,
 ‘ doth not practise sin ?’—‘ Under the’ same
 ‘ limitation,’ Mr. M. afterwards adds, ‘ we
 ‘ may admit the position of an acute writer,*
 ‘ that the views, dispositions, and conduct of
 ‘ real Christians invariably characterize the
 ‘ regenerate children of God in scripture :’
 —and ‘ that other position’ also, ‘ that there
 ‘ is an infallible connection between regenera-

* Mr. Overton,

**tion and salvation*:—positions, which are ‘true, precisely to the same extent as the assertion of the apostle, that *by baptism we are dead unto sin, and are freed from sin.*’ I know not where the apostle asserts, that ‘by baptism we are dead unto sin, and freed from sin.’ I suppose the allusion is to Rom. vi: but I find no such assertion there. The church, as it has already been remarked, says, ‘So SHOULD we who are baptized die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness.’ That all they who are baptized are BY PROFESSION dead to sin may be true, but that they are so in fact—nothing, I fear, is less true.

After what has been observed on the preceding passages, we may be very brief on those which remain.

1 John iv. 7, 8: “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God: and every one that loveth is BORN OF GOD and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.”—The apostle writes much in this epistle of that love, which true Christians bear to one another, for Christ’s sake. And of that he must doubtless be understood to speak in this place. He calls it “the love of the brethren:” and elsewhere mentions the possession

of it as a decisive evidence of “having passed
“from DEATH unto LIFE.” *

1 John, v. 1: “Whosoever believeth that
“Jesus is the Christ, is BORN OF GOD: and every
“one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also
“that is begotten of him.” From the other
passages adduced, it must be evident that the
faith here intended is the ‘true, lively, and
‘Christian faith,’ which “worketh by love,” and
produceth obedience. However, whether more
or less be understood by this “believing that
“Jesus is the Christ,” here is no allusion made
to baptism.

Ibid. 4, 5: “Whatsoever is BORN OF GOD over-
“cometh the world: and this is the victory which
“overcometh the world, even our faith. Who
“is he that overcometh the world, but he that be-
“lieveth that Jesus is the Son of God.” All other
men are held in bondage by the world,—by the
love of it, or the fear of it: but he that is “born
“of God” has received: ‘a new principle of life
‘and of action,’ which enables him “to overcome
“the world.” Is this true of all baptized per-
sons? If not they are not all “born of God.”

Ibid. 18: “We know that whosoever is BORN

* John. iii. 14.

“ OF GOD sinneth not, but he that is BEGOTTEN
 “ OF GOD keepeth himself, and that wicked one
 “ toucheth him not.” ‘ The apostle is speaking
 ‘ concerning *a sin unto death*; and his words
 ‘ clearly mean, that no one, who has been *born*
 ‘ of God, or *begotten of God*, committeth this sin
 ‘ unto death. I might here, with a force of ar-
 ‘ gument not easily answered, maintain the final
 ‘ perseverance of all who are *born of God*: for
 ‘ apostates are especially the persons marked out
 ‘ as guilty of this sin. But, waving this
 ‘ subject, I would only ask, Is there any kind or
 ‘ degree of sin, from which all baptized persons
 ‘ are secured? any, from which they all, uni-
 ‘ formly and without exception, keep themselves?
 ‘ If this be answered in the negative, as I think
 ‘ it must; then, beyond all doubt, being *born of*
 ‘ *God* is something’ by no means inseparably con-
 ‘ nected with baptism.’*

‘ We may here observe how prominent the
 ‘ idea of all true Christians being *born of God*
 ‘ was in this apostle’s mind; and that they *alone*
 ‘ were born of God.’ ‘ He never adduces any
 ‘ thing peculiar to Christianity, but it is asso-
 ‘ ciated with being born of God.’ ‘ Yet he does
 ‘ not expressly mention baptism, except as record-
 ‘ ing facts in all his writings.’ †

* Scott’s Remarks, &c. vol. i. p. 202, 203.

† Ibid. p. 193.

‘ Every passage, in the New Testament, has
 ‘ now been considered, in which the term rege-
 ‘ neration is used, or words of similar import :
 ‘ and in two only, is there even any direct allu-
 ‘ sion to baptism.* “ The will of God ” is
 assigned as the source ; † “ the word of God ” as
 the ordinary instrument ; ‡ and “ being led by
 “ the Spirit,” the “ love ” of God and man,
 “ overcoming the world,” and righteousness of
 life, as the necessary evidences § of regeneration :
 but how little do we read concerning baptism in
 this connexion !

And as being “ born of God ” is continually
 spoken of without any reference to baptism, so,
 on the other hand, it has been remarked, that,
 ‘ in no one instance, in which the baptizing
 ‘ of any persons is recorded in the New Testa-
 ‘ ment, is the least intimation given, that they
 ‘ were then regenerated. The two subjects
 ‘ are kept entirely separate,’ with the excep-
 tion of the allusions to the outward sign just
 specified. ||

* Ibid. p. 204. The two passages intended are John iii. and Tit.
 ii. In Rom. vi. and Col. ii. no such term occurs. If a third passage
 is to be added, it must be Gal. iii. 26, 27, above quoted.

† John i. 11, 12. James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 3.

‡ James 1. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23

§ Rom. viii. 14. 1 John ii. 29. iii. 9, 10. iv. 7, 8. v. 18.

|| Scott’s Remarks, vol. i. p. 210.

Indeed it seems impossible to turn from such works as Mr. M.'s to the New Testament, without feeling strongly the transition we have made. In the former, I had nearly said, baptism occupies the whole field of view. It is placed in the greatest possible prominence: almost every thing is ascribed to it: all blessings are connected with it. 'Supernatural grace is thereby conferred:' 'Christ,' it is declared, 'ordained it with the promise of salvation annexed to its legitimate administration:' 'it conveys regeneration:' 'it is the vehicle of salvation:' it 'entitles us to eternal life:' we 'are born anew in baptism, and in baptism exclusively:' 'it infuses a new principle of life and of action:' 'we are by baptism made heirs of salvation:' 'sanctification and purity, unspotted and unblemished holiness, are attributed to the church of Christ as the effect' of it. In short, it would seem that we are thereby regenerated, adopted, justified, sanctified, if not also glorified for to that the passage last alluded to refers.* But turn now to the New Testament. There we find, indeed, baptism 'expressly ordained by Christ himself,' with the declara-

* So also the Bishop of Lincoln: 'Those who are baptized are immediately translated from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ; the original guilt which they brought into the world is mystically washed away; and they receive forgiveness of the actual sins which they may themselves have committed; they become reconciled to God, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal happiness,' &c. *Refutation of Calv.* p. 83.

tion, "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be "saved." It is the appointed mode of professing faith in him: it is 'a sign, a pledge, a means' of important blessings. As such it is required to be observed, and it is supposed that Christians have not failed to observe it. But when the terms of salvation are to be propounded, how seldom, comparatively, do we hear of it! "To "as many as received him to them gave he power "to become the sons of God, even to them that "believe on his name:" "That whosoever *believeth* on him should not perish, but have "everlasting life:" "He that heareth my word, "and *believeth* on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life:" "He that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, and "he that *believeth* on me shall never thirst:" "What shall I do to be saved? *Believe* on the "Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:" "Through his name, whosoever *believeth* in him "shall receive remission of sins:" "By him all "that *believe* are justified from all things:" "That *repentance* and remission of sins should "be preached in his name, among all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem:" "Testifying both "to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance* "towards God, and *faith* towards our Lord Jesus "Christ:" "Repent and be *converted* that your "sins may be blotted out."

For what purpose do I make these quotations? To shew that baptism is unimportant, because it is not mentioned in them? If such were my purpose, I might justly be charged with the same negative mode of reasoning, which, in the last chapter, I condemned in Mr. M. But such is by no means the use which I make of these passages. I adduce them only to shew, in what terms the inspired writers *ordinarily* proclaimed the salvation of the gospel to mankind. I do not infer that they omitted baptism, or neglected to insist upon baptism, because it is not here mentioned: yet I cannot but ask, Had baptism occupied as large a space in their view as in Mr. M. s, had they attributed as extraordinary an efficacy to it, would it not have been much more prominent than it is in their addresses?

In one place, indeed, St. Paul even speaks of “baptizing” as a very secondary and inferior employment, compared with “preaching the gospel.” “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name..... For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.”*—I cannot persuade myself, that such language comports with the idea of bap-

* 1 Cor. i. 14—17.

tism being so completely ‘ the vehicle of regeneration and salvation,’ as Mr. M. esteems it.

Before we quit the ground of scripture, there is another argument which may well deserve consideration. The Jews, it is allowed, were as much the covenant people of God, during the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation, as Christians are now. They had their initiatory ordinance as well as we. It denoted, that, according to our Lord’s expression, “ that which is born of the flesh is flesh ;” and that this corrupt nature needs to be mortified and put away. It represented “ the circumcision of the heart to love God.”* It was “ the seal of the righteousness of faith.” † Was it not to them ‘ the sacrament of regeneration,’ as much as baptism is to us? ‡ It was appointed by the same authority ; it stood in the same place ; it signified the same thing ; it sealed the same blessings. It was evidently ‘ a sign,’ and ‘ a pledge’ of ‘ a spiritual grace ;’ and to those who ‘ received it rightly’ it would be, at least, ‘ by virtue of the prayers’ § which would accompany it, ‘ a means’ of grace. Its sacramental character, I apprehend, will not

* Deut. xxx. 6.

† Rom. iv. 11.

‡ See Col. ii. 11 : where some commentators understand the apostle to call baptism “ the circumcision of Christ.”

§ Art. xxvii.

be questioned. Mr. M. says, by baptism ‘man kind at large were to be admitted into covenant with God, *as* the Jews had been by the right of ‘circumcision.’* And subsequently he adopts the words of a venerable prelate, who says, ‘Our REGENERATION is wholly the act of the Spirit of Christ. But there must be something done on our parts in order to it; and something that is instituted and ordained by Christ himself, which in the Old Testament was ‘circumcision, in the New, baptism.’ † This is admitting, I think, what I contend for, that to the Jews circumcision was the ‘sacrament of regeneration;’ ‡ and that circumcised Jews stood on the same footing by their circumcision, as we do by baptism. If, therefore, baptism, by ‘its sacramental character,’ necessarily or uniformly convey the ‘spiritual grace’ of regeneration to us, circumcision must, for the same reason, and in the same manner, have conveyed it to them.

It becomes, then, an inquiry bearing directly upon the question before us, In what light do the inspired prophets and apostles view their circumcised hearers? How do they address them with respect to ‘the inward and spiritual grace’ of

* P. 6, 7.

† P. 26.

‡ When I wrote the above, I did not recollect the decision of our church upon the subject: ‘*And so was circumcision a sacrament, which,*’ &c. Hom. of Com. Prayer and Sacraments.

circumcision? Do they consider them as having, of course, received it, and as incapable of any other reception of it in this life?

As I have proved, both from the nature of the case, and from Mr. M.'s own authorities, that 'regeneration' was 'the inward and spiritual 'grace' of circumcision, no less than of baptism, I might at once adduce the passage which has already so much engaged our attention,—our Saviour's discourse with Nicodemus. It was addressed to a man who had done that which was 'to be done on his part,' 'under the Old Testament,' 'in order to regeneration;'* who had received the only sacrament of regeneration then in existence:† yet it was mainly employed in inculcating upon characters, circumstanced as he was, the necessity of their being born again. "Marvel not that I say unto you, YE must be "born again." Either, therefore, our Lord was enjoining on them a second regeneration, or he assumed, that many of them, notwithstanding their circumcision, were still unregenerate.

But not to urge this further, let us attend to some other specimens of scriptural addresses to circumcised persons.

* Quotation above made from Tracts, p. 26.

† Tracts, p. 7, 8.

Lev. xxvi. 41, 42: "If then their *uncircum-*
cised hearts be humbled, and they then accept
 "of the punishment of their iniquity; then will
 "I remember my covenant," &c.

Deut. x. 16: "Circumcise, therefore, the fore-
 "skin of your heart, and be no more stiff-
 "necked."

Ibid. xxx. 6: "The Lord thy God will cir-
 "cumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed,
 "to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,
 "and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Jer. iv. 4: "Circumcise yourselves to the
 "Lord, and take away the foreskins of your
 "heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of
 "Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire,
 "and burn that none can quench it, because of
 "the evil of your doings."

Ibid. ix. 25, 26: "Behold the days come, saith
 "the Lord, that I will punish all them which are
 "circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt,
 "and Judah, and Edom, and the children of
 "Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the ut-
 "most corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for
 "all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the
 "house of Israel are *uncircumcised in the heart.*"

Acts vii. 51: “Ye stiff-necked, and *uncircumcised in heart and ears*, ye do always resist the “Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

This collection of scriptural passages might easily be enlarged to almost any extent, by the induction of others which speak the same sentiments, only without the use of exactly the same figure. Such, for example, are those which enjoin, “Make you a new heart, and a new spirit;” “for why will ye die, O house of Israel:” or which promise, “I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.”* That all this relates to ‘the inward and spiritual grace,’ of which they had already received ‘the outward and visible sign,’ is proved by those passages which represent the change of the heart “to love God,” as the thing denoted by circumcision: and that it is the same as regeneration, Mr. M. virtually admits, when he describes regeneration as ‘a new principle put into us,’ even ‘the Spirit of grace.’ This surely cannot differ much from “a new heart and a new spirit put within us.”

All these passages sufficiently shew, with what good reason our Lord intimated, that “a

* Ezek. xviii. 31. xi. 19.

“teacher of Israel” ought to have learned the doctrine of regeneration, even from the Old Testament.

I add only a passage from St. Paul, which strongly countenances the doctrine contended for, and distinctly explains the principle upon which all the texts just adduced proceed.

Rom. ii. 25—29: “ For circumcision verily
 “ profiteth, if thou keep the law : but if thou be
 “ a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made
 “ uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumci-
 “ sion keep the righteousness of the law, shall not
 “ his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision.
 “ And shall not uncircumcision which is by na-
 “ ture, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the
 “ letter and circumcision dost transgress the law ?
 “ *For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly ;*
 “ *neither is that circumcision, which is outward*
 “ *in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one IN-*
 “ *WARDLY ; and circumcision is THAT OF THE*
 “ *HEART, in the spirit, and not in the letter,*
 “ whose praise is not of men but of God.”

This passage most decisively proves, “ that the
 “ circumcision of the heart” was the thing of
 essential consequence ; and that it might be, and
 alas ! too commonly was, separated from outward

circumcision. Now, if all, which this passage lays down, held good under the comparatively external dispensation of Judaism, how much more must it be true under the more spiritual dispensation of the gospel ! God forbid that we should imagine ourselves, or teach others to imagine themselves, in any essential and highly important sense of the word, Christians, while we are such only “ outwardly !” God forbid that we should satisfy ourselves, or teach others to satisfy, and thus to deceive, themselves with a baptism which is only “ outward in the flesh ;” or with any thing which necessarily accompanies outward baptism, and is common to ‘ baptized ‘ infidels’ with baptized believers ! and that we should rest in any thing short of the baptism “ of the heart, in the spirit, and not (merely) in “ the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of “ God !”

Now, on all these scriptures last adduced, let me be permitted to ask, Is it not perfectly conceivable, that there might have arisen persons in the Jewish church, strongly impressed with the privileges which pertained to them as members of that church ; entertaining high notions of the nature of a sacrament, and of ‘ the spiritual ‘ grace which it conveyed’ wherever it was ‘ rightly administered ;’ and to whom, conse-

quently, all these passages of the prophets and apostles would sound very offensive? to whom they would be as obnoxious, as the inculcating the necessity of the new birth upon Christians can be to Mr. M., or to any other person who entertains his sentiments? And may it not easily be imagined, that such characters would be able to plead very plausibly against the notions of a despised ‘party,’ which insisted upon somewhat more distinguishing and more spiritual;—which maintained, in short, such doctrines as those of Rom. ii. 25—29, just quoted? They might have urged ‘the sacramental character,’ and the high things said in scripture of circumcision; and have pressed the charge of reducing it to a ‘mere beggarly element, a form without substance, a body without spirit, a sign without signification:’ and no doubt strong prejudices would have existed in their favour, in the breasts of those whom they encouraged to be ‘filled with all joy and peace in believing that they partook’ of spiritual circumcision,—that blessing having been ‘conferred by the sacrament of’ circumcision, which they had all received. But how our Lord, how his forerunner, and how his apostles would treat such *vain confidences* we are not left to conjecture: for what I have here only proposed as an hypothesis, did actually take place, and those who held the doctrine of St. Paul, as just cited, were

charged with *vacating Jewish privileges and the benefits of circumcision*, as much as any of us can be with disparaging those, which are connected with baptism and admission into the Christian church. This appears from the very next words of the epistle : (iii. 1, 2, &c.) “ What advantage, “ then, hath the Jew ? and what profit is there “ of circumcision ? ” The apostle answers, but in terms which would give as little satisfaction to his opponents, as ours can do to those who condemn us, “ Much every way : chiefly because that “ unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

CHAPTER IV.

A Consequence of the Doctrine, that Baptism is Regeneration, or the only Medium of Regeneration.

HAVING thus considered the testimony of holy scripture upon the subject of regeneration, and its connexion with baptism, we might at once proceed to examine the doctrine of the church upon the same subject : but a consequence, immediately resulting from Mr. M.'s sentiments, presents itself, which may challenge some previous notice ; and which is of so awful import, as must necessarily induce us very strictly to scrutinize the grounds of his opinions, before we adopt them.

In the discourse with Nicodemus, we have heard our blessed Lord repeatedly and most solemnly declare, that, “ except a man be born
“ again—born of water and of the Spirit—he
“ cannot see, or enter into the kingdom of God.” In these words, by Mr. M.'s own interpretation,* this ‘ new birth or regeneration.....is pronounced

* P. 29, 35.

‘ by our Saviour to be necessary to salvation.’ Yet he maintains, that it can be conveyed only by baptism: ‘ that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.’* What, then, is the unavoidable consequence? Clearly, that baptism is absolutely ‘ necessary to salvation,’ and that we ‘ cannot become heirs of salvation’ without it.

In many places, indeed, Mr. M. would seem almost to recognise this consequence. ‘ By ‘ being born again,’ he says, ‘ of which our Saviour speaks in such lofty language, something ‘ is designed *absolutely necessary* to be attained ‘ by those, who would enter into the kingdom of ‘ God.’ † Yet he maintains that it is baptismal regeneration which is designed, and nothing else. ‘ In what other ceremony,’ he asks, ‘ and ‘ at what other season,’ than at baptism, ‘ shall ‘ we find that joint operation of water and of the ‘ Holy Spirit, of which Christ affirms we must ‘ be born.’ ‡—Again: ‘ For the purpose of regeneration we conceive this union of water, as the ‘ instrument, and of the Spirit, as the efficient ‘ principle, to be *absolutely necessary*.’ §

But though he thus seems, at times, almost explicitly to admit this consequence, of the ab-

* P. 32.

† P. 24.

‡ P. 25.

§ P. 27.

solite necessity of baptism to salvation, I do not charge him with holding it. Once indeed he qualifies his language upon the subject. His words are: ‘ We are justified, in contending, ‘ that for the express purpose of regeneration, ‘ not only is his (the Spirit’s) operation necessary, ‘ but that it must also (humanly speaking) be ‘ administered through the mediation of water.’*

But it is manifest, that, if our Lord in the passage referred to spoke of baptism, every such qualification is unauthorized and unwarrantable. He says no such thing, as that ‘ humanly speaking’ a man must be “ born of water and of the “ Spirit,” in order to salvation; but, absolutely and unconditionally, that, except he be so, he “ cannot “ enter into the kingdom of God.” His language perfectly suits the ideas which we entertain upon the subject. We hold the change of regeneration to be indispensable to salvation, in every child of fallen Adam. How Mr. M. will make it accord with his sentiments, it is for him to consider.

I have said, however, that I do not charge him with holding the consequence, which, I have shewn, must follow from the supposition, that, in John iii, our Lord is speaking of baptismal regeneration, and of that only. But I do adduce the whole of what has been quoted in this chapter, as

displaying a somewhat rash and ill-considered way of writing, by which Mr. M.'s Tracts appear to me eminently unsuitable to answer their design, of 'conveying correct notions'* on the subjects of which they treat.

I subjoin an extract from a work before referred to, which presses our present argument in a very forcible manner.

' Our Lord says to Nicodemus, *Verily, verily,*
 ' *I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,*
 ' *he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a*
 ' *man be born, &c. &c.* Whence I infer, with-
 ' out fear of refutation, that whatever is meant by
 ' being *born again*, no man can possibly, without
 ' being born again, either be a true Christian on
 ' earth, or inherit the kingdom of God in heaven :
 ' and consequently he must live and die in his
 ' sins, and finally perish. Now is his Lordship
 ' prepared to admit, in its full extent, this conse-
 ' quence *concerning baptism*? Will he exclude
 ' from the possibility of salvation the whole body
 ' of the Quakers, and all those children of Anti-
 ' pædobaptists, who die without receiving adult
 ' baptism; and all those, who are Antipædo-
 ' baptists in principle, yet never receive either
 ' infant or adult baptism? Do all these perish

* Title-page.

‘ without hope? Will he maintain, that no
 ‘ misapprehension, and no outward situation, in
 ‘ which baptism could not be procured, will
 ‘ make any exception? Are all the children of
 ‘ Christians who die unbaptized, excluded from
 ‘ the kingdom of God?—not to speak of the
 ‘ children of Jews, and heathens, and Moham-
 ‘ medans, who die before the commission of
 ‘ actual sin, but die unbaptized.—I am far from
 ‘ believing that his Lordship, and others, who
 ‘ hold that baptism is regeneration, are prepared
 ‘ to admit these consequences; which would be
 ‘ more repugnant to all our ideas of the divine
 ‘ mercy, than any thing, that either the most
 ‘ zealous opposers of Calvinism, have charged
 ‘ upon the system; or the most rigid and wild
 ‘ enthusiast, who disgraced the name of Calvinist,
 ‘ ever advanced on the subject.’*

* Remarks on the Bishop of Lincoln’s Refutation of Calvinism,
 vol. i. p. 173, 174.

CHAPTER V.

The Doctrine of the Church—Remarkable Difference between the Language of the Church and that of Mr. Mant—Analogy of the other Sacrament—Church Articles and Catechism—Mr. Mant's Doctrine a Revival of the opus operatum.

THE needless embarrassment in which the subject is left, by the want of a more distinct definition of what is meant by regeneration; whether a change of dispositions, or only a change of state and relations; * has been already complained of. In what follows, however, I shall be content to take Mr. M.'s account of its nature, that it is 'a supernatural grace conferred,' 'a new principle put into us,' 'the sanctification of the Spirit,' which makes us 'heirs of salvation,' and 'entitles us to eternal life.' And, I trust, it will be at all times kept in mind, that the great question between us is, Is this supernatural grace necessarily, or is it even constantly conferred, where baptism is rightly administered?

* Bp. Hopkins, above, c. i.

Having discussed the argument from scripture, I proceed to inquire, Whether our church teaches us to answer this question in the affirmative.

In conducting his investigation of this point, or rather his proof that the church takes the affirmative side, Mr. M. commences with the addresses and prayers in the baptismal services. Without particularly objecting to his method, I shall prefer beginning with the Articles. It seems natural to expect, from these professed and studied expositions, the most exact information concerning the doctrines of the church: and by them also it would appear reasonable to interpret any thing, which might be thought doubtful, in her more popular compositions.

And here we have, happily, no less than six excellent articles upon the subject of the sacraments, five of which bear more or less upon the question. Strange however as it may appear, Mr. M., professing to omit no one passage ‘in the liturgy and articles,’* which relates to the subject, has not so much as mentioned more than one of these articles; while he has endeavoured to press into his service three others,

* P. 20.

which appear to me nearly foreign to the purpose.

‘ In three of the articles,’ he says, the doctrine in question ‘ is incidentally alluded to in such a manner, as to shew that the church takes for granted the connexion between baptism and the new birth. In the 9th it is laid down, that *the original infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated*; and by the context it appears, that by the regenerated are intended *they that believe and are baptized*.’*

The article referred to is that ‘ of original or birth-sin.’ The connexion of those parts on which the observation is made, may be seen from the following extract: ‘ And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated. . . . And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.’ That they who ‘ believe and are baptized ’ are regenerated, I have no sort of doubt. But how it appears *from this context*, that ‘ by the regenerated are intended they that believe

* P. 18.

‘and are baptized,’ is not very clear. And, if it were, I do not perceive how it would make for Mr. M.’s purpose; unless, because ‘they that *believe* and are baptized’ are regenerate, it follows, that all who are baptized are regenerate, *whether they believe or not!*—This is the third instance in which Mr. M. drops all notice of “faith,” in passages where it is expressly mentioned, and where it fills a prominent situation. And faith must here mean, not a mere general assent to Christianity, but ‘the true, lively, and Christian faith:’* for it cannot be asserted, that ‘there is no condemnation’ for those who believe with any other than a living and fruitful faith, even though they be ‘baptized.’

‘In the 15th’ article, Mr. M. proceeds, ‘Christians universally are designated by the appellation of those, *who are baptized and born again in Christ.*’ †

In this short remark there is, I apprehend, a double error. The article is, ‘Of Christ alone without sin.’ The part referred to is, ‘But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things.’—‘All we the rest’ surely means, not only ‘Christians universally,’ but all mankind except Christ.

* Homilies.

† P. 18.

Consequently the following clauses do not affirm, that all these persons are both ‘baptized, and ‘born again in Christ,’ but that *even those of them* who are so, do yet in many things offend. The connexion is exactly like that in the ninth article; ‘the infection doth remain, *yea in them that are regenerated:*’ ‘*ETIAM in renatis.*’ The Latin copy (which is original authority as well as the English,*) makes this more clear; ‘*Sed nos reliqui, ETIAM baptizati, et in Christo regenerati, in multis tamen offendimus omnes.*’

‘The 16th Article,’ Mr. M. adds, ‘speaks of ‘the condition of *those, who fall into sin after baptism*; that is, according to an equivalent expression, after they have *received the Holy Ghost.*’ †—Not to spend more time upon such passages, I content myself with begging that the reader will turn to the article, and judge for himself what proof it affords, that the expressions above quoted are used as equivalent. I find none. At all events, arguing from such short and uncertain hints, when ample, distinct, and decisive matter is before us, appears to be labour misapplied. Proceed we, therefore, to the articles which treat expressly of the sacraments.

* Burnet.

† P. 18.

Mr. M. quotes only the twenty-seventh. I must request the reader's attention to the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and twenty-ninth.

On comparing all these articles with Mr. M.'s tracts, we are at once struck with a very material difference in the language employed. The great thing upon which the Articles dwell with respect to the sacraments, in order to their salutary effect, is the 'RIGHT RECEIVING' of them: the *only* thing on which Mr. M. insists is, baptism being 'rightly administered.' By this he evidently means, administered in due form, and by an authorized person: and accordingly he, in one instance, substitutes for the '*right administration,*' the '*legitimate administration:*'—'*ordained,*' he says, '*as it was by Christ himself, with a promise of salvation annexed to its legitimate administration.*'* Of this *right* or *legitimate administration* he speaks repeatedly, while he never mentions the *right reception*, I believe, but once; and that merely as the phrase happens to occur *in a quotation from the articles.* † Surely a difference of language, so essential and so uniformly preserved, affords no

* P. 51.

† P. 19.

slight presumption of a material difference in sentiment.

But not only does Mr. M. assert, that ‘ a promise of salvation is annexed to the legitimate ‘ administration ’ of baptism, and that all are ‘ regenerated ’ to whom it is ‘ rightly administered : ’ not only does he justly observe, that the catechumen ‘ is instructed, that baptism is a sacrament ; and as such, of course consisting of ‘ an outward and visible sign, and of an inward ‘ and spiritual grace : ’ * but he evidently and, I might even say, avowedly takes it for granted, that the two cannot be separated ; that where the former is ‘ rightly administered, ’ the latter must accompany it. To suppose the inward grace separated from the outward sign is, he says, ‘ to ‘ reduce ’ this sacrament ‘ to a mere beggarly ‘ element, a form without substance, a body ‘ without spirit, a sign without signification.’ The supposition that such a separation may be made, he calls a ‘ doubting of the inward and ‘ spiritual grace of baptism, ’ the expression of which doubt excites in him ‘ pain and surprise.’ He demands to have ‘ the exception ’ to regeneration’s ‘ taking place at baptism ’ pointed out. He repeatedly argues, that if, where rightly ad-

* P. 15.

ministered, baptism do not 'convey effectual regeneration,' it is '*no sacrament*,' and that 'to deny its regenerating influence is to deny its sacramental character.' *

Now if all this hold of baptism, by its very nature as a sacrament, it must, of course, equally hold good of the other sacrament of the Lord's supper. Let us then hear the articles of the church upon the subject.

And first concerning the Lord's supper.

Art. xxix. *Of the wicked which eat not the body of Christ in the use of the Lord's supper.* — 'The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing.' — Is this supposing that the inward and spiritual grace must constantly accompany the outward and visible sign in a sacrament?

Secondly, of the sacraments conjointly.

* P. 10, 11, 15, 16, 21, 28, 29, 36, 40, 51.

Art. xxv. *Of the sacraments.*—‘ In such only
 ‘ as WORTHILY RECEIVE the same they have a
 ‘ wholesome effect or operation: but they that
 ‘ RECEIVE them UNWORTHILY purchase to them-
 ‘ selves damnation, as St. Paul saith.’

Thirdly, of baptism in particular.

Art. xxvii. *Of baptism.*—‘ Baptism . . . is a
 ‘ sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby,
 ‘ as by an instrument, they that RECEIVE bap-
 ‘ tism RIGHTLY are grafted into the Church,’
 &c. &c.

Nor does the church leave us uninformed
 what she understands by a RIGHT RECEIVING of
 the sacraments.

Art. xxvi. *Of the unworthiness of the ministers,
 which hinders not the effect of the sacrament.*—
 ‘ Neither is the effect of Christ’s ordinance taken
 ‘ away by their wickedness, nor the grace of
 ‘ God’s gifts diminished from such as BY FAITH
 ‘ and rightly do receive the sacraments,’ &c. &c.

Art. xxviii. *Of the Lord’s supper.*—‘ To such
 ‘ as *rightly, worthily,* and WITH FAITH, receive
 ‘ the same, the bread which we break is a par-
 ‘ taking of the body of Christ,’ &c.

Every one must remember similar sentiments and language in the communion service. ‘As the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament; (for *then* we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, are one with him, &c. ;) so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily.’

And so also the catechism teaches us, that by ‘the faithful’ alone are ‘the body and blood of Christ,’ or the spiritual blessings procured and represented by them, ‘verily and indeed taken and received in the Lord’s supper:’ and that ‘repentance and faith’ are required in those who come either to that sacrament, or to the sacrament of baptism.—With what shadow of reason, then, can Mr. M. pretend that the catechism countenances, and much more that it ‘unequivocally asserts,’ his doctrine? The catechism as much asserts an inward and spiritual grace of the Lord’s supper, as it does of baptism: it would be extraordinary if it did not. It declares the same qualifications (at least, in subjects capable of them) to be requisite for one sacrament as the other; and, with respect to the former, it evidently adopts that limitation of the spiritual grace, which the articles so explicitly lay down. It is confined to ‘the faithful:’* for ‘the mean

* Catechism.

‘whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten
 ‘in the supper is faith.’* Strange then, indeed,
 would it be to infer, that, according to the cate-
 chism, the inward grace of baptism must needs
 accompany the outward sign, merely because an
 inward grace of that sacrament is asserted! Yet
 Mr. M. has little other ground than this for
 claiming the authority of the catechism in favour
 of his sentiments. †

Let it be remembered that the point now in
 discussion is, whether ‘the spiritual grace’ in all
 cases accompanies ‘the outward sign’ in a sacra-
 ment. Whether to deny this is ‘to deny the
 ‘nature of a sacrament.’ If that be true of one
 sacrament, it must be of both: and the passages
 which I have adduced are express and decisive of
 the judgment of the church on the question,
 with respect to both sacraments. There is no
 possibility of evading it.—Here then, I do not
 scruple to say, that Mr. M., at the very moment
 when he is taking upon him to judge and con-
 demn his brethren, is himself in the same condem-
 nation which he pronounces upon them—is ‘in
 ‘IRRECONCILEABLE OPPOSITION to the UNEQUI-

* Article xxviii.

† Whatever additional ground he may think that he has from the
 words, ‘we are thereby made the children of grace,’ will be consi-
 dered in c. viii.

‘VOCAL and NUMEROUS declarations’ of the church of England, on this most ‘important article.’ *

In a subsequent part of his tracts, Mr. M. himself appeals to the other sacrament, and argues from it in a manner which, after what we have seen, may be thought not a little extraordinary. ‘If the spiritual part of baptism be *denied*, why should the spiritual part of the communion be *allowed*? If water be not really the laver of regeneration, why should bread and wine be spiritually the body and blood of Christ, and convey strength and refreshment to the soul?’ Do they do so, except to the penitent and believing soul? The articles have already answered the question. And who denies that baptism conveys spiritual grace, with a similar restriction?—Mr. M. proceeds, ‘Surely it is not too much to affirm, that the stripping of one of God’s ordinances of that, which constitutes its essential value, has a natural tendency to bring the efficacy of the others into question, and to diminish at least, if not to annihilate, a man’s respect for them as means of spiritual grace.’ † —We strip baptism of ‘that which constitutes its essential value,’ no more, nor any otherwise, than Mr. M. so strips the Lord’s supper, every

* Tracts, p. 23.

† P. 51.

time he recites the exhortation in the communion service.

But, in fact, this question of the necessary, or unfailing efficacy of the sacraments is no new one: and Mr. M.'s doctrine upon it seems little else than a revival of the popish doctrine of the *opus operatum*, or that the benefit of the sacraments is conveyed by the mere reception of them, independently of the state of mind of the person receiving them. And of this doctrine let us hear the opinion of our church; and of the reformers generally, as summed up by Bishop Burnet. 'This,' he says, 'we reckon a doctrine that is not only without all foundation in scripture, but that tends to destroy all religion, and to make men live on securely in sin, trusting to this, that the sacraments may be given them when they die. The conditions of the new covenant are repentance, faith, and obedience; and we look on this as the corrupting the vitals of this religion; when any such means are proposed, by which the main design of the gospel is quite overthrown. . . We look on all sacramental actions as acceptable to God *only with regard to the temper, and the inward acts of the person to whom they are applied*; and cannot consider them as medicines or charms, which work by virtue of their own, whether the person to whom

‘ they are applied co-operates with them or not.’
 ‘ Thus we reject, not without great zeal against
 ‘ the fatal effects of this error, all that is said of
 ‘ the *opus operatum*, the very doing of the sacra-
 ‘ ment: we think it looks liker the incantations
 ‘ of heathenism, than the purity and simplicity of
 ‘ the Christian religion.’ *

Again, in the following passages, his language applies, if possible, still more directly and unequivocally to the case before us. ‘ The second part of this period’ (Art. xxv.) ‘ is, that the effect of
 ‘ the sacraments *comes only upon the worthy re-
 ‘ ceiving of them.* . . . The pretending that sacra-
 ‘ ments have their effect any other way is the
 ‘ bringing in the doctrine and practice of charms
 ‘ into the Christian religion: and it tends to dis-
 ‘ solve all obligations to piety and devotion, to a
 ‘ holiness of life, or a purity of temper:’ † &c.

‘ These august words, that were dictated by
 ‘ our Lord himself’ to be used in baptism, ‘ shew
 ‘ us that there is somewhat in it that is internal,
 ‘ which comes from God; that it is an admitting
 ‘ men into somewhat that depends only on God,

* Burnet on Art. xxv. p. 330, 331, 332, 8vo.—I do not adopt every mode of expression which occurs in these extracts: but the general argument is excellent.

† Ibid. p. 366.

‘ and for the giving of which the authority can
 ‘ only be derived from him. But after all, this
 ‘ is not to be believed to be of the nature of a
 ‘ charm, *as if the very act of baptism carried*
 ‘ *always with it an inward regeneration.* Here,
 ‘ we must confess, that very early some doctrines
 ‘ arose upon baptism, that we cannot be deter-
 ‘ mined by. The words of our Saviour to Nico-
 ‘ demus were expounded so, as to import the ab-
 ‘ solute necessity of baptism in order to salvation.’
 — ‘ Another opinion, that arose out of the for-
 ‘ mer, was *the mixing of the outward and the in-*
 ‘ *ward effects of baptism . . .* St. Peter has stated
 the subject ‘ so fully, that if his words are well con-
 ‘ sidered, they will clear the whole matter. He,
 ‘ after he had set forth the miserable state in which
 ‘ mankind was, under the figure of the deluge,
 ‘ in which an ark was prepared for Noah and his
 ‘ family, says upon that, *The like figure where-*
 ‘ *unto, even baptism, doth also now save us.* Upon
 ‘ which he makes a short digression to explain
 ‘ the nature of baptism, *not the putting away the*
 ‘ *filth of the flesh, but the answer (or the demand*
 ‘ *and interrogation) of a good conscience towards*
 ‘ *God; by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who*
 ‘ *is gone into heaven.* The meaning of all which
 ‘ is, that Christ having risen again, and having
 ‘ then had all power in heaven and in earth
 ‘ given to him, he had put that virtue in bap-

' tism, that by it we are *saved*, as in an ark, from
 ' that miserable state in which the world lies, and
 ' in which it must perish. But then he explains
 ' the way how it saves us; that it is not as a
 ' physical action, as it washes away *the filthiness*
 ' *of the flesh* or of the body, like the notion that
 ' the gentiles might have of their februations;
 ' or, which is more natural, considering to whom
 ' he writes, like the opinions that the Jews had
 ' of their cleansings after their legal impurities,
 ' from which their washings and bathings did
 ' absolutely free them. The salvation that we
 ' Christians have by baptism is effected by that
 ' federation into which we enter, when, upon
 ' the demands that are made of our renouncing
 ' the devil, the world, and the flesh, and of our
 ' believing in Christ, and our repentance to-
 ' wards God, we make such *answers from a good*
 ' *conscience*, as agree with the end and design
 ' of baptism; then by our thus coming into co-
 ' venant with God, we are saved in baptism. So
 ' that the salvation by baptism is given by rea-
 ' son of the federal compact that is made in it.
 ' Now this being made outwardly, according to
 ' the rules that are prescribed, that must make
 ' the baptism *good among men*, as to all the out-
 ' ward and visible effects of it: but since it is
 ' *the answer of a good conscience* only that saves,
 ' then an answer from a bad conscience, from a

‘ hypocritical person, who does not inwardly
 ‘ think, or purpose, according to what he pro-
 ‘ fesses outwardly, *cannot save, but does, on the*
 ‘ *contrary, aggravate his damnation.* Therefore
 ‘ our article puts the efficacy of baptism, in or-
 ‘ der to the forgiveness of our sins, and to our
 ‘ adoption and salvation, upon the *virtue of*
 ‘ *prayer to God*; that is, upon those vows and
 ‘ other acts of devotion that accompany it: so
 ‘ that *when the seriousness of the mind accom-*
 ‘ *panies the regularity of the action, then both*
 ‘ *the outward and inward effects of baptism are*
 ‘ *attained by it*: and we are not only *baptized*
 ‘ *into one body, but are also saved by baptism.*
 ‘ —So that upon the whole matter, baptism is a
 ‘ federal admission into Christianity, in which,
 ‘ on God’s part, all the blessings of the gospel
 ‘ are made over to the baptized: and on the
 ‘ other hand, the person baptized takes on him,
 ‘ by a solemn profession and vow, to observe and
 ‘ adhere to the whole Christian religion. So it
 ‘ is a very natural distinction to say, *that the out-*
 ‘ *ward effects of baptism follow it as outwardly*
 ‘ *performed: but that the inward effects of it*
 ‘ *follow upon the inward acts.* But this difference
 ‘ is still to be observed between inward acts and
 ‘ outward actions, that when the outward action is
 ‘ rightly performed, the church must reckon the
 ‘ baptism good, and never renew it: but if one

‘ has been wanting in the inward acts, those may
 ‘ be afterwards renewed, and that want may be
 ‘ made up by repentance.’ *

Such are the doctrines of an exposition of the articles, written by a right reverend prelate, and recommended, I believe, for more than a hundred years past, by all our bishops, to the study of every candidate for orders. Yet a society, which boasts the patronage of the whole bench of bishops, now circulates Mr. Mant’s tracts, in order ‘ to convey correct notions ’ † upon the same subject !

But it may be said, that all which has been adduced relates to the reception of the sacraments by adults, or persons capable of repentance, faith, and other qualifications of mind : whereas Mr. M. confines, or nearly confines, his attention to the baptism of infants. This, however, is not strictly true. That the church had not *forgotten* the case of infants, when she thus delivered the doctrine of the sacraments, is made evident by the conclusion of the twenty-seventh article :
 ‘ The baptism of young children is in any wise
 ‘ to be retained in the church, as most agreeable
 ‘ with the institution of Christ.’ But, even if it had not been so, still my quotations demon-

* Burnet on Art. xxvii. p. 378—380.

† Title-page.

strate, that, in the opinion of the church, there exists no necessary or constant connexion between the outward sign and the inward grace of a sacrament; that the former may be ‘rightly administered,’ and the latter not communicated; nay, that this is always the case where the sacrament, whether of baptism or of the Lord’s supper, is not ‘rightly received.’ And the occurrence, or even the possibility, of such a fact, in any one instance, overthrows Mr. M.’s hypothesis, that the inward and spiritual grace of baptism must uniformly accompany the due administration of the outward and visible sign.

But that Mr. M. should have so much confined his attention to the case of infant recipients of baptism, I take to be a material fault of his work. Had he allowed himself duly to consider the case of adults receiving a sacrament, and what the church has laid down, concerning the qualifications requisite for receiving it with spiritual benefit, I think it impossible that he should have continued in some of, what I must call, his present errors. Perfectly agreeing with what I have just quoted from our twenty seventh article, that ‘the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ;’ I still must think, that with the case of infants, and *in trans-*

ferring, to subjects 'incapable of repentance and faith,' language which was originally applied only to persons supposed to possess both, much of the confusion which has prevailed, was introduced into the subject.

Let me then again put to Mr. M. the case of an adult, having baptism 'rightly administered' to him, but yet, contrary to all his professions, destitute of "repentance towards God, and faith "towards our Lord Jesus Christ:" does such a person, in receiving baptism, receive the inward and spiritual grace, or does he not? If he does, what becomes of all the doctrine of our articles concerning the sacraments bringing condemnation, instead of 'a wholesome effect and operation,' to them who receive them not 'rightly, 'worthily, and with faith?' If he does not, what shall we say to Mr. M.'s principle of 'the sacramental character' being 'denied,' by supposing the outward sign rightly administered, and the inward grace not communicated?

It may be said again, 'The case of an infant, incapable of personal repentance and faith,* is not to be put upon a footing with that of an adult, positively *impenitent* and *unbelieving*, and therefore a hypocrite in his baptismal professions.'

* Catechism.

True, it is not : but neither is it to be considered as *necessarily* on an equality with the case of a real penitent, and true believer in Christ, professing his faith in baptism. Such an one unquestionably enjoys the inward and spiritual grace, as well as the outward and visible sign. But on what ground (after Mr. M.'s principle respecting 'the sacramental character' has been discarded,) it is concluded, that these two distinct things must *necessarily*, or *in all cases* go together, where infants are concerned, I am at a loss to conceive.

The language of our church upon this subject will very soon be considered. In the mean time I ask, does it seem reasonable to suppose, that a blessing *necessarily* or *always* accompanies the administration of a sacrament, to those who 'by reason of their tender age cannot' exercise repentance and faith, which *by no means necessarily* or *always* accompanies it, to grown persons who are capable of both those graces ?

CHAPTER VI.

*Church Services.—Office for Baptism of Adults.
—Principle on which the Church proceeds, in speaking of all whom she has admitted to Baptism as regenerate.*

IN the preceding chapter, I trust I have demonstrated, that the articles of the church afford no countenance to Mr. M.'s doctrine concerning baptism; and at the same time succeeded in removing one main support of his system, namely the assumption, that to suppose the inward grace of baptism in any case withheld, where the outward sign is 'rightly administered,' is 'to deny its sacramental character;' 'to reduce it to a mere beggarly element, a form without substance, a body without spirit, a sign without signification.' Like every other religious rite, baptism may be made nearly all this:* but then who 'make' it such? Not they who caution men against resting in the outward form, with-

* Not indeed 'a sign without signification;' the expression is incorrect:—but a sign *separated from* the thing signified.

out enjoying the spiritual blessing, but they who ‘ receive it unworthily.’

But still it may be asked, Supposing Mr. M. to have been incautious or erroneous in this principle, yet is he not borne out by our public services, in asserting that baptism ‘ conveys regeneration’ to every one to whom it is rightly administered?

This question I proceed to consider; only premising, that it would seem very unlikely, that a church, which, in her doctrinal articles, so carefully lays it down, that ‘ in such only as worthily receive the same, the sacraments have a wholesome effect or operation;’ should, in her liturgy have assumed, that the outward rite and the spiritual grace inseparably accompany each other. Mr. M., however, is so sure that the services of the church are on his side, that he says they ‘ need no comment:’ ‘ language cannot be plainer.’ One thing, however, I hope he may by this time feel, that, *according to his view of those services*, they certainly do want a comment to reconcile them with the articles. And this is some presumption, that the view which he has taken of them is not quite correct.

I shall begin with ‘ the ministration of bap-

‘tism to such as are of riper years, and able to answer for themselves;’* in order that we may consider the subject disencumbered of any particular questions, which the case of infants might introduce into it. That case shall afterwards receive separate consideration.

Before we proceed to the baptism of such persons, the rubric admonishes us, that ‘due care is to be taken for their examination, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion; and that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves with prayers and fasting for the receiving of this holy sacrament.’—This is by no means immaterial to our inquiry.

The persons being ‘found fit,’ and the time for the administration being come, the service opens with an address, which differs only by the addition of the words in brackets from that, which Mr. M. has quoted from the ministration of public baptism to infants:—‘Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, [and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and they that are in the flesh cannot

* I am aware that this office is of later date than the rest. But I suppose no one will pretend that it has not equal authority. Besides, the same system evidently pervades all the offices, and all must be interpreted in the same manner.

‘ please God, but live in sin, committing many
 ‘ actual transgressions;] and that our Saviour
 ‘ Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom
 ‘ of God, except he be regenerate and born anew
 ‘ of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you
 ‘ to call upon God the Father, through our Lord
 ‘ Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he
 ‘ will grant to these persons that which by nature
 ‘ they cannot have; that they may be baptized
 ‘ with water and the Holy Ghost, and received
 ‘ into Christ’s holy church, and be made lively
 ‘ members of the same.’

It would seem not unnatural to ask, Are we not furnished, by the words in brackets, with a criterion by which to judge whether a man is ‘ in the flesh,’ (that is, I suppose it will be allowed, ‘ unregenerate,’*) or the contrary? They who ‘ live in sin,’† are, it would seem, by the testimony of our church, as well as by the decision of St. John, ‘ in the flesh,’ and therefore not ‘ born of God.’‡ But I forbear to press this.

Mr. M.’s remarks upon this address are as follow:—It ‘ is designed to draw the attention of
 ‘ the hearers to the purpose, for which baptism
 ‘ is administered. It consists of two parts; an

* See John iii. 6.

† See Rom. vi. 2.

‡ 1 John iii. 9. See above, p. 72.

‘ admonition to the people to pray, and a reason
 ‘ for the admonition : what they are to pray for
 ‘ partly is, that the child [or the persons] *may*
 ‘ *be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost ;*
 ‘ the reason for their being called on so to pray,
 ‘ is, *forasmuch as Christ saith, None can enter*
 ‘ *into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate*
 ‘ *and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost.*
 ‘ Putting these passages together, what else is the
 ‘ prayer that the child [person] may be baptized
 ‘ with water and the Holy Ghost, than a prayer
 ‘ that by baptism he may be born anew.’ *

If the words *by baptism* here mean *through the medium of baptism*, I have no wish to dispute this inference, taken with a limitation, which it may hereafter be seen that it requires. I readily admit that the church considers baptism as being, by the very nature of a sacrament, ‘ a means and ‘ pledge,’ as well as ‘ a sign,’ of ‘ a death unto ‘ sin and new birth unto righteousness.’ But does no further inference suggest itself to Mr. M.’s mind from this address? In the exhortation to pray, that the persons about to receive baptism ‘ *may be baptized with water and the ‘ Holy Ghost,*’ does he not again read the doctrine of the articles, that the outward rite may be duly administered, and the inward grace not

* P. 11, 12.

be received? The object of the petition cannot be the baptism with water: *that* the priest has power to administer, and is about to administer: it must be, that baptism with the Holy Ghost may accompany it. It is possible, therefore, that it should not accompany it: at least it may be so, if these prayers are not made devoutly and in faith.

The prayers, which immediately follow, form the best comment on the address, and the best confirmation of the argument which I have drawn from it. In them the spiritual grace is the sole object of petition. We beseech God 'to wash and sanctify these his servants with the Holy Ghost, that they, being delivered from his wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church:' &c. &c. And again, 'We call upon him for these persons, that they coming to his holy baptism, may receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration.' This passage, Mr. M. says, 'needs no comment: it will only be recollected that the question is, What does the Church of England understand by our Saviour's expression of being born of water and of the Spirit.' This is, by no means, the only question between us. However, I perceive in this passage no further answer to that question, than that the church understands our Saviour to speak of a spiritual change, of which

baptism is a 'sign,' and may be 'a means:' but which may fail of accompanying baptism; else why so earnestly pray, that these persons, 'coming to baptism,' *may* have it?

Similar remarks may be made upon other prayers, which Mr. M. cites, though he pronounces any further comment upon them to be unnecessary. For example: 'Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that they *may be born again*, and 'be made heirs of everlasting salvation.' Does not this imply, that they might be baptized, and yet not be "born again." I profess, that to me the prayers seem to suggest conclusions, directly *opposite* to those which Mr. M. would make from them. He would infer, that baptism either 'is,' or 'conveys' regeneration: these prayers imply, (what the articles have expressly taught,) that it is very possible for regeneration not even 'to accompany' baptism!

Again, I quote, because Mr. M. has quoted, the following: 'Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that the persons now to be baptized therein may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children.' Is it not implied here, that it is just as possible for them to fail of receiving 'the fulness of God's grace' now, at their baptism, as

to fail of ‘ remaining ever in the number of his
‘ faithful and elect children ’ afterwards ?

But we have already passed the gospel appointed for the occasion. We return to it. In Mr. M.’s words, ‘ the passage selected is the conversation, wherein Christ asserts to Nicodemus ‘ the necessity of the new birth : ’ and, as he observes, it is made the foundation of an address commencing as follows : ‘ Beloved, ye hear in ‘ this gospel the express words of our Saviour ‘ Christ, that except a man be born of water and ‘ of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom ‘ of God. Whereby we may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had.’

On these words Mr. M. thus triumphantly remarks : ‘ It must be enough barely to quote this ‘ passage : it would be an insult upon any man’s ‘ understanding, to attempt to make it clearer ; ‘ and it would be superfluous to add more from ‘ the same office. If a bare statement of this fact ‘ does not convince a man, nothing, I am persuaded, can convince him, that it is by baptism, ‘ in the judgment of the church of England, that ‘ a man is born of water and of the Spirit.’ *

Here is great confidence, great exultation, but

I, for one, must acknowledge my obligation to Mr. M. for the hint he has given at the close, without which I might have been too dull to perceive what was the occasion of his triumph.

I can readily, indeed, perceive from this address, that the church agrees with Mr. M. in understanding our Lord, when he speaks of being “born of water,” ‘to allude by anticipation to ‘the sacrament of baptism, which he intended to ‘ordain.’* And in this respect I agree with him also.

I likewise readily admit, as I have before done, that the church considers baptism as not only ‘a ‘sign,’ but also ‘a means’ of regeneration.

But neither is this a point in dispute: and, with regard to points in which we really differ, I infer from the passage one or two things a good deal *opposed* to Mr. M.’s views.—Has Mr. M. considered, with the attention which it deserves, that clause, ‘the great necessity of baptism WHERE ‘IT MAY BE HAD?’ Would the church have presumed to interpolate such a limitation as this, in our Lord’s unlimited asseveration, that “except a man be born again he cannot see the “kingdom of God?” Far from her friends be

* P. 8.

such an insinuation ! Had she, then, supposed ‘ no other than baptismal regeneration to be ‘ possible in this world,’ * would she have ventured to say, ‘ its great necessity *where it may be had ;*’ when by Mr. M.’s own confession, our Lord has declared regeneration to be ‘ *absolutely necessary,*’ ‘ an *indispensable* requisite to salvation,’ † in all cases ?—From this clause, I conclude, without the fear of refutation, that it is NOT by baptism ONLY, ‘ in the judgment of the ‘ church of England, that a man’ can be “ born “ of water and of the Spirit,” in our Lord’s sense of the words.

Other passages have demonstrated, that, according to her judgment, a man may receive baptism ‘ rightly administered,’ and yet not be thus born again : and this passage proves to me, that, in her judgment also, a man may be thus born again *otherwise* than by baptism, and indeed *without* baptism.

No one, I trust, would be further than myself from depreciating ‘ the necessity of baptism ‘ where it may be had,’ or of any other thing which Christ hath commanded : but yet I conceive a church, which expresses herself in this manner, would not go so near to pronouncing

* P. 32.

† P. 24 and 25.

baptism *essential* to salvation as Mr. M. has done.*—And I contend that she had authority for making this limitation, as to the sacramental sign, though not as to the thing signified. The nature of Christianity furnished this authority: for it is a religion standing not in external rites, (however important, or necessary, ‘where they ‘ may be had,’) but in the substantial blessings of “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy “ Ghost.” The passage itself, as I have already shewn,† furnished ground for it: for, though our Lord, in one assertion of the necessity of the new birth, just mentions the external sign of “water,” he drops it in every other instance, insisting only upon being “born of the Spirit,” as the great essential thing intended. And, finally, authority for such a limitation is furnished by the very words of the institution of this sacrament, which have been before commented upon, and which the church immediately proceeds to quote, as follows: ‘He gave command to his disciples, saying, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*’ By the omission of baptism in the second clause, our Lord shews that he did not intend to make it essential to salvation.‡

* See p. 51 and 37: and above c. iv. † Above, c. ii.

‡ Above, c. ii.

‘ To add more,’ that is peculiar to this office, Mr. M. says, ‘ would be superfluous.’ I can by no means think so. To me it appears, that this very exhortation contains much more, which requires the particular attention of one who would ascertain the real doctrine of the church. We will recur to it, when we have considered some other parts of the service.

After another prayer, which has already been noticed, the persons to be baptized are addressed. They are reminded of the prayers which have been offered for them, and of the promises of Christ to answer such prayers. They are then admonished, that ‘ after this promise made by Christ, they must also faithfully, for their parts, promise, in the presence of these their witnesses, and the whole congregation, that they will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God’s holy word, and obediently keep his commandments.’ They then make the baptismal vows: and, after some further prayers, which have, as far as is necessary, been considered, they are baptized; ‘ received into the congregation of Christ’s flock; and signed with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter they shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the

‘ devil ; and to continue Christ’s faithful soldiers
 ‘ and servants unto their lives’ end.’

All this shews what are the expectations of the church, and what her *suppositions* respecting them.

Then follow the terms, in which, if in any thing, lies the strength of Mr. M.’s cause. ‘ See-
 ‘ ing now, dearly beloved brethren, that these
 ‘ persons are regenerate,’ or, as it is in another
 ‘ office, ‘ by baptism regenerate,’ and grafted into
 ‘ the body of Christ’s church, let us give thanks
 ‘ unto almighty God for these benefits.’ And
 ‘ accordingly the congregation are led to ad-
 ‘ dress themselves to almighty God, saying, ‘ We
 ‘ yield thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father,
 ‘ that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the
 ‘ knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee ; in-
 ‘ crease this knowledge and confirm this faith in
 ‘ us evermore. Give thy Holy Spirit to these
 ‘ persons ; that, *being now born again, and made*
 ‘ *heirs of everlasting salvation,* through our Lord
 ‘ Jesus Christ, they may continue thy servants
 ‘ and attain thy promises.’ Or, as it is some-
 ‘ what more strongly in the other offices, ‘ that it
 ‘ hath pleased thee to regenerate’ them ‘ with thy
 ‘ Holy Spirit, to receive them for thine own chil-
 ‘ dren by adoption, and to incorporate them into

‘thy holy church.’ ‘These words,’ Mr. M. says, ‘must be left to speak for themselves. They admit of no illustration or explanation. Language cannot be plainer.’

Are we then to admit his conclusions from them, that the church supposes baptism, rightly administered, always to convey regeneration? True it is, and we have no hesitation in acknowledging it, that she ‘speaks of every person, ‘whom she has baptized, as regenerate.’* But the question is, *on what grounds* she does this? Is it because she holds, with Mr. M., that baptism necessarily, or, at least, constantly ‘conveys regeneration to those to whom it is rightly administered?’ After all that we have seen, I confidently answer, No. She has taught us in her catechism, that ‘repentance and faith’ are required in persons to be baptized. She has constantly inculcated it upon us in her articles, that ‘in such only as worthily,’ that is, as she presently after explains it, ‘BY FAITH AND RIGHTLY,’ ‘RECEIVE the same, the sacraments have a whole-some effect and operation:’ and does she, at once, render all null and void, by concluding that every one, who receives ‘the outward sign,’ receives, as a thing of course, as an inseparable adjunct, ‘the inward and spiritual grace?’ Far from her

* Tracts, p. 21.

be such self-contradiction and absurdity ! Irresistible and overpowering indeed, and incapable of receiving any other explication, must be the evidence which should drive us to such a conclusion.

But now what is the case ? The whole appears to me to admit of the easiest, the most natural explanation—explanation which proceeds upon the most common principles, and which, in fact, the church has herself pointed out to us. Let it be observed, that before she thus speaks of her members as regenerate and born again, not only has she repeatedly prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and be born again, as for a blessing which might be wanting, even where baptism was ‘ rightly administered ;’ but she has commanded that they be ‘ examined’ and ‘ found fit,’ previously to their admission to baptism ; she has admonished them of the necessity of ‘ faithfully promising’ things which no man, who is not a partaker of ‘ repentance and ‘ faith,’ does or can ‘ faithfully promise ;’ and she has received their solemn vows and professions accordingly. Not till all this has taken place ; not till this examination has been had, these prayers offered, these professions and vows made, as well as baptism administered ; does she speak of the persons baptized, as ‘ born again and made

‘ heirs of everlasting salvation ?’ And now let me ask, Who is there amongst us all, entertaining even the strictest views of regeneration, as a moral change, ‘ a change of heart,’ turning man from sin to holiness, and “ from the power of “ Satan unto God,” that would hesitate to pronounce such persons ‘ regenerate,’ “ born again,” “ passed from death unto life”—only supposing one thing—*only assuming them to be devout in the prayers in which they had been joining, sincere in the vows which they had been making ?*

But suppose, on the other hand, all these awful forms gone through; these prayers offered up; these vows made; all in due order, indeed, as far as man could see, but without any devoutness, any sincerity, any seriousness in the sight of God: suppose all this done, for example, by an unbelieving Jew, induced, (as we have reason to conclude many have been,) for the sake of worldly advantage, publicly to profess the faith of Christ, while privately he would blaspheme his name: who could, who *would* say, that, in such a case as this, any regeneration, any spiritual grace accompanied, what was, on the part of the receiver, at least, a profane and impious mummery? And if no spiritual grace accompanied baptism in such a case as this, by parity of reason, we should have no right to conclude that any accompa-

nied it, in other cases, where, though there might be less impiety, there should prove to have been no more sincerity or real devotion.

I contend, then, that the ground on which the church speaks of all those, whom she has baptized, as regenerate, is neither more nor less than THE SUPPOSITION—THE ASSUMPTION, OF THEIR SINCERITY IN THEIR PROFESSIONS. I contend, that, with regard to adults, (and the case of infants will be considered hereafter,) this is clear from the whole of the service; as well as necessary to the consistency of the service with the articles.

I have said that the church has herself given us the clue to this mode of understanding her language. A passage in the catechism to that effect will be considered on another occasion: at present I confine myself to the office before us. Let us turn back to the exhortation before noticed. What do we there read? ‘Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will favourably receive these present persons’—doing what?—simply coming to baptism? No, let the words be marked—‘TRULY REPENTING, AND COMING TO HIM BY FAITH.’ Here the supposition, *elsewhere implied and understood, is positively expressed*: ‘*Truly repenting and coming to him by faith.*’ This is what is supposed con-

cerning them. It is *assumed*, that they come to baptism with the proper requisites for ‘RECEIVING IT RIGHTLY,’ with ‘REPENTANCE AND FAITH.’ It would be a disbelief of God’s promises to doubt, whether, so COMING, they should receive the inward and spiritual grace or not: whether or not they should by baptism, ‘as by an instrument, be grafted into the church; have the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of their adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, visibly signed and sealed to them; their faith confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.*

Agreeably likewise to what has been now argued and adduced, the baptized persons are, at the close of the service, addressed as ‘being made the *children of God* and of the light’—how? by baptism? that indeed might be ‘a sign,’ ‘a pledge,’ ‘a means:’ but the language here is, ‘made the children of God and of the light BY FAITH in Jesus Christ.’ This again assumes their possession of faith, as well as points out the real source of their privileges.

I might add that the passage of the exhortation, just cited, is introduced by a quotation from St. Peter, which has been repeatedly no-

* Art. xxvii.

ticed, and in which the apostle is careful to inform us, that “the answer of a good conscience,” that is, the very thing here assumed,—sincerity in the professions made, or a state of heart corresponding to them,—is the great thing requisite to our enjoying the blessing sought and represented in baptism.

As far, then, as adults are concerned, I consider the intention of our church service as clearly and satisfactorily made out. No difficulty, it seems to me, need be supposed to remain upon the subject.

CHAPTER VII.

The Case of Infants—Church Service for their Baptism—A Passage in the Catechism furnishes the Key—Bishop Hopkins's Views of baptismal Regeneration.

BUT I am aware that the case of infants, and the services appointed for their baptism, will probably be urged against the reasonings which I have used in the last chapter.

Even supposing it proved, that the adult subjects of baptism are pronounced regenerate, only upon the assumed sincerity of their repentance and faith, what, it may be said, are we to think concerning infants, who are not capable of exercising repentance and faith? Nay, seeing that the church has used the same language respecting them, as respecting adults, does not this demonstrate, that, however satisfactory the arguments employed in favour of a hypothetical construction of that language, even in the case of adults, might appear, they are indeed fallacious,

and the conclusions drawn from them unfounded?

I admit, in return, the plausibility of this reasoning, but I am prepared to maintain, that it is unsound and delusive.

In the first place I observe, that the same prayers, and very nearly the same exhortations, are used in this case, as in that of adults.

And, in the next place, it is much to be remarked, that, though the infant is incapable of making any engagements whatever, the same professions and vows are required as in the other case. And of whom are they required? Not of others, as is often erroneously supposed: but of HIM, *through the medium of those who act for him.* ‘After this promise made by Christ, THIS ‘INFANT must also faithfully, for his part, promise BY YOU that are his sureties, (until he ‘come of age to take it upon himself,) that he ‘will renounce the devil and all his works,’ &c.

Accordingly the questions run, ‘Dost thou, ‘IN THE NAME of this child, renounce, believe,’ &c. Nay, ‘Wilt THOU be baptized? Wilt THOU ‘obediently keep God’s holy will and command-

‘ments?’ These questions are addressed as to the child himself: the answers considered as his answers. It is as if, by a sort of legal fiction, to which we are no strangers in the most important temporal transactions, the soul of the child were considered as transferred to his sponsor, and as speaking in him and by him. And, accordingly, after the baptism the sponsors are addressed, ‘Forasmuch as THIS CHILD hath promised BY YOU his sureties, &c.; ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see, that he may be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, HE hath here made BY YOU.’

The engagements made are, to all intents and purposes, considered as the engagements of the children themselves. And hence, in the catechism, it is observed, that these promises, ‘when they come to agé, themselves are bound to perform.’ And for the explicit recognition of this obligation the rite of confirmation is appointed, in which they are asked, ‘Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made *in your name* at your baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound

‘ to believe, and to do all those things, which
 ‘ your godfathers and godmothers then under-
 ‘ took *for you?*’ *

Now all this is very remarkable. One is certainly somewhat at a loss for words, in which to speak of engagements, supposed to be made by an infant incapable of any knowledge of the transaction. But when such promises and vows are *supposed* to be made, something must in like manner be *supposed* concerning what, in another case, we should call the sincerity with which they are made — concerning the performance of them, or the disposition to perform them: and, according to what is thus supposed, must be the language subsequently used of the party concerned in them. Here then, as before, I contend, that the church, by an hypothesis certainly not more bold, than that which imagines the infant to make engagements at all, *supposes* something which corresponds to *sincerity*:—supposes that the child will perform—

* ‘ In your name,’ is the authorized and repeated explanation of the words *for you*. Let it not be pretended that I use an overstrained interpretation of the words, in considering the questions as addressed to the infants, and the answers reputed as their’s. If the reader will turn to Hooker, B. v. § 64, he will find more than nine pages employed in explaining and vindicating the practice, under the following title: ‘ Interrogatories proposed unto infants in baptism, and answered as in their names by godfathers.’

or (what is perfectly possible) that it even now, through the grace of God, possesses a disposition which will lead it, as it becomes capable of so doing, to perform its vows : and, *on the ground of this supposition*, returns thanks to almighty God, ‘ that it hath pleased him to regenerate ‘ this infant with his Holy Spirit, and to receive ‘ him for his own child by adoption,’ as well as ‘ to incorporate him into his holy church.’

And this interpretation of the language employed, I support, as before, by the explicit doctrine of the articles ; by the nature of the baptismal service itself ; and by what was urged above, the utter unreasonableness of supposing, that a blessing must *necessarily* attend the ministration of baptism to an infant, which, it has been proved, does by no means necessarily accompany it to a grown person.—And on what ground is it argued, that the church holds regeneration always to accompany baptism in an infant ? There is nothing stronger for it than the language, ‘ We yield thee hearty thanks, that it ‘ hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant.’ But the same language is used concerning adults, in whom the church, avowedly, does not consider baptism as having ‘ a wholesome effect and operation’ necessarily, nor unless they receive it ‘ with ‘ faith and rightly.’ But what warrants no such

inference in one case, cannot warrant it in the other.

But, as the case of infants is obviously attended with difficulties peculiar to itself, the church has entered into explanation upon the subject: which, though among the passages omitted by Mr. Mant, is of great importance in the argument. In the catechism, it having been stated, that the things ‘required of persons to be baptized’ are ‘repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament;’ the question occurs, ‘Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?’ Now what should we have expected as the simple and natural answer to this question? I remember formerly to have thought, that the words of the twenty-seventh article, ‘The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, *as most agreeable with the institution of Christ,*’ would have furnished a more obvious and more satisfactory answer, than that which is given. And so they certainly would have done, if it had been intended only to assign our *authority* for baptizing infants. But the answer returned makes it clear, that the question was designed to introduce an *explanation* of the church’s

views in receiving infants, and considering them in the manner she does. The answer is, ‘ Because ‘ they PROMISE them both’ (both repentance and faith,) ‘ by their sureties ; which promise, when ‘ they come to age, themselves are BOUND TO PER-
‘ FORM.’

It is, then, avowedly, upon the ground of this promise, and in the expectation of its performance, that the church admits infants to baptism : and consequently it is upon the same ground, that she proceeds to speak of them in the manner we are considering.

Here, therefore, is the same system of *charitable supposition*, which we have seen pervade the office for adult baptism. The prayers offered are supposed to have been sincerely offered ; the promises made, it is presumed, will be performed ; and, UPON THESE ASSUMPTIONS, the infant is spoken of as ‘ regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit.’ But if these conditions fail ; if the prayers have been offered in mere form ; if the child, ‘ when he comes ‘ to age,’ shews no disposition to keep his vows ; then I feel myself warranted to conclude, that the spiritual blessing, dependent upon such conditions is, with regard to him, null and void : and that, although, having been admitted into the visible church by the external sign of bap-

tism with water, he needs not to be baptized again; yet without “the baptism of the Holy Ghost,” without ‘spiritual regeneration,’ he never can be a member of the spiritual church of Christ, (consisting of all *true* believers,) or come to the kingdom of heaven.

If it be thought, that there has been some more difficulty in making out this case than that of adults; I beg to suggest, that it is nothing more than what naturally results from the condition of infants, supposed to make vows, and, on the faith of those vows, pronounced regenerate; while they can give no evidence, in their conduct, either of a regenerate or an unregenerate state. And, on the other hand, does Mr. M. find no difficulty in the case of thousands and millions, whom he supposes to have been actually ‘quicken’d by the Holy Spirit,’ and to have had ‘a new principle of life and of action infused into them,’ at their baptism, whose life and actions, from their earliest to their latest days, give no evidence of any such principle existing within them?

I do therefore consider the passage, which I have quoted from the catechism, as furnishing, and designedly furnishing, the true key to the meaning of the church, in the language which

* P. 50.

she uses concerning infants. She requires of them by their sureties, as she does of adults personally, certain vows ; she assumes their disposition, as they become capable of it, to perform those vows ; and she speaks of them as (what upon that supposition they must be,) regenerate, and the children of God by adoption and grace.*



Hitherto I have considered the word *regeneration* as used only in its highest and most spiritual sense ; and have endeavoured to shew, under what limitations it may, in that sense, be applied as it is in these services. But it is not to be overlooked, that there is a lower sense, which, like many other terms of high import, it may bear, and in which many persons understand it to be used in the offices of our church.

This I shall more fully explain from Bishop Hopkins ; whose ‘ Doctrine of the two Sacra-

* I am aware, that the part of the catechism, which treats of the sacraments, like the office for adult baptism, is of later date than the rest : but it is equally authority with us : and, added as it was, may be supposed to have been designed to furnish explanation, where explanation might be wanting.—I do not take any separate notice of the service for private baptism. That is but a sort of inchoate and imperfect proceeding, which is afterwards to be completed elsewhere. It *implies*, however, all the same things which actually take place in the public service.

‘ments,’ and ‘Nature and Necessity of Regeneration,’ well deserve the reader’s attentive perusal.*

He observes, that ‘to be sanctified imports, in the proper signification of it, no other than to be appointed, separated, or dedicated to God.’ And so persons and places are often said to be consecrated and sanctified to the Lord.† But then there are ‘two ways of dedication unto God . . . the one external, by men; the other internal, and wrought by God himself.’

‘As there is this twofold dedication or separation, so there is also a twofold sanctification. There is an external, relative, or ecclesiastical sanctification; which is nothing else, but the devoting or giving up of a thing or person unto God, by those who have power so to do. There is an internal, real, and spiritual sanctification: and, in this sense, a man is said to be sanctified, when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his soul the habits of divine grace, and maketh him partaker of the divine nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in a holy life.’

* They are to be found in the second volume of his Works, as lately re-published by the Rev. Josiah Pratt, B.D.

† Exod. xiii. 2. xxviii. 41. xix. 23. Num. vii. 1. Heb. ix. 13.
 ‡ Pet. i. 18.

In applying this distinction to baptism, he lays down the two following propositions.

1. *‘Baptism is the immediate means of our external and relative sanctification unto God.—*
‘By this holy sacrament, all that are partakers of
‘it are dedicated and separated unto him.’

From this it follows, as he shews at large, ‘that
 ‘those, who are baptized, may in this ecclesiastical sense, be truly called saints, the children of
 ‘God, and members of Christ, and, thereupon,
 ‘inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.—Doubtless, so far forth baptism is a means of sanctification, as it is the solemn admission of persons
 ‘into the visible church; as it separates them
 ‘from the world, and from all false religions in
 ‘it, and brings them out of the visible kingdom
 ‘of the devil, into the visible kingdom of Jesus
 ‘Christ. . . But this is only a relative sanctity, not
 ‘a real: and many such saints and sanctified
 ‘men there are, who shall never enter into heaven;
 ‘but, by their wicked lives, forfeit and lose that
 ‘blessed inheritance to which they were called.
 ‘Many there are, who are saints, by their separation from paganism and Judaism into fellowship with the visible church; but they are not
 ‘saints, by their separation from wicked and ungodly men into a spiritual fellowship with

‘ Christ. And yet, to such saints as these, all the
 ‘ ordinances of the church are due, till, for their
 ‘ notorious wickedness, they be cut off from that
 ‘ body, by the due execution of the sentence of ex-
 ‘ communication.’*—And then immediately fol-
 low the words, which, it has been observed above,
 Mr. M. quotes, though not with perfect fairness :
 ‘ Such a baptismal regeneration as this is must
 ‘ needs be acknowledged by all, that will not
 ‘ wilfully shut their eyes against the clear evi-
 ‘ dence of scripture ; from which I have before
 ‘ brought plentiful proofs to confirm it.’

His lordship’s second proposition is this :

2. ‘ *That baptism is not so the means of an in-
 ‘ ternal and real sanctification, as if all, to whom
 ‘ it is administered, were thereby spiritually re-
 ‘ newed, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost
 ‘ in his saving graces.*

‘ Though an external and ecclesiastical sancti-
 ‘ fication be effected by baptism, *ex opere operato*,
 ‘ by the mere administration of that holy sacra-
 ‘ ment ; yet so is not an internal and habitual
 ‘ sanctification : and that, whether we respect
 ‘ adult persons or infants. For adult persons we
 ‘ have a famous and uncontrollable instance, in

* See Matt. xiii. 28—30.

‘ the baptism of Simon Magus, who *believed* upon
 ‘ the preaching of the gospel ; (for so it is said
 ‘ Acts, viii. 13.) and, upon the profession of faith
 ‘ in Jesus Christ, was admitted to the holy ordi-
 ‘ nance of baptism. Yet, ver. 23, St. Peter tells
 ‘ him, that he was still *in the gall of bitterness,*
 ‘ *and in the bond of iniquity* : in the same state
 ‘ of sin and misery, and as much a blackmoor
 ‘ when he came out of the laver, as he was before
 ‘ he entered into it.—And, for infants, it is not
 ‘ easy to be conceived, what inward work can, in
 ‘ an ordinary manner, pass upon them. . . . How-
 ‘ ever, baptism was not instituted to any such
 ‘ purpose, that it should be an instrument of
 ‘ working a real change upon infants : for neither
 ‘ can it work this change by any immediate and
 ‘ proper efficiency, since the washing of the body
 ‘ cannot thus affect the soul, nor infuse any gra-
 ‘ cious habits into it, which itself hath not ;
 ‘ neither can it work morally, by way of suasion
 ‘ and argument, because infants have not the use
 ‘ of reason to apprehend any such. Again, if
 ‘ this baptismal regeneration be real, by the infu-
 ‘ sion of habitual grace, how comes it to pass that
 ‘ the greater part of those, who have received it,
 ‘ lead profane and unholy lives, and too, too many
 ‘ perish in their sins ? . . . Therefore I judge it un-
 ‘ sound doctrine, to affirm, that baptism doth
 ‘ confer real sanctification upon all infants, as

‘ well as upon some adult persons, who are made
 ‘ partakers of it.’

He then supposes it objected, that ‘ the church
 ‘ hath appointed a prayer in the office of baptism
 ‘ wherein we bless God, that it hath pleased him
 ‘ to regenerate the baptized infant with his Holy
 ‘ Spirit :’ and he remarks upon it, ‘ to this I an-
 ‘ swer, that the baptismal regeneration of infants
 ‘ is external and ecclesiastical. They are regene-
 ‘ rated, as they are incorporated into the church
 ‘ of Christ: for this is called *regeneration*, Matt.
 ‘ xix. 28. *Ye which have followed me in the re-
 ‘ generation : . . . i. e. in planting my church, which
 ‘ is the renewing of the world. . . To be admitted,
 ‘ therefore, by baptism, into the church of Christ,
 ‘ is to be admitted into the state of regeneration,
 ‘ or the renewing of all things.’*

‘ But how then are infants said, in baptism, to
 ‘ be regenerated *by the Holy Spirit*, if he doth not
 ‘ inwardly sanctify them in and by that ordinance?
 ‘ I answer, Because the whole œconomy and dis-
 ‘ pensation of the kingdom of Christ is managed
 ‘ by the Spirit of Christ: so that those, who are
 ‘ internally sanctified, are regenerated by his
 ‘ effectual operation; and those, who are only
 ‘ externally sanctified, are regenerated by his
 ‘ public institution. Infants, therefore, are in

‘ baptism regenerated by the Holy Ghost, because
 ‘ the Holy Spirit of God appoints this ordinance
 ‘ to receive them into the visible church, which
 ‘ is the regenerate part and state of the world.’

He adds two further propositions.

3. ‘ *It is not so the means of sanctification, as
 ‘ if none could be internally and really sanctified,
 ‘ who are necessarily deprived of that holy ordi-
 ‘ nance.*

4. ‘ *Baptism is an ordinary means appointed
 ‘ by Christ, for the real and effectual sanctifica-
 ‘ tion of his church.—For this is the great end of
 ‘ all gospel-ordinances, that, through them, might
 ‘ be conveyed that grace, which might purify
 ‘ the heart and cleanse the life.’**

In this lower, external, and ecclesiastical sense, therefore, we may affirm, unconditionally, the

* Hopkins’s Works, vol. ii. p. 416—428. Again, p. 468, he thus expresses the same sentiments: ‘ There is, indeed, a baptismal re-
 ‘ generation, whereby all, that are made partakers of that ordinance,
 ‘ are, according to scripture language, sanctified, renewed, and made
 ‘ the children of God, and brought within the bond of the covenant:
 ‘ but all this is but after an external manner; as being, in this ordi-
 ‘ nance, entered members of the visible church. This external re-
 ‘ generation by water entitles none to eternal life, but as the Spirit
 ‘ moves upon the face of these waters, and doth sometimes secretly
 ‘ convey quickening virtue through them.’

regeneration of all ' to whom baptism is rightly
' administered.'

But, in the higher and spiritual sense of the term, we can predicate regeneration of baptized persons, only hypothetically: namely, upon the supposition, in the case of adults, of their sincerity; and, in the case of infants, of their possessing that disposition, which shall lead them, when they become capable of it, to keep their baptismal vows.

CHAPTER VIII.

That the hypothetical Principle pervades the Services of the Church.

IF any thing could be wanting to reconcile us to the admission of a principle so natural and so common, as that of supposing professions made to be made sincerely, it would surely be sufficient, to find it generally adopted in the services of the church. ‘She puts,’ as it has been justly observed, ‘the language of real Christians into the ‘mouth of all her worshippers,’ because they profess to bear that character. Not only does she in the collect for Christmas day use the language, ‘Grant that we being regenerate, and ‘made thy children by adoption and grace, may ‘daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit;’ but in that for the Epiphany, ‘Mercifully grant, that ‘we, which know thee now by faith, may after ‘this life have the fruition of thy glorious God-‘head.’ The former of these prayers Mr. M. would fain mould into an argument for his views: * but the hypothetical principle better explains them both, and it alone can explain the

* P. 17, 18.

latter. We profess to be ‘regenerate and the children of God by adoption and grace,’ and ‘to know God by faith;’ our profession is assumed to be just, and we are spoken of accordingly.

But I would more particularly apply the remark to certain occasional services of the church.

And, in the first place, to the *confirmation service*, which Mr. M. quotes, as decidedly making for him. The bishop who presides at the office, it is true, is directed thus to pray: ‘Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace;’ &c. Here Mr. M. observes, ‘The assertion is plain and direct: the church affirms by the mouth of one of her governors, and she affirms it in the most solemn form of a prayer to the almighty and everliving God, that he has vouchsafed to regenerate his servants, who come now to be confirmed, by water and the Holy Ghost: not, as has been confidently alleged, *with a view to blessings*

‘ *contingent upon their future endeavours,** but
 ‘ with a view to those, which at baptism they ac-
 ‘ tually receive.’†

Now it is, in the first place, observable, that, in quoting the above passage, Mr. M. stops short of the clause, ‘ *daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace,*’ which implies that already they possess these gifts in some measure; and of what nature they are, the following clauses explain,—‘ the spirit of wisdom and understanding; ‘ the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the ‘ spirit of knowledge and *true godliness;*’ &c. Again, in commenting upon the passage, Mr. M. entirely drops the clause, ‘ *hath given unto them forgiveness of all their sins;*’ which must mean, up to the present time, and not only at baptism. This is as much ‘ *affirmed,*’ as that God hath regenerated ‘ *these his servants:*’ but no one, I presume, would assert the present forgiveness of all the persons to be confirmed, unconditionally, merely on account of their baptism, and without any *supposition* made concerning the present state of their minds. And, lastly, what is most important of all, Mr. M. makes no allusion to what has preceded, in this very service, respecting ‘ *these God’s servants.*’ They have

* The reference is to Mr. Overton, p. 104. † P. 16, 17.

been admonished concerning the nature and intent of confirmation, and the instructions preparatory to it; the end of which is, that, 'being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, they may themselves, openly before the church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.' They have next been interrogated by the bishop: 'Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?' And to this solemn question 'every one' has 'audibly answered, I do.' Now, to quote the 'affirmation' without this admonition, examination, and profession, is, to my apprehension, like quoting an engagement, and suppressing the stipulation on which it is made. Concerning persons who make, and *are assumed sincerely to make* such professions, we may safely affirm, both that God hath 'regenerated them,' and that he hath 'given unto

‘ them forgiveness of all their sins.’ But he that, after observing the spirit and conduct of too many who come to confirmation, can affirm such things of them absolutely, and merely on the ground of their baptism, must have not only very different views, but very different feelings, than I either have, or would wish to have.

I confidently conclude, therefore, that ‘ the affirmation’ proceeds upon an assumption, that the profession is sincerely made : and if that assumption fail, the affirmation, concerning the persons’ being ‘ regenerate and pardoned,’ fails with it.—The confirmation service, therefore, affords no instance of persons being pronounced regenerate, without regard to their present state of mind.

The visitation of the sick is the service to which we will next proceed. Here occurs a form of absolution which has caused difficulty to many persons. ‘ Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences : and, by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’

I meddle not with other questions to which this formulary might give rise. But can any one doubt, upon what ground the absolution pronounced in it proceeds? Will any one imagine, that it is pronounced absolutely, *without any thing supposed* concerning the state of mind of the absolved? The very words of the preamble would repel such an imagination, for they speak only of ‘ a power to absolve sinners *truly repenting and believing in Christ.*’ But here, as in the confirmation service, the key to the right understanding of the passage is to be found in what precedes. This absolution is not to be pronounced till after the minister has ‘ examined ’ the sick person, ‘ whether he repent him truly ‘ of his sins, and be in charity with all the ‘ world:’ not till he has ‘ moved him to make a ‘ special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter.’ ‘ After which confession,’ it is directed, ‘ the ‘ priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and ‘ heartily desire it,) after this sort.’

Who does not see, then; that the absolution *proceeds upon the supposed sincerity* of the repentance, faith, and charity, professed by the person absolved? And, accordingly, as a preceding prayer had implored, that ‘ strength ‘ might be *added* to his faith, and seriousness to

‘ his repentance,’—which supposes him already to possess repentance and faith ; so the prayer, which next follows, pleads in his behalf, ‘ foras-
 ‘ much as he putteth his full trust only in God’s
 ‘ mercy.’

The same is the case in the service for the *churching of women*. The woman returning thanks is assumed to be ‘ the servant of the
 ‘ Lord,’ and ‘ to put her trust in him :’ and is prayed for accordingly.

Another service, which has occasioned difficulty to many persons, is that for the *burial of the dead*. Here we speak of almighty God having been pleased, ‘ of his great mercy, to take
 ‘ unto himself the soul of our dear brother, or
 ‘ sister, departed.’* And, again, we ‘ give him

* I do not cite the words which follow—‘ We commit his body
 ‘ to the ground...in sure and certain hope of THE resurrection to eter-
 ‘ nal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ :’ because they do not seem
 to me to require even that simple sort of comment, which I offer on
 the others. I cannot but wonder that friends of the church should
 have found such a difficulty, or foes such a handle in them, as they
 have done. The latter, indeed, have sometimes descended to *direct*
 mis-quotation in order to create, or strengthen the difficulty. The fact
 is, that these words describe the Christian hope generally, without
 special reference to the individual. The language seems designedly
 varied for this purpose. We commit HIS body to the ground, in sure
 ‘ and certain hope of THE resurrection to eternal life.’ It is not said
 of *his* resurrection, but, generally, ‘ of *the* resurrection.’ And accord-
 ingly it immediately follows, likewise in general language, ‘ who shall

‘ thanks that it hath pleased him to deliver our
 ‘ deceased brother, or sister, out of the miseries
 ‘ of this sinful world.’ Here no one doubts;
 that the language employed *proceeds upon the*
supposition, that the deceased was in reality, what
 he is understood to have been in profession, a
 sincere Christian. Whether in any cases, here
 or elsewhere, the system of *charitable hope and*
supposition may have been carried too far, is not
 the present subject of inquiry. It is sufficient
 for my purpose to shew, that that system does
 pervade the other services of the church, and
 therefore that it is not unreasonable to believe
 it to have been adopted in the offices for the ad-
 ministration of baptism.

Finally, I maintain that the *catechism* is com-
 posed upon the same principle. In it children
 are taught to speak of themselves; as ‘ in bap-
 ‘ tism made members of Christ, children of God,
 ‘ and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.’ In
 profession, indeed, and, as Hooker’s language is,
 ‘ in the eye of the church,’ they were undoubt-

‘ change OUR vile body,’ &c. I am far from denying that the service
 supposes the deceased to be among those who may expect a blessed
 resurrection: I am admitting and asserting this. But that is not the
 thing expressed in this part of the service; and when it is afterwards
 expressed, it is in much more measured language: ‘ that we may rest
 ‘ in him, as OUR HOPE IS this our brother doth.’

edly made such:* but, if the words are to be taken in a higher and more spiritual sense, then it must be here *supposed*, that they have subsequently shewn themselves to be indeed ‘dead unto sin, and born anew unto righteousness.’ And accordingly it is to be observed, that the same persons, who are taught to use the above language, also answer as follows to the question, ‘Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and do as thy godfathers and godmothers promised for thee’ in thy baptism? ‘Yes verily, and *by God’s help so I will*: and I *heartily thank* our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: and I *pray unto God* to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.’ And again afterwards they profess faith in ‘God the Holy Ghost, who *sanctifieth them* and all the elect people of God?’ Here the things supposed are explicitly enough avowed. Whoever does heartily purpose and endeavour, ‘by God’s help,’ to keep his baptismal vows; whoever does ‘heartily thank’ God, and devoutly ‘pray unto him to give him his grace;’ whoever is ‘sanctified by God the Holy Ghost, among the elect people of God,’ is undoubtedly ‘a member of Christ, a child of

* See extracts from Bp. Hopkins, close of c. vii.

‘ God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,’ in the highest sense of the terms. Whoever has, from the time of his baptism, possessed the disposition of mind, which these things imply, has undoubtedly been such from that time. But he who will affirm, that the very act of baptism necessarily makes a person such, seems to me to draw, from a few misinterpreted expressions, conclusions alike opposed to reason, to scripture, and to the doctrines of our church.

CHAPTER IX.

That the same Principle is adopted in Scripture.—An important Question in the Interpretation of the sacred Writings.—Circumstances under which the strong Language, used concerning baptized Persons, was introduced.

EVERY reader of scripture, and particularly of the apostolic epistles, must have observed, that whole bodies of Christians are continually addressed, as partakers of the most exalted privileges and invaluable blessings. They are spoken to as persons who, “being justified by faith, have peace “with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” as “those who shall be saved from wrath “through him:” as “reconciled to God:” * as “washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the “Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God:” † as “sons of God, into whose hearts God hath “sent forth the Spirit of his Son:” ‡ as “blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places “in Christ:” as “sealed with the Holy Spirit of “promise, which is the earnest of their inherit- “ance:” § as persons “quickened from death in “trespasses and sins:” || as “having all their sins “forgiven them for Christ’s sake:” ¶ as those in

* Rom. v.

† 1 Cor. vi.

‡ Gal. iv.

§ Eph. i.

|| Eph. ii. Col. ii.

¶ Eph. iv. Col. ii.

whom “ God hath begun a good work, which he
 “ will perform unto the day of Christ : ” * as “ a
 “ chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a pecu-
 “ liar people, that they should shew forth the
 “ praises of him, who had called them out of
 “ darkness into his marvellous light : ” † as “ the
 “ sons of God, who, when their Lord shall ap-
 “ pear, shall be like him, for they shall see him
 “ as he is.” ‡

Now respecting all these, and an indefinite number of like passages, the following question arises : Seeing they are addressed to societies consisting of mixed characters, “ tares and wheat growing together,” how are they to be interpreted ? Does all this exalted and delightful language express nothing more, than was common to Simon Magus with St. Peter ? to the incestuous Corinthian with St. Paul ? to Diotrephes with St. John ? Is its meaning to be so lowered down and evaporated, that it may apply to all professors of Christianity, not excepting the most hypocritical, or the most profligate, as well as to the most consistent and honourable ? Common readers will doubtless be startled at such questions. But too true it is, that they are not superfluous. A system has been devised, or at least ‘ matured and methodized,’ by an Arian dissenter,

* Phil. i.

† 1 Peter ii.

‡ 1 John iii.

which, owing to circumstances much to be lamented, we are taught to believe is ‘at present ‘extensively and increasingly prevalent among ‘our clergy;’ and according to which, all these terms, apparently ‘expressive of an internal ‘state,’ are made to mean ‘nothing but external ‘privileges:’ and from the leaven of this doctrine Mr. M. does not appear to be altogether free.* Leaving it to others more formally to refute so mischievous a scheme,† I shall content myself with briefly assigning my reasons for adopting a very different mode of interpretation.

I admit, indeed, that many high terms may occasionally be used in describing the privileges enjoyed by persons, as members of the visible church of Christ.‡ But this does not induce me to believe, that all the exalted language, which has been quoted, is so applied. To disprove this, I should think it sufficient to appeal only to the common sense of every serious and pious reader. Let any such person carefully peruse, for example, six or eight verses at the beginning of St. Peter’s first epistle, where he ad-

* See p. 8, 35, 45, &c.

† I am happy to refer to a refutation of Dr. Taylor’s ‘Key to the ‘Apostolic Writings,’ and to a substitute for it, in a series of papers in the *Christian Observer* for 1807, which have been subsequently acknowledged as the work of the late excellent rector of Clapham, the Rev. John Venn, M. A.

‡ See extracts from Bp. Hopkins, close of c. vii.

dresses the disciples, as “ elect according to the
 “ foreknowledge of God the Father, through
 “ sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and
 “ sprinkling of the blood of Jesus :” as, “ accord-
 “ ing to the abundant mercy of the God and
 “ Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten
 “ again to a lively hope, through the resurrection
 “ of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance
 “ incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not
 “ away, reserved for them in heaven,”—they being
 “ kept by the power of God, through faith unto
 “ salvation :” as “ greatly rejoicing” in this hope,
 “ though now for a season (if need were,) they
 “ might be in heaviness through manifold temp-
 “ tations: that the trial of their faith, being much
 “ more precious than that of gold that perisheth,
 “ though it be tried with fire, might be found to
 “ praise and honour and glory at the appear-
 “ ing of Jesus Christ :—whom, having not seen,
 “ they loved; in whom, though now they saw
 “ him not, yet believing, they rejoiced with joy
 “ unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the
 “ end of their faith, even the salvation of their
 “ souls.” Now, I ask, Can all the sophistry of
 man persuade any plain pious Christian, of com-
 petent understanding, that all this language means
 nothing more, than ‘ what belongs to all professed
 ‘ Christians without exception,’ ‘ even to those,
 ‘ who,’ though they should persevere in their

present course, ‘ shall perish eternally ?’* The supposition carries its own refutation on the face of it.

But, further, not only is language expressive of *privilege* thus applied to bodies of Christians, but language directly and necessarily expressive of *moral excellence* is applied with equal liberality. They are spoken of, as “ dead to sin,” as well as freed from condemnation : as those who had been “ the servants of sin, but who had now “ obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered unto them :” † as “ walking not after “ the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The Corinthians are spoken of “ as washed and sanctified,” no less than “ justified :” ‡ The Ephesians “ in “ time past walked in trespasses and sins,” § but it is implied, that they did so no longer. “ The “ work of faith, and labour of love, and patience “ of hope ” || of the Thessalonians, were “ remembered by the apostle without ceasing :” “ their “ faith grew exceedingly,” and “ their charity “ towards each other abounded.” Those, to whom St. Peter wrote, were sanctified “ to obedience :” “ loved the unseen Saviour,” and “ had purified their souls, in obeying the truth, “ through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the

* Dr. Taylor’s words.

§ Eph. ii.

† Rom. vi.

|| Thess. i.

‡ 1 Cor. vi.

“brethren.”* Now whatever else could, these things certainly could not, be predicated of any but true, and pure, and holy, and obedient believers: and therefore whatever difficulty may be imagined to arise, from the application of the language in question to ‘large societies’ of Christians, it is not to be removed by explaining the whole, of things common to ALL professed Christians.

And finally, the limitation, the distinction, though usually left to be supplied by the common sense of the reader, is yet frequently enough expressed, to prevent its being overlooked or forgotten. A very few instances may evince this. “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” St. Paul says to the Romans, † “if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you:” but “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,” so far from God being ‘his God, king, saviour, father, husband, shepherd,’ ‡ &c. on the ground of his being a professed Christian — “he is none of Christ’s.” “As many as are led by the Spirit of God,” he says, “they are the sons of God.” § To the Corinthian Christians the same apostle writes, “Examine yourselves whether ye be *in the faith*; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that

* 1 Pet. i.

† C. viii.

‡ Dr. Taylor.

§ Rom. viii.

“ Jesus Chrst is in you, except ye be repro-
 “ bates ? ” * Though, speaking generally to the
 Galatians, he says, “ Ye are all the children of
 “ God by faith in Jesus Christ,” yet he elsewhere
 tells them, that he “ stood in doubt of them;” and
 admonishes them, that in Christ Jesus no faith
 availed but that which “ worked by love,” no-
 thing short of “ a new creature.” † Address-
 ing the Philippians, he assigns his reason for
 thinking so favourably of them as he did : “ Even
 “ as it is meet for me to think this of you all,
 “ forasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the de-
 “ fence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are
 “ partakers of my grace.” ‡ The Colossians he
 expressly addresses *upon the ground of their pro-
 fession* : “ *If ye then be risen with Christ seek*
 “ *those things which are above.*” § I do not
 mean to say, that these hypothetical sentences
 were intended to convey any specific doubt of
 their sincerity : but certainly they did convey a
 reference to their professions, and a call to act
 consistently with them.—In like manner St. Peter
 says to those to whom he wrote, “ *If so be ye*
 “ *have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*” || And
 St. John affirms, that, “ *if we say we have fellow-
 “ ship with God, and walk in darkness,*” or live
 in sin, “ *we lie, and the truth is not in us :*” and

* 2 Cor.

§ Col. iii.

† Gal. iii. 26. v. 6. vi. 15.

|| 1 Pet. ii.

‡ Phil. i. 7.

that hereby only “do we know that we know Christ, if we keep his commandments.” *

On the whole, then, I think it palpably evident, that we are by no means to solve the difficulty, (if difficulty it deserve to be called,) arising from the general application of exalted language to Christian churches, by lowering its meaning so as to adapt it to all professed Christians. An unspeakably easier and more obvious, I should have thought it a self-evident, solution is, that of understanding professed Christians to be addressed upon the ground of their profession—*upon the supposition of their sincerity*. This, we have seen, is continually done by our church: more or less it must be done at all times: and never could it be so natural to do it, as when the very profession of Christianity brought with it many dangers to men’s property, to their liberty, and even to their lives. In such times the apostles wrote, and in similar times the language was introduced, which has led men too frequently to confound the outward sign with the inward grace of baptism; or at least to suppose, that the latter necessarily accompanies the former. In such times it was natural and reasonable to believe, that *professed* Christians were *real* Christians—that those who were ‘baptized’ were indeed ‘re-generate by the Spirit of God.’ And this affords

* 1 John i. ii.

a most easy account of the means by which the strong language, that has been so long in use, was brought into the church.

The circumstances of those times, as compared with our own, and the effect of them upon the language employed concerning professed Christians, have been well set forth by the learned prelate already frequently referred to. Though believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, ‘is not,’ he says, ‘regeneration, yet it was then almost an infallible test of it; and to persuade men to believe that Jesus was the Christ, was to prevail upon them to be truly and really converted. It was seldom seen among those primitive Christians, where there were no carnal respects nor outward advantages that could commend the gospel to the secular interests of men; when the only reward of professing Christ was reproaches, persecution, and martyrdom: seldom was it seen, that any were won over from heathenism or Judaism, to make profession of the despised name of Christ, but such, as were inwardly renewed by that almighty grace, that can conquer all the despites and affronts of the world: few were so foolish as to profess Christ in hypocrisy, when that hypocrisy would endanger their own lives; and yet, because it was but in hypocrisy, it could gain them no benefit by his death. Therefore it is,

‘ that the scripture speaks of those, that made a
 ‘ profession of the name of Christ, as if they
 ‘ were regenerated, because it was then almost
 ‘ an infallible mark of it. Thus you have it in
 ‘ in 1 John iv. 15: Whosoever shall confess that
 ‘ Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him,
 ‘ and he in God . . . But now, when the very name
 ‘ of a Christian is become a title of honour, and
 ‘ the same punishments do now attend the deny-
 ‘ ing of Christ, that then attended the acknow-
 ‘ ledgment of him, men may indeed be called by
 ‘ his name that never were effectually called by
 ‘ his grace, and may make a profession of the
 ‘ true faith and yet remain Christian infidels. *

The following quotation is from a tract, of
 which more particular notice will shortly be
 taken:—‘ It is the way of the scriptures to speak
 ‘ to and of the visible members of the church of
 ‘ Christ, under such appellations and expressions
 ‘ as may seem at first hearing to imply, that they
 ‘ are all of them truly righteous and holy per-
 ‘ sons The reason of which is, that they were
 ‘ *visibly* BY OBLIGATION *and* BY PROFESSION all
 ‘ this; which was thus represented to them, the
 ‘ more effectually to stir them up and engage
 ‘ them to live according to their profession and
 ‘ obligation.’ †

* Bp. Hopkins, Works, vol. ii. p. 471.

† Bp. Bradford, on Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration.

CHAPTER X.

That Regeneration is not restricted to Baptism by the Church of England—by the English Reformers—by the Divines to whose Authority Mr. Mant appeals—or by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

I. **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.**—I here confine myself strictly to the term *regeneration*, and not merely to the doctrine. My proof is taken from the Homily for Whitsunday. It has occurred accidentally, and might probably be supported by other instances, were pains taken to search for them. I give the passage at length, because it both exhibits the doctrine of the church on some kindred points, of great importance, and presents us with, what must be, in Mr. M.'s eyes, an extraordinary phenomenon,—a discussion on regeneration, and the third chapter of St. John's gospel, without even the mention of baptism!

‘ Where the Holy Ghost worketh, there nothing is impossible; as may further also appear by *the inward regeneration and sanctification of mankind*. When Christ said to Nicodemus,

‘ Unless a man be born anew, of water and the
 ‘ Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,
 ‘ (John iii. 5,) he was greatly amazed in his
 ‘ mind, and began to reason with Christ; de-
 ‘ manding how a man might be born which was
 ‘ old. Can he enter, saith he, into his mother’s
 ‘ womb again, and so be born anew? Behold a
 ‘ lively pattern of a fleshly and carnal man! He
 ‘ had little or no intelligence of the Holy Ghost;
 ‘ and therefore he goeth bluntly to work, and
 ‘ asketh how this thing were possible to be true.
 ‘ Whereas, otherwise, if he had known the great
 ‘ power of the Holy Ghost in this behalf, that it
 ‘ is he which inwardly worketh *the regeneration*
 ‘ *and new birth* of mankind, he would never have
 ‘ marvelled at Christ’s words; but would have
 ‘ rather taken occasion thereby to praise and glo-
 ‘ rify God.

‘ For as there are three several and sundry
 ‘ persons in the Deity; so have they three several
 ‘ and sundry offices proper unto each of them;
 ‘ the Father to create, the Son to redeem, the
 ‘ Holy Ghost to sanctify and regenerate. Whereof
 ‘ the last, the more it is hid from our understand-
 ‘ ing, the more it ought to move all men to won-
 ‘ der at the secret and mighty working of God’s
 ‘ Holy Spirit, which is within us. For it is the
 ‘ Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth

‘ quicken the minds of men ; stirring up good
 ‘ and godly motions in their hearts, which are
 ‘ agreeable to the will and commandment of God ;
 ‘ such as otherwise of their own crooked and per-
 ‘ verse nature they should never have. *That*
 ‘ *which is born of the flesh, saith Christ, is flesh ;*
 ‘ *and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*
 ‘ (John iii. 6.) As who should say, Man of his
 ‘ own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and
 ‘ naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without
 ‘ any spark of goodness in him, without any vir-
 ‘ tuous or godly motion, only given to evil
 ‘ thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works
 ‘ of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and
 ‘ godly motions, if he have any at all in him,
 ‘ they proceed only of the Holy Ghost; who is
 ‘ the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh
 ‘ us new men in Christ Jesus. Did not God’s
 ‘ Holy Spirit miraculously work in the child
 ‘ David, when of a poor shepherd he became a
 ‘ princely prophet? (1 Sam. xviii. 27.) Did
 ‘ not God’s Holy Spirit miraculously work in
 ‘ Matthew, *sitting at the receipt of custom,*
 ‘ (Matth. ix. 9,) when of a proud publican he
 ‘ became a humble and lowly evangelist? And
 ‘ who can choose but marvel, to consider that
 ‘ Peter should become, of a simple fisher, a chief
 ‘ and mighty apostle? Paul, of a cruel and
 ‘ bloody persecutor, a faithful disciple of Christ

‘ to teach the gentiles ? *Such is the power of the Holy Ghost TO REGENERATE MEN, 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. *Know ye not, saith St. Paul, that ye are the temple of God, and that his Spirit dwelleth in you ? (1 Cor. iii. 16.) Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is within you ? Again he saith, You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. For why ? The Spirit of God dwelleth in you. (Rom. viii. 9.) To this agreeth the doctrine of St. John, writing on this wise : The anointing which ye have received—he meaneth the Holy Ghost—dwelleth in you. (1 John ii. 27.) And the doctrine of Peter saith the same, who hath these words : The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. (1 Pet. iv. 14.)*

‘ O what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth within him ! *If God be with us, as the apostle saith, who can be against us ? (Rom. viii. 31.)*

‘ O but how shall I know that the Holy Ghost is within me ? some man perchance will say.

‘ Forsooth, *as the tree is known by his fruit, so is
 ‘ also the Holy Ghost.* The fruits of the Holy
 ‘ Ghost, according to the mind of St. Paul, are
 ‘ these: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentle-
 ‘ ness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, tempe-
 ‘ rance, &c. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) Contrariwise, the
 ‘ deeds of the flesh are these: adultery, fornica-
 ‘ tion, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witch-
 ‘ craft, hatred, debate, emulation, wrath, conten-
 ‘ tion, sedition, heresy, envy, murder, drunken-
 ‘ ness, gluttony, and such like.

‘ Here is now that glass, wherein thou must
 ‘ behold thyself, and discern whether thou have
 ‘ the Holy Ghost within thee, or the spirit of the
 ‘ flesh. If thou see that thy works be virtuous
 ‘ and good, consonant to the prescript rule of
 ‘ God’s word, savouring and tasting not of the
 ‘ flesh, but of the Spirit; then assure thyself that
 ‘ thou art endued with the Holy Ghost; other-
 ‘ wise, in thinking well of thyself, thou dost
 ‘ nothing else but deceive thyself.’ *

Here is the very term *regeneration*, and *rege-
 nation by the Holy Ghost*, used for a change of

* The two last paragraphs furnish a very sufficient answer to Mr. M.’s assertion, p. 25, ‘ that, if the work of regeneration is not effected
 ‘ by baptism, . . . we are left without’ any other criterion, than ‘ our
 ‘ own imaginations, or our own feelings, to determine whether’ we are
 regenerate or not.

mind, which produces ‘good and godly motions ‘in the heart;’ by which, and by the conduct resulting from them, we are taught to determine whether we be endued with the Holy Ghost or not. The term is applied to the change wrought in David, St. Matthew, St. Peter, and St. Paul. Now what authority is there for ascribing St. Peter’s change, from ‘a simple fisher to a mighty ‘apostle,’ to his baptism? What, for saying one word of baptism in the case of ‘Matthew, *sitting ‘at the receipt of custom,* when of a proud publican he became a humble and lowly evangelist?’ And, most of all, what has the ‘regeneration’ of David, ‘when of a poor shepherd he ‘became a princely prophet,’ to do with baptism?—Whatever be the nature of the change here described by it, the passage demonstrates, that the church does not *confine* the term to baptism, or the effect of baptism, or consider ‘any ‘other than baptismal regeneration as impossible ‘in this world.’

II. THE ENGLISH REFORMERS.—Here, again, I do not pretend to have carried my investigation to any great length. A few decisive passages must suffice.

Archbishop *Cranmer* is unequivocal in declaring, that the inward grace does not always ac-

company the outward sign. He says, ‘As in
 ‘baptism, those who come feignedly, and those
 ‘that come unfeignedly, both be washed with
 ‘the sacramental water; but both be not washed
 ‘with the Holy Ghost, and clothed with Christ:
 ‘so in the Lord’s supper,’ &c.* And, again,
 ‘Whosoever cometh to that water, being of the
 ‘age of discretion, must examine himself duly,
 ‘lest if he come unworthily, (none otherwise
 ‘than he would come unto other common water,)
 ‘he be not renewed in Christ, but instead of sal-
 ‘vation receive his damnation.’—Does, then,
 this venerable metropolitan and martyr ‘doubt
 ‘the inward and spiritual grace of baptism,’ and
 ‘deny its sacramental character?’ No one, as-
 suredly, will affirm it.—This, however, is not pre-
 cisely the subject of the present chapter.

Latimer, bishop and martyr, speaks more
 directly upon it.—‘Christ saith, *Except a man*
 ‘*be born again from above, he cannot see the*
 ‘*kingdom of God.* He must have *regeneration*:
 ‘and what is this *regeneration*? It is not to be
 ‘christened in water (as these firebrands* ex-
 ‘pound it,) and nothing else. How is it to be ex-
 ‘pounded then? St. Peter sheweth, that one place
 ‘of scripture declareth another....Saith St. Peter,
 ‘*We be born again.* How? *Not by a mortal seed,*

* Fathers of the English Church, vol. iii. p. 335.

† Meaning the Papists.

‘ *but by an immortal.* What is this immortal seed? *By the word of the living God.* By the word of God preached and opened. **THUS COMETH IN OUR NEW BIRTH.**’*

Mr. M. † quotes from this venerable reformer a passage which contains nothing decisive: but how far he is from sanctioning Mr. M.’s doctrine, that regeneration or new-birth is ‘conveyed exclusively by baptism,’ the reader may now judge.

Hooper, bishop and martyr. ‘Such as be baptized must remember, that repentance and faith precede this external sign; and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained, BEFORE the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man, *when he believeth*, and trusteth that Christ is the only actor of his salvation.’—‘Thus be the infants examined concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptized with water; at the contemplation of which faith, God purgeth the soul. Then is the exterior sign and deed *not to purge the heart; but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world*, that this child is God’s.’—

* *Fathers, &c.* vol. ii. p. 654, 655.

† P. 27.

‘ A traitor may receive the crown, and yet be true
 ‘ king nothing the more : so a hypocrite and infi-
 ‘ del may receive the external sign of baptism,
 ‘ and yet be *no Christian man*, any the more ; *as*
 ‘ *Simon Magus* and others.’ *

The discerning reader will discover, in this passage, corroboration of several things which have already been advanced, and of some which remain to be urged.

John Frith, martyr. ‘ This outward sign doth
 ‘ neither give us the Spirit of God, neither yet
 ‘ grace, that is, the favour of God. For, if
 ‘ through the washing of the water the Spirit of
 ‘ grace were given, then it would follow, that
 ‘ whosoever were baptized in the water should
 ‘ receive this precious gift. But that is not so ;
 ‘ wherefore I must needs conclude, that this out-
 ‘ ward sign, by any power or influence that it
 ‘ hath, bringeth not the Spirit and favour of
 ‘ God. That every one receiveth not this trea-
 ‘ sure in baptism it is evident : for put the case,
 ‘ that a Jew or an infidel should say that he did
 ‘ believe, and believe not indeed ; and upon his
 ‘ words were baptized indeed, (for no man can
 ‘ judge what his heart is, but we must receive
 ‘ him unto baptism, if he confesses our faith
 ‘ with his mouth, albeit his heart be far from

* *Fathers, &c.* vol. v. p. 169, 170, 171.

‘ thence,) this miscreant, now thus baptized,
 ‘ hath received this outward sign and sacrament
 ‘ as well as the most faithful man believing.*
 ‘ Howbeit, he neither receiveth the Spirit of
 ‘ God, neither yet any grace but rather con-
 ‘ demnation.’—‘ It followeth that the outward
 ‘ sign giveth no man any grace. Moreover, if
 ‘ the Spirit of God and his grace were bound
 ‘ unto the sacraments, then where the sacraments
 ‘ were ministered, there must the Spirit of grace
 ‘ wait on; and where they were not ministered
 ‘ should be neither Spirit nor grace. But that
 ‘ is false; for Cornelius and all his household re-
 ‘ ceived the Holy Ghost, before they were bap-
 ‘ tized. Here we may see that, as the Spirit of
 ‘ God lighteth where he will, neither is he bound
 ‘ to any thing. Yea, and this example doth well
 ‘ declare unto us, that the sacraments are given
 ‘ to be an outward witness to all the congrega-
 ‘ tion of that grace, which is given before pri-
 ‘ vately to every man.’—‘ When we baptize one
 ‘ that is come unto the years of discretion, we
 ‘ ask of him whether he believe: if he answer,
 ‘ Yea, and desire baptism, he is baptized: so
 ‘ that we require faith of him, before he be bap-
 ‘ tized, (which is the gift of God, and cometh of
 ‘ grace,) and so it is an outward sign of his invi-
 ‘ sible faith, which was before given him of God.’

* Qu. *living?*

‘ His supposition ’ (Rastall’s) ‘ is, that all
 ‘ men which are baptized with material water,
 ‘ are very Christian men, and have the true faith,
 ‘ and are those which Paul affirmeth to be *with-*
 ‘ *out spot, blame, or wrinkle.** But thereto I
 ‘ say, Nay: for even as the outward circumcision
 ‘ made not the Jews the elect people, and chil-
 ‘ dren of salvation; so doth not the outward
 ‘ baptism make us the faithful members of Christ:
 ‘ but, as they were the children of God, who
 ‘ were inwardly circumcised, even so they, that
 ‘ are washed inwardly from the concupiscence
 ‘ of this world, are the members of Christ.’ †

Clement, who escaped martyrdom by dying
 in prison. ‘ Until the Spirit of *regeneration* be
 ‘ given us of God, we can neither will, do, speak,
 ‘ nor think any good thing, that is acceptable
 ‘ in his sight. Let us *therefore* always pray to
 ‘ God, that he will make in us a clean heart, and
 ‘ renew in us an upright spirit.’ ‡ Let the reader
 observe the connexion of the parts in this sen-
 tence, and then determine whether it be not an
 exhortation to us to *pray for regeneration.* §

* See Mant, p. 33. Above, p. 52.

† Fathers, &c. vol. i. p. 384—386, 403.

‡ Fathers, &c. vol. iv. p. 296. *Clement’s Confession* ‘ may be
 ‘ looked upon as an account of the belief of the professors in those
 ‘ days.’ *Strype*.

§ Mant, p. 43.

Mr. M. quotes from King Edward's catechism as follows: 'Baptism doth represent and set before our eyes that we are by the Spirit of Christ new born, and cleansed from sin; that we be members and parts of his church, received into the communion of saints. For water signifieth the Spirit.' What confirmation of his sentiments Mr. M. finds in this passage, I am at a loss to conceive. That baptism 'represents' and 'signifies' these things is not disputed: but that it was the doctrine of King Edward's days, that the sign and the thing signified always went together, no one, I think, can believe, after reading the passages just recited. Of this, however, I add one more confirmation from another catechism of great repute, I mean, that usually called Dr. Nowell's. It is supposed to have been prepared by the same persons who drew up our articles. It was sanctioned by the convocation which sanctioned the articles. It was recommended by the king's letters patent, and its use enjoined by the privy council. It has also been recently re-published by two distinguished prelates, Bishop Cleaver and Bishop Randolph. Now in what manner does this catechism speak upon the point before us? It speaks in a manner which may serve as a key, perhaps, to the right understanding of many of Mr. M.'s quotations, 'The water

‘ is only a representation of divine things, but
 ‘ by no means a trifling or false one, inasmuch as
 ‘ the truth of the things themselves is united
 ‘ with it; for as God offers us in baptism the
 ‘ forgiveness of our sins and newness of life, so
 ‘ are they truly received by us. Far be it from
 ‘ us to suppose that God would delude us with
 ‘ false appearances.’ Now had Mr. M. observed
 this passage, would he not have deemed it de-
 cisively in his favour? But hear how it is inter-
 preted in what presently follows. ‘ *But all do*
 ‘ *not indiscriminately, and in common, obtain this*
 ‘ *grace (regeneration). The faithful alone reap*
 ‘ *this blessing. The unbelieving, by rejecting*
 ‘ *the promises of God presented in baptism,*
 ‘ *shut themselves out, and go away empty: yet*
 ‘ *they do not cause the sacraments, for that rea-*
 ‘ *son, to lose their nature and virtue.* The use of
 ‘ baptism therefore consists in faith and repent-
 ‘ ance.’—No doubt many of Mr. M.’s authorities
 are to be understood in the same way: that is, they
 speak only of those who ‘ receive the sacraments
 ‘ rightly,’ though he has understood them to speak
 of all, to whom the sacraments are ‘ rightly ad-
 ‘ ministered.’

III. THE FATHERS AND OTHER DIVINES CITED
 BY MR. MANT.—I had not intended at all to med-
 dle with any other of Mr. M.’s authorities, than

the scriptures, and the sanctioned writings of the church of England: and I have intimated as much in a note on a former chapter. My reasons were, partly, that I consider no other authorities, however respectable, as binding upon us, either as Christians, or as churchmen; and partly the time and labour, which the examination of various authors, to collect their sentiments upon a given topic, must cost. But, in turning over the pages of a valuable periodical publication, I have met with a number of passages, which may sufficiently answer my purpose, and which will doubtless add to the reader's satisfaction.

Mr. M. avails himself with great confidence of the authority of the fathers: and I readily admit, that he may adduce many things from them which may be *really*, and many more which are *apparently*, favourable to his views. He observes, 'Baptism, indeed, and regeneration, the terms which specifically denote the outward sign and the spiritual grace, appear to have been employed by early Christians, as expressions of the same import.' But would Mr. M. hence infer, that the two things were believed to be the same, or inseparably connected together? St. Austin, as quoted in the 'Homily of common prayer and the sacraments,' will furnish him with a better explanation of the fact. 'He saith, If

‘ sacraments had not a certain similitude of those things of which they be sacraments, they should be no sacraments at all. And of this similitude they do, for the most part, receive the names of the self-same things they signify.’ Combine with this, what was observed at the close of the preceding chapter, concerning the circumstances of the primitive times, and the comparatively few instances, in which the profession of faith was separated from a real conversion of the heart unto God; and the interchange of the terms for each other will be satisfactorily explained, without supposing that, among primitive Christians, the sign was confounded with the thing signified, or the one supposed to be inseparable from the other.

This may account, as far as it is necessary to account, for the language quoted from Justin Martyr.*

St. Austin is the only father whom Mr. M. cites, beside Justin, and the language ascribed to him has been noticed above.† To Mr. M.’s quotation, I beg leave to oppose what follows. ‘ Theodoret’s opinion, as often quoted by the old writers . . . is, *Gratia sacramentum aliquando præcedit, aliquando sequitur, aliquando nec se-*

* Tracts, p. 33.

† P. 49, note.

‘quitur.* St. Augustine (on the 77th Psalm)
 ‘thus resolves, *Omnes eundem potum spiritualem*
 ‘*biberunt, sed non in omnibus bene placitum est*
 ‘*Deo: et cum essent omnibus communia sacra-*
 ‘*menta, non communis erat omnibus gratia, quæ*
 ‘*sacramentorum virtus est. Sicut et nunc, jam*
 ‘*revelatâ fide, quæ tunc velabatur, omnibus, in*
 ‘*nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti bap-*
 ‘*tizatis, commune est lavacrum regenerationis;*
 ‘*sed ipsa gratia, cujus sunt sacramenta, quâ mem-*
 ‘*bra corporis Christi cum suo capite regenerata*
 ‘*sunt, non communis est omnibus.†* In his fifth
 ‘book against the Donatists, c. 24, he says,
 ‘*Christ is put on sometimes, usque ad sacramenti*
 ‘*perceptionem, as far as the receiving of the sa-*
 ‘*crament, sometimes also unto sanctification of*
 ‘*life; the first is common to good and bad, the*
 ‘*other is proper to the good and godly. St.*
 ‘*Chrysostom, in his fifth homily on St. Matthew,*
 ‘*observes, Many are baptized with water, who*
 ‘*are not baptized with the Holy Ghost; they*

* ‘Grace sometimes precedes the sacrament, sometimes follows it,
 ‘and sometimes does not even follow it.’

† ‘All did drink the same spiritual drink, but not with all was God
 ‘well pleased: and, whereas the sacraments were common to all,
 ‘the grace was not common to all, which constitutes the virtue of the
 ‘sacraments. So also now, when faith is revealed, which was then
 ‘veiled, the laver of regeneration is common to all, who are baptized
 ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;
 ‘but the grace itself, of which they are sacraments, and by which the
 ‘members of the body of Christ are regenerated with their head, is
 ‘not common to all.’

‘ seem to be the sons of God in respect of their
 ‘ baptism, but indeed they are not the sons of
 ‘ God, because they are not baptized with the
 ‘ Holy Ghost. St. Jerome has a similar passage,
 ‘ in his commentary on the third chapter of the
 ‘ Galatians.’ *

More direct contradiction to Mr. M.’s principles cannot easily be conceived. Instead of regeneration being always conveyed by baptism, ‘ Grace sometimes precedes, sometimes follows, and sometimes not even follows, the sacrament.’ Instead of all baptized persons being spiritually regenerate, ‘ The washing of regeneration is common to all, but not so that grace of the sacrament, by which the members of Christ are regenerated with their head.’ ‘ The putting on of Christ, as far as the receiving of the sacrament, is common to good and bad; the putting him on to the sanctification of life is peculiar to the good and godly.’ ‘ Many are baptized with water, who are not baptized with the Holy Ghost: and these are not indeed the sons of God.’

* Christian Observer, 1804, p. 565. Many valuable papers, connected with the subjects of this work, are dispersed through the volumes of the Christian Observer. See particularly, vol. for 1802, p. 764: 1803, p. 396, 561: 1804, p. 565: 1809, p. 794: 1811, p. 584: 1812, p. 365: 1813, p. 161, &c.

These passages evince, both that, in the judgment of these fathers, regeneration is not restricted, either as to the name or the thing, to what takes place at baptism; and that baptism may be ‘rightly administered’ and no spiritual regeneration conveyed.

Hooker may be deservedly placed at the head of the more modern divines of whose authority Mr. M. avails himself. In the same place, from which I have taken the above quotations from the fathers, I find the following observations respecting his sentiments on the subject before us: ‘No author is more express as to the efficacy of the sacraments, and the necessity of our using them, than he is; but, by comparing different parts of his works together, it will appear, that he did not extend their virtue in that unlimited and indiscriminate manner’ which some now wish to do. ‘Speaking as he generally does, in the name of real believers,’ he uses language which constitutes Mr. M.’s only quotation from him, as follows: ‘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 that baptism, which both declareth and maketh us

‘ Christians. In which respect we justly hold it
 ‘ to 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 re-
 ‘ ceived, but *to our sanctification here*, a step
 ‘ that hath not any before it.’ *

If ‘the reader will duly attend to the words marked in italics, and which are certainly very important to the sense of the passage, he may find the whole much less favourable to Mr. M.’s sentiments, than might at first be supposed. Hooker speaks principally of what takes place ‘in the ‘eye of the church,’ of ‘our entrance into God’s ‘house,’ or the church ; of ‘the first *apparent* ‘beginning of life ;’ of ‘the *ordinary* course of ‘divine dispensation ;’ and of ‘our sanctification ‘here :’ which last expression, when compared with his avowed sentiment, that ‘grace’ and ‘the ‘inward baptism’ may precede the outward, must evidently mean our separation and outward consecration to God, as before explained from Bishop Hopkins.

On the whole, the following passages will be found, I think, much more clearly against Mr. M., than this appears to be in his favour.

* Book v. c. 60, p. 248.

‘ They, ’ the sacraments, ‘ are not physical, but
 ‘ moral instruments of salvation, duties of service
 ‘ and worship : which unless we perform as the
 ‘ author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable:
 ‘ *for, all receive not the grace of God which re-*
 ‘ *ceive the sacraments of his grace.*’ * How does
 this accord with Mr. M’s notion of a sacrament
 necessarily or constantly conveying the inward
 grace of which it is a sign ?

‘ If outward baptism were a cause in itself pos-
 ‘ sessed of that power, either natural or superna-
 ‘ tural, without the present operation whereof no
 ‘ such effect could possibly grow ; it must then
 ‘ follow, that. . . no man could ever receive grace
 ‘ *before* baptism : which being apparently both
 ‘ known, and also confessed to be otherwise, ’ † &c.

Again: ‘ It is on all parts gladly confessed,
 ‘ that there may be in divers cases life by virtue
 ‘ of inward baptism, even where outward is not
 ‘ found.’ ‡

Is not this regeneration before baptism ? and
 without baptism ? Yet Mr. M. says, ‘ no other

* Book v. § 57, p. 239.

† Ibid. p. 246, 247.

‡ Ibid. p. 250.

‘ than baptismal regeneration is possible in this
‘ world.’

Bishop Beveridge is an author whom Mr. M. repeatedly quotes : and certainly the language which in one sermon he uses, respecting the connexion between regeneration and baptism, is very strong. Yet the following passages, from his seventy third sermon, (on 1 Pet. i. 3.) shew, that there was no small difference between his sentiments and those of Mr. M.

‘ *When a man believes in Christ* the second
‘ Adam, and so is made a member of his body, he
‘ is quickened and animated by his Spirit, which
‘ being the principle of a new life in him, he
‘ thereby becomes a new creature, another kind
‘ of creature from what he was before, and there-
‘ fore is properly said *to be BORN AGAIN, not of*
‘ *blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the*
‘ *will of man, but of God.* . . His whole nature is
‘ changed. . . He hath a new set of thoughts and
‘ affections, a new sight and sense of God, a new
‘ bias upon his mind, so that he is now as much
‘ inclined to virtue as he was before to vice ; and
‘ of a foolish, proud, sinful, and carnal creature,
‘ is become wise, and humble, and holy, and spi-
‘ ritual. . . And whereas other men are born only
‘ of the flesh, such a one is REGENERATE, or BORN

‘ AGAIN of the Spirit, according to that remarkable saying of our blessed Saviour, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* . . every thing being of the same nature with that, from which it proceeds. . . Hence all such are called the sons OF GOD, and are really so.’ *

All this, and much more to the same effect, occurs under the first general head of the sermon, namely, ‘ That the saints of God are begotten again by him.’ The venerable prelate quotes John iii. 5, yet he says not a word of baptism in the whole discussion ! Nay, were it possible for any one to persuade himself, that such a change, as he describes, is made in the nature of every man by his baptism, the bishop shews, that he, at least, has no such thing in his contemplation ; for he expressly refers it to the time, ‘ when a man BELIEVES in Christ,’ not to the time when he is baptized.

The learned *Joseph Mede* is quoted by Mr. M. for the sentiment, ‘ that in the baptism of Christ the mystery of all our baptisms was visibly acted ; and that God says to every one *truly baptized*, as he said to him, in a proportionable sense, *Thou art my son, in whom I am well*

* Beveridge’s Works, vol. i. p. 609, 610.

‘pleased.’* Now surely it is but reasonable, unless the context irresistibly determine otherwise, to understand here, by ‘truly baptized,’ what our church expresses by ‘receiving baptism rightly.’ For who would presume to affirm, that God says to a wicked man, hypocritically receiving baptism, “Thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased?”—And that Mede’s sentiments do indeed correspond with this interpretation, as well as that he does not confine regeneration to the period of baptism, will be evident from the following extract. ‘Regeneration, or new birth, consists of these two parts—*repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*: . . . that is, the whole mystery of regeneration, whereby a man becomes the child of God, and a member of the kingdom of heaven. Both joined together make a *new birth*, or a *new man*.’† How does this agree with the idea, that the new birth is inseparable from baptism, and ‘that no other than baptismal regeneration is possible in this world?’

In his second tract, Mr. M. twice refers to *Barrow*. The reader who will turn to the second volume of his works, Sermon 34, will find, that this great man ‘represents regeneration to be a spiritual change, effected by the influence of the

* Tracts, p. 36. † Mede’s Discourses, 1652. p. 30.

‘ Holy Spirit, on the mind, the will, and the affec-
 ‘ tions of an adult sinner,’ * and even describes,
 somewhat minutely, the sort of process by which
 it is produced. ‘ Both these operations together,’
 he says, ‘ (enlightening our minds, sanctifying
 ‘ our will and affections,) do constitute and ac-
 ‘ complish that work, which is styled the REGENE-
 ‘ RATION, *renovation, vivification, new-creation,*
 ‘ *resurrection* of man ; the faculties of our souls
 ‘ being so improved, that we become as it were
 ‘ other men thereby ; able and apt to do that, for
 ‘ which before we were altogether indisposed and
 ‘ unfit.’—Barrow, therefore, is a stranger to Mr.
 M.’s distinction between regeneration and renova-
 tion : nor does he appear to have any idea of con-
 fining regeneration to baptism.

The following passage is from *Archbishop Til-
 lotson’s* Sermon on Galatians vi. 15. ‘ After
 ‘ many strugglings and conflicts with their lusts,
 ‘ and the strong bias of evil habits, this resolution,
 ‘ assisted by the grace of God, does effectually
 ‘ prevail, and make a real change both in the
 ‘ temper of their minds, and the course of their
 ‘ lives ; *and when that is done, and not before,*
 ‘ *they are said to be REGENERATE.*’

If then, in preaching regeneration to baptized

† Christian Observer, 1812, p. 342.

adults, we be guilty of fanaticism ‘and heresy,’ we have the satisfaction of knowing, that the profound Barrow, and the ‘proverbially sober’ Tillotson, have erred before us, and set us the example !

I add only the following sentence from the work, to which I have acknowledged myself indebted for most of these extracts. ‘It is almost ‘unnecessary for us to remark, that it is *usual* ‘with our old divines to speak of bad Christians ‘as being *unregenerate* men : frequent instances ‘of this occur in the writings of Dr. Jackson, ‘Dr. Hammond, Bishop Hall, Bishop Sanderson, ‘and many other divines.’ *

IV. THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.—My proposition is, that neither has this society, in the works which it has circulated, been at all accustomed to restrict regeneration to any thing, which takes place at baptism.—To ascertain the fact, I have looked into no more than three of its tracts, each of which decisively proves my assertion.

- The first is the ‘Directions for a devout and ‘decent behaviour in the public worship of God,’

* Christian Observer, 1804. p. 566.

which, it has been already observed, point out the collect for Christmas-day as ‘a Prayer for Regeneration:’ directly contrary to Mr. M.’s principle, that we are not to be ‘instructed to pray after baptism for regeneration.’ This, at least, was the case, if I mistake not, with all editions of the tract up to the year 1812.*

The next is, ‘An account of the beginnings and advances of a spiritual life,’ which, though written by another hand, has always accompanied Scougal’s ‘Life of God in the soul of man.’ The two works were first introduced to the world by Bishop Burnet, who wrote a preface to them. My quotations are from ‘the fourteenth edition, carefully corrected,’ and published by the Society in 1801. In this tract, we find much concerning ‘*converted*’ men, ‘the beginnings of *conversion*,’ ‘*first awakenings*,’ ‘the inward *leadings* of God’s Spirit, *perceived* by us,’ and other matter, which might have been thought very enthusiastic, had it proceeded from a more questionable source than the Society for promoting Christian knowledge. But besides this one section is expressly entitled, ‘The beginnings of regeneration.’ Nor does this, or, as far as I have observed, any contiguous part of the book, make

* The history of the change may be seen, Chris. Ob. 1814, p. 293.
 ‘The objection rested on the words containing false doctrine, since we were regenerated in baptism only.’

even an allusion to baptism ! On the contrary, the author, having shewn ‘the state of most ‘young persons,’ that too many of them ‘will ‘not let’ themselves ‘think seriously, lest the ‘impressions of’ their ‘education return upon’ them ; and others have ‘nothing to think of, ‘having never had a right scheme of religion set ‘before’ them ; proceeds as follows : ‘But when ‘God hath a purpose of love towards any such, as ‘are either lost in *vice*, or ruined in an insensible ‘*neglect* of God and divine things, he usually ‘begins to deal with them upon great and sudden ‘emergencies, by a sickness, some great and out- ‘ward trouble, or the loss of a dear friend, which ‘have brought on melancholy ; and perhaps ‘sometimes upon the commission of some great ‘sin, that fills the conscience with horror : any ‘of these cases meeting with some serious good ‘sermon, or the converse of a sincerely pious and ‘affectionately devout person, or the reading of ‘some good book, will often occasion a great ‘excitation of mind, to consider the condition ‘and danger such a person is in ; and though I ‘deny not but some are insensibly, and, by de- ‘grees, slowly wrought to a change of heart and ‘life, (and indeed there are no rules to be given ‘to the Almighty,) yet commonly the change is ‘notable in the first beginning ; a horror for past ‘sins, and sad apprehensions of the judgments ‘of God usually break in first.’

On this ‘*horror* for past sins’ the next section is employed: and the author judiciously observes, that ‘none are to measure their first REGENERATION, either by the vehemence or by the continuance of their sorrow, but by the effects it produceth.’

And again, in a subsequent section, (p. 130,) he says, ‘God does very often meet young converts with *sensible joy* in his ways: . . . and thus generally there is a strong fervour about *the beginning of* REGENERATION.’

Now surely it is not for a society which has been, through a century past, thus teaching us to preach REGENERATION to baptized persons, and to professed Christians a CONVERSION in many cases SENSIBLE, now to turn round, and, through the medium of a book, which it has newly taken up, to charge us with ‘heresy,’ and I know not what ‘irreconcilable opposition to the unequivocal and numerous declarations’ of the church to which we belong; merely because we have taught in conformity with the instructions which it has itself given us! and, I must say, have not often taught in language less measured than is found in some parts of these extracts!

Were we disposed to retaliate, here is full scope for the application of the resolve,

Dixerit insanum qui me, totidem audiet, atque
Respicere ignoto discet pendentia tergo.*

The last tract, to which I appeal, is ‘ A Dis-
course concerning baptismal and spiritual Re-
generation : by Samuel Bradford, D. D. then
Rector of St. Mary-le-bow, London ; and af-
terwards Lord Bishop of Rochester.’ The
text is Titus iii. 4—7, a passage which has al-
ready engaged our attention. My copy is of
the seventh edition, printed for the Society in
1810 ; with the following advertisement pre-
fixed. ‘ This seventh edition is published at a
time, when it is hoped, that so judicious and
scriptural a discourse may be of service to settle
the minds of good Christians, in some present
disputes concerning *baptismal* and *spiritual*
regeneration.’

Let us then hear the doctrine of this ‘ judi-
cious and scriptural discourse, for the settling
of *our* minds respecting the present dispute.’
The fourth general head is announced in these
words: ‘ To shew that *the washing of regene-
ration* may be separated from *the renewing of
the Holy Ghost* ; and that if it be so, the end
for which it is used, namely, our *salvation*, can-
not be obtained ; the latter being absolutely

* He that calls me *fanatic* shall hear as good in return, and be
taught to consider what hangs unobserved upon his own back !

‘ necessary in order to our being *saved*, in the ‘ complete sense of that word.’

Now I am well aware, that Mr. M. will be ready with the demand, ‘ What is there in this contrary to my doctrine? I contend, indeed, that spiritual regeneration takes place exclusively at baptism; but I distinctly admit, that the subsequent “renewing of the Holy Ghost” is necessary to the attainment of salvation.’ And thus, it may be thought, that the whole of what I have to adduce from this discourse is obviated. But such is by no means the case. For, though Mr. M. makes a broad distinction between spiritual regeneration and “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” Bishop Bradford is to be added to the number of those divines, who do no such thing. He interprets his text precisely as I have proposed to do, and not as Mr. M. does. He considers the two clauses, “the washing of regeneration,” and “the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” as ‘ exactly correspondent ’ to our Lord’s expression “born of water and of the Spirit;” * and accordingly refers the former to ‘ the outward and visible sign of baptism,’ and the latter to ‘ the inward and spiritual grace.’ With him, there-

* P. 10, 11, and see above, p. 45. So likewise Bp. Beveridge on this text. ‘ By the washing with water as the sign of our regeneration, and by *the renewing of the Holy Ghost* as *the thing signified.*’ Works, vol. i. p. 304.

fore, “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” and ‘spiritual regeneration’ are precisely the same thing.*

This being established, let us return to the fourth head of the Bishop’s discourse. The express object of it is to shew, ‘that the washing of regeneration may be separated from the renewing of the Holy Ghost:’ that is, as we have proved, that baptism may be separated from spiritual regeneration. Let it be observed, that his Lordship does not merely drop a casual expression or two looking this way; but that he sets himself to prove it, as a distinct proposition, and founds upon it a whole head of his sermon.

* Not further to encumber my text, I throw the following proofs of this into a note.

Page 11, he says, that in John iii. 3, 5, ‘born, and born again, plainly answer to *regeneration* in his text, as *water* and the *Spirit* answer to the *washing of regeneration*, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost.* “Born of the Spirit” is, therefore, being “renewed by the Holy Ghost.”

Again, in the same page, ‘*Regeneration* . . . is frequently applied to *baptism* ;’ it also ‘particularly denotes *the renewing of the mind by the divine Spirit.*’

P. 22, 23. He defines the renewing of the Holy Ghost ‘an alteration of the temper of our spirit, effected by the power of the divine Spirit.’ It is the same, he says, with “giving men a new heart and a new spirit: with “God’s putting his Spirit within them, and causing them to walk in his statutes:” with “being spiritually minded,” and “transformed by the renewing of the mind:” with “putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him.” And then, having quoted these and some other scriptures, he adds: ‘Finally, this is what our Lord himself means, in his discourse with Nicodemus, by *being born of the Spirit, as well as of water.*’

He elsewhere thus expresses his meaning: ‘ that external regeneration, *if not accompanied with the internal*, will not avail us to the end for which it is designed.’* And, in confirming his proposition, he reasons thus: Though the apostles speak of ‘ the visible members of the church of Christ under such appellations and expressions as may seem at first hearing to imply, that they are all of them truly righteous and holy persons,’ yet ‘ it is too evident, from divers passages in their writings, and experience has confirmed to us the same thing, that both in their times and ever since, there have been many who have enjoyed *the washing of regeneration*, whose tempers and manners have demonstrated that they were not also renewed by the Holy Ghost,’ that is, in his sense of the words, were not “born again of the Spirit.” ‘ Simon Magus,’ he adds, ‘ was a notorious instance to this purpose, who, though the text tells us that *he believed and was baptized*; yet was soon after told by St. Peter, that *he had neither part nor lot in that matter*, namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost,’ † &c.

Exactly after the manner of our church articles, but in a style very different from that of Mr. M., he insists upon ‘ the right *use*,’ and not merely ‘ the right administration ’ of the sacra-

* P. 11.

† P. 37, 38.

ments, in order to their proper effect. Baptism
 ‘ becomes to us a means whereby we are saved,’
 as for other reasons, so ‘ 4thly, as it is *in the*
 ‘ *right use of it* a means of obtaining those bless-
 ‘ ings which it represents.’* And again, ‘ All
 ‘ the institutions of Christianity are represented
 ‘ as so many means, in the use of which the di-
 ‘ vine Spirit will be certainly communicated, *if*
 ‘ *we use them aright* : which is the true reason,’
 he adds, ‘ why baptism and the gift of the Spirit
 ‘ are so frequently joined together, *as if they*
 ‘ *were inseparable*, as here in my text,’ in John
 iii, and in Acts ii. 38, 39, †—‘ as if they were in-
 ‘ separable,’ evidently implying that they are not
 really so.

‘ Nor can it be otherwise conceived,’ he says,
 ‘ that God should accept of men only upon ac-
 ‘ count of their having complied with some ex-
 ‘ ternal and ritual institutions, whilst they had
 ‘ *no regard to the design of them*. The institu-
 ‘ tions of Christ do not work like charms: but
 ‘ being appointed to be used by reasonable crea-
 ‘ tures, there is *a disposition of mind* in the person
 ‘ using them, necessary to the rendering them
 ‘ effectual.’ ‡

Under the fifth and last head of his discourse,
 he proceeds, therefore, ‘ to inquire, How those

* P. 13, 14.

† P. 19.

‡ P. 39.

‘ persons, who have had *the washing of regeneration*, but are not yet *renewed by the Holy Ghost*, may attain to this renovation: ’ that is, according to what we have demonstrated to be, in his view of things, synonymous language, How they who have received ‘ external regeneration,’ but are strangers to ‘ the internal,’ may become ‘ spiritually regenerate.’ And this he does, because he says, ‘ it is to be feared, nay, it is evident, that ‘ many ’ are in this case. *

We have here, then, a spectacle presented to us, which demands the very serious consideration of the members of the society at large, and of the heads of our church in particular. Up to the year 1810, or 1812, and perhaps later, the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge circulates throughout the kingdom, under the high sanction of its patronage, works which teach us, that baptism is by no means inseparably connected with spiritual regeneration; which admonish us, therefore, notwithstanding our baptism, to look to ourselves, lest, after all, we be not “ born again of the Spirit,” and ‘ to pray for regeneration;’ which describe to us ‘ the beginnings of regeneration and conversion,’ and point out to us how we are to proceed in order to obtain spiritual regeneration, if we be yet strangers to it: it cir-

* P. 41, 43.

culates tracts containing these sentiments, as ‘judicious and scriptural,’ and suited, in the year 1810, to ‘settle the minds of good Christians in ‘some present disputes concerning *baptismal* and ‘*spiritual* regeneration:’ and then, in 1815, it adopts and circulates, under the same authority, tracts which teach, that ‘by baptism exclusively’ is spiritual regeneration conveyed; that ‘no other ‘than baptismal regeneration is possible in this ‘world;’ that to suppose baptism separated from spiritual regeneration is ‘to strip it of its sacra- ‘mental character,’ to deny its inward and spiri- tual grace,—is ‘heresy’—is, ‘in some sense, ‘doing despite to the Spirit of grace!’ Surely there is much here to *unsettle* ‘the minds of good ‘Christians!’ Surely there is some great mis- management at the helm! Can one forbear say- ing, Here is a noble vessel, indeed, ample in her dimensions, firmly built, well found with all kinds of stores, capable of great service: to whom is it owing, that she has been left thus to float to and fro on the face of the deep, without a certain destination?

CHAPTER XI.

That, by Mr. Mant's own Concession, every adult Person, 'receiving Baptism rightly,' is regenerate before he is baptized.

MR. M. admits, that being "born of God" is the same thing as being "regenerated."* On the ground of this unavoidable admission, I undertake to prove the proposition at the head of this chapter: and that, independently of any peculiar notions which I may be supposed to entertain of regeneration. And my proof is very short and simple. It is as follows.

We are justly taught by our church, that, in order to the right reception of baptism, by a person come to years of discretion, repentance and faith are necessary. †

Now St. John assures us, (1 Ep. v. 1.) that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is "born," γεννηται, *has been born,* "of God."

* P. 35, 44.

† See Catechism, and Art. xxv. xxvi. xxvii. and compare Mark xvi. 16. Acts ii. 38. viii. 37, &c. &c.

Hence it inevitably follows, that every grown person who, 'by faith and rightly, receives' baptism, has been previously "born of God," or regenerated. He must have been so, before that faith could exist in his mind, without which baptism could not be rightly received.'

Nor is this taking an unfair advantage of a casual expression. Indeed I can form no idea of casual, or, in other words, of incautious expressions in inspired writings.* But independently of that consideration, I take it to be the general and established doctrine of scripture, that true faith is, in all cases, the effect of the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind.

And accordingly it will have been observed, that many of the eminent writers, quoted in the foregoing chapter, expressly admit the priority of regeneration to baptism: and, in particular, the great champion of our church avows, both that a man may 'receive grace *before* baptism', and that 'it is on all parts gladly confessed, that there

* It is a valuable observation of Dr. Doddridge's on our Saviour's argument from David, by the Holy Ghost, calling the Messiah *his Lord*, that he 'always takes it for granted, in his arguments with the Jews, that the writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit as to express themselves 'with the strictest propriety on all occasions.' On Matt. ix. 45.

‘ may be in divers cases life by virtue of inward
‘ baptism, even where outward is not found.’ *

But if spiritual regeneration in many cases precede baptism, how is it pretended, that ‘ by baptism exclusively’ is regeneration conveyed, and that ‘ no other than baptismal regeneration ‘ is possible in this world ?’

I claim no merit of novelty for this argument. It has been often urged before ; and I shall here repeat it from a work to which frequent reference has been already made.

‘ *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ*
‘ *is born of God ; and every one that loveth him*
‘ *that begat, loveth him also that is begotten*
‘ *of him. Now if every true believer in Christ*
‘ *has been born of God, and if none, as adults,*
‘ *are properly admissible to baptism, except those*
‘ *who profess faith in Christ ; and none, as adults,*
‘ *receive baptism aright, except true believers :*
‘ *then it inevitably follows, that all’ such persons*
‘ *in the primitive church, and all in every age,*
‘ *who rightly have received baptism, have been*
‘ *previously born of God. He that believeth, and*
‘ *is baptized, shall be saved. What doth hinder*
‘ *me to be baptized? If thou believest with all*

* Eccles. Pol. B. v. § 60. Vol. ii. p. 247, 250, Oxf. Ed.

‘ thy heart, thou mayest: and he answered and
 ‘ said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of*
 ‘ *God:—and he baptized him.* Is it not clear,
 ‘ from the apostle’s assertion, *Every one that be-*
 ‘ *lieveth that Jesus is the Christ, has been born*
 ‘ *of God,* that regeneration preceded baptism, in
 ‘ respect of this Ethiopian? And is it not equally
 ‘ clear, that it does so, in the case of all, who re-
 ‘ ceive baptism, on a sincere profession of faith in
 ‘ the Lord Jesus? How then can baptism be re-
 ‘ generation; or be uniformly connected with
 ‘ it.’*

* Scott’s Remarks, &c. vol. i. p. 199.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Importance of the Question at issue, and the practical Tendency of Mr. Mant's Doctrine.—The Author's Conclusions concerning the Effect of Baptism.

CONSIDERING how far Mr. M. sometimes carries his concessions, concerning 'the privileges of the new birth being forfeited' by those who do not 'grow up in faith and obedience;'^{*} and concerning the necessity of a change of heart and character in 'every one who is satisfied with mere nominal Christianity, or with any thing short of true Christian holiness of heart and life;'[†] some may be ready to conclude, that we are at issue chiefly about the meaning and use of a word. I cannot, however, admit that this is the case; nor will Mr. M. himself admit it.[‡]

We have seen that he considers all, to whom baptism is 'rightly administered,' as having 'a new principle put into them,' even 'the Spirit of grace,' which 'makes them heirs of salva-

^{*} P. 11, 20, 46, 47.

[†] P. 60, 65, 22.

[‡] See p. 48.

‘tion,’ and ‘entitles them to eternal life.’ And so far, at least, he is a believer in ‘indefectible ‘grace,’ as to hold, that what is thus given can never be withdrawn, and need to be communicated anew ;* though ‘the privileges’ attached to it may be ‘forfeited.’

But this is not all. Simply on the ground of their baptism, he applies, to professed Christians, at large, scriptural terms, expressive, one would imagine, of the highest and most spiritual privileges. He speaks of them, without limitation, as entitled to ‘*be filled with all joy and peace in believing that they partake*’ of the ‘new birth.’ † He contends, that such language as that of St. Peter, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ;” and that, again, of St. John, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is :” was applied to the ‘immense societies of Christians, scattered throughout the east,’ solely on this ground, that ‘their regeneration was the effect of an ordinance, (baptism,)

* P. 49.

† P. 24.

‘ of which all Christians in general partake.’ *
 Consequently these passages must be applicable to all baptized persons now. He puts into the mouth of a supposed character, of whose moral habits not a word is said by way of qualification, the following language, as what he might without impropriety employ, in describing the views he had been taught to entertain of his own situation: ‘ When an infant, I was baptized according to the order of the national church; and the minister pronounced by her directions, that I was regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and received by our most merciful Father as his own child by adoption. As soon as I was able to learn, I was taught what a great blessing was then conferred upon me; and that by having been admitted to baptism, I had been made the child of God, and had undergone a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. When I had been sufficiently instructed to be confirmed by the bishop, I heard from him a repetition of the comfortable assurance, that God had vouchsafed to regenerate me by water and the Holy Ghost, and to give me forgiveness of all my sins.† And I have since periodically

* P. 35.

† It will be observed, that all this is here rehearsed without one word of the vows and professions which precede it, and are mixed up with it, as it stands in the services of the church. Thus torn from its connexion and dependencies, it no longer represents the

‘joined with my brother Christians, in making our grateful acknowledgments to Almighty God, for being regenerate and made his children by adoption and grace.’ * He goes on to suppose such a person, concerning *whose character, dispositions, and conduct, he has not given a single intimation*, to have been authorized by the church to consider himself as ‘a Christian,’ ‘a child of God,’ and ‘in the way of salvation.’ In another place he also affirms, that to suppose ‘in every Christian congregation there are two

doctrine of the church, however it may convey Mr. M.’s sentiments. —Can any thing be more direct ANTINOMIANISM than to assure a person ‘now come to the years of discretion,’ merely on the ground of his baptism, received in infancy, that God ‘*hath given him forgiveness of all his sins?*’ Not merely *did* forgive him his ‘original sin’ at baptism, but *hath* forgiven him all his sins up to the present time! This might be a very ‘comfortable assurance,’ but is it so certain, that it would be very safe, either to the giver or the receiver?

* P. 49. Mr. M. supposes his imagined character, having been subsequently ‘seduced from the words of truth and soberness’ by the preachers of ‘the modern new birth,’ to proceed: ‘What can I think of such a church? Can I regard her as a pillar and ground of the truth? Can I reverence her, who so grossly deluded me by a visionary regeneration, and threw an impenetrable veil over that which alone is effectual? who taught me to think that I was in the way of salvation, when I had not yet passed the threshold? who made me believe I was a child of God, when I was still a child of the devil? who treated me as a Christian, when I was nothing but a baptized heathen?’ The answer to be returned to a person, declaiming in this way, is very obvious. It is no other than this: ‘Sir, you have entirely misunderstood the church, by adopting Mr. Mant’s interpretation of her formularies, instead of studying her articles, her homilies, and the whole of her liturgy taken together.’

‘ sorts of people, some that know Christ, and
 ‘ some that do not know him; some that are
 ‘ converted, and some that are strangers to
 ‘ conversion;’ — is ‘ a conceit which revelation
 ‘ warrants not, and which reason and experience
 ‘ disclaim.’*

Our succeeding chapter (which will be employed on Mr. M.’s second tract, on conversion,) will bring further evidence of this kind before us. But already, I apprehend, enough has been adduced to evince, that it is no mere dispute of words in which we are engaged. With Mr. M. I exclaim, ‘ Far indeed, very far from it!’ † I take my stand, in this entire argument, as pleading the cause of holiness and practical religion, against an error which threatens the subversion of both. I contend, if not against “ a faith “ without works,” yet against *a regeneration without effects*. Very seldom, I fear, is the regeneration, of which we now hear so much, seen to exert any salutary influence on the heart and life: but whether it do or not, men, it seems, are to be taught to place great practical reliance upon it. Yet what can be more gross antinomianism, than to rely upon a religious distinction, which is unaccompanied with the purification of the heart and conduct?

* P. 60, 61, 68.

† P. 48.

But shall I be told that Mr. M. pleads for no such thing? With his *intentions* I have nothing to do: but for what he has in fact done, I appeal to all which I have just cited from him. He authorizes a man, merely on the ground of his baptism, and without a single supposition made concerning his present conduct, to consider himself as ‘having been made a child of God, and having undergone a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness:’ as ‘having heard *the comfortable assurance*, that God had vouchsafed to regenerate him by water and the Holy Ghost, and *to give him forgiveness of all his sins:*’ and as warranted to ‘*be filled with all joy and peace in believing* that he partakes’ of that change, ‘of which our Saviour speaks in such lofty language’ in the third chapter of St. John. And I cannot consider Mr. M.’s doctrine otherwise than as having a strong and direct tendency, to encourage men to take all this ‘comfortable assurance’ to themselves, not hypothetically,—certain suppositions being made concerning their character and conduct—as our church allows them to do, but unconditionally and unreservedly.

I appeal, further, to other passages of his work. Baptismal regeneration, he says, ‘makes us heirs of salvation,’ and ‘entitles us to eternal

‘ life.’ ‘ We argue for baptism being the vehicle
 ‘ of regeneration, BECAUSE IT IS THE VEHICLE OF
 ‘ SALVATION.’* Not only so: without one ex-
 ception or limitation, he says of baptism, ‘ or-
 ‘ dained as it was by Christ himself, WITH A PRO-
 ‘ MISE OF SALVATION ANNEXED TO ITS LEGITI-
 ‘ MATE ADMINISTRATION.’† Christ’s promises are all
 sure, and indubitably true: not one of them shall
 fail of being fulfilled in its season. If, therefore,
 he has ‘ annexed a promise of salvation to the
 ‘ legitimate administration of baptism,’ all who
 have been ‘ legitimately baptized ’ must infallibly
 be saved.—I know that Mr. M. does not own
 such a conclusion:‡ but will not his words teach
 men to draw it? and does it not unavoidably
 follow from them?—One would surely have
 thought it impossible, for a learned protestant
 divine, in the nineteenth century, delivering
 theological lectures in one of the first universi-
 ties in Christendom, to use language, so unmea-
 sured, so unwarrantable! and still more so, for
 a society, which may almost boast itself The So-
 ciety of the Church of England, to adopt the
 lecture, and circulate it through the kingdom,
 ‘ to convey correct notions ’ to ‘ the community
 ‘ at large!’ §

* P. 35.

† P. 51.

‡ P. 21.

§ It is to be recollected, that seldom can those persons, who occupy high stations in such societies, take a very active part in the proceedings. Generally the business is transacted by a few individuals, who happen to be on the spot.

To treat the subject with unmixed seriousness. Should such doctrines as these come to be prevalent; should they at all generally be heard from our pulpits; should they be embraced by 'the community at large;' it would be in vain for us to think of counteracting their antinomian tendency, by a few cautions against forfeiting 'the privileges' of that regenerate state, which, it would appear, is itself so irrevocable, that no further regeneration is 'necessary, or expedient, or possible.'* A speculative man may try to persuade himself that Mr. M.'s restrictions of this kind render his doctrine harmless; but the great practical question is, How will it impress the mass of 'the community,' among whom it is to be disseminated? For a time his cautions and limitations may seem to bear some tolerable proportion to his broad positions of a contrary nature: because the former fall in with all that we have been used to, and with the suggestions of that conscience, which God has implanted in the breast of man; while we hesitate at the latter as novel, and almost incredible; and conclude that they are to be received in a qualified sense, even where it is not so expressed. There may have been health enough infused into the constitution from other sources, to enable it to resist the poison for a time. But, in the lapse of a few years, if such instructions become common,

* Mant, p. 49.

the case will be altered. The cautions and limitations will gradually fall into oblivion, while the broad assertions, and obvious but dangerous inferences from them, may fix themselves in the memory, become principles in the heart, and govern the life.

And it is not only from Mr. M.'s writings that such danger is to be apprehended. In another work, to give all possible effect to which no pains have been spared, we meet with such statements as follow : ‘ Those who are baptized are immediately translated from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ ; the original guilt which they brought into the world is mystically washed away ; and they receive forgiveness of the actual sins which they may themselves have committed ; they become reconciled to God, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal happiness ; they acquire a new name, a new hope, a new faith, a new rule of life. This great and wonderful change in the condition of man is as it were a new nature, a new state of existence ; and the holy rite, by which these invaluable blessings are communicated, is by St. Paul figuratively called *regeneration*, or new-birth. Many similar phrases occur in the New Testament, such as *born of water and of the Spirit ; begotten again unto a lively hope ; dead in sins,*

‘ and quickened together with Christ ; buried
 ‘ with Christ in baptism ; born again, not of
 ‘ corruptible seed, but of incorruptible : these ex-
 ‘ pressions all relate to a single act once perform-
 ‘ ed upon every individual—an act essential to
 ‘ the character of a Christian, and of such impor-
 ‘ tance, that it is declared to be instrumental to
 ‘ our ‘ salvation.’ *

What is the tendency of such doctrine as this ?
 What, but to reduce the scriptures to a mere
caput mortuum, a mere dead, inefficient mass ?
 to strip them of whatever in their contents was
 most suited to arrest the attention, to awaken the
 conscience, to interest the feelings, to stimulate
 the hopes and fears of mankind. Numberless pas-
 sages, it seems, which the Christian world has
 been used to consider as most solemnly descrip-
 tive of the character and condition of those, who
 are in the way to be saved, as contradistinguished
 to those who are yet “ dead in their sins,” are
 henceforth to be understood of nothing but what
 is common to us all ! They ‘ all relate to a
 ‘ single act once performed upon every indivi-
 ‘ dual,’ namely, at his baptism !

All these high things, be it observed, are said
 to be effected not only upon infants, when they

* Refutation of Calvinism, p. 83, 84.

are baptized, but upon any person receiving baptism; as is manifest (if proof were necessary) from the clause, ‘ they receive forgiveness of the ‘ *actual sins* which they may themselves have ‘ committed.’ Yet not a word is said of the necessity of ‘ repentance and faith’ accompanying the reception of the sacrament !

But how is it possible, that the promulgators of such doctrines can fail to be struck with a consideration of the following kind ? In the country, in which we live, though the great majority are baptized in their infancy, yet there is a competent number of persons who are not. We have many quakers, and many anti-pædobaptists among us, whose children uniformly grow up without baptism. Now as baptism makes so ‘ great ‘ and wonderful a change’ in those who receive it, that they ‘ are immediately translated from the ‘ curse of Adam to the grace of Christ ; . . . become reconciled to God, partakers of the Holy ‘ Ghost, and heirs of eternal happiness ; acquire ‘ a new name, a new hope, a new faith, a new ‘ rule of life,’ nay ‘ a new nature, a new state ‘ of existence :’ we may naturally expect to trace a striking practical difference, as they grow up, between the mass of those young persons who have been baptized in their infancy, and those who have not. We may expect to see the former

class, if not uniformly, yet very commonly, make it manifest, by the virtues of “the new man,” that they are in ‘the grace of Christ, partakers of the Holy Ghost,’ possessed of ‘a new nature, heirs of eternal happiness.’ The latter, (awful spectacle!) it may be anticipated, will uniformly, or almost uniformly, shew themselves, by the prevalence of wicked tempers and habits, to be under ‘the curse, unreconciled to God,’ destitute of ‘the Holy Spirit,’ and of ‘the hope, the faith, the new state of existence,’ which characterize the others.

But now, in point of fact, is any such striking difference of character to be generally or frequently traced between our children, who are baptized, and those children of dissenters, who grow up without baptism? Does any marked distinction between them appear, which we are warranted to ascribe to the enjoyment of baptism among one party, or the want of it in the other? Or is it consistent with the avowed principles of scripture to believe, that, among a number of persons, some are “children of wrath,” and the others ‘children of grace,’ and ‘heirs of eternal happiness,’ while no perceptible difference can be pointed out in their spirit and character? Is this agreeable to the maxim, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision

“availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,”—but “faith which worketh by love?” Is this exhibiting God as “no respecter of persons?” Or rather is not this falling precisely into the errors which proved fatal to the Jews? *

* The observation may possibly have reached Mr. M.'s ears, that his doctrine respecting one sacrament a good deal resembles that of the papists respecting the other, or indeed respecting both. And the grounds of this observation may now appear. They are twofold. First, as transubstantiation requires us to believe contrary to the evidence of our *senses*, so this doctrine, concerning ‘the great and wonderful change’ produced in the very ‘nature’ of those who are baptized, requires us to believe contrary to *experience*: and in both cases, the demand seems to be made upon us equally without authority of scripture. Take two pieces of the wafer, the one consecrated, the other not. Examine them: you find no difference: yet you are to believe that one is bread, the other flesh and blood! In like manner, take two young persons, one baptized, the other not: you catechize, and you observe them: you find, it is very likely, no difference in their knowledge, their spirit, their conduct: yet you are to believe the one ‘transferred from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ—reconciled to God—of a new nature;’ for he is baptized: the other, the reverse of all this; for he is unbaptized!—The second ground is, that, if this doctrine be thoroughly received, we, who bear the priestly office, certainly need not despair of regaining that supreme influence, which was possessed by our predecessors, before their power to open or shut the kingdom of heaven, at pleasure, by giving or withholding the sacraments, fell into discredit.

It is, further, natural to remark, that, if it be in the power of baptism to do so much for us, as the last and some other quotations represent, it is surely to be regretted that the practice, once prevalent, has not been retained, of deferring baptism till the very article of death, that the receiver of such inestimable benefits may not be allowed the opportunity of forfeiting them again!

To extinguish all true and spiritual * religion amongst us; to reduce Christianity to a system of external distinctions; and to substitute for its humble, holy, vital spirit, that compound of self-righteous pride and antinomian licentiousness, which characterized the Jewish church, in its last and worst days; is, to my apprehension, the direct tendency of such doctrines as we are contemplating.

The Jewish church,—let me impress the sentiment upon the members of an establishment, whose welfare I have deeply at heart,—the Jewish church stands a beacon to us, to warn us against the fatal tendency of a false confidence, like that which these doctrines tend to generate in us. The Jews were ever ready to exclaim, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord” are we! ‘We are the church, the true church of God, his children, and the exclusive heirs of his kingdom!’ They confided in being “the descendents of Abraham,” admitted into covenant with God by circumcision, as we are by baptism. In this confidence they esteemed themselves secure: and fell into the neglect of that “righteousness and true holiness,” to which all their privileges and distinctions were intended to lead them.

* 1 John iv. 23, 24.

Against such false confidence their prophets of old had frequently warned them. But when the forerunner of the Messiah, and when, shortly after, the Messiah himself and his apostles appeared, they, with united voice, exerted all their energies against it. "Repent ye," they exclaimed, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that God is able even of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." "There cometh one after me," cried the holy Baptist, "who is mightier than I, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." "I say unto you," proclaimed our blessed Lord himself, "that many shall come from the east, and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM"—those who thought themselves such—"shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

* See Matt. iii. and viii.

The discourse to Nicodemus is in the same strain. In opposition to the Jewish confidence in a lineal descent from Abraham, it declares to them, that Jews as well as gentiles must be “born again,” or they could never see the kingdom of God.

And, to name no more, St. Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, lays down the principle, that “*not all are Israel which are of Israel:*” and proclaims, in language, to which we have on a former occasion bespoken attention, “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*” And, as he had lived to witness the fatal consequences of his countrymen’s neglecting all the warnings which had been given them, and persisting in their errors, to the rejection of him who would have redeemed them, he most passionately deplores the event, declaring himself ready to have endured any evils which might have been a means of preventing it.

Far be it from me to insinuate that Mr. M.

* Rom. ii, ix, &c.

would willingly produce a false confidence, and an unrighteousness of life, like those of the Jews: I believe the very contrary: and I forget not the cautions which he puts in against such a construction. But I am not concerned with his intentions, but, in the first place, with the foundation which there may be for his doctrine in scripture, and, that having been shewn to be none at all, with its tendency, and the practical effects which are likely to flow from its prevalence amongst us: and these I do solemnly apprehend to be of the worst possible kind.



BEFORE we finally quit the consideration of baptism and its effects, it may, perhaps, be expected, that I should state, what is the result of my inquiries, and what the conclusions I come to upon the subject. And this I do for my own satisfaction, as well as that of the reader.

1. With respect to persons come to years of discretion, I fully concur with Bishop Burnet, that the external act of baptism, apart from right dispositions in the receiver, does no more than admit to external privileges. God *may*, indeed, make the administration of baptism the

means of "quickenning the soul," that came to it "dead in trespasses and sins:" but this is a more 'sudden conversion,' than we are in ordinary cases warranted to expect.

2. In those who 'receive baptism rightly,' I believe, with our twenty-seventh article, the inward blessing communicated to them to be 'the confirmation of faith, and increase of grace' already received. Regeneration, strictly taken, in the sense of the infusion of 'a new principle of life and of action,'* or, as Hooker's words are, 'the first disposition towards future newness of life,' cannot be received by these persons in baptism, for they already have it before they are baptized. They are partakers of 'repentance and faith,' and consequently possess the grace of God before they come. All they need is, to have these spiritual graces 'confirmed and increased:' which they may confidently expect in this sacrament, 'by virtue of prayer unto God.'

And with this latitude it is both natural and necessary to understand 'the death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness,' mentioned in the catechism as 'the inward and spiritual grace' of which baptism is 'a means,' as well as 'a

* Mant.

‘ sign and a pledge.’ There is no need to confine the terms to the very first communication of grace to the soul : and to suppose them so confined in this place, would be to contradict both the article, which assumes ‘ grace ’ to have been previously given, and the preceding sentences of the catechism, which require ‘ repentance and ‘ faith ’ in persons to be baptized.

I add, further, that, as the article most properly states, persons receiving baptism rightly have ‘ the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of ‘ their adoption to be the sons of God by the ‘ Holy Ghost, thereby visibly *signed* and *sealed* :’ all which must greatly conduce to their comfort and the confirmation of their faith.—As internal sanctification is the real seal and attestation of our acceptance with God ; so baptism, which represents sanctification, is the outward and visible attestation of it, which is given by the church, and ratified in heaven when given to a proper subject.*

* So, under the old dispensation, circumcision *represented* the mortification of sin, or sanctification ; but it was. “ the *seal* of the “ righteousness of faith,” that is, of justification. Rom. iv, 11.

This view of the subject will explain the clause in the Nicene creed—‘ one baptism for the remission of sins :’ the prayer in the baptismal service, for ‘ remission of sins by spiritual regeneration :’ and the expression—‘ after that we are *baptized* or *justified*’—which occurs in the Homily of Salvation. Baptism ‘ visibly signs and seals’

3. With respect to infants: baptism admits them into the visible church, and so far is certainly a relative sanctification or regeneration of them. But, as to their regeneration in a higher sense of the word, this, like that of adults, can be declared of them only hypothetically. In the one case, sincerity in the professions made, and, in the other, a disposition to fulfil their baptismal vows as they become capable of doing it, must be assumed, as the basis of the declaration. The event of their conduct must determine, both in one case and the other, whether the persons baptized have received the sanctification of the

to us forgiveness, justification, adoption, and other blessings consequent upon these.

This further illustrates some passages of scripture, which have before engaged our notice. Acts ii. 38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins.*" Acts xxii. 16: "Arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins,* calling on the name of the Lord."—By baptism they would receive from the church the appointed attestation, that their sins were forgiven them for Christ's name sake: an attestation which was ratified in heaven, provided only they were sincere in their professions made in baptism.

'Baptism, wheresoever it was received *with all qualifications necessary in the person accepting,* and conferred with all things necessary to be performed by the person administering, was most infallibly efficacious, as to this particular, that is, to the remission of all sins committed before the administration of this sacrament.' Pearson on the Creed, Art. x.

I find, that, in what I have written on the Articles, I have omitted to notice the expression; that they are '*effectual signs of grace,*' Art. xxv. It needs no other remark, than that the article proceeds to tell us *to whom* they are effectual,

‘ Spirit,’—‘ a new principle of life and of action ’
—or not.

That even infants are capable of receiving from God such a disposition, as I have supposed, seems to me as clear, as that they may and do, by nature, possess a contrary disposition. And that almighty God may be pleased, in many instances, to communicate such grace, especially to the children of pious parents, presented to baptism with devout and fervent prayers, I can readily hope and believe.

If, after all, any persons complain, that this is reducing the effect of baptism to narrow limits, as to the most of those to whom the ordinance is administered; I reply, that their thinking so may be ascribed to their having entertained unreasonably high ideas of the efficacy of this sacrament—much higher, probably, than they entertain of the efficacy of the other sacrament. I refer them, also, to the beginning of the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle answers the same objection brought against his doctrine concerning circumcision. And I caution every one against reputed it a small privilege, to have been ‘ called ‘ to a state of salvation,’ by being received into the visible church of Christ; placed under

Christian instruction ; numbered among those “ to whom the oracles of God are committed,” * and addressed, on whom all Christian duties are binding, and to whom all Christian privileges are specially offered. ‘ Whosoever,’ says Bishop Hopkins, ‘ are partakers of baptism are reckoned ‘ visible members of the church, and have an interest in all the prayers of the saints, for their brethren on earth. And this ought, by every sober Christian, to be esteemed a great benefit, that his children, by their being baptized, are wrapped up in the prayers of all the saints throughout the world, and so daily presented to God, though to them unknown.’

I add the following remarks from works already before the public, without venturing to pronounce any very confident opinion on the point to which they relate.

‘ A large proportion ’ of the clergy called evangelical ‘ do suppose, that some special gra-

* “ What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Rom. iii. 1, 2.

So again it was represented as a great privilege of the Jews, that they were “ the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with their fathers, saying unto Abraham,” &c., though it was not supposed that they were, without their own personal repentance and faith, interested in the spiritual blessings of that covenant. Acts iii. 25.

‘ cious effect attends the due administration of
 ‘ infant-baptism,’ * beyond the mere admission
 of the children to the privileges of church-mem-
 bership.

‘ This is certainly our own sentiment: We
 ‘ find no difficulty whatever, in considering the
 ‘ baptismal rite as an assurance and pledge,
 ‘ on the part of God, that the person hereby
 ‘ admitted into personal covenant with him
 ‘ through the second Adam, shall not perish
 ‘ through the fault of the first.’ †

* Scott's Remarks, &c. vol. ii. p. 212.

† Christian Observer, 1812, p. 370.

CHAPTER XIII.

On Mr. Mant's second Tract, on Conversion.

OF Mr. M.'s second tract a much more cursory notice may be sufficient. He here pretty clearly marks the distinction between the several parties on whom he animadverts: and a large proportion of his tract is employed on extravagancies, with which I have no concern but to deplore them.

Justice, however, would seem to require, that, while the faults and errors of men, who, like Whitfield and Wesley, effected great good, though they have produced also much evil, were exposed, some notice should be taken of their public acknowledgments of those errors and faults. As this has not been done by Mr. M., I shall transcribe a few sentences upon the subject, from a work, to which no candid person, who has a competent acquaintance with its contents, will refuse to listen on this occasion.

‘ It is enough briefly to say, that, although the language of Whitfield and Wesley, upon divine

‘ communications, occasionally merits the severity of Mr. M.’s censure; yet perhaps some little tenderness might have been shewn to men who had finally and nobly avowed their fault— had confessed that the impressions they had mistaken for divine influence, had often “ proceeded from the state and disposition of the body ”—“ were genuine instances of enthusiasm,” were “ vain and blasphemous conceits.” How few men, idolized like Whitefield, would have degraded themselves to plead guilty in such language as the following: “ I came soon into the world, I have carried high sail whilst running through a torrent of popularity and contempt, and by this means have sometimes been in danger of oversetting. I know that I am a man of like passions with others, and consequently may have mistaken nature for grace, imagination for revelation, and the fire of my own temper for the pure and sacred flame of holy zeal, which cometh from God’s altar. Alas, alas! in how many things have I acted wrong! I have been too rash and hasty in giving characters both of places and persons. I have too much made impressions, without the written word, my rule of action. Being fond of scripture language, I have often used a style too apostolical, and at the same time I have been too bitter in my zeal. Wild fire has been

‘ mixed with it, and I find I have frequently
 ‘ written and spoken in my own spirit, when I
 ‘ thought I was writing and speaking entirely by
 ‘ the assistance of the Spirit of God.” Many
 ‘ have been weak enough to transgress with
 ‘ Whitefield, but few great enough to offer such
 ‘ an atonement for their faults.’ *

And again, with respect to instantaneous conversion, ‘ it would be ungenerous to forget that
 ‘ Wesley and Whitefield both made a living
 ‘ avowal of their errors also upon this subject—
 ‘ that they made it to thousands, upon whom
 ‘ they might almost have imposed what senti-
 ‘ ments they pleased—that they made it in the
 ‘ face of implacable enemies—that they made it
 ‘ amid scenes of unparalleled success, when they
 ‘ sometimes preached to twenty thousand auditors,
 ‘ and when one half of these were either dis-
 ‘ solved in tears, or otherwise violently agitated.
 ‘ Such an avowal might, in any court of equity,
 ‘ be pleaded, and would be received in mitigation
 ‘ of punishment.’ †

Had Mr. M.’s attack, then, been confined to
 ‘ the founders of methodism,’ I had left it to
 others to repel it. Or had ‘ sudden and in-
 ‘ stantaneous conversion ’ been the only thing to

* Christian Observer, 1813, p. 159, 160.

† Ibid. p. 163.

which he objected, I had not undertaken its defence, any further than to assert, that, as in ancient times the day of pentecost, and, in modern times, the case of Colonel Gardiner, demonstrate, conversion may be sudden and yet effectual ; * and, likewise, that if conversion be a “ passing from death unto life,” a “ quickening of those who were dead in trespasses and sins,” there must be a moment when life commences, though, perhaps, that moment is as much out of the reach of human discovery with respect to spiritual, as with respect to natural life.

* Mr. M. seems to concede as much himself, p. 73, 74. He says, ‘ Not that I would be understood to assert, that Providence may not perhaps, even in the present day, be sometimes pleased to interpose in a manner more awful and impressive, than is agreeable to the ordinary course of his proceedings, and to arrest the sinner in his career of infidelity or wickedness, and to turn him from darkness unto light. But it is the error of enthusiasm to invert the order of God’s proceedings, and to mistake that for the rule, which in reality constitutes the exception.’ To all this I fully assent.

So also Dr. Paley, in his latter days, very beautifully : ‘ I do not, in the smallest degree, mean to undervalue, or speak lightly of such changes, whenever or in whomsoever they take place ; nor to deny, that they may be sudden, yet lasting ; (nay, I am rather inclined to think, that it is in this manner that they frequently do take place ;) nor to dispute what is upon good testimony alleged concerning conversion brought about by affecting incidents of life ; by striking passages of scripture ; by impressive discourses from the pulpit ; by what we meet with in books, or even by single touching sentences, or expressions in such discourses or books. I am not disposed to question these relations unnecessarily, but rather to bless God for such instances, when I hear of them, and to regard them as merciful ordinations of his providence.’

Nor am I disposed to except against what Mr. M. has delivered concerning the *nature* of conversion. In his 65th page, he assents to Mr. Overton's statement, that it consists in 'the actual reformation of the heart and character; that the author of this happy change is the Holy Spirit, but that it is generally effected, and is always to be sought after, in the diligent use of the appointed means of grace: that it is no instantaneous operation, *which finishes the whole business of religion at once*, but that it is the serious commencement of a work, which it requires the vigorous exertions of the whole life to complete.' All this is excellent: nor is Mr. M.'s own description of it materially different. He says, p. 57, 'Conversion, according to our notions; may not improperly be said to consist of a rational conviction of sin, and sense of its wretchedness and danger; of a sincere penitence and sorrow of heart, at having incurred the displeasure of a holy God; of steadfast purposes of amendment, with the blessing of the divine grace; of a regular and diligent employment of all the appointed means of grace; and of a real change of heart and life, of affections and conduct, and a resolute perseverance in well doing.' This differs not, I think, from the former passage, except it be, that it contains not so explicit a recognition of the Holy Spirit.

as the author of the ‘rational conviction of sin,’ ‘the sincere penitence,’ and ‘the steadfast purpose of amendment.’ I take it for granted, however, that Mr. M. means it to be understood, that all these ‘holy desires, good counsels; and ‘just works’ proceed from the operation of God’s Holy Spirit on the mind; and also that a deep and heart-affecting ‘conviction of sin,’ such as we see exemplified at the day of pentecost, or in the penitent publican, is no more than is perfectly ‘rational.’ These things being understood, I am well content that Mr. M.’s description should be received as a just account of conversion.

And, further, with respect to the proper subjects of conversion, he is sometimes pretty liberal in his concessions. In the primitive days he allows that ‘universally, both among Jews and ‘among gentiles, those who were living under ‘the dominion of sin, or were not duly convinced of the necessity of a Redeemer,’ needed to be ‘converted from their errors, whether in ‘principle or in practice.’* And ‘now also,’ he says, ‘every unbeliever and every sinner, although made by baptism a member of Christ ‘and a child of God, must be, in a certain sense, ‘converted, if he would ultimately succeed to

* P. 59, 60.

‘ his inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.’* And so again, after reciting Mr. Overton’s words, as above quoted, he declares, ‘ considering conversion in this light, I can cheerfully concur with our brethren in maintaining the necessity of such a change to every one, who is *satisfied with mere nominal Christianity, or with any thing short of true Christian holiness both of heart and life.*’ † And yet again he admits, that ‘ previous habits of irreligion and worldly-mindedness render it necessary.’ † At the same time he is of opinion, that we should do better to ‘ decline the phraseology of enthusiasm,’ by calling the change ‘ *true repentance,*’ rather than *conversion.* ‡ Why he should so speak of the term *conversion,* I feel rather at a loss to determine, after having read, only a few pages before, his description of ‘ conversion, according to the notions’ entertained of it by himself and his friends: and when, in the interval between the two passages, he declares, from the late Bishop Randolph, that ‘ in scripture we find conversion conjoined with repentance as *one and the same.*’ §

But now, after all this, what must we think of such sentences as the following? ‘ We are not told in scripture, as we are now imperiously

* P. 60.

† P. 65.

‡ P. 65, 66.

§ P. 64.

‘ called upon, to divide our hearers, being be-
 ‘ lievers in Christianity in common, into the
 ‘ classes of converted and unconverted.’ ‘ That
 ‘ among men, baptized as Christians, taught from
 ‘ their infancy to believe the doctrines and prac-
 ‘ tise the duties of Christianity, a special conver-
 ‘ sion also at some period of their life is necessary
 ‘ to stamp them true Christians, is an unheard of
 ‘ thing in the gospel, and is plainly a novel insti-
 ‘ tution of man.’ *

I fear this indicates, that Mr. M.’s objection, like that of too many persons who raise an outcry against ‘ sudden conversions,’ is not merely to the suddenness or extravagance of some professed conversions, but to conversion itself; at least, when represented as a change necessary to turn even those who ‘ profess and call themselves Christians,’ from what they are by nature, to what they must be before they can be fit for heaven.

Here also we see the practical influence of Mr. M.’s views of baptismal regeneration. The change which it has produced in men seems to be thought, of itself, a reason against preaching conversion to them, even though they should have ‘ forfeited their privileges’ by a sinful life.

* P. 63, 64.

But in the last passage much depends upon the meaning of certain terms, which are sufficiently lax and indefinite. What is meant, by ‘taught from their infancy to believe the doctrines and practise the duties of Christianity?’ Does it mean no more than instructed by man that they ought to do so? or, inwardly “taught” and inclined to do it, by the grace of God, accompanying outward instruction? If the latter, then the persons have been and are converted, and turned from a state of nature to a state of grace. If the former, let all experience as well as scripture declare, whether outward instruction supersedes the necessity of a conversion by divine grace, turning the heart from sin to God.

Again, what is meant by a ‘special conversion?’ Does it mean a conversion of which the person can distinctly specify the time, the means, the manner, the beginning, and middle, and end? If so, I know none of ‘our self-denominated evangelical brethren,’ who insist upon its necessity. We are happy to believe that there are ‘some humble Christians, who, having ‘been once regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, have so followed his heavenly motions,’* that, though we should not think of saying of them, somewhat quaintly, and not a little pre-

* Mant, p. 61.

sumptuously, ‘ their angels may not blush to behold the face of their heavenly Father ;’ * yet we often do describe them as persons, whose conversion ‘ began so early, and has proceeded so gradually, that it exceeds the power of man precisely to trace its rise and progress.’ But if ‘ a ‘ special conversion’ mean only a real, a great, a radical, a divine change, then we certainly do maintain, that it has passed, or must pass, upon every man in order to his being a true Christian ?

But whatever ambiguities, leaving an opening for more favourable interpretation, there may be in these sentences, which are borrowed by Mr. M., but borrowed with high commendation, I am sorry to say there appears no such thing in the following passage, for which Mr. M. himself is answerable. ‘ To suppose,’ with Whitefield, “ that in every Christian congregation there are ‘ two sorts of people, some that know Christ, and ‘ some that do not know him, some that are converted, and some that are strangers to conversion ;” —this is a conceit which revelation warrants not, and which reason and experience disclaim.’ †

It is really difficult to read this conclusion without exclamations of astonishment. To say

* Mant, p. 61.

† P. 60, 61.

nothing of ‘revelation’—nothing of our Lord’s solemn declaration to the Jews, “Ye say that he “is your God, but ye have not *known* him:”—nothing of St. Paul’s admonition to the Corinthian church, “Some have not the *knowledge* of “God, I speak this to your shame:”—nothing of St. John’s rule for trying our ‘knowledge of ‘Christ,’ “Hereby do we know that we know “him, if we keep his commandments:”—not to dwell on these, or a thousand other passages of holy writ, I notice only the appeal to ‘reason ‘and experience,’ which, it is affirmed, ‘disclaim’ as a vain ‘conceit’ the supposition, that, ‘in ‘every Christian congregation, there are some ‘that are converted, and some that are strangers ‘to conversion.’

Of course, Mr. M. does not mean so far to take advantage of the strictness of the term ‘*every* ‘Christian congregation,’ as to point out assemblies of literally “two or three” pious individuals “met together in the name of Christ,” as the exceptions. If that were his meaning, he would be contending without an antagonist. He must mean, that, at least, the better sort of Christian congregations ought not to be considered as containing unconverted persons. Restricted beyond this, his censure will have no application.

Take, then, his own descriptions of the characters who need to be converted. ‘ Every unbeliever and every sinner ’—‘ all those who are living under the dominion of sin ’—‘ those whose previous habits of irreligion and worldly-mindedness render it necessary ’—‘ every one who is satisfied with mere nominal Christianity, or with any thing short of true Christian holiness of heart and life : *—every such person, ‘ although made by baptism a member of Christ and a child of God, must be, in a certain sense, converted, if he would ultimately succeed to his inheritance of the kingdom of heaven ; ’ † and he (Mr. M.) ‘ can cheerfully concur in maintaining the necessity of such a change,’ as Mr. Overton describes under the name of conversion, to all these characters. ‡ Yet ‘ reason and experience,’ he says, ‘ disclaim,’ as an unwarranted ‘ conceit,’ the supposition, that ‘ our hearers’ are to be divided ‘ into the two classes of converted and unconverted ! ’ § Were it not well-known, that Mr. M. is ‘ Chaplain to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Rector of’ a parish in the metropolis, might one not have supposed him a recluse, who had lived all his days immured in a college, and was utterly unacquainted with the state of the Christian world, nay, with all that was passing in the university itself, beyond the pre-

* P. 59, 60, 65.

† P. 60.

‡ P. 65.

§ P. 61, 65.

cinets of his own room:—would it not be natural to suppose this, when we hear him allow, that so many and so comprehensive descriptions of persons need to be converted, and yet reprobate the supposition that almost all Christian congregations contain ‘ persons that are strangers to ‘ conversion,’ as well as those that are converted? *

* How much more rational, and wise, and right, as well as more scriptural, the following observations of Dr. Paley:—‘ Of the persons ‘ in our congregations, to whom we not only may, but must preach ‘ the doctrine of conversion plainly and directly, are those, who, with ‘ the name indeed of Christians, have hitherto passed their lives with- ‘ out any internal religion whatever; who have not at all thought ‘ upon the subject; who, a few easy and customary forms excepted, ‘ (and which with them are mere forms,) cannot truly say of them- ‘ selves, that they have done one action, which they would not have ‘ done equally, if there had been no such thing as a God in the world; ‘ or that they have ever sacrificed any passion, any present enjoy- ‘ ment, or even any inclination of their minds, to the restraints and ‘ prohibitions of religion; with whom indeed, religious motives have ‘ not weighed a feather in the scale against interest or pleasure.’ To ‘ these it is utterly necessary that we preach conversion. At this day ‘ we have not Jews and Gentiles to preach to; but these persons are ‘ really in as unconverted a state, as any Jew or Gentile could be in ‘ our Saviour’s time. They are no more Christians, as to any actual ‘ benefit of Christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew, or ‘ the most profligate Gentile was in the age of the gospel. As to any ‘ difference in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These ‘ must be converted, before they can be saved. The course of their ‘ thoughts must be changed, the very principles upon which they act ‘ must be changed. Considerations, which never, or which hardly ever ‘ entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them. ‘ Views and motives, which did not influence them at all, either as ‘ checks from doing evil, or as inducements to do good, must become ‘ the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they ‘ are guided: that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle:

But seriously, what a mockery is it of the feelings of a Christian minister, sincerely labouring to turn sinners to righteousness, to tell him, that he must by no means consider his congregation as consisting partly of those who are converted, and partly of those who are unconverted ! What congregation is there, in which no drunkard, no swearer, no fornicator, no sabbath-breaker, no unjust dealer, no covetous, ‘ irreligious, worldly- minded ’ man is to be found ? in which there are none who have been ‘ satisfied with mere nominal Christianity, or with something ’ far ‘ short of true Christian holiness of heart and life ? ’ And must not all these persons “ turn ” and be “ converted ” unto God, if they would not “ die ” eternally ? Must they not “ repent and be converted,” if they would have “ their sins blotted out ? ” To what purpose, then, is it to interrupt

‘ the visible conduct will follow the change ; but there must be a revolution within. A change so entire, so deep, so important as this, I do allow to be a conversion, and no one, who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it ; and he must necessarily both be sensible of it at the time, and remember it all his life afterwards. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck. Whether it was sudden, or whether it was gradual, if it was effected, (and the fruits will prove that,) it was a true conversion : and every such person may justly both believe and say it himself, that he was converted at a particular assignable time. It may not be necessary to speak of his conversion, but he will always think of it, with unbounded thankfulness to the giver of all grace, the author of all mercies, spiritual as well as temporal.’

those, who are seriously calling upon such characters “to repent and turn (or be converted) to God, and do works meet for repentance,”—with the charge, that they are doing ‘a thing unheard of in the gospel?’ What means it to hold such useful labourers up to the wicked, whose conversion and salvation they are seeking, as persons actuated by ‘conceits, which revelation war-rants not, and which reason and experience dis-claim?’ What object does all this promote, but one, which ought to be the most opposite to all the desires and feelings of a Christian minister’s heart—“to strengthen the hands of the wicked in his wicked way”—and to furnish arms to him, wherewith to resist all the attempts made to bring him to a better mind? It is impossible not to write with a degree of zeal and earnestness against sentiments and passages, so big with practical mischief.*

* My feelings prompt me to decline, and my judgment does not urge me to meddle with, all those parts of Mr. M.’s tracts which are mere declamation, and appeal to the passions and prejudices of his readers, against the opinions he controverts. Were not this the case, I must seriously call upon him to consider the tendency of such passages as that, in which Milton’s description of the lazar-house is applied to the methodistic conversions. I am no more friendly than Mr. M. to the extravagancies animadverted upon: but the imaginations of wicked and libertine men, furnished with such images, will not confine the application of them to the distortions which have deformed religion, but will not fail to associate them with things of a very different and even of the most sacred nature. The wicked have ever been ready to charge their faithful reprovers with “desiring the

But there is a passage of Mr. Overton's, which comes in for the same condemnation, of exhibiting 'a conceit which revelation warrants not, and which reason and experience disclaim.' It is this: 'that, in order to a state of salvation, a change of mind, of views, and dispositions must be effected in every person, wherever born, however educated, and of whatever external conduct.'*

On this sentiment Mr. M. proceeds to reason thus: 'Some humble Christians undoubtedly there are, who, having been once regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, have so followed his heavenly motions, and improved his sanctifying graces; have so pursued the calm and blameless tenor of their way; have preserved that childlike simplicity of character, and that childlike innocence of conduct, that their angels may not blush to behold the face of their heavenly Father.—Such was the conversation, even under the Jewish law, of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "who were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." . . . And are we to

"woful day," which they did but foretel; and they will be ready to avail themselves of the countenance, which Mr. M. may even *seem* to afford them, for representing such persons as 'dwelling with horrible delight on the terrors of God's wrath.' P. 77—79.

* Mant, p. 61, and again p. 65, quoted from Overton, p. 160.

‘ be told that Christians, such as these, must experience an entire change of heart, a thorough conversion of their ways ?’—I answer, Certainly not. Nor would Mr. Overton, or, I believe, any other writer whom Mr. M. has quoted, say that they must. Is it possible for Mr. M. to have understood Mr. O. to assert, that even the truly converted man must undergo another conversion, or be excluded from heaven ? This is scarcely credible : yet, upon any other supposition, what avails all this reasoning ? Mr. M. has himself immediately furnished the answer to it ; though with some confusion of language, as to the distinct provinces of the atoning blood of Christ, and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. ‘ By the blood of Christ,’ he says, these persons ‘ *have been* purified from the original corruption of their nature ; by that blood they ‘ *have been* cleansed of their actual sins ; by the ‘ Holy Spirit of God, they ‘ *have been* regenerated ; ‘ his preventing grace ‘ *hath* conducted them ; ‘ his assisting grace ‘ *hath* co-operated with, and ‘ given effect to their zealous endeavours to ‘ persevere in the course of piety and virtue ; his ‘ sanctifying influence renews and invigorates ‘ them day by day. Let God have all the glory ‘ of their continuance in their Christian career ; ‘ but let it not be judged necessary that they ‘ should undergo “ a change of mind, of views,

“and dispositions,” when that change must be
 ‘from holiness to sin.’*

Is there any thing in this contrary to Mr. O.’s doctrine? Let the reader examine the whole passage in that author, and judge whether it furnished a shadow of reason for the perversion which it has suffered.

‘It is our opinion,’ Mr. O. says, ‘that, in order
 ‘to salvation, a change of mind, of views, and
 ‘disposition must be effected in every person,
 ‘wherever born, however educated, or of what-
 ‘ever external conduct. Is it said, this change is
 ‘effected in us at our baptism? We answer:
 ‘have you then indeed kept your baptismal vow?
 ‘Have you in the uniform and habitual tenor of
 ‘your life been “renouncing sin, the world, and
 ‘the devil; following the example of our Saviour
 ‘Christ; and daily becoming more like unto
 ‘him?” Have you indeed experienced the inward
 ‘and spiritual grace, of which the washing of
 ‘water is the external emblem, “a death unto
 ‘sin, and a new birth unto righteousness?” And,
 ‘are your views, tempers, and pursuits indeed
 ‘such, as in scripture every where characterize
 ‘the regenerate children of God? IF so, *it is*
 ‘*well*: but, IF NOT, remember, we add, the apos-

'tle's reasoning respecting circumcision, that
 "if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circum-
 cision is made uncircumcision." . . . Consider
 also, we proceed, upon what high authority
 it is declared, . . . that "a good tree CANNOT
 bring forth evil fruit," but that "evil fruit"
 is a certain proof of "a corrupt tree;" and
 that an evil conduct can only proceed from
 an "evil heart."* Can any man, without
 direct injustice, read over this passage, and
 then represent Mr. O. as, in it, declaring
 conversion to be still necessary for those, who
 have been and are acting agreeably to their bap-
 tismal vows? I do not charge Mr. M. with in-
 tentional injustice; far from it: but I see not how
 he can be cleared of the want of that care and
 attention, without which great practical injus-
 tice often cannot be avoided. No one can read
 Mr. O.'s paragraph with half the pains which
 should precede criticism upon it, and un-
 derstand him to say prospectively, with regard
 to every person, converted or unconverted, that
 he must *hereafter* undergo such a change? His
 observation is introduced by an express reference
 to the subject of his preceding chapter—human
 depravity—and evidently relates to the natural
 state of fallen man, and to a change which

* Overton's True Churchmen, p. 160, 161. It may be remarked that Mr. O. does not, in this whole passage, use the obnoxious term, *conversion*. His chapter is on 'the doctrine of repentance.'

either *has* taken place, or *must* take place in him, in order to his salvation. In those who are really such Christians as Mr. M. describes, the change is already made, and needs not to be made again.

I do not think it necessary to enter into any minute examination of the scriptural use of the term *conversion*. Mr. M. has not attempted to shew, that this is such as should restrict its application to the bringing over of infidels to the faith of Christ, or even to the turning of profligates to righteousness of life. The Jews are continually called upon “to turn” or “be converted;” and that not only when it became their duty to embrace Christianity, but by their own prophets, during the continuance of their own dispensation. The term is applied in the New Testament to the reclaiming of a professed Christian, who had fallen into sin or error. “If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he, which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”* Our blessed Lord applies it to the recovery of Peter from his fall: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren:”†—and even to the change which still needed to

* James v. 19, 20.

† Luke xxii. 32.

be made, or at least carried forward, in the minds of his disciples: “ Verily I say unto you, Except ye be *converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* —This is extending the use of the term much further than those persons commonly do, who fall under the censure of Mr. M.

But why need we adduce particular instances, when Mr. M. himself, with high approbation, cites the authority of a learned prelate, declaring that ‘ in scripture we find ’ conversion and repentance ‘ conjoined, as one and the same?’† If it be an unquestionable matter, that we are to preach repentance; and if in scripture conversion be ‘ conjoined with repentance, as one and ‘ the same;’ I see not on what ground we are to be condemned for preaching conversion or repentance, indiscriminately: or what pretence there is for ranking the term *conversion* with ‘ the ‘ phraseology of enthusiasm.’‡ Further questions may remain, respecting the nature of conversion, (on which, indeed, we are not at variance with Mr. M.,§) but, if repentance and conversion be the same thing, this must demonstrate, that to

* Matt. xviii. 5—8. Mr. M., quoting these words, says, ‘ such was ‘ our Saviour’s warning to the *unbelieving Jews.*’ (P. 58.) The fact is, they were addressed to our Lord’s disciples, asking of him, “ Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven !”

† P. 64.

‡ P. 66.

§ Above, p. 240, 241.

condemn the preaching of conversion, wherever we allow it necessary to preach repentance, is 'frivolous and vexatious.'

I do not, however, agree in the accuracy of this representation, that in scripture conversion and repentance mean exactly the same thing. As applied, indeed, to the first bringing of a sinner to repentance, it may be pretty nearly true: but not as applied to that daily repentance, in the exercise of which the Christian lives. We all need repentance at all times: our continual imperfection and sinfulness demand it. But we do not all, in the same way, need conversion. In scripture, as well as in modern language, this term *generally* includes the idea of a *commencement* of true religion, which in many has happily taken place, and does not need to be repeated. And, I apprehend, it is the feeling of this difference, which makes many persons more willing to hear of repentance than of conversion. They are willing to acknowledge themselves sinners, and imperfect, and therefore needing repentance: but they are not willing to feel, that they are so 'far gone from original righteousness,' so perverted and estranged from God, that they must have "a new heart created, and a right spirit put within them," and that otherwise they can never serve God acceptably on earth,

or inherit his heavenly kingdom hereafter. A duty, which is common to them with sincere and devout Christians they are willing to hear of, at least in a general manner: but of what is necessary to make them true and devout Christians they cannot bear to be told, because it suggests unpleasant truth concerning their present state.

Let repentance be preached, such as the term *μετανοια* (a change of mind) implies, and such as the necessities of one, who has hitherto been 'satisfied with mere nominal Christianity,' require; and the doctrine of repentance, I fear, will become no less unpalatable than that of conversion. But it is because something much short of this may be understood by the word, something which resembles not "the washing of the hands, and the head," and the whole man, but that of him, who, having already been in the bath, "needs not, save to wash his feet," and is then "clean every whit:"* it is, I apprehend, because they conceive repentance to mean only something of this slighter and more general kind, that it is less offensive to the fastidiousness of modern ears.—There is great justness in the following observations, which have been made upon this subject. 'Not a few either exclude

* John xiii. 6—10.

' the words conversion and regeneration from
 ' their vocabulary, or are extremely sparing of
 ' such expressions. They prefer the use of the
 ' term repentance: but the repentance of which
 ' they speak is interpreted by the body of their
 ' hearers to be something very slight and tran-
 ' sient. It is construed to mean regret on ac-
 ' count of some few specific acts which have
 ' been wrong, or a sorrow which may be sup-
 ' posed to have sufficiently manifested itself by
 ' consenting to the confession in the church ser-
 ' vice while it was read. It is not habitual
 ' contrition on account of corruption, which
 ' the penitent now perceives to have pervaded
 ' the heart and life.—The amendment of conduct
 ' also, which many persons of this class labour
 ' to enforce, seems to consist chiefly in the re-
 ' nunciation of gross sins, and in a due observ-
 ' ance of the public ordinances of the church.
 ' They represent man as in a safe and good state,
 ' unless and until he by some course of immo-
 ' rality forfeits his title to the Christian hope;
 ' and though they treat of sins as acts which
 ' provoke God and bring guilt on the perpe-
 ' trator, they seldom speak of them as indicative
 ' of an unpardoned and generally unsanctified
 ' state.' *

* Christian Observer, 1808, p. 170.

Two or three more points are all which I shall notice, and my remarks upon them will be very brief.

Mr. M. endeavours to establish a marked distinction among the conversions recorded in scripture, between those which were effected suddenly, and those which were more gradually accomplished. The former, he says, were ‘ the consequence of miraculous evidence ;’ the latter, ‘ of a deliberate attention to the ordinary methods of conviction, and a willing and rational acquiescence in the result.’ * Of the one, he adduces as instances the three thousand added to the church at the day of pentecost ; the five thousand who subsequently ‘ believed the word preached by Peter and John ;’ the people of Lydda and Saron, Acts ix ; the two persons whom he calls ‘ the proconsul of Asia,’ and ‘ the jailor at Thyateira ;’ † and, finally, St. Paul,

* P. 68, 71, 72.

† P. 68. The inaccuracies into which Mr. M. falls in his appeals to scripture are not a little extraordinary, especially in a learned commentator. We have just seen him adducing our Lord’s admonition to his disciples, (Matt. xviii. 3,) as ‘ his warning to the *unbelieving Jews.*’ He here, and again, p. 84, mis-names the “ deputy,” or proconsul, of the island of Cyprus, ‘ the proconsul of *Asia.*’ In three different passages he calls the man who is known to every one, as the Philippian jailor, ‘ the jailor at Thyateira,’ or alludes to what occurred in connexion with his history, as happening ‘ at Thyateira,’

of whom he expressly says, ‘ It was the light
 ‘ from heaven above the brightness of the sun,
 ‘ and the voice of the heavenly vision, which con-
 ‘ verted’ him.—Among the others, he instances
 the Bereans, (Acts xvii.) who, he says, were
 ‘ not wrought upon by the Spirit of God, ope-
 ‘ rating independently of, and in a manner dis-
 ‘ tinguished from evidence, and argument, and
 ‘ moral suasion; but (they believed) subsequently
 ‘ to, and in consequence of, their daily investiga-
 ‘ tion of the scriptures, and ingenuous comparison
 ‘ between them and the doctrine of the apostle.’

It is readily allowed, that the evidence of mira-
 cles, which was afforded to some of these charac-
 ters, as well as the study of the scriptures, for which
 the others are so justly praised, was a *means* by
 which their conversion was brought about. But
 does Mr. M. suppose, that miraculous evidence
 rendered any influence of the Spirit of God
 upon the mind, “ to take away the heart of
 “ stone, and to give the heart of flesh,” or “ to
 “ work in men to will and to do, of his good
 “ pleasure,” superfluous? If so, he is, I con-

a city of Asia, instead of at Philippi, in Macedonia. P. 68, 81, 86.
 The source of the mistake is, I suppose, there happening to have
 been at that time at Philippi “ a certain woman named Lydia, a
 “ seller of purple of the city of Thyateira.”— All this occurs after
 Mr. M.’s Lecture has passed the press not less than six or seven
 times!

ceive, at variance with all sound and orthodox divines, as he certainly is with the doctrines of the church to which he belongs. And further, if miraculous evidence were sufficient, without any such inward operation of the Spirit, how came it to pass, that, while many were so happily affected by it, many more were only moved to enmity and opposition, proportioned to the overbearing nature of the proof, by which a hated conviction was forced upon them? *

Does he, again, conceive either miraculous evidence, or such an operation of the Spirit upon the mind as I have described, and as the scriptures certainly much insist upon, to be incompatible with ‘argument, moral suasion,’ and ‘a deliberate attention to the ordinary methods of conviction?’ If so, I should be sorry to take his views of the subject. I understand miracles to have furnished argument, and to have excited attention to argument; and the gracious influence of the divine Spirit on the mind to be designed to enlighten the understanding, and to incline the will to that ‘deliberate attention,’ and to that ‘ready acquiescence in the result’ of ‘deliberate attention, to the ordinary methods of conviction,’ of which Mr. M. speaks.

* See John xi. 47—57. xii. 10, 11.

But this connects with another point which demands our notice.—Mr. M. is of opinion, that ‘there is some disposition and temper of mind more apt than others to receive the effectual impressions of the gospel.’ ‘Such,’ he says, from an author whom he styles ‘invaluable,’ ‘is the honest and good heart in the parable: such are the honest and meek, and the poor in spirit: such as do the truth and the will of God, so far as their information serves them; such are the weary and heavy-laden, and the like; they are resembled to sheep and to babes; and are said to be of God, to have learned of the Father, and to know him. These are said to be *ordained*, that is *disposed*,* and in a fit posture for eternal life; and of this ingenuous and noble temper were the people of Berea.’ † That such a difference of character exists, there is no doubt: the only question is, Whence does it originate? Is it from nature, or from ‘the pre-venting grace of God?’ How our church answers the question, may easily be judged from her tenth article; from her thirteenth article; from the passage quoted from her homilies at the beginning of chapter x; and from her

* Both this author (Womack) and Mr. M. would fain have the words, (Acts xiii. 48.) “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed”—to mean, as many ‘as were *fit* or *well-disposed* for the kingdom of heaven.’ They do not, however, venture to assert, that *κατασκευασται* ever expresses inward disposition of mind. † P. 73.

prayers, which teach us to ascribe ‘ all holy
 ‘ desires, all good counsels, and all just works,’
 to God. In a sense somewhat different than
 Mr. M.’s author appears to mean, such persons
 have been “ taught, and have learned of the
 “ Father:” hence it is, that they are ‘ disposed’
 to “ come unto Christ.”

The last passage on which I offer any re-
 mark is the following. It professes to be di-
 rected against the Methodists, but its principle
 strikes directly at the doctrines of our common
 Christianity. It is as follows, p. 75. ‘ It is
 ‘ true, we hear them telling their deluded fol-
 ‘ lowers, that they ought to be converted; ex-
 ‘ postulating with them for not choosing to be
 ‘ converted, and for putting off their conversion,
 ‘ for not turning to God directly; intreating
 ‘ them to repent and be converted: yet where-
 ‘ fore? when in almost the same breath they
 ‘ tell them, that the author of this conversion is
 ‘ the Holy Ghost; that it is not their own free
 ‘ will; it is not moral suasion; that nothing
 ‘ short of the influence of the Spirit of the
 ‘ living God can effect this change in their
 ‘ hearts.’

Now what is the principle here assumed? That
 nothing, which cannot be effected without ‘ the

‘influence of the Spirit of the living God,’ is to be made the subject of exhortation! That it is absurd and self-contradictory to exhort us to that, of which the Holy Ghost must be ‘the author’ in us. In this principle, Mr. M. is again in entire unison with persons whose doctrines, I am sure, he abhors—the antinomians, who hold that repentance, that faith, that prayer, is *no duty* to men in general, because none of these things can be performed aright but by the grace of God! Mr. M. holds, that it is absurd to exhort men to that, which they cannot perform but by ‘the influence of the Spirit:’ and the shocking perverters of Christianity, just named, agree with him!—But is not repentance the gift of God? Is not faith the gift of God? Are not love, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and meekness, and temperance, “the fruits of the Spirit?” And yet is it not our duty to repent, to believe, and to exercise all these Christian graces? And are we not to be exhorted to perform this duty, though ‘nothing short of the influence of the Spirit of the living God’ can enable us to do it? Do not ‘all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works proceed from God?’ And yet is it not our duty, and are we not to be exhorted, to conceive holy desires, to form good counsels, and to execute just works?—In short, has Mr. M.

never heard of it, as a first principle in all sound theology, indeed as a fact which presents itself on the very face of the scriptures, that there is *no one thing which almighty God, in one place, engages to work in us, which he does not, in another, exhort and command us to do*, as much as if all depended upon ourselves? Is it promised in Deut. xxx, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God?" it is commanded in Deut. x, "Circumcise your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Is it the gracious engagement of God, (Ezek. xxxvi.) "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh?" It is his injunction and exhortation, by the same prophet, (c. xviii.) "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Is it "the Lord" who must "direct our hearts into the love of God?" and are we "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation?" (2 Thess. iii. 1 Pet. i.) We are charged also, (Jude 21.) "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Are not repentance and faith the gifts of God? Yet it is our duty, which we are commanded to perform, "to repent and believe the gospel."

If these things present a difficulty, and a *spe-*

culative difficulty, it is allowed, they do present, he who has not felt his own system encumbered with it, either has not embraced the system of scripture, or has very little considered what he has professed to embrace. But, though a difficulty is admitted to exist in speculation in this point, none can be felt in *practice*. Then do the *commands* and *exhortations* answer their purpose, when they excite us to seek of God the fulfilment of his *promises* : and, when we plead his *promises* in earnest prayer, then shall we be enabled to obey his *commands*. And accordingly we may add, to the maxim above laid down, the following : That there is nothing which is in one place made the subject of *command*, and in another of *promise*, which is not in a third place made *the subject of prayer unto God*. Thus, “ Create in
 “ me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right
 “ spirit within me ! ” Here the thing *enjoined* in Ezek. xviii., and *promised* in Ezek. xxxvi., is *prayed for* in Psalm li. And the same might be shewn of every other duty and blessing.

But what shall we say if Mr. M. has not only, in the basis of this argument, contradicted the first principles of sound theology, and scriptural knowledge, but if he has, at least as directly, contradicted himself? This is the case. In page 65, he professes his ‘ cheerful concurrence ’ with

Mr. Overton, who declares, that ‘ *the author of the happy change* ’ of conversion ‘ *is the Holy Spirit.*’ In page 75, he argues the absurdity of certain persons ‘ intreating men to repent and be converted,’ and ‘ expostulating with them for not choosing to be converted ’—because ‘ in almost the same breath they tell them, that *the author of this conversion is the Holy Ghost!*’

Can a writer who falls repeatedly into such self-contradictions; who so frequently mistakes the scriptures; who so lightly, and even unconsciously, goes about to subvert established principles of orthodoxy; be justly set up for a competent guide of public opinion? Shall we think him properly selected ‘ to convey, to the community at large, correct notions,’ on the most important theological subjects? I should be sorry to say one word, tending to lower Mr. M.’s reputation as an author, did I not think that reputation employed to give currency to opinions, contrary to the real doctrines of the church of England, and to “the truth of the gospel” of Christ. But, as that is my deliberate judgment, I offer no other apology for what I have written.

Here, then, I close my strictures on Mr. M. To any one who may think of honouring these pages with an answer, I beg leave to say as follows :

All I ask in an opponent is *fairness*. Give me an antagonist, who shall ‘feel an instinctive aversion to vain and fruitless contentions concerning the mere outsides of questions:’* one who shall ‘wish to meet fairly the real points in dispute, and to grapple with them:’* and I am satisfied. Such an antagonist I have endeavoured to shew myself to Mr. M.; and, should I meet with one who proceeds upon the same principle in return, I hope I shall be ready to avail myself of any light and instruction he may have to afford me. But I must say, that the plan on which replies are too often conducted is nauseating to every sincere lover of truth, and every really honest mind. I have known replies made, wherein a few detached points were selected on which a little wit, a little eloquence, or a little seeming argumentation might be displayed, but in which all the main questions at issue were either misrepresented, or passed over in silence: insomuch that, on reading over again the book which was to be answered, and noting in the margin the topics which were left untouched, their amount scarcely fell short of nine-tenths of the whole. Now this is offensive and disgusting.— So, in the present instance, nothing can be more easy than to re-state, with confidence, assertions, which have been already made; nothing more easy than to collect again a few detached sen-

* Dean of Carlisle.

tences from our church services, (the meaning of which is one great point at issue,) and to say of them, ‘ They need no comment: language cannot be plainer: ’—nothing more easy than—to do many things which I could name, and which may raise the shout of victory among a man’s own partizans: but all this can advance us nothing in the pursuit of truth:—it can afford no satisfaction to the honest mind. Let us see the question at issue fairly stated: let us see the arguments which have been adduced upon it from the scriptures—from the articles and liturgy of the church—from the analogy of the other sacrament—from the use of the same language concerning adults as is employed concerning infants—though, in the former, one would suppose *a right state of mind* must by all be allowed necessary to prove ‘ the sanctification of the Spirit: ’ Let these and other arguments be fairly met and canvassed, and I say again, I am satisfied: I will regard the man, who thus combats me, not as an adversary, but as my coadjutor in the investigation of truth.

Nov. 29, 1815.

P. S. *Dr. M. is styled in the Tracts, The Rev. R. Mant, M. A. It was not till the greater part of these sheets had passed the press, that I was aware that he had proceeded to the degree of D. D.*

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