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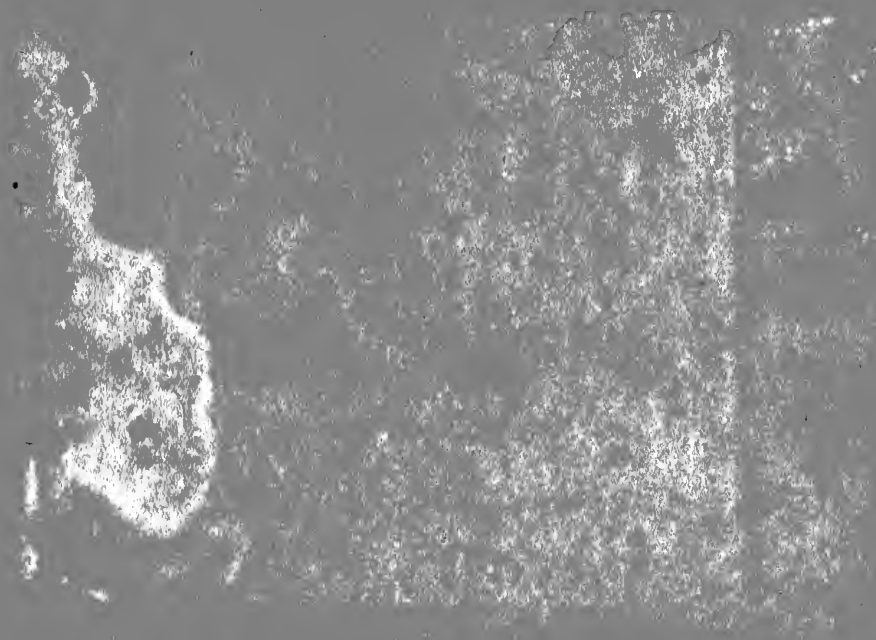
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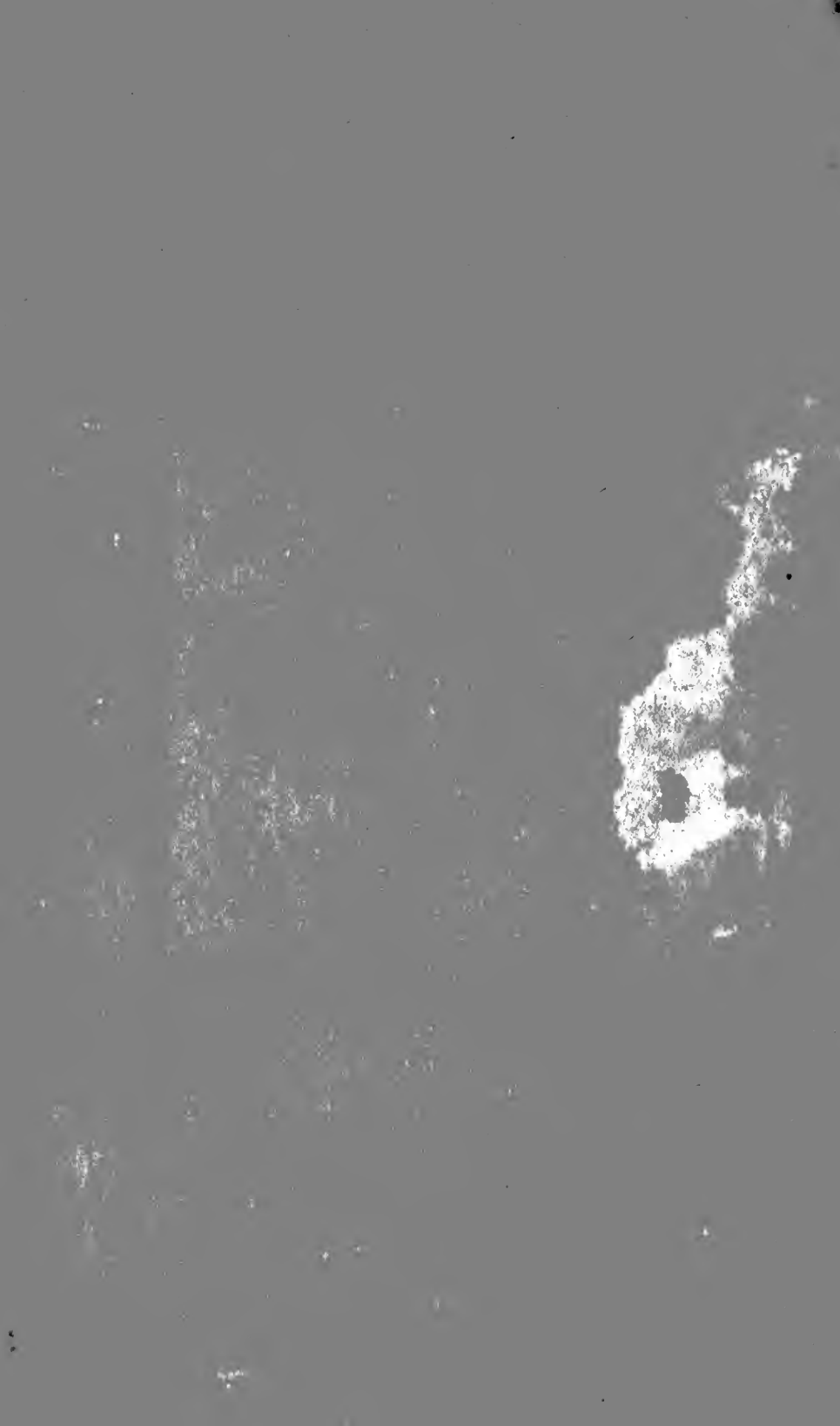
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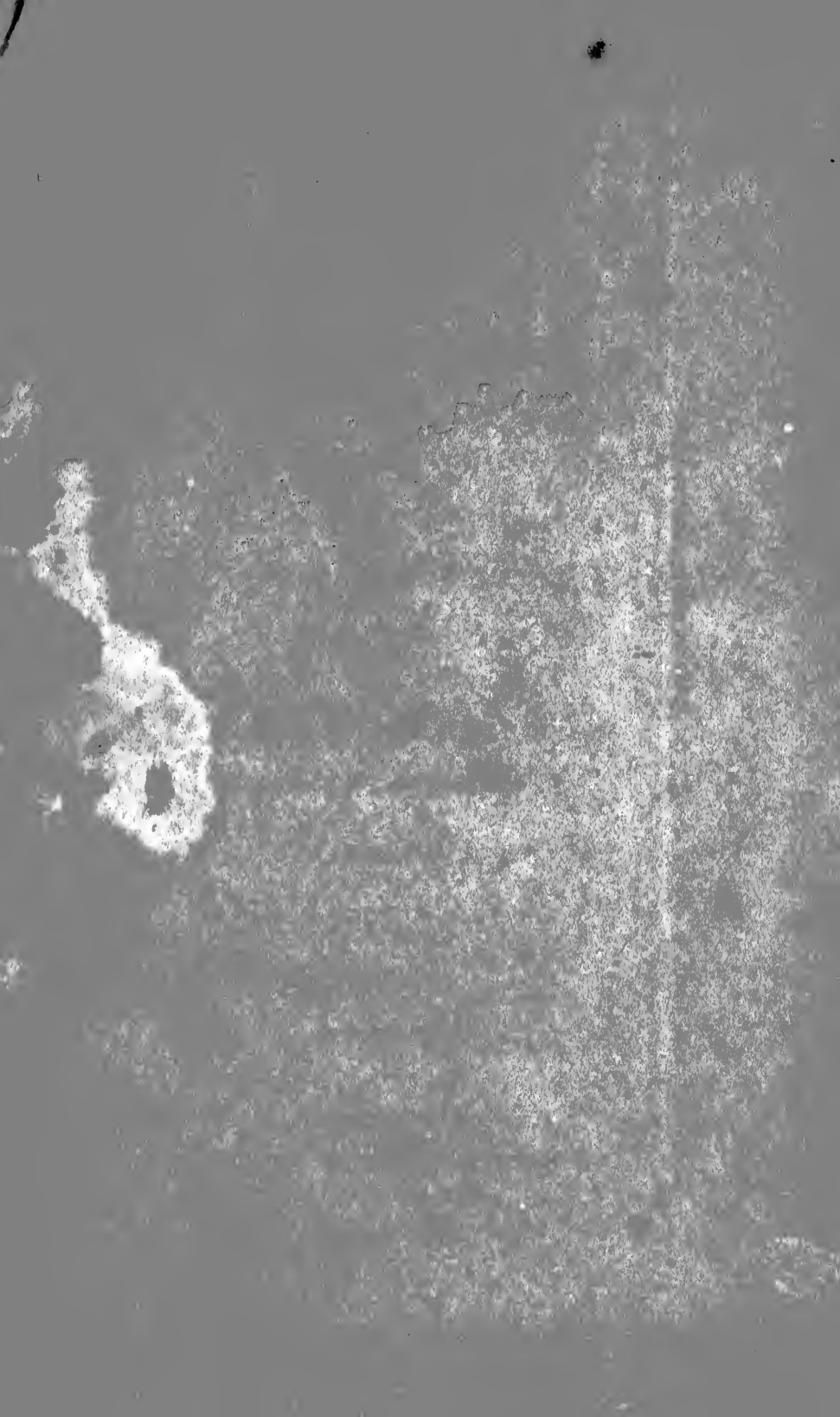
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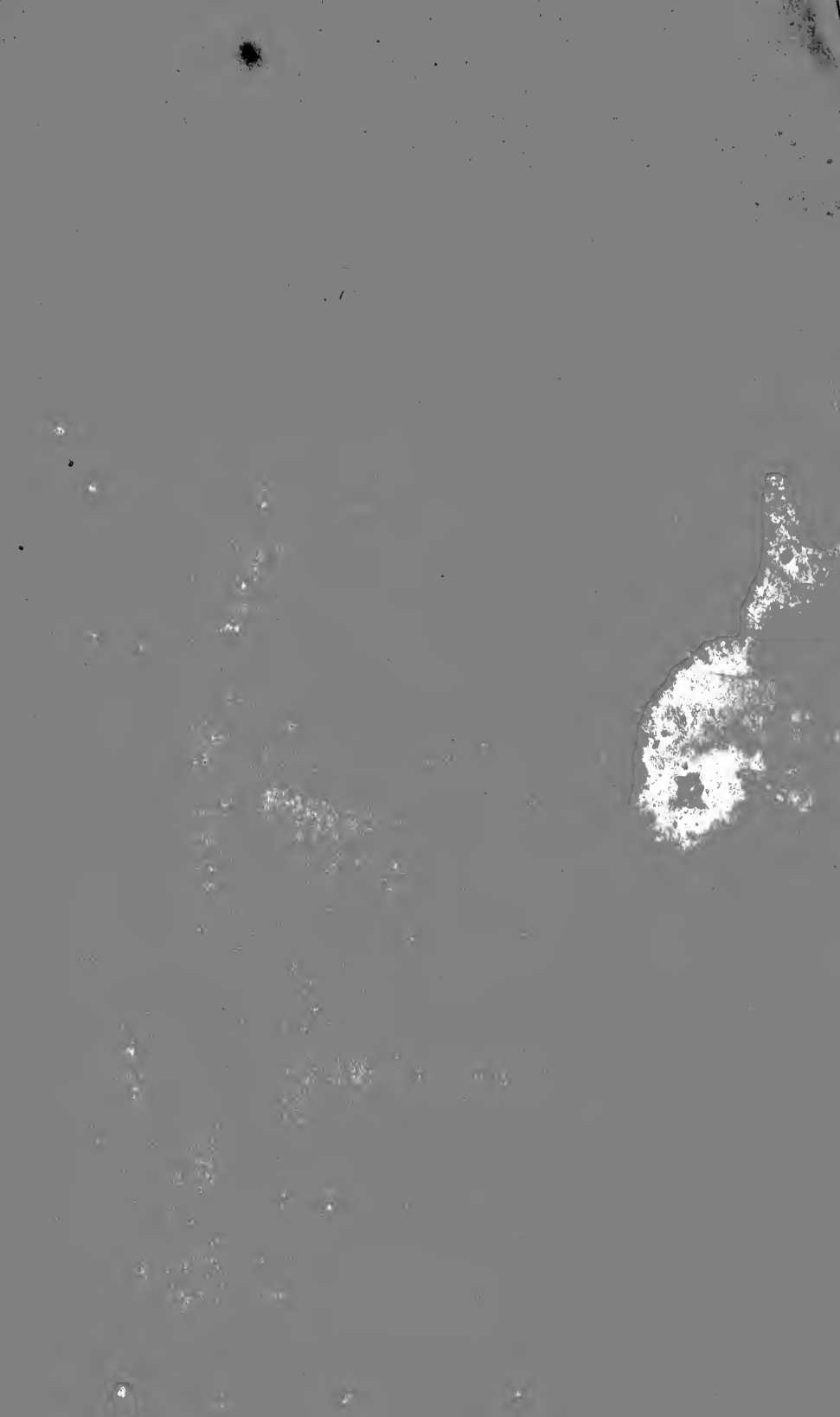
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*George Stanley Faber*

# SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS.

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BY GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B.D.

RECTOR OF LONG-NEWTON.

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VOLUME I

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PHILADELPHIA :

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.....  
*July 25, 1817.*

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS

GEORGE STANLEY FARM, B.D.

AT THE ...

JAMES I.

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...

...

TO THE  
**RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS BURGESS, D. D.**

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,

AS A TOKEN OF UNFEIGNED RESPECT

FOR AN

EMINENTLY PIOUS AND VIGILANT

RULER

*IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,*

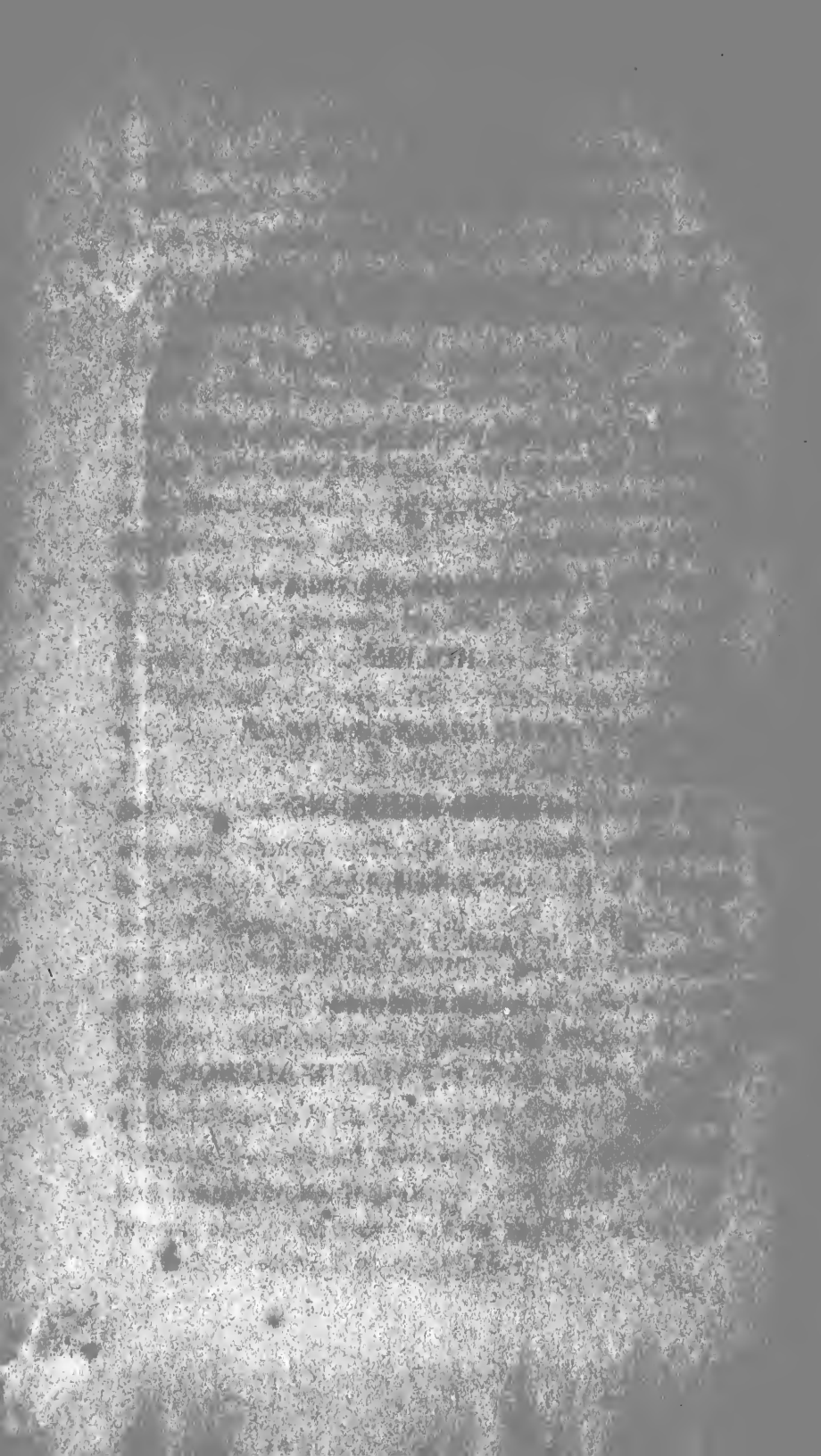
**THESE SERMONS**

ARE INSCRIBED BY

HIS OBEDIENT AND OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

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THE Sermons here offered to the Public, have been written at various intervals and on various occasions, in the course of the last twelve years. In order that there might be as much coherence between them as possible, and that they might not seem to stand altogether detached from each other, I endeavoured to arrange them in strings according to the several subjects of which they treat. The first volume contains *one* of such strings: and, in each of them, the drift of the author's argument would appear to the best advantage, if the Sermons should be read exactly in the order of their collocation.

It may be proper to remark, that the *substance* of the last Sermon in the first volume was originally, in the year 1804, printed in the form of a pamphlet. The unreserved commendation bestowed upon it while in that shape by the late Bp. Horsley, in terms which the author is alike unable either to forget or to specify, induced him to model anew the whole discussion: and, although by this process the first draught is very materially altered, not only in point of arrangement, but likewise by numerous additions and excisions; yet, as eleven years have now passed

over his head since its original publication, he is willing to hope, that the Sermon would not have been more unworthy of that great man's *imprimatur*, had his valuable life been spared to the present hour, than the pamphlet whence it emanated.

In mentioning this circumstance, I may very possibly incur the imputation of vanity: but it is of no great consequence. Much as I have reason to be grateful to my venerable and excellent diocesan for the successive unsolicited marks of approbation which I have received from him; I can never cease to remember, with a feeling of peculiar though melancholy pleasure, the equally unsolicited friendship, with which in my younger days I was honoured by an illustrious theologian now gone to his reward. In the sobriety of middle age, I trust I am animated by a somewhat better and more composed spirit, than what might be excited by the *laudari a laudato viro*. Whether in the study of theology or in the discussion of prophecy, I never encountered a man with whose views I could more generally symbolize than the Bishop of St. Asaph.

I think it right to state, that my visitation sermon before the Bishop of Durham, which occurs in the second volume, was very greatly shortened in the delivery.

*Long-Newton, Dec. 18, 1815.*

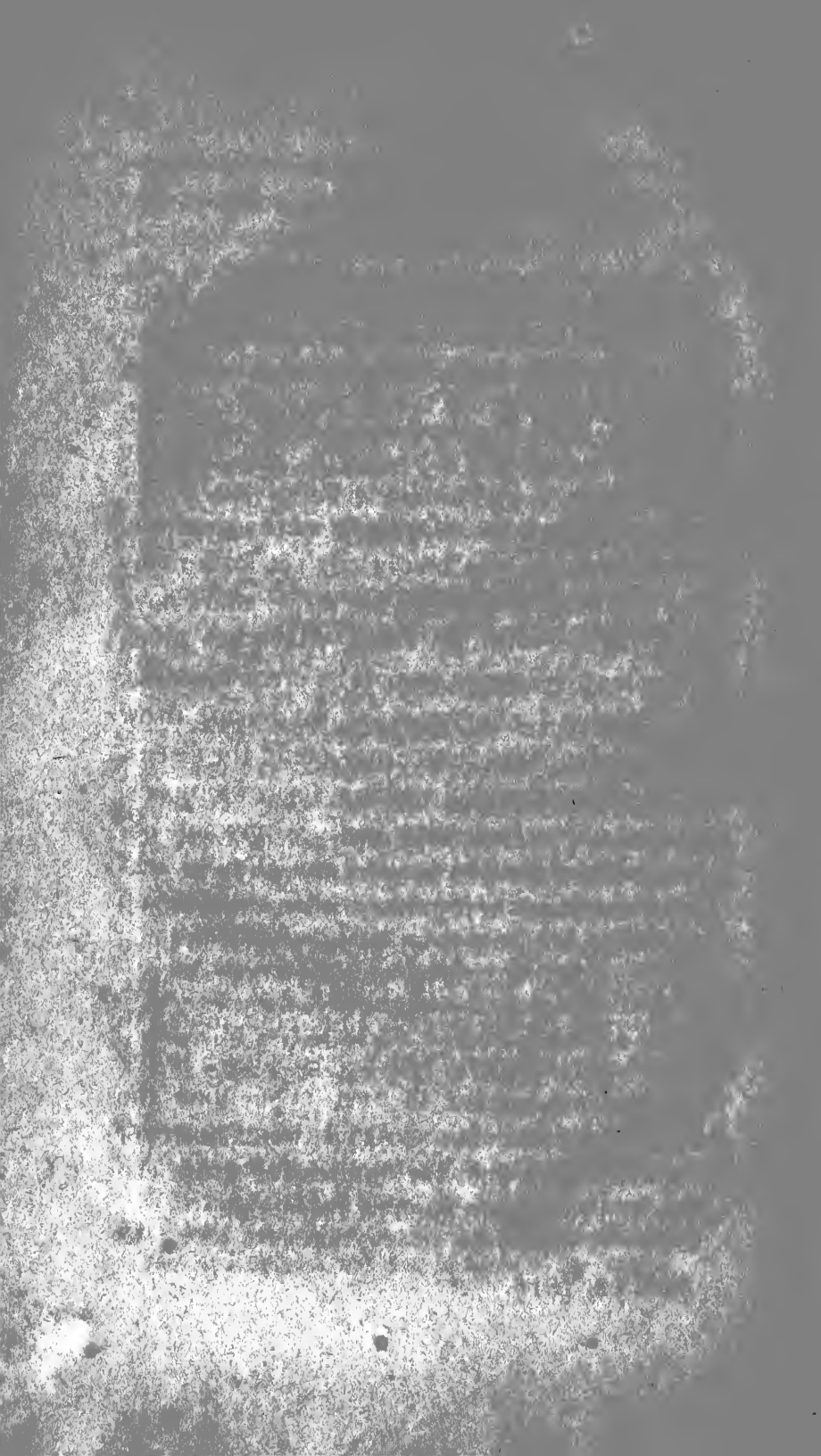


## POSTSCRIPT.

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PERHAPS it may not be inexpedient to state, that the four Sermons on Regeneration, which occur in the first volume, were written *before* the commencement of the present controversy on that subject, and therefore *before* I had read the compositions of those authors who have recently embarked in it on either side of the question. My own opinion was first briefly set forth many years ago in my Bampton's Lectures: and I have not as yet met with any thing, which has given me the least reason to suspect its erroneousness. This opinion I afterwards at my leisure drew out and defended at large: nor could the discussion be comprehended within a narrower space, than that of four long sermons. As my sole object is truth, should I ever feel myself to be manifestly confuted in argument, I trust that I shall never hesitate in acknowledging myself to have been mistaken: but, with respect to what I have *hitherto* read on the subject, I am constrained to say, that the opinion, which is opposite to my own, does not appear to rest even upon the shadow of a foundation. At all events however we may be sure, that the interests of truth can never fail to be promoted by discussion.

*April 22, 1816.*



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*Faber* 1

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## SERMON I.

### THE UNIVERSAL PROFITABLENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

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2 TIM. III. 16, 17.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

IN this brief yet most comprehensive passage, St. Paul at once sets before Timothy the divine origination and the high practical importance of Holy Scripture.

He begins with solemnly calling his attention to it; for he observes, that the sacred volume is all given *by inspiration of God*. It is therefore no cunningly devised fable of men, no ingenious theory, which may be admitted or rejected at pleasure, no system of mere human ethics, enforced only by a mortal legislator: but it is

the word of God to fallen man, the word of the Most High to his rebellious subjects, the word of an infallible lawgiver, the word of essential Truth itself. It speaks, as having a right to *demand* our attention: it dictates, as having undeniable *authority*. For shall God condescend to speak; and shall not man attend? Shall the Lord of heaven and earth teach the road to everlasting happiness; and shall man refuse to become a learner? Surely it is at once our bounden duty and our highest privilege humbly to listen to the behests of Heaven, to acquaint ourselves with God as he stands revealed in his own word, to inquire what he would have us to do, and thus, on the only possible solid grounds, to be at peace.

St. Paul, having authoritatively claimed the attention of Timothy by urging the divine inspiration of Scripture, proceeds to inform him in what respects it is profitable. The points, which he specifies, are four in number: it is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*. These matters being laid down, the Apostle then adds, by way of summary and application of the whole, that it was given, in order *that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.

In discussing the present subject more at large, I cannot do better than follow the order which



St. Paul himself has marked out. And I have the rather chosen such a subject, because it gives me an opportunity of stating both the doctrines and the practice, which I shall hereafter feel myself bound in conscience to inculcate among you. Not indeed that I conceive you ignorant either of the one or of the other. Such a supposition would equally reflect upon the labours of my worthy predecessor,\* and upon your own use of the means of grace. But the misfortune is, that we all know much more than we are inclined to practice. Hence the ministers of the Gospel have occasion to *add line upon line, and precept upon precept*: and hence it will be my duty unceasingly to exhort you to CONTINUE *in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; and that, from children, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.*†

I. As Scripture is given by inspiration of God, for the information of man, we may be sure that it will be profitable *for doctrine*.

The Bible however not being written in a scholastic form, it has been found expedient by perhaps every Church, to bring together into a

\* The Rev. John Brewster, now Rector of Eggescliffe.

† 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

regular summary the leading points which we are required to believe, that so they may be easily referred to and distinctly understood. No sound Church indeed wishes to impose any such summary on the consciences of its members, further than as it may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Writ : yet, when the summary *is* set forth, it becomes our duty to attend to it, and to compare it diligently with Scripture, that we may see how they tally together.

The xxxix Articles of the Church of England constitute a summary of this description. These Articles you have just heard read : and, as I have declared before you my unfeigned assent and consent to them, which in truth I do with a hearty good will ; I may from them briefly state to you the doctrines, which are taught in Scripture, and which are peculiarly profitable for man in his present state. Afterwards let it be *your* business to search your Bibles, and judge from them whether these things be so indeed. For do not imagine, as some almost appear to do, that the clergy in the way of their profession are alone concerned with the great truths of Christianity, and that the laity need trouble themselves very little about the matter, simply because they *are* laity. This is a gross mistake : I fear indeed I may say a *wilful* mistake ;

which many fall into with alacrity, hoping that they may thus escape the awful responsibility of creatures in a state of probation. But do not deceive yourselves. The clergy are merely your helpers and spiritual advisers. Religion, in all its bearings, is a strictly *personal* matter. Though it is not your business to *minister* in holy things : it is your business, quite as much as it is the business of the clergy, so to *acquaint* yourselves with the Gospel as to be able to give a satisfactory account both of your faith and your practice. As no one can perish everlastingly by proxy : so, you may depend upon it, no one ever was, or ever will be, or ever can be, saved by proxy.

1. The basis, on which rests the whole of Christianity, is the scriptural doctrine, that we are very far gone from original righteousness, and that we are inclined by nature to evil : inso-much that we cannot turn and prepare ourselves by our own physical strength and good works to faith and calling upon God ; but that, by reason of our manifold sins both original and actual, we all justly deserve God's wrath and damnation.\*

2. Such being the case, how shall we flee from the wrath to come ?

\* Art. ix, x.

The answer is afforded in Scripture : *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.\**

3. But how are we to believe in the Lord Jesus ; since we are assured, that we cannot turn ourselves to faith and calling upon God ?

The answer again is ready : Though *we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God WITHOUT the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will ;* yet WITH the grace of God, which will never be refused to earnest and persevering prayer, we may have both the will and the power to believe and to do good works. The Holy Trinity have covenanted from all eternity : the Father, to accept the meritorious sacrifice of the Son ; the Son, to take our nature upon him and to offer himself up a ransom for the many, the just for the unjust ; the Holy Ghost, to comfort, strengthen, and support us, to enable us to turn unto God, to renew our fallen nature by his mighty though secret influence, to bring us by Regeneration and consequent Sanctification from darkness into light, and thus to make us meet for the inheritance of the glorified saints.†

4. As we are thus both depraved and utterly unable to help ourselves by any good deeds, it

\* Art. xi.

† Art. x, i, ii, xii, xvii.

necessarily follows, what we further learn, that, touching the article of our Justification, *we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings.* When we have done all, we are still but unprofitable servants. Instead of being inflated with I know not what vain notion of our own meritoriousness for the few and imperfect good actions which *we* have done ; we each of us rather have need to smite upon our breasts, and to exclaim with the humble publican, *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!* \*

5. We learn, however, that although we be justified solely by grace through faith, we are not on that account to imagine that we are set free from the law of righteousness so far as its *moral* obligation upon us is concerned. *Shall we sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.* That were indeed to insult the Almighty for all the mercies which he has shewed towards us : that were to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame before infidels and men of this world : that were with desperate hands to tear up the work of the Lord in our souls, and to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing by making Christ the minister of unright-

\* Art. xi.

teousness. Good works are the necessary and only sure evidence of our possessing true faith and of our being in a state of acceptance with God. This is the test, which our Lord himself proposes. He does not refer us to frames and feelings, to delusive joys and fleeting raptures, to an imaginary assurance that we are the chosen of God, and to a vain confidence that it is out of our power to fall away: but he teaches us, as the Church does after him, that a lively faith may as evidently be known by good works, as a tree is by its fruit. Without a tree there can be no fruit: without a lively faith, there can be no good works. But then again, as a dead tree produces no fruit, and is meet only to be cut down and cast into the fire, though it exhibits all the outward semblance and lineaments of a tree: so a dead faith equally produces no good works, being, in fact, the mere theoretical belief which characterizes the very devils themselves.\*

6. Accordingly we learn, that the elect people of God are only those, who are made his sons by adoption; who are changed into the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; who walk religiously in good works; and who at length, by God's mercy, attain to everlasting felicity. All, who answer not to this description, how-

\* Art. xii.

ever they may flatter themselves with being in the number of the elect, are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, they are not labouring to make their calling and election sure: and, inasmuch as they shew by their works that they have not the spirit of Christ, they assuredly are none of his, whatever may be their high-vaulting pretensions.\*

7. Finally we learn, that God freely invites all men to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb; that, to all who sincerely ask for such a blessing, he has promised his Holy Spirit to guide and preserve and sanctify them; that he will reject no penitent sinner, to whom the remembrance of his past iniquities is grievous, and to whom the burden of them is intolerable; that he will not bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax; that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; that God, even the God of truth, will never fail those who meekly and humbly put their trust in him; but that he will be their guide and the unbending staff of their confidence even unto death.†

These are some of the most important of those doctrines, which the Scripture is profitable to teach us: doctrines of the highest moment

\* Art. xvii.

† Art. xv.

to man, inasmuch as they point out to him the road to everlasting happiness, and open unto him the gates of eternal life.

II. But Scripture is moreover profitable *for reproof*.

*Let him that thinketh he standeth*, says the Apostle; *take heed lest he fall*. Since we are all by nature prone to sin, God in mercy is pleased to mingle, with the most gracious invitations to the truly penitent, the sharpest reproofs to the impenitent; in order that they may be induced to forsake the evil of their ways and turn them humbly to their Saviour. *As I live*, saith the Lord, *I have no pleasure in the death of the unrighteous*. The tremendous threats, with which Scripture abounds, are denounced, not with a view to drive us to despair, but to lead us to repentance; not to make us harden ourselves in hopeless iniquity, but to constrain us with a merciful violence to flee from the wrath to come. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we*, his appointed ministers, *persuade men*: and, as the ambassadors of heaven, *we beseech you to be reconciled unto God*, lest unadvisedly you destroy your own souls.

Painful as the office of reproof may be, we dare not handle the word of God deceitfully; we dare not heal the wounds of his people slightly; we dare not *cry peace, when there is no*



*peace.* We should shew ourselves to be either hypocrites or unbelievers, if we presumed to hold out comfort to the impenitent. We cannot, as we value our own salvation, promise the kingdom of heaven to fornicators and adulterers, to drunkards and unclean persons, to liars and blasphemers, or to those who indulge in the diabolical spiritual sins of envy, hatred, or malice. But we feel an unspeakable pleasure, when we find ourselves authorised to administer the scriptural balm of consolation to all such persons upon their true and hearty repentance. The one duty we perform with reluctance, the other with heartfelt satisfaction. Yet they are both *equally* duties imposed upon us: and it is at our own peril, if we so attend to the second, as to neglect the first.

III. St. Paul goes on to tell us, that Scripture is yet additionally profitable *for correction*.

By the word *correction* here used,\* I understand *the setting us right in our opinions*, whether those opinions respect principles or practice. Without the Bible, all our sentiments of God and religion are radically false: it is the office of Scripture to correct these sentiments. And, even with the Bible in our hands, it is astonishing what erroneous opinions are frequently en-

\* Gr. ἐπινοήσασιν

tertained with regard both to doctrine and practice: it is the office of Scripture to correct all such mistakes.

It may not be amiss, if I instance a few of them, and point out how the inspired word of God discharges this part of its office.

1. Some have fancied, because Scripture declares that we are dead in trespasses and sins and that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, that it is a vain labour for us to attempt to repent and turn unto God. *We can do nothing of ourselves*, say they; *why therefore should we fatigue ourselves with fruitlessly trying to do our duty?*

Now in what manner does Scripture correct such perverters of God's word? It says to them: *True: you can do nothing of yourselves; but God hath declared, that his grace shall be sufficient for you, and that his strength shall be made perfect in your weakness, unless you wilfully and obstinately reject his proffered assistance. I can do all things, said the Apostle, through Christ that strengtheneth me: and so may each of you say. Weak as you are by nature, God will freely impart the aid of his Holy Spirit to such as ask it. Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: is the express direction and promise of that very Saviour, who yet has likewise declared,*

Without me ye can do nothing. *The pleading of your natural inability will stand you in very little stead at the day of judgment ; when it is found, that you never sought for that assistance which would abundantly have enabled you to fight the good fight of faith. You would entertain a very bad opinion of the common sense, and still worse of the honesty, of a servant, who declined doing his work on the plea that it was above his strength ; when it turned out upon enquiry, that his master had furnished him with every requisite assistance, but that he did not think proper to make use of it.*

2. Others have run into a directly contrary error ; and have argued on the Pelagian system, that, because Scripture commands us to perform such and such duties, we of course are able to perform them in our own strength. But, if we be able to perform them in our own strength, then we require not any preventing grace of God to bring us into the paths of righteousness ; but possess both the will and the power to make ourselves holy.

Scripture is equally profitable to correct this error also. It declares to us, that *of ourselves we can do no good thing, that all our sufficiency is of God, and that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Hence it plainly follows, that every command to do our duty pre-

supposes, that we both ask and receive assistance from the throne of grace. When our Lord commanded the man with the withered arm to stretch forth the inefficient member, should we think it a very wise mode of reasoning, if a bystander had argued, that the arm certainly was *not* withered, because it would be nugatory to enjoin that which it would be physically impossible to perform? We should obviously reply: *The arm indeed is doubtless withered and is utterly incapable of self-motion: the man therefore, who has stretched it out at the word of command, must evidently have first received strength from him who gave the command; otherwise he would still have remained as incapable of action as ever he was.* Just the same mode of reasoning applies, with equal force, to a religious precept enjoined upon a person labouring under moral disability. The precept does not prove the man to labour under *no* disability: it only proves, that the gracious Being, who gave the precept, is ready to give all necessary strength for the due performance of it.

3. Others again have become Antinomians; and have madly decried all good works as mere servile legality, because the Bible teaches us, that we are justified solely by grace through faith and not for our own workings or deservings.

Here likewise the Scripture will be found profitable for correction. We are not to give up the sound doctrine of Justification, because some wrong-headed persons have built upon it a monstrous heresy : but we are to reject the heresy, and yet contend for the doctrine. Though the Bible repeatedly declares, that we are justified solely by faith, *else grace were no longer grace* : it nevertheless assures us, that we are only justified by such a faith as worketh by love ; *by faith solely, not by faith solitarily*, as the old divines were wont aptly to express themselves.\* *Faith without works is dead, being alone : shew me thy faith by thy works*, otherwise thou assuredly possessest not one atom of saving faith. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, however just his speculative notions may be respecting Christian doctrines. If he possess nothing but a barren dead faith, a faith utterly unproductive of evangelical godliness ; *he hath a name that he liveth, and is dead*.

IV. Finally, Scripture is profitable for *instruction in righteousness*.

It is ever the plan of the inspired writers, and we the appointed pastors of God's people ought to imitate them therein, to deduce holy practice from sound doctrine. We shall not fully dis-

\* Fide sola, non solitaria.

charge our duty, if we merely lay before you the dogmas of Christianity: we must likewise labour to make the Scripture *profitable for your instruction in righteousness, that so you may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* And how amply does the Bible furnish us with such instruction in righteousness.

I. Read the sermon of our Lord on the mount; and see there delineated, with the unerring pencil of eternal truth, the character and duties of an Israelite indeed.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.\**

2. Would we further know, what manner of men we ought to be, to please God, and what sins it is our bounden duty to forsake; how full and complete is the instruction in righteousness afforded us by the inspired apostle.

\* Matt. v. 3—10.

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these : adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.\**

In this manner does Scripture instruct us in righteousness. The more *particular* manner, however, in which it thus instructs us, must be reserved for our frequent future meditations. To discuss it fully requires not one discourse merely, but numerous discourses

V. To conclude : *who is sufficient for these things ?*

Since it has been declared, even of the inspired teachers of the primitive Church, that, although a Paul planted and an Apollos watered, God alone gave the increase ; and that *neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that*

\* Gal. v. 19—25.

18 *The Universal Profitableness of Scripture.*

*watereth, but God that giveth the increase :* much more may we of the present day take up a similar declaration respecting ourselves. Vain will be the labour of him who has for so many years diligently planted the word among you ; vain will be my labour in watering what he has planted : unless God's Holy Spirit be richly shed abroad in your hearts ; and unless to the hearing of the word you add frequent meditation, earnest prayer, and constant self-examination.

While you pray then for yourselves, brethren, pray likewise for *those who watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.* And, as I doubt not that your prayers will follow your late good pastor, pray also for us, that we may be enabled to exercise our ministry among you with a sound conscience in this world ; and that hereafter you may be *our joy and crown of rejoicing, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.*



## SERMON II.

### GOD'S JUSTICE EXEMPLIFIED IN THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

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ROM. III. 23—26.

*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

THE perfect justice of a God of boundless power is an attribute so tremendously awful, that the best of men may well shrink from the contemplation of it. Yet, since in one sense it is the very basis of Christianity, since the whole of St. Paul's argument throughout his epistle to the Romans is built upon the undeniable existence of such an attribute, and since the notion of it even in its highest state of perfection seems

to be familiar to the human mind ; a reverential discussion of it, as connected with the hopes of peace and pardon held forth to us in the Gospel, can at *no* time be altogether *out of* season, and on *some* occasions may be deemed peculiarly *in* season.

I. Any exertion of justice necessarily presupposes the existence of some known law or standard of right and wrong, to which the actions of those who are amenable to the tribunal in question may be referred.

If the actions are of such a description as come not within the cognizance of the law by violating any of its enactments, the man is innocent : but, if they be of a contrary description, then he is guilty ; and justice cannot be satisfied without his undergoing the merited punishment. Very possibly he may not have broken *every* enactment of the law. But still his partial innocence will not excuse his partial transgression : his obedience will never be weighed against his disobedience. If he be convicted of theft, he will in no court be allowed to plead in arrest of judgment his freedom from the criminality of murder. He has broken the law in *one* point ; and that is amply sufficient. His actions come not up to the standard required of him : justice therefore is concerned in exacting satisfaction of him. He will not indeed be pun-

ished for a crime which he has not committed : but his single violation of the law will no less assuredly arm it against him, than if his breach of it had been ever so complicated. Justice is concerned in seeing him punished : and, if he be not punished, the suffering of him to escape is undoubtedly an act of injustice.

In the exercise of human laws, it is found necessary to vest somewhere or other the power of granting an absolute pardon. But the use of this power, or, in other words, the assumption of the privilege of mercy, must inevitably, from the very nature of things, be a departure from strict and naked justice. We may call it *a necessary power*, or we may call the occasional exercise of it *an amiable injustice* : but still, disguise it as we please, turn it as we may, if sifted to the bottom, it will prove to be neither more nor less, than an act of *absolute injustice*. In fact, such is the unavoidable deficiency of human institutions, *perfect justice* and *perfect mercy* cannot subsist together. We may, like Draco of old, write our laws in blood by way of attaining to *perfect justice* : but what then becomes of *mercy* ? We may allow to the sovereign the exercise of *mercy* : but what then becomes of *the perfection of our justice* ? The moment that *mercy* is introduced, since it can only be extended to those who *deserve* punishment (otherwise

the remission of punishment is not *an act of grace*, but *a claim of absolute right* :) the moment, I say, that *mercy* is introduced, *justice* is rendered imperfect, because a criminal is suffered to escape with impunity; and, the moment that *justice* is in this manner rendered imperfect, it, to all intents and purposes, becomes *injustice*.

So far as the merits of the abstract question are concerned, it is in vain to say, that there were such and such mitigating circumstances, which moved the sovereign to extend his pardon to the culprit. The sum of the matter, after all, will be found to be simply this: *did the man break the law, or did he not break it?* If he did *not* break it, an exemption from punishment was no more than his *right*; in this case, there was plainly no room for *mercy*. If he *did* break it, then in absolute strictness he deserved *punishment*: and, if he were suffered to escape, no mitigating circumstances can possibly render that *just*, which in itself is intrinsically *unjust*. We may applaud the *amiability* of mercy; nay, we may even find it *necessary* for the well-being of society, that the discretionary power of exercising it should be lodged somewhere: but *mercy*, as exercised by man, can never, if thoroughly analysed, be any thing else than an inferior sort of *injustice*.

II. Now, if I mistake not, some such view of the subject as this forms the groundwork of St. Paul's argument.

His *assumption* is, that God must, from the very perfection of his nature, be absolutely and immutably just: because, if he did not possess the attribute of justice in perfection, he would be an imperfect being; and an imperfect Godhead presiding over the universe is a contradiction in terms.

His *point to be proved is*, that all men of every description, whether they be Jews or whether they be Gentiles, have acted in opposition to a known law: obviously not the ceremonial law, in the case of *the Gentiles*, because *they* were wholly ignorant of any such law; and as obviously not the ceremonious law even in the case of *the Jews* (as some have imagined,) because throughout the whole of this epistle, the law, which St. Paul maintains them to have broken, and thence to have become guilty before God, is plainly the moral law.\*

His *deduction* is, that, since all have thus sinned, none can be justified by the law which was the appointed standard of their actions; whether that law was the unwritten law, as in the case of the Gentiles, or the written law, as in

\* See Rom. ii. 17—29. iii. 9—20, 23, 27, 28. iv. 1—16. vii. 7, 8, 21—25.

the case of the Jews: and consequently, since the law cannot justify them, it must inevitably condemn them.

1. With respect to St. Paul's assumption, namely *the immutable justice of God*; as it clearly cannot be denied, so neither can it require any discussion.

2. We may proceed, therefore, immediately to consider the mode, in which he would *prove* the position, that *all men have sinned or violated a known law*.

The Gentiles possessed what is usually called *the law of nature*, but what seems in reality to have been a recollection of primitive patriarchal revelation so strong that neither time nor a debased superstition could wholly obliterate it. They were, as the Apostle speaks, *a law unto themselves*: not thereby intimating, I apprehend, that they actually invented the law to which they were amenable (for, if it had not been originally imposed by God, the breach of it could not have been an offence against him); but that, in a state of nature as contradistinguished from a state of subjection to a written law, they were still liable to be called to an account for their transgression of that will of God with which they were acquainted.

Now the Apostle contends, that, however imperfect might be their knowledge of God's will,

compared with that possessed by the Jews, who had a written law to direct them, still they never acted up to that degree of light which they *did* enjoy. Their first criminality was an unwillingness to retain God in their knowledge, a departure with a high hand from those divine institutions which the children of Noah (as the Rabbins rightly contend) must have carried with them into all their primitive settlements.

But this, it may be said, was the crime of their forefathers, rather than of the later Gentiles.

It was, I allow, *peculiarly* their crime, but not *exclusively* so. The progress of corruption, originating in a hearty dislike to the just and holy law of God, was nevertheless gradual. Each generation added something to the apostacy of the preceding one: each therefore was successively criminal.

Nor was this all: plunged as they were, when St. Paul flourished, in the grossest abominations both of principle and practice, given over, as they awfully were, by God himself to a reprobate mind; yet they had not been able wholly to obliterate a sense of right and wrong, with respect to the Deity as supreme lawgiver: I say, with respect to the Deity, not simply, with respect to society; for to this point is the argument of the Apostle directed, and indeed must be directed in order to be conclusive. He con-

tends, that, in addition to their disliking to retain God in their knowledge, they were wilfully guilty of actions, which, at the very time of their committing them, they knew to be offensive to him: *KNOWING the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Hence they were guilty, on their own principles; because they had voluntarily and determinately broken that portion of the divine law which they did possess.

It were easy to shew from the writings of the ancient heathens, that they themselves acknowledged this to be the case; that they owned themselves to act in direct opposition to what they knew to be the will of God: but it is superfluous to press the matter any further. And, if the Gentiles stand convicted of this criminality, no arguments can be necessary to shew the violation of the written moral law on the part of the Jews.

Nor let us imagine, that mere freedom from outward obliquity of conduct, even supposing such a thing ever to have perfectly existed, either within or without the pale of the Levitical church, could in itself exempt a man from the charge of having transgressed the divine law.— Under mere human institutions, *external* violation alone constitutes guilt. Whatever may be



the *hidden* purpose, until that purpose be *carried* into effect, the man is accounted innocent. But the law of God partakes of the spirituality of its immaculate author. In the eyes of him, before whom every secret desire lies naked and exposed, each thought is an action; each rebellious speculation is rebellion itself; each unhallowed wish is positive transgression. When the divine law is taken in this point of view (and such is the view in which it must be taken both according to reason and Scripture), what man is there, who liveth, and hath not offended? Well then may the Apostle confidently wind up his argument, by saying, *We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*

3. If, therefore, his *assumption* be valid, that *God is perfectly just*; and if his point be clearly proved, that *all men without exception have knowingly transgressed the divine law*: his *deduction* must follow, in the way of necessary and inevitable consequence; that, *so far from any of us being able to hope for justification by our obedience to the law, we can thence look for nothing but condemnation.*

The reason of this is manifest. A law exists, to which we owe submission, and which, nevertheless, we have voluntarily transgressed. *This* person may have transgressed it in one way, and *that* person in another; *this* indeed, *that* per-

haps only in purpose : but *every* individual *has* transgressed it in *some* shape. *Every* individual therefore must deserve punishment : and God, as a just judge, is obliged (with reverence be it spoken), not indeed by any physical necessity, but by that moral necessity which results from the eternal immutability of his nature ; God is obliged to exact the penalty incurred. Were it otherwise, God would not be perfectly just : and a God not perfectly just is an imperfect God ; which monstrous idea, as I have already observed, is a contradiction in terms. We not unfrequently hear a strange notion advanced, that in the day of judgment a man's good deeds will be weighed against his bad ones, and a sort of balance struck between them. If the good preponderate, he will be saved ; if the bad, he will perish. But, to say nothing of the unscripturalness of such an opinion, it is daily confuted by the practice of our courts of justice. What should we think, if a man, fully convicted of robbery, and pretending not to deny his guilt, should argue, that he ought not in justice to be punished, because he was perfectly innocent both of adultery and forgery, and of murder : he had broken the law only in *one* point, perhaps only in one instance ; he had paid due obedience to it in many points, in *every* instance perhaps except one : therefore his obedience far outweigh-

ed his disobedience ; *therefore* he ought to escape, not only without punishment, but with well deserved commendation for his exemplary conduct in having violated the law in only one solitary case? What, I ask, should we think if such a defence were set up in a human court of judicature? Yet some have imagined, that this very plea, which can scarcely be stated without bordering upon the ludicrous, will be perfectly valid in that awful court, where God himself presides by the agency of his eternal Son.

III. The sum, then, of the whole argument, an argument founded on right reason and peremptorily established by the authority of revelation—the sum of the whole argument is this.

God is a God of perfect justice. But God has, with greater or less clearness, made known his will to all mankind: either by traditionary law, which the Apostle describes as an obligation to *do the things of the law by nature*; or by the written law, which in his day was peculiar to the Jews. All mankind, however, have acted in direct opposition to his will, by voluntarily breaking the law, which was appointed as the standard of their actions. Therefore the justice of God is as much concerned to inflict punishment on all mankind, as the justice of our courts of law is concerned to inflict punishment on a robber or a murderer.

What that punishment is, we are very unequivocally taught in the Old Testament: and St. Paul confirms its decision in the New. *As many as are of the works of the law*, that is, as many as venture to build their claim of salvation on their having fulfilled the requisitions of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them..\**

Would we then be justified by the law, we must not fail to obey it in every particular. If we transgress in *any one*, we bring ourselves under a curse. Nor can our obedience to it in other points make us cease to be disobedient to it in this one: just as, if we have committed robbery, our freedom from the guilt of murder will not therefore make us cease to be robbers. But *all*, both Jews and Gentiles, have transgressed, not merely in *one* point, but in many: and the penalty of such transgression is *the being brought under the curse of God*. Therefore all mankind, without the exception of a single individual, are under the curse of God. Hence the Supreme Judge of all the Universe is as much bound, by the immutable principles of justice, to inflict punishment on them, as an earthly judge is bound to inflict punishment on a murderer. In either case, if the culprit be suffered to escape with im-

\* Gal. iii. x.

punity, an act of injustice is palpably committed; however we may attempt to disguise it under the name of *mercy*.

IV. If this view of the subject be accurate (and, unless I greatly mistake, it is the view presented to us by St. Paul), we may fearfully exclaim with the prophet of Pethor, *Alas who shall live when God doeth this?* But we ought to do more: we ought (it is surely our interest to do so); we ought diligently and anxiously to inquire, in what manner, then, we may hope to be delivered from the tremendous potency of a divine curse. And the inquiry has been made in all ages, though the unaided wit of man was never able to prosecute it successfully.

I. The plan of the Deist who rejects divine revelation, in which he is followed by the Socinian who receives it so far as it squares with his pre-conceived opinions, is partly to extenuate the alleged guilt of man, and partly to call in the unqualified mercy of God.

But such a plan by no means solves the difficulty. The question is not to what extent we have been disobedient, but whether or no we have been disobedient at all. If we have disobeyed in any one single point, we are, upon every principle of legal justice, obnoxious to merited punishment. Therefore, unless the Deist and the Socinian be prepared to maintain the abso-

lute sinlessness of man, they must acknowledge, that, in the quality of a transgressor of God's law, he deserves punishment : just as they must acknowledge, that a person, who has been guilty of only a single robbery or a single murder, deserves punishment, however blameless he may be in all other points. But we rarely find them inclined to hazard the naked assertion, that man is altogether sinless before God ; though they are apt to designate his offences by the qualifying appellation of *frailties*. *Words*, however, will not alter the nature of *things*. The acknowledgment that *man has frailties*, is, in plain English, the acknowledgment that *he has faults*. And, if he has faults, then he has offended before God. And, if he has offended before God, then he deserves punishment. And that punishment the Socinian, at least, who admits the authority of revelation, must admit to be *the being brought under God's curse* : because this is positively declared to be the fate of those, who continue not in *all* things enjoined by the law ; that is, of those, who violate it in *any one single* particular.

The point, therefore, is, in what manner are we, upon the principles of the Deist and the Socinian, to escape the tremendous consequences of the curse attached to any one act of disobedience ?

They teach us, that God is merciful as well as just ; and that we are to look for the free pardon of our sins, or (as they term them) frailties, from his unqualified mercy, adding, perhaps, on the condition of our repentance.

This scheme appears sufficiently plausible on the first aspect. But it will in no wise bear the test of close examination. God is represented in it as being merciful at the expense of his justice. The Deity of the Socinian is *necessarily*, by a circle of consequence, whatever attempts may be made to escape from it ; is *necessarily* and *inevitably* an unjust being, and therefore an imperfect being. He suffers the guilty to escape with impunity ; and therefore, however he may be complimented on the score of *mercy*, he most assuredly does not possess the attribute of perfect *justice*, and consequently is himself imperfect.

*What !* it may be asked, *does it argue injustice to pardon a culprit on his sincere repentance ?*

The best answer to this question is afforded by the practice of our courts of human judicature. A man is convicted and condemned as a murderer. He professes himself, and (we will suppose) really *is*, a true penitent. Now, on the Socinian scheme (for the only difference between the two cases is, that in the one God is

the judge, and in the other a fellow mortal ; so far as the abstract question of justice and injustice is concerned, there is no difference at all between them :) on the Socinian scheme, I say, this murderer may equitably be pardoned, simply because he is heartily sorry for what he has done, and wishes it undone.

If such reasoning would not be thought valid in our courts of law, I see not why we should expect it to be admitted at the bar of heaven. If bare repentance will not avail to procure a pardon in this world, why should we suppose its efficacy to be greater in the next? Mercy is indeed sometimes extended here : but, as I have already shewn, if it be analysed, it is in reality a partial act of injustice, disguised under a pleasing name. If it be ever exercised by the Deity in the manner for which the Socinian contends ; he just so far departs from perfect justice ; he just so far is partially unjust ; he just so far is an imperfect Being. It is impossible to form an idea of a perfectly just Being, remitting, by a mere act of mercy, that punishment which justice requires to be inflicted on an offender. In so doing (the consequence can never be eluded) in so doing, he ceases to be perfectly just ; because he does not fulfil the requisitions of perfect justice ; and thenceforth he becomes, to a certain degree, unjust.



Let the Socinian labour to extricate himself as much as he pleases, I see not how he can escape from the horns of this dilemma : *either the God, whom he worships, is a partially unjust, and therefore an imperfect God ; or, if he be a perfectly just and therefore a perfect God, all mankind lie under the curse of the violated law.*

2. The system exhibited in Scripture, but with more minute (perhaps I may say, with more scholastic) particularity by St. Paul than by any other of the sacred writers, differs, unless the words of Holy Writ be twisted most unnaturally from their plain and obvious meaning, very essentially from the system advocated by the Socinian.

The remarkable passage before us contains the sum and substance of the whole matter. As a point already proved by him in the preceding part of his epistle, St. Paul sets forth, as an undeniable principle, that *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* He next declares, that, notwithstanding our violation of the divine law, we are yet *justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* He then proceeds to describe *how* we are redeemed by Christ : *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.* And he lastly intimates, that this was done in order that the justice of God might be preserved absolutely

perfect and entire, even at the very time when he was extending pardon to those whose condemnation that justice loudly demanded : *to declare his righteousness* (or, *for the public demonstration of his justice*) *in the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; I say, for the public demonstration of his justice at this time : that so he might be just, and yet the justifier of : in which believeth in Jesus.*

It must, I think, strike every one, however singular it may appear at the first view, that God's remission of sins is not here described as an act of *mercy*, but as an act of strict and unbending *justice*. His remission of them, contradictory as such a thing might seem, is yet a public demonstration of his *justice*. The Apostle, in order as it were that his meaning might be incapable of misapprehension, emphatically repeats his words : and, instead of disguising the point, or refusing to meet the difficulty, he sums up the whole, in what may well be termed *the great legal paradox of Christianity*, by declaring, that God accepted the atonement made by the blood of Christ, in order that *he might at once be just himself, and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus ;* nay, that, by virtue of this powerful atonement, the remission of sins should absolutely be a demonstration of his *justice* ; not of his *mercy* (as the Socinian would teach us,) but of his *justice*.

The evident drift of St. Paul is to shew, how God may preserve inviolate his attribute of justice at the very time when he is pardoning those whom strict justice would condemn: and this he teaches us, is done by Christ being made our substitute and by his bearing in his own person the whole weight of that wrath which must otherwise have fallen upon us. The complete penalty of sin was exacted even to the uttermost farthing: and the most ample satisfaction was made to the divine justice; but it was done, not by the sufferings of the guilty, but by the sufferings of one placed in their stead. The divine attribute of justice being now perfectly satisfied, and a punishment completely equivalent to the sins of the whole world having been inflicted; that very attribute of justice, *justice not mercy*, was now as much concerned in pardoning the sins of every faithful penitent, as it was before concerned in punishing them, notwithstanding his repentance. For, precisely as it would be unjust to punish a man twice for the same offence, so it would be unjust to punish those whose punishment had already been undergone by their surety, Christ.

But it may be objected, *Where is the justice of punishing the innocent, and suffering the guilty to escape; of laying upon the innocent the punishment due to the guilty? Surely this very*

*substitution is in itself a breach of that justice, for which it is contended.*

I reply, that such a substitution would doubtless be unjust, if it were *constrained* : but, since it is *voluntary* on the part of the substitute, all shew of injustice towards *him* is done away ; for no person's own free act and deed, however injurious it may be to *himself*, can be construed into an injury received from *another*.

V. Here however we must remark, that this voluntariness, though *essential*, is not in itself sufficient to constitute an *adequate* substitute. It is obviously necessary, that there should be not only *the will*, but *the right* ; not only *the right*, but *the power*. Now it is not easy to conceive, how all these three requisites, *the will*, *the right*, and *the power*, should subsist in any *created being*.

1. We will first suppose, that a mere man should be willing to make satisfaction for the sins of the world by undergoing the merited punishment.

He is *himself* a sinner : his *own* life is already forfeit : therefore *he* can no more take upon himself the punishment due to others, than a *condemned malefactor* could engage to lay down his life for a fellow-culprit. His life is no longer his own : it is already forfeit to the law. He may have *the will* ; but he wants both *the right* and *the power* to make satisfaction for another.

2. We will next suppose the case either of a perfectly sinless man, or of an incarnate angel, who should be willing to satisfy the justice of God by suffering that death which was a punishment due to others; his own life by the hypothesis not being previously forfeit.

He has *the will*; and, for a moment, we will grant that he has *the power*, to make full satisfaction; but in himself he assuredly has not *the right*. No person can have a right to dispose, according to his mere pleasure, of what he has received only upon trust. But every created being has received his life upon trust. Therefore no such being has a right to dispose of it according to his mere pleasure. If he acted otherwise, he would, by the very act itself, forfeit his sinlessness: and therefore, being now himself a violator of the law, he would no longer have *the power* to make satisfaction for the sins of others, even supposing that he had previously possessed such *power*.

3. To this it might be replied, that, although he possessed not the right *inherently*, he might possess it *by grant*: under which circumstance, provided only he possessed *the power*, he would possess all the three requisites in question, *the power, the will, and the right*; the latter, not indeed *naturally*, but *by lawful acquisition*.

I allow, then, that he might possess *the will* intrinsically, and *the right* by grant from the

Creator: but it is still greatly to be doubted, whether in the very nature of things, *the power* ever *could* be possessed by any *created* being, the circumstance of his *creation* necessarily and inevitably withholding it from him. Many perhaps will be little disposed to allow the validity of the common argument, that *sin, being committed against an infinite Being, requires an infinite satisfaction; but an infinite satisfaction can only be made by an infinite person: and infinitude is an incommunicable attribute of God; therefore Christ, who makes an infinite satisfaction for the sins of the world, must himself be God*: many, I say, will not be disposed to allow the validity of this argument; because a mere inversion of the terms will produce an exactly opposite conclusion.\* Yet it is hard, nay impossible, to conceive, how any *created* being, however exalted, can make satisfaction to the Almighty for the sins of *others*: because, let him be exalted as may, his duties rise in exact proportion to his exaltation; and, when he has done all in his power to glorify God, though not an *unprofitable* servant, yet he has done *no more* than his duty. He has no *excess* of merit, whereby he may at once save his own soul, and endure the whole

\* See Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. i. p. 160, 161. No. xiii.

weight of God's wrath on account of the sins of a guilty world.

VI. This train of reasoning seems necessarily to lead to the conclusion, that the person, whose atonement is of such powerful efficacy as to exhibit God perfectly just, even in the very act of justifying sinners, must himself be God: because it does not appear, how any being inferior to God could at once possess all the qualifications essential to the character of a substitute, namely, *the will, the right, and the power.*

But Christ, whose Godhead is elsewhere as positively declared as it is here the apparently necessary result of abstract reasoning; Christ possesses *all* the requisite qualifications. *The will* he possesses in common (it might be) with *any* created being: *the right* he possesses (as *we* believe) inherently, though *that* he might have possessed only by grant from the Deity: but *the power* is, I apprehend, an essential attribute of the Godhead, which never can be communicated to any *creature* without that creature losing its distinguishing characteristic of a *creature.*

Accordingly, both *the inherent right* and *the full power*, which last completes the character of a sufficient substitute, are expressly claimed for our Lord. *Therefore doth my father love me, saith he, because I lay down my life, that I might take*

*it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.\** So likewise, *He is able, saith his apostle, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.†*

VII. In this manner, and in this only, can the problem be solved; *that sinful man should escape the penalty due to his sins; and that God should still retain inviolate his attribute of perfect justice.*

In Christ Jesus alone, very God and very man, are the apparently jarring attributes of *justice* and *mercy* reconciled together. Through the atonement made by his precious blood-shedding, we may now with a firm, though humble, confidence look up to God as being at once *just*, and the *justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

\* John x. 17, 18.

† Heb. vii. 25, 26, 27.



## SERMON III.

### THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION.

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ROMANS VIII. 33, 34.

*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ?  
It is God that justifieth : who is he that condemneth ?*

IN the discussion of theological subjects, I take novelty, at least novelty of *opinion*, to be no recommendation ; rather indeed the reverse. An intemperate love of broaching something new, has been, in all ages, the fruitful parent of heresy. Yet surely if any thing be fixed and immoveable, if any thing in its nature be incapable of change ; it must be the leading doctrines of divine revelation. To them, above all other matters, we may apply the exhortation of the prophet : *Stand ye in the ways : and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.\**

\* Jerem. vi. 16.

Yet, while it is our duty to disclaim all pretensions to *novelty*; it is no less our duty, as occasion serves, to *restate* and *enforce*, from time to time, the great truths of religion. The labours of our forefathers are apt to be disregarded by the careless and inconsiderate, merely because their productions now wear a somewhat antiquated garb, This circumstance alone, even if there were no other reason, forbids us to rest in listless indolence; and gives a never ceasing importance to the expository part of the ministerial function. Truths, however undoubted, when never referred to, become in a manner obsolete. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity therefore ought to enter more or less fully into *all* our discourses. The practice of the Gospel ought *ever* to be built upon the principles of the Gospel. Yet there are peculiar seasons, when it may be expedient to discuss each particular doctrine, if not more *fully*, yet in a somewhat more *regular* and *scholastic* form, than might be deemed adviseable before mixed congregations.

If the end of the Gospel be the reconciliation of man with God, and if it be therefore of prime importance to ascertain how that reconciliation is effected: then the doctrine of *Justification* may claim to itself a sort of precedency over all other doctrines; then one of the greatest fathers of the reformation did not err, when he pro-

nounced it to be the badge of a standing or of a falling church, according as it was held soundly or unsoundly.\* Its importance, indeed, sufficiently appears from the conclusion of the argument, which runs through the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians. To them, who have departed from the sound holding of this grand doctrine, it is declared, that *Christ shall profit nothing*; that *Christ is become of no effect*.† Surely then it is of unspeakable moment both to ourselves and to our congregations, that we should take heed to ourselves that we are sound in the faith; that we should not rest in the superficial consideration of such a point; but that we should labour to be well grounded in it, that so, in the awful day of reckoning, we may save both ourselves and those committed to our care.

I. In discussing this subject, the first matter necessary seems to be to acquire a clear conception of the term.

The words *Justify* and *Justification* occur in Scripture in various senses, just as we are accustomed to use them in our ordinary conversation: but we have at present only occasion to concern ourselves with what may eminently be styled their *theological sense*; I mean the sense,

\* *Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ.* Luther.

† Gal. v. 2, 4.

in which St. Paul, who has more formally treated of the doctrines of the Gospel than any of the other apostles, uses them to describe the mode and ground of our acceptance with God.

Now the sense, in which he employs them for this purpose, may be gathered with singular definiteness from the words which I have chosen for my text.

*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?*

The phraseology of this passage is manifestly *forensic*. The elect of God are put upon their trial. Charges of various descriptions are pleaded against them. Yet, however aggravated these charges may be, whatever degree of truth they may contain (and alas! they are but too true); who shall presume to condemn, since it is God that justifieth? Here Justification is plainly used antithetically to Condemnation. But the opposite of Condemnation is Acquittal. Therefore the theological sense of Justification must be Acquittal. It is acknowledged however, that the charges brought against the elect are true, and consequently that they deserve Condemnation rather than Acquittal. Hence, although *acquitted* when put upon their trial, they evidently cannot be acquitted precisely in that sense of the word which is usual in our courts of justice: that is to say they cannot be acquitted as innocent persons,

against whom certain accusations have been falsely preferred. Justification, therefore, is a complex idea : it involves the notion of Pardon as well as of Acquittal.\* In this sense accordingly we find it used : *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*†

But here it may be asked, does not this complex idea involve a sort of contradiction ? How can the allowedly guilty be not only pardoned, but acquitted ? How is such a procedure reconcilable with the divine attribute of justice ?

This is, if I may so speak, the grand Christian paradox ; a paradox which can only be resolved by a right understanding of the doctrine of Justification. The Apostle was aware of this apparent contradiction : and therefore immediately after the words last cited, he adds, *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*‡

\* " God's justifying, solely or chiefly, doth import his acquitting us from guilt, condemnation, and punishment, by free pardon and remission of our sins, accounting us, and dealing with us, as just persons, upright and innocent in his sight and esteem." Barrow's Sermon of Justification by faith. §. V.

† Rom. iii. 23, 24, 25.      ‡ Rom. iii. 26.

II. The difficulty, however, is not yet removed: the question still recurs, how God can be just, and yet the justifier, *the acquitting pardoner*, of those who are clearly guilty. For a solution of this question we must consider *the grounds* of our justification before God.

Now we can only be justified before a just God by *righteousness of some sort*; by *our own righteousness*, or *the righteousness of some other person*. That we have *naturally* no righteousness of our own, and that our justification is merited and procured by Christ, is alike the opinion of Romanists and Protestants. But, in the essence of justification, and in the manner wherein it is conveyed to us, there is a very material difference between them.

1. Aware that Scripture will not bear them out in ascribing to man by *nature* such righteousness as can merit his justification, yet being equally aware, that without sufficient righteousness of *some* description no man can be justified, the Romanists maintain, that the righteousness in question is a divine spiritual quality, merited for us by Christ, and infused into the souls of each of us.

This infused quality (they say) renders our good works meritorious, and therefore effectual to procure our justification: and our good works, being thus rendered meritorious, deserve and

procure an augmentation of the infused quality which produced them. The first reception of this quality, which they term *grace*, is, in their divinity, what they call *the first Justification*: while the augmentation of it they consider as a *second Justification*. As Grace, after its original reception, may be increased by the meritoriousness of the works which itself produces; so may it be diminished by the demerit of venial sin, and lost by the greater demerit of mortal sin. if it be only diminished, it may be repaired by holy water, Ave Marias, crossings, and the like: if it be altogether lost, it must be reprocured by the sacrament (as they style it) of Penance. Yet, when reprocured, it hath not the same power that it originally had. For it only removes the guilt of the mortal sin which hath been committed, changing the eternal punishment due to it into a temporal satisfactory punishment, either here or hereafter: *here*, if there be sufficient time for the infliction of the requisite mortification; *hereafter*, in purgatory, if there be not. Nevertheless, the pains of purgatory may be either lightened, shortened, or quite removed, by masses and other observances, by pardon for a certain term, or by plenary pardon.

Nor is this the whole of their system. Though they believe, that we need infused Grace to enable us to perform such good works as may merit

our justification : yet they likewise maintain, that this very Grace itself, which we have not by nature, may be deserved on account of works done by us antecedently to its reception, if not of *condignity*, yet (as the schoolmen express it) of *congruity*. *This, as the judicious Hooker strongly remarks, is the mystery of the man of sin. This maze the Church of Rome doth cause her followers to tread, when they ask her the way to justification.\**

It is not very difficult to shew the irreconcilableness of such doctrine with Scripture.

St. Paul repeatedly declares, that our justification is solely by faith in the merits of Christ, and not by our own workings or deservings. *Where is boasting ? saith he, It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude* (a conclusion drawn from the preceding argument, that, since *all* have sinned, all *without exception* must be justified freely by grace through the redemption of Christ Jesus) *Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.†* And, that *the moral Law*, not merely *the ceremonial Law*, is here meant, is manifest, both from the circumstance of Abraham being adduced as an example who lived before the institution of the

\* Discourse of Justification. § 5.

† Rom. iii. 27, 28.



ceremonial Law, and from the drift of the whole argument which goes to prove that *all* are sinners, Gentiles as well as Jews. Accordingly, the Apostle elsewhere places *works*, so far as *the meritorious cause* of justification is concerned, in direct opposition to *grace*. *There is a remnant according to the election of grace. And, if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But, if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.\** Now, in the Romish system, our own works are made the cause meritorious of our justification. It is of little avail to urge, that the righteousness, whereby they contend we are justified, is not *naturally* and *independently* our own, but that it is *the fruit* of a divine principle *infused* into us. If the righteousness be composed of righteous actions performed by *us*, it is to all intents and purposes *our own* righteousness. The derivation from God, of the *power* to perform those actions does not make them the less *our* actions, unless to *the communicated power* of performing them be superadded a *fatal necessity* of performing them, which is not pretended to be the case. Upon the Romish system, we might just as well argue that *nothing* is our own: for what is there,

\* Rom. xi. 5, 6.

either natural or spiritual, which we have not received from God either at our birth or subsequent to it? Hence it is manifest, that, according to such a system, the whole argument of the Apostle is nugatory: for it were mere trifling to place our works, be they performed as they may, in direct contradistinction to grace, if it might be replied that our works are no more our own than grace itself, inasmuch as the power to perform them is derived from God.

“What then, is the fault of the Church of Rome? Not that she requireth works at their hands which will be saved: but that she attributeth unto works a power of satisfying God for sin, a virtue to merit both grace here and in heaven glory—He, which maketh any work good and acceptable in the sight of God to proceed from the natural freedom of our will; he, which giveth unto any good works of ours the force of satisfying the wrath of God for sin, the power of meriting either earthly or heavenly rewards; he, which holdeth works going before our vocation in congruity to merit our vocation, works following our first to merit our second justification and by condignity our last reward in the kingdom of heaven: he pulleth up the doctrine of faith by the roots; for out of every one of these the plain direct denial thereof may be necessarily concluded—By grace, the Apostle saith, and

by grace in such a sort as a gift ; a thing, that cometh not of ourselves nor of our works, lest any man should boast and say, *I have wrought out my own salvation.* By grace they confess ; but by grace in such sort, that as many as wear the diadem of bliss, they wear nothing but what they have won.”\*

2. The time would fail me to shew what gross errors, particularly the monstrous error of supererogatory merit, may be traced up to the Romish doctrine of justification. The detection of falsehood is the best preparation for the statement of truth. I proceed, therefore, to exhibit the Protestant doctrine of Justification, or, I should rather say, the scriptural doctrine of it.

It has already been observed, that we can only be justified either by our own righteousness, or the righteousness of some other person. By our own we certainly cannot. Therefore we must be justified by some external righteousness : and that righteousness is the righteousness of our Saviour Christ, apprehended by faith and imputed to us by the grace of God. We are not justified by this righteousness being infused into us ; but by its being so imputed to us, that at the bar of heaven it is reckoned as our own and pleaded by our great advocate in arrest of

\* Hooker's Discourse of Justification. § 32, 34.

judgment. Hence Christ is said to be made righteousness unto us.\* Hence this righteousness which is styled the righteousness of God, is said to be by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference, inasmuch as all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.† Hence we are told, that the faith of Abraham was *counted unto him for righteousness*: and the method of this counting is immediately after explained to us with much precision: Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.‡ Hence we read of the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.§ And hence, since faith is the instrument whereby we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, we are said to be justified by faith; || which is, in effect, the same as our being justified by grace through faith: ¶ and, since we can do no works pleasing unto God without faith,\*\* and since consequently we can do no works theologically good previous to our justification, St. Paul draws the conclu-

\* 1 Corin. i. 30.

† Rom. iii. 22, 23.

‡ Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5.

§ Rom. iv. 6.

|| Rom. v. 1.

¶ Ephes. ii. 8.

\*\* Heb. xi. 6. Rom. xiv. 23.

sion, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. \*

On these authorities our church rightly determines, that we “are accounted righteous before God (*accounted* only, not actually *made* righteous†), only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”‡ And, on the same authorities, she further decides respecting works done before justification, that *they are not pleasing to God.*§ But, if works done before justification be not pleasing unto God, then no works of ours can, in any shape, be *the procuring cause* of justification: for, if we can do no good works until we be first justified, and if even the good works done after our justification and in consequence of it *cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God’s judgment;*|| then our justification must necessarily be wholly independent of our works.

\* Rom. iii. 28.

† By this merit it is that we are accounted righteous before God; where we may take notice by the way, how our being justified is here expressed by our being accounted righteous, and not by our being made righteous. Bp. Beveridge on Art. xi.

‡ Art. xi.

§ Art. xiii.

|| Art. xii.

Thus, so far as *the cause meritorious* of our justification is concerned, we arrive at the conclusion; that we are justified solely by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, his all-perfect righteousness being imputed unto us, and thence in the court of heaven accounted as our righteousness.

Zealous as we ought to be of good works in their proper place, here, in the article of justification, we must altogether renounce them. We must reckon them, as altogether nothing. We must not presume, in the slightest degree, to build upon them. We must not imagine, that they can purchase heaven for us. We must not dare to plead them in arrest of judgment. Before God our only suit must be, that we are sinners; that Christ is righteous; that he was imputatively made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might imputatively be made the righteousness of God in him.\*

And alas! what are our works, that we should even think of pleading them, that we should even dream of being justified on any other ground than faith alone in the righteousness of Christ? Our very best deeds, performed after our very best fashion, what are they? Take into the account their fewness, their imperfec-

\* Art. xii.

tion, their debasement by the admixture of human motives and by-regards, their constrainedness, the little reverence to the High Majesty of heaven with which they have been performed; take into the account the mere negativeness of what we not unfrequently reckon as good works, the absence, the only partial, absence of evil, rather than the presence of actual good: and short and defective indeed, God knoweth, will be the catalogue of them. It would sound strangely in the ears of the blessed angels to hear fallen man exulting in the supposed dignity of his moral merit, and claiming the happiness of heaven as a debt due to his good works. How much more strangely then must it sound in the ears of that God, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth his angels with folly. High as the thoughts of some may be at present, when death cometh upon them as an armed man, and when they stand trembling upon the verge of eternity, they will then feel how little they can venture to build upon their very best deeds. They will then feel that there is no solid ground of comfort, no stable hope of acceptance, but in the alone merits of Jesus Christ.

Admirably clear and decisive is the language of our venerable Church on this important point of doctrine.

*Faber.* 9

“ The true understanding of this doctrine, *we be justified freely by faith without works*, or that *we be justified by faith only*, is—that although we hear God’s word and believe it ; although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread, and fear of God, within us, and do never so many works thereunto ; yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues, of faith, hope, charity, and all other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak and insufficient and imperfect to deserve remission of our sins and our justification : and therefore we must trust only in God’s mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Christ Jesus the Son of God once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God’s grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly to him again. We put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only ; that we be justified by God’s free mercy and the merits of our Saviour Christ only, and by no virtue or good works of our own, that is in us, or that we can be able to have or to do for to deserve the same ; Christ himself only being the cause meritorious thereof.”\*

\* Homily of Salvation. Part ii. and iii.



III. This statement of the doctrine of *Justification* has had various objections alleged against it in all ages.

1. The most common objection to it, and (I believe) the most ancient, is, that it relaxes the bonds of morality ; that it encourages licentiousness ; that it is liable to be grossly abused. *If we are to be justified by faith alone*, it has frequently been asked, *what need have we to be anxious in the performance of good works ?*

It is not to be dissembled, that the doctrine has been miserably and dangerously perverted by the impure speculations of Antinomianism. But what then ? Are we to give up the very fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, because it has been abused by the evil-minded to their own destruction ? No : the doctrine we must retain, we must guard as our best treasure. We must retain it, but protest against the perversion of it.

Such was the method adopted by St. Paul. After fully stating the doctrine, he anticipates and reprobates the abuse of it. *What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?\** The mercy of God in freely justifying us by the alone

\* Rom. vi. 1, 2.

merits of his Son, independently of any workings or deservings on our parts, so far from encouraging us to wallow in the mire of iniquity, ought rather to stir us up to shew our gratitude to our heavenly benefactor for the infinite grace which he hath bestowed upon us. And such always will be its effect, wherever the doctrine is received into the heart with sanctification, and not merely admitted by the intellect as a barren, unprofitable theory.

But, unless I greatly mistake, the Apostle's mode of repelling the danger of Antinomian abuse is profitable, not only for reproof and correction, but likewise for doctrine and instruction. It seems to me to prove most decidedly, that *justification, as explained by the protestant churches, is the very justification set forth to us in Scripture.*

St. Paul is evidently conscious, that the doctrine proposed by him was liable to be perverted by Antinomian teachers, to the worst kind of licentiousness, a licentiousness horribly deduced from Scripture itself. Now the doctrine, as explained by the Church of Rome, namely that *we are justified by the good works which we perform in consequence of the infusion of grace*, is certainly not liable to the peculiar kind of abuse guarded against by the Apostle: while the doctrine, as explained by the protestant churches, namely

that *we are justified by the sole merits of Christ through faith and not in the slightest degree by our own works*, is plainly liable to the *very* abuse which the Apostle guards against. Hence it is certain, that the doctrine of the Romanists cannot be *his* doctrine ; because, if it were, his repelling argument would be altogether irrevelant and out of place : he would be combating an absolute shadow, an impossible abuse. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe, that the doctrine of the Protestants *is* his doctrine, both because it is expressed in the very language of St. Paul, and because it is undoubtedly liable in the hands of bad men to the very perversion to which he acknowledges that *his* doctrine is liable.

That this is an accurate statement, is sufficiently manifest from the conduct of the Romanists themselves.

At and after the time of the reformation, they were loud in objecting to the Protestants, that the doctrine of *Justification*, as taught by them, served only to encourage licentiousness ; for that, if men were justified by faith only, and not by works, an inducement would be held out to them to continue in sin.

In making this objection, they appear not to have considered, that, by the confession of St. Paul *himself*, it might equally be made to *his*

statement of the doctrine of *Justification*. With the same propriety, that they charged the protestant churches with encouraging licentiousness, they might have charged the Apostle himself; that is to say, with no propriety whatsoever. So far as *the cause meritorious* of our justification is concerned, the Apostle and the protestant churches alike maintain, that we are justified by faith without works,\* by faith in the merits of Christ independently of any deserving on our parts: so far as this doctrine is mischievously abused by evil men, to *the purposes of licentiousness*, they alike protest against the abuse, and declare that they sanction not any such consequences. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid*, indignantly exclaims the Apostle. *How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?†* “It is a childish cavil,” says the judicious Hooker, “wherewith, in the matter of justification, our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming, that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing in Christians but faith; because we teach that *faith alone justifieth*: whereas by this speech we never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable mates with faith in

\* Rom. iii. 27, 28.

† Rom. vi. 1, 2,

the man that is justified ; or works from being added as necessary duties, required at the hands of every justified man : but to shew, that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification ; and Christ, the only garment, which, being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures ; hideth the imperfection of our works ; preserveth us blameless in the sight of God, before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea to shut us from the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter.”\*

It is indeed hard to say, why the protestant doctrine of *Justification* should be charged with undervaluing good works, merely because it assigns to them their proper place and office.

Shall we be thought to depreciate the utility of food and medicine, because we deny that medicine can be used as food, or food as medicine? Do we not at once perceive, that each is good *in* its place, each *out of* its place mischievous and prejudicial? Just so is it with good works. Because we deny that they are in any shape *the procuring cause* of our justification, do we therefore deny that they are *the necessary consequence* of it? Because we allow them not

\* Discourse of Justification. § 31.

*merit*, are we therefore the preachers of *immorality*? Can they be performed from no other motive, than that of enabling us to set down God in our debt-books, than that of proudly demanding from him the happiness of heaven as no more than the just recompense of our meritorious exertions? While we deny their meritoriousness as a plea, while we cast ourselves wholly on the mercy of God through Christ; we cease not to declare, that they are the only sure proofs and evidences of justification; that they necessarily (that is, by moral necessity) follow after it, though they go not before it; that they are inseparable from the state and condition of a really justified man; that no one who bringeth not forth fruits meet for repentance hath a right to consider himself as being in that state.

In short, the difference between the Romanists and the Protestants, is this.

They alike hold the necessity of good works: but they hold it in different senses of the word *necessity*. The Romanists hold their necessity *in the matter of justification* (for to *this* point their doctrine, however large may be the circle in which it moves, must ultimately be brought :) the Protestants hold their necessity *only in the matter of duty*. *We acknowledge*, as Hooker states the question with admirable clearness, *We acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing*

well, but the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce.\* Thus, though we renounce good works, and altogether reject them in the article of justification ; we enforce them as the undoubted duty of every Christian man, as the only sure evidence whereby he can be known to be a Christian man. Thus do we disclaim the Popish doctrine of merit in all its ramifications ; while we hold out no encouragement, as our adversaries have slanderously misrepresented us, to the crude abominations of the Antinomian heresy.

2. There is yet another objection to the doctrine of *Justification*, as taught by the Church of England, deduced from the well known passage in the epistle of St. James, wherein he teaches, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*†

On this it may be observed, that, since St Paul declares that *a man is justified by faith alone without works* ; and reasons upon this proposition, that, if it were not so, *grace would be no longer grace* : and, since St. James declares, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only* : it is a clear case, that these two propositions cannot stand together, unless some of the terms which they contain be used in different senses.

\* Discourse of Justification. § 7.

† James ii. 24.

Now the terms which they contain, are *Justification*, *Faith*, and *Works*. The question therefore is, which of these terms is variously used by the two Apostles.

The most natural solution, because the most accordant with the context, seems to be, that the terms so used are *Justification* and *Faith*.

St. Paul speaking of Justification in its naked, abstract, theological sense, of Pardon and Acquittal, declares that the procuring cause of it is a lively faith in the merits of Christ; a faith, whereby the believer submits himself to him as his king, his priest, and his prophet. This declaration appears to have been either misunderstood or perverted by certain antinomian teachers. St. James, therefore, asserts, that the faith, which justifies a man, is not a mere speculative belief, such as the devils have: and, using the word *Faith* in the sense of those whom he is opposing (that is to say, in the sense of bare historical belief, a sense in which St. Paul never meant it to be understood), he thence teaches, that a man is not justified by *Faith only*.

But he goes yet further: he also declares, that a man is justified by works. He must therefore use the word Justification likewise in a different sense from his brother Apostle. Hence, as St. Paul undoubtedly uses it in the abstract; so St. James must be understood to use it in the



concrete, as involving the idea of its consequent Sanctification. Thus, though the righteousness of Abstract Justification be imputative and not personal; yet the righteousness of sanctification, which is the consequent and concrete of justification, is no doubt personally inherent and not imputative.

Using the word then in different senses, or rather in a less and a more extended sense, the two Apostles teach with equal truth; the one, that a man is justified by faith only; the other, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith (that is, speculative belief) alone. St. Paul speaks of the imputed righteousness of proper justification; St. James, of the inherent righteousness of that sanctification which followeth after proper justification. Before God a man is justified by the former righteousness only: hence St. Paul teaches, *To him that worketh not, but believeth, faith is counted for righteousness.\** With respect to his own personal condition, he is justified by the latter righteousness, and not by the vain belief of a devil: hence St. John teaches, *He that doeth righteousness is righteous.†*

“Of the one,” says the judicious Hooker, “St. Paul doth prove by Abraham’s example, that we have it of faith without works: of the other, St.

\* Rom. iv. 3.

† 1 John iii. 7.

James, by Abraham's example, that by works we have it, and not only by faith. St. Paul doth plainly sever these two parts of Christian righteousness one from the other." *Being freed from sin and made servants to God, ye have your fruit in holiness, and the end everlasting life.\* Ye are made free from sin, and made servants unto God* : this is the righteousness of justification. *Ye have your fruit in holiness* : this is the righteousness of sanctification—By the one we are interested in the right of inheriting : by the other we are brought to the actual possession of eternal bliss ; and so the end of both is everlasting life.†

IV. The doctrine of *justification by faith only* is pronounced by the Church of England to be a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.‡ Such, I am persuaded, it is, when received with purity and godly simplicity, when guarded (as the Apostle guards it) from the mischievous perversions of Antinomianism.

1. It is a wholesome doctrine, as tending to curb all pride in man, and as inculcating the deepest humility ; as exalting the mercy of God, and as displaying in the most striking point of view the importance of the vicarious sufferings of Christ ; as filling our hearts with gratitude for

\* Rom. vi. 22.

† Discourse of Justification. § 6.

‡ Art. xi.

undeserved grace ; and as teaching us to prostrate ourselves in the lowest self-abasement at the foot of the cross, conscious that we have deeply sinned and have come far short of the glory of God.

The less we attribute to ourselves, the more disposed shall we be to be thankful to our Redeemer : for, whatever portion of merit we arrogate to ourselves, just so much do we depreciate the value of Christ's sacrifice. The man, who imagines that he is in part to be justified by his works, and that the merits of his Redeemer serve only to eke out his deficiencies, must ever be disposed to glorying, must ever entertain a far lower idea of the value of his Saviour's atonement, than he, who feels himself to be a miserable lost sinner ; who presumes not to rest upon his defective services ; who casts himself wholly on the mercy of God through Christ ; whose only plea is the righteousness of his Redeemer ; whose only prayer is, that God would be merciful to him a sinner, and grant him grace henceforth to walk in the paths of sanctification. Hence St. Paul represents it as one great characteristic of the doctrine, that it excludes all boasting. After stating, that *all the world is become guilty before God, and therefore that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight*, he asks, *Where is boasting, then ? It is excluded. By*

*what law ? of works ? Nay : but by the law of faith.\** Hence also he argues incontrovertibly, that, *if Abraham were justified by works, he would have whereof to glory.†*

Surely then such a view of the doctrine, as not only allows to each of us the capability of having a sufficiency of merit for his own justification, but likewise admits the existence of supererogatory merit in saints and martyrs : surely such a view of the doctrine, which tends to puff up those who hold it with Pharisaical pride and self-sufficiency, can never be that humbling Scriptural view of it, which excludes all boasting.

2. The Church of England further pronounces *Justification by faith only* to be a doctrine *very full of comfort.*

Our adversaries have been wont to object to this, that “ comfortable no doubt is the doctrine which requires faith only in order to justification, inasmuch as it teaches a road to heaven which must ever be agreeable to the wicked.”

They seem not, however, to understand the ground on which our Church makes this declaration.

Suppose we had been taught in Scripture, that we were to be saved partly by our works and

\* Rom. iii. 19, 20, 27.

† Rom. iv. 2.

partly by faith : in that case, the line must have been drawn *somewhere*, between a sufficiency of works and a non-sufficiency of them. Under these circumstances, how could any of us have had a well-grounded hope, that we came up to the standard required of us, when we knew not, and never could know, what that standard was ? How tormenting must have been our anxiety ! how slavish our obedience ! Whatever service we performed must have been in the very spirit of bondage ; not a particle of generous, grateful, filial love could have entered into it. We should have been wretched slaves, the spiritual children of Hagar,\* urged to our tasks with whips of scorpions, loathing the intolerable drudgery, hating God in our hearts as a tyrannical, unrelenting taskmaster. Such in fact is the very spirit of Popery and of those who incline to the Popish doctrine of merit. The whole round of penances, mortifications, and pilgrimages ; the trumpery of monastic devotion, the austerity of eremitical seclusion ; the blood-stained scourge of the ascetic in this world, the imagined expiatory flames of purgatory in the next : are all but component parts of that gloomy, cheerless servitude, which is the genuine offspring of *Justification by works*.

\* Galat. iv. 22—31.

But that doctrine, which our Church declares to be full of comfort, is comfortable, not as encouraging licentiousness, not as holding out a reward to hardened profligacy ; but as setting our minds at rest on the certainty of our acceptance with God, as instrumentally infusing into our hearts that Spirit of the Son, whereby we cry *Abba, Father.*\* Blessed be God, *we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.*† Conscious of our demerits, aware that our very best deeds are so mingled with sin and imperfection that we have need to abhor them in the presence of an all-seeing Judge, we cast away all hope, all confidence, in ourselves ; we presume not to demand justification as our right ; we throw ourselves wholly on the mercy of God through Christ ; in him alone we put our trust ; to him alone we flee for shelter and security. Nor will he, in any wise, cast out those who thus come unto him. Graciously will his arms be stretched forth unto them : freely will he justify them from all their sins.

But what then ? Will his justified ones harden themselves in iniquity ? Will they, who have thus come unto Christ, remain bondmen of Sa-

\* Galat. iv. 6.

† 2 Tim. i. 12.

tan? Is it possible for those; over whose hearts the spirit of filial adoption hath been shed, yet to remain in the gall of bitterness? Is it possible for those, who, bewailing their sins, and sensible of their utter inability, have applied unto the Saviour for wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification: is it possible for these men deliberately, presumptuously, habitually, to tear open afresh the wounds of their gracious Redeemer, to tread under foot the Son of God, to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, to do despite unto the Spirit of grace? None, who have *thus* drawn near unto Christ, are capable of such base ingratitude. The two states of mind are utterly incompatible. The language of the justified ever is, and ever must be, *Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Being made free from sin, we are become the servants of righteousness. Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.\** They are freed from the law, as a yoke of bondage, as a code of hard conditions by the performance of which their justification is to be purchased: but, as a rule of holy living, they are still subject, it is their *privilege* to be subject, to the law. Knowing that the ground of their

\* Rom. vi. 15, 18, 6.

justification is wholly distinct from any thing, which they either have or can do ; they labour to serve God under a sweet sense of security : they strive to promote his glory with the affectionate feelings of children who think they can never do enough to evince their gratitude to a kind and indulgent father. They work, as our old reformers were wont to express it, not *for* salvation, but *from* salvation ; not that they *may be* justified, but because they *are* justified.

Thus, rejoicing in hope, full of comfort, abounding in good works, anticipating the glories of the inheritance reserved for them ; thus do the redeemed of the Lord advance on their way heavenward. Renouncing all trust in their own righteousness, they *have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb\**. Soon, therefore, in the full employment of the beatific vision of God, shall they cast, with the apocalyptic elders, their crowns before the throne, and take up the triumphant song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing ; therefore blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.†*

\* Rev. vii. 14.

† Rev. v. 12, 13.



## SERMON IV.

### THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION.

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HEB. XII. 14.

*Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

MAN was created upright: but by his fall from his original integrity, he became a transgressor of the divine law, and was thence made obnoxious to such penalty as the Divine Justice might please to require of him. A consciousness of this deplorable state naturally and necessarily produced an alienation of his heart and affections from God: for, however we may acknowledge it to be *equitable* that the unrighteous should be punished, it is utterly impossible, when *we ourselves* are the subjects of such punishment, that we should feel any *love* for the agent who inflicts it.

The effects, therefore, of the fall were twofold: a *liability to God's justice on account of*

*transgression, and an alienation of the heart from him when viewed as the inflicter of this justice.*

Now, as God is essential holiness, as well as essential justice, it follows inevitably, that the being who ceases to love him, does by that very act cease also to be holy. By his enmity to God, he is brought into a state of contrariety to holiness. But contrariety to holiness implies positive depravation. Man, therefore, by transgressing the divine law, became liable to punishment; becoming liable to punishment, he thence contracted a deep enmity against him from whom he expected the infliction of it: and, having contracted this deep enmity against a perfectly pure and holy Being, he, in consequence of it, became hostile to the very principle of holiness, and was thus tainted to the core with moral and spiritual corruption.

Such I apprehend to have been the progress, through which man deflected from righteousness to unrighteousness, and from purity to impurity.

But here, unhappily, the matter did not stop. The first commandment to man was, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth\**. Now to our primeval parents no offspring was born previous to their fall: a question therefore might

\* Gen. i. 28.

well arise as to the moral condition of children, who should be produced from those who had themselves experienced moral corruption ; whether they would come into the world free from all taint, or whether they would inherit those mental qualities which already characterised their depraved father and mother.

Were we to judge only from analogy, we should, even then, I conceive, find ourselves compelled to determine in favour of the latter supposition. I dwell not upon the mere outward form of the lionet resembling that of the lion, or upon the mere outward form of the lamb reflecting faithfully that of the sheep : for *external appearance* is not the point in question. What we have here to consider is the *internal temper and disposition* of the brute creation : whether nature acts, or does not act, with the same invariable uniformity in producing the mental, as in producing the bodily, characteristics of each animal. Does the young lion then resemble its sire in inward disposition, as well as in outward form : and does the lamb transcribe the temper of its dam, no less than copy its external symmetry ? It is almost superfluous to answer, that, in this particular, just as much as in that which respects bodily organization, the rule of nature is of universal application. Each animal inherits alike the disposition and the form of its pa-

rents. The lamb never betrays the propensities of the lion; nor the lion, the propensities of the lamb. Never do the dispositions of the eagle characterise the dove; never do the dispositions of the dove mark the eagle. Each class of animals, from generation to generation, is invariably distinguished by the same leading temper: the ferocious produce the ferocious; the gentle, the gentle; the docile, the docile; the treacherous, the treacherous. So far as we can observe, in such as are domesticated, there will indeed be minor shades of character in animals of the same class, as there are minor shades of character among individual men: but the great outline of disposition, by which one class is distinguished from another class, remains the same from age to age, and from generation to generation.

The whole analogy then of the brute creation, whether we regard birds and beasts, or fishes and reptiles, would lead us to conclude, that man inherits from man no less the features of mind than the outlines and constitution of body. Adam and Eve, therefore having both experienced moral depravation before the birth of their children, the whole analogy of nature would teach, that their offspring would come into the world bearing their express image both mental and corporeal. In other words, the whole analogy of nature would require us to expect that

state of mind in the human species, which in theology is usually designated by the name of *original sin*.

Following the same analogy, we should be necessarily led to contradict the Pelagian theory, that the sinfulness of man is not *inherent* in his constitution, but that it springs altogether from mere *imitation*. Among animals, a tendency to savageness or mildness, or any other characteristic disposition does not arise from *copying* the manners of other animals, but is plainly *innate* in each subject. Were a lion's cub brought up among sheep, we should not find that he would *adopt* the manners of a lamb: nor, if it were possible that a lamb could be educated among lions, would it thence be led to *imitate* the ferocity and the courage of its associates. In both cases, the temper severally inherited from the parents would still be conspicuous; and would thus prove itself to be *inherent*, not the result of *imitation*. In a similar manner, if we take analogy for our guide, we shall be led to conclude, that man's universal tendency to sin does not originate from his successively *following the bad example* of his parents or companions; but that it is *innate in his very constitution*, and that it derives itself from the *mental depravation* of his progenitors.

We are not, however, left to deduce this important tenet from mere analogy. Scripture is

express on the subject. *The imagination of man's heart, we are told, is evil from his youth\**. *What is man, that he should be clean; and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?†* *Behold, says David, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.‡* The same awful truth is no less necessarily implied, than it is positively declared. *By one man, argues the Apostle, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.§* *For the wages of sin is death.||*

From these passages we learn, that the universal cause of death is sin. Every one that dies, is, by the very circumstance of his death, proved to have been a sinner; because death, we are assured, is the penalty which sin is doomed to pay. But infants die: therefore they are proved by their death to be sinners. Actual sin, however, they have no opportunity of committing: and yet they are sinners: because they pay the penalty of death, no less than adults who have committed actual sin. Therefore, as they have not committed actual sin, and yet are sinners; they can only be sinners in consequence of some radical taint of their nature derived by birth from their parents.

\* Gen. viii. 21.

† Job xv. 14.

‡ Psalm li. 5.

§ Rom. v. 12.

|| Rom. vi. 23.

It is worthy of observation, that the inspired writers occasionally inculcate the same doctrine by a train of analogical reasoning similar to that which I have already employed.

*Can the Ethiopian change his skin ; or the leopard his spots ? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.\**

*But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.†*

Man's sinfulness is compared, in the first of these passages, to the sooty hue of a negro and to the spots of a leopard : while, in the second, his inveterate propensity to evil, notwithstanding any mere temporary outward reformation, is illustrated by certain well known actions of a dog and a sow. But, in both cases, the similitude is palpably *defective*, and therefore *improper*, on the Pelagian scheme. The Ethiopian is black, and the leopard is spotted, not by the *imitation* of black men or of spotted animals, but *from the very time of the natural birth* : therefore the sinfulness, which is compared to them, cannot be simply *imitative*, but must be *inherent*. And, in a similar manner, the dog returns to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the

\* Jerem. xiii. 23.

† 2 Pet. ii. 22.

mire, not because they have been led to *imitate* other dogs and other swine in such unclean practices, but because actions of this description are *natural* to them: therefore the perpetual recurrence to evil deeds on the part of the unregenerate, after various short-lived attempts at reformation, is not to be accounted for on the principle of their *imitating* other unregenerate men, but is to be ascribed to an *original* and *innate propensity* to sin.

This then being the proper constitution of man's nature since the fall, any religion, which descends from heaven, must inevitably *assume* it as a leading fact, and must specially be adapted to *remedy* it: for a religion, *not* thus characterised, could not be *true*, and must be *useless*. Now man by the fall suffered in two distinct modes: by his deflection from righteousness, he lost all *title* to the kingdom of heaven on the score of God's justice; and, by his contraction of impurity, he lost every *qualification* for the kingdom of heaven on the score of God's nature. Man therefore, in order to his salvation, required a religion, which should remedy *both* these defects: a religion, which, by some provision or other, should restore to him his lost *title* to heaven; and which, at the same time, should be instrumental in so bringing back his depraved nature to its original purity, as to give him his



lost *qualification* for the enjoyment of heaven. For, unless the first defect were remedied, he would be shut out by God's immutable justice : and, unless the second were equally remedied, he would still be excluded by God's immutable purity. In the language of Holy Writ, this religion from heaven must at once devise a way, by which *God might both be just and the justifier of sinners*, and by which those sinners might *be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*.

Now to such a description Christianity will be found exactly to answer. By his one sacrifice of himself once offered, Christ has made a perfect atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ; so that, through his all-prevailing meritoriousness, our lost claim and title to the kingdom of heaven is as fully restored to us as if it had never been forfeited : this is our *Justification*. And again, by his Holy Spirit changing and renewing our hearts, making us altogether different creatures from what we were by nature, and gradually maturing us in every disposition pleasing to God, he renders us fit subjects for spiritual happiness ; so that thus our qualification for the kingdom of heaven is restored to us, no less than our right and title to it : this is our *Sanctification*.

These two then, our *Justification* and our *Sanctification*, comprehend the very sum and

substance of Christianity. They are the two hinges, upon which the whole Gospel turns: and, as in point of theory they both presuppose the fact of man's declension from righteousness and purity; so, in point of practice and application, though they essentially differ from each other in nature, they never must and never can be separated. For, if we might suppose it possible that Sanctification could take place in fallen beings without a concomitant Justification, this Sanctification, though it might *qualify* them for heaven, could plainly give them no *title* to it consistently with God's justice; because it could in no respect forensically annihilate their previous violations of the law: and, on the other hand, if the Justification of fallen beings had been accomplished without their concomitant Sanctification, this Justification, though it might give them a *title* to heaven, would plainly be incapable of *qualifying* them for it; because a purchased right to any situation or condition does not in itself make a man fit to occupy it.

Thus it appears, that Justification, if solitary, cannot open to us the kingdom of heaven; because, without Sanctification, we should labour under a natural unfitness for the celestial state: and inversely, that Sanctification, if solitary, can just as little open to us the kingdom of heaven; because, without Justification, we should labour

under a manifest defectiveness of title. In short, without Justification, we should be excluded by the immutability of God's righteousness; without Sanctification, we should be excluded by the immutability of God's holiness.

We are at present concerned with the doctrine of Sanctification viewed as a necessary qualification for the heavenly inheritance. The Apostle charges us to *follow holiness*; we must therefore learn what that holiness is: and he further intimates, that *without it no man shall see the Lord*; it will be useful therefore to establish the truth of this declaration on the principles of right reason, by shewing, that without holiness it is impossible in the very nature of things to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

1. Since holiness is the state, into which we must be brought with a view to our attaining the celestial inheritance; and since that inheritance was originally forfeited by transgression, which produced a loss of holiness; it is evident that the state into which we have been brought by transgression, is the reverse of a state of holiness; and consequently, that the state of holiness, into which we must be brought in order to salvation, is the very state from which our first parents deflected. The process, therefore, of our sanctification, is precisely an inversion of the process of our fall: the condition of that soul,

that was lost, is the identical condition that must be recovered ; the image of God, that was obliterated, is the identical image that must be restored. Hence, would we learn the nature of Christian holiness, we must inquire into the nature of that spiritual condition in which Adam was first created.

1. We are briefly but significantly told by Moses, that God made man in his own image.\*

Now, as God is a spirit unshackled by any material form, the image here spoken of cannot be an outward bodily appearance. The similitude therefore of the first man to God did not consist in his corporeal resemblance to his Maker. But, if it did not consist in any corporeal resemblance, it could only have consisted in a mental resemblance. Consequently, man is said to have been created in the image of God, because his spirit, in its nature and disposition resembled the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God, however, is a Spirit altogether pure and holy, free from the least taint of corruption, and utterly abhorring all iniquity. The spirit, therefore, of man, at his first creation, must have been distinguished by the very same characteristics in kind, whatever necessary difference there may have been in a degree between a finite creature and an infinite Creator.

\* Gen. i. 27.

Each then being perfectly similar in disposition, there would of course be a perfect similarity in point of taste. Whatever the Spirit of God loved the corresponding spirit of man would also love: whatever the Spirit of God abhorred, the corresponding spirit of man would also abhor: whatever the Spirit of God willed, the corresponding spirit of man would also will. Such being the case, the affections and the will of man would be in perfect harmony with the affections and the will of God.

This similarity of propension necessarily implies also a similarity in the intellectual powers. God does not will, and love, and abhor, either through blind caprice, or by any fatal necessity of his constitution; but because his will and affections are invariably directed by his boundless intellect, which perceives at a glance the eternal fitness or unfitness of things as viewed in reference to his own immutable holiness: God loves or abhors, because his intellect first approves or disapproves. But man was created after the spiritual image of God, without any limitation except the necessary one of degree. The intellect therefore, of man, was similar in kind to the intellect of God. It did not indeed embrace the universe, because omniscience is a special attribute of the Supreme Being alone: but, so far as it was capable of being exerted, it

was ever exerted in perfect correspondence with the divine intellect. Man therefore, previous to the fall, willed the things that God willed, loved the things that God loved, and abhorred the things that God abhorred; not from caprice or any fatal necessity, but because his clear and unclouded intellect viewed the things which came under its cognizance precisely in the same light that the divine intellect itself viewed them: like God, he loved or abhorred, because his intellect first approved or disapproved; and, as his intellect in kind precisely corresponded with the intellect of God, it thence necessarily approved or disapproved whatever the divine intellect approved or disapproved.

Thus perfectly, in every spiritual particular, was man created after the image of God. In one word, as it is written, *God made man upright.\**

2. The inspired penman however immediately adds, *But they have sought out many inventions.*

These perverse excogitations of the heart, which have characterised man ever since the fall, and the indulgence of which in fact constituted the fall, however variously they may be ramified according to the various situations in

which a corrupt being may be placed, may all be resolved into the workings of a darkened intellect, a perverted will, and a distorted affection.

As the two last were in complete unison with the divine Mind anterior to the fall, because the first wholly corresponded in its view of things and their relations with the intellect of God; so the tempter began his operations with seeking to cloud the powers of man's understanding. He presented to the intellect of Adam and Eve a different view of the propriety of God's command from that in which God himself beheld it. The human understanding now for the first time ceased to harmonize with the divine understanding. A different intellectual view of things necessarily produced a difference of will and affection: for we will, and love, and hate, according as objects are exhibited by the intellect. Hence the will of man ran counter to the will of God, and the affections of man ceased to coincide with the affections of God.

The consequence was, that the human mind, by this aberration from the divine Mind, became wholly darkened, and distorted, and polluted, in its three leading faculties of the intellect, the will, and the affection: for, as God is pure intellectual light, an aberration from that light must be intellectual darkness; as God is perfectly

just and direct in the exercise of his will, an aberration from that will must be equivalent to distorted volition ; and, as God is perfectly holy in the working of his affection, an aberration from that affection necessarily implies pollution and unholiness.

Such then is the condition of the natural man in consequence of the fall: his foolish heart is darkened, so that he no longer clearly apprehends the spiritual relations of things ; his perverse will is fixed in resolute contrariety to the will of God ; and his debased affection loves what God hates, and hates what God loves.

3. A being so constituted is clearly unfit for any enjoyment of the divine presence. He must tread all his steps retrogressively in order to be qualified for it.

As the operation of the will and the affections ultimately depends upon the intellect, and as their depraved operation originated from the depravation of the intellect ; a change must first take place in the intellectual power. At the time of the fall, this power, becoming darkened, was led to view the relations of things in a different light from what they appear to the divine Intellect. It must therefore now have its faculties so cleared up, as to view them in the same light in which God's Intellect views them.



When the understanding is thus reformed so as to have an accurate perception of right and wrong according to the unerring standard of the divine judgment, it is obviously prepared to be the instrument of moderating the will and the affections. A notion of right being distinctly presented to the mind, the will is strongly induced to choose it: and, a notion of wrong being no less distinctly presented to the mind, the will is strongly induced to reject it.

But, right and wrong appearing in their true colours to a reformed intellect, and the will operating upon each to choose or to reject it, the affections now come forcibly into play. What the will prefers, according to the dictates of a reformed intellect, produces the affection of love towards it: and what the will rejects, still according to the dictates of a reformed intellect, produces the affection of hatred towards it.

This retrograde working of the soul, by which its darkened intellect, its distorted will, and its debased affections, are brought into unison with the luminous intellect, the unoblique will, and the pure affections, of the Divinity, is the sum and substance of Christian Sanctification.

4. Scripture universally represents fallen man, as dead in trespasses and sins, and as utterly unable by his own unassisted powers to raise himself up to the life of righteousness. He has

wandered from the fold of God: but he cannot by himself retrace his steps. He has corrupted himself by many inventions: but he cannot wash away the stain of that corruption. His intellect is darkened: but he cannot illuminate it. His will is distorted: but he cannot rectify it. His affections are polluted: but he cannot purify them. Hence he has need of some extrinsic assistance to bring him into a state of unanimity with God.

Scripture accordingly teaches us, in full agreement with the doctrine of man's complete inability, that the Holy Spirit of God is the grand agent in working that salutary change in the soul, which causes it once more in all faculties to harmonize with the Deity. This blessed personage illuminates the darkened understanding; and then, using it as a proper effective instrument, by it as a secondary cause rectifies the will and purifies the affections. The man, being now made at unity with God, becomes qualified for the divine presence: and thus, as God the Son effected his Justification, by which he obtained *a right* to the heavenly inheritance; so God the Holy Ghost completes his Sanctification, by which he is *made meet* (as the apostle expresses it) *for the inheritance of the saints in light.*

5. It is manifest, that the change, which has been described, is altogether *internal*, altogether of a *spiritual* nature. It will indeed abundantly shew its reality by the *outward* fruits of righteousness, which are produced in consequence of it : but still the change itself is much more than a mere *outward* reformation of conduct : still the change itself is a radical change of the whole *soul*.

This is the special particular in which the renewed Christian differs from the mere decorous moralist. It is not that their *outward* actions will not, in various instances, be precisely the same ; for, though a man may be a moralist without being a Christian, no man can be a Christian, without being a moralist : but these similar *outward* actions proceed from wholly dissimilar *inward* principles. Many social good deeds may be performed, many moral precepts may be duly observed, without any reference to the mind of God. The Supreme Governor does indeed approve of such a system of conduct, and requires it at the hand of all his servants : but the system may be adopted without any previous regard to *his* approbation, and may be pursued without any direct view to *his* requisition. Stoical pride, a regard to decency of character, a sense of social convenience, a desire of the approbation of his fellows, a fear of inconvenience, and various

other inferior motives, may influence a man to persevere in a highly decorous and useful line of behaviour ; while the will of God is altogether overlooked, or slighted, or thrown out of the account. If the unreformed intellect view some matters in the same *light* with the divine Intellect ; it is not on the same *grounds* and *principles*, nor is it in consequence of any assimilation of the one to the other : if the distorted will affect some things which the divine Will affects ; it is from mere particular self-impulse, without any general identity of volition, and without any distinct or permanent reference to the behests of that higher Will : if the corrupt affections incline to some things, to which the divine Affections incline : it is still after a partial and arbitrary manner, with a sort of indefinite love indeed for some matters which God loves, but with a positive and vehement hatred for other matters which are equally loved by God. Nor is this all : while certain *outward* decencies and duties are tolerably attended to by the mere moralist ; the *internal* regulation of the mind, with respect to God as the supreme governor of the world of spirits, is little regarded.

Such indeed is the natural consequence of the understanding being darkened by the fall. It perceives not the heinousness of sin in its first secret workings. It regards it not as a *princi-*

*ple*, because from various preventing causes it may not be openly developed in this or that particular action. It objects to sin, only when displayed in all its naked deformity by some flagrant tangible deed. Even many outward acts of sin do not meet with any very violent censure from it. Provided they be not so gross as to shock every sense of decorum, provided they do not palpably and outrageously injure society, provided in short they be offences rather against God than man; the intellect, in the darkened state in which it has been left by the fall, will be much more disposed to palliate and gloss them over than to view them as highly culpable deviations from the line of duty.

The whole of this radically false estimate of right and wrong springs from a radical fault in the understanding of what Scripture calls *the natural man*; that is to say, man as he is born into the world of his natural parents ever since the primeval transgression of Adam: and the true ground of this radical fault in the understanding is, as I have already stated, a deflection of the human intellect from the divine Intellect, so that things no longer appear in the same light to the one that they do to the other. Hence, the very *principle* of the sinfulness of sin being overlooked, namely *its rebellious contrariety to the will and purposes of God*; it is no wonder,

that both the inward operations of the mind, and even many outward actions, should be considered as mere trifles, to censure which would be a superfluous and narrow-minded preciseness.

But the enlightened intellect, or the intellect brought by the Holy Spirit into unison with the divine Intellect, is accustomed to view every thing, not merely according to its external developement, but with an express reference to a settled first principle. This principle is, that the sovereign will of God, guided by infinite wisdom and swayed by ineffable purity, determines the moral relations of all things; that not merely obedience to, but full acquiescence in, this determination is required of every subject intelligent creature; and, consequently, that not only an open disobedience to such determination, but all secret mental resistance of whatsoever description, is rebellion against the high majesty of heaven. To this principle every thought, word, and deed, is systematically referred: and, as the intellect in the course of its progressive illumination has its views of things daily more and more assimilated to those of the divine Intellect, it acquires a sort of jealous discernment, a sort of microscopic accuracy, to which in its previous state of darkness it was altogether a stranger. The essence of sin is acknowledged to be *rebellion against God*: hence it can allow *no sins*.

to be properly styled *venial* and *trifling*. Not only therefore are outward sins of every kind and degree viewed as so many acts of rebellion : but each evil working of the heart, each depraved cogitation of the mind, each embryo purpose of wickedness, each malignant feeling, each rising of impatience, each fretful act of repining against the course of God's providence, each want of cheerful acquiescence in his purposes, each defect even of love to him as our maker and benefactor, is considered as essentially rebellious and therefore essentially sinful.

Such is the operation of the enlightened intellect in its view of things : that is to say, it is brought according to the degree of its illumination to estimate things, not by an arbitrary scale of man's contrivance, but as they are estimated by the divine Intellect. And analogous to this operation of the enlightened intellect is the working of the renewed will and affections. He, who has indeed been sanctified by the blessed Spirit of grace, not only views things intellectually as they are viewed by the Supreme Ruler, but heartily wills and loves the things which God wills and loves, while he heartily rejects and abhors the things which God rejects and abhors. His fixed purpose is uniform obedience and entire submission to the divine government : he labours to *perfect holiness in the fear of God* : he

strives to be holy as God is holy, and pure as God is pure. In short, as Sanctification is altogether *internal*, though it will ever evince its reality by *external* actions, the holy man is distinguished from the natural man by an entirely new state of mind, through which he becomes a totally different creature from what he himself was heretofore. *Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. He has been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. He has been renewed in the spirit of his mind. He has put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Being renewed in the spirit of his mind, he is a partaker of the holiness of God.* His views of things may indeed seem irrational to the human intellect, as it is left darkened by the fall: but this is nothing more than what God's word has prepared him to expect, and what indeed is the necessary consequence of his intellect being brought into harmony with that divine Intellect from which the understanding of corrupt man has so widely departed. *We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natu-*



*ral man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.\**

6. Now, as the several spiritual faculties of man are thus debased by the fall, and as the whole work of Sanctification consists in bringing them back to their original condition as they subsisted in Adam when he was first created : it is obvious, that there must be *some turning point* from evil to good, *some precise time* in which each individual *begins* to experience the holy change that has been described. For, as the natural man has his understanding darkened, his will distorted, and his affections vitiated ; and as the same man, when sanctified, has his understanding enlightened, his will rectified, and his affections purified : it is perfectly clear, that so entire a change from one condition of soul to another condition of soul cannot possibly have taken place without *beginning* to take place ; it is perfectly clear, that this great work of Sanctification must have had a *commencement*. Such a commencement accordingly is both always supposed in holy scripture, whenever Sanctification is either described or alluded to ; and it

\* 1 Corin. ii. 12, 13, 14.

is likewise expressly mentioned under its own special and appropriate name.

Thus we read of Christians being *called out of darkness into God's marvellous light* : and this important change in their spiritual condition is immediately afterwards elucidated by our being told, that *in time past they were not a people, but are now the people of God.*\* Thus likewise it is said, that believers *were sometimes darkness, but that now they are light in the Lord* : whence they are exhorted to *walk as children of light.*† And thus the natural man, in order that he may be a partaker of this change, is solemnly addressed, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead ; and Christ shall give thee light.*‡

In all these passages (and it were easy to multiply them,) two states diametrically opposite to each other are manifestly spoken of: and *the commencing point*, when the man first turned from darkness to light, when the sleeper first awoke from his sleep and rose from a condition of figurative death, is plainly supposed. Nor can it be reasonably said, that *this turning point* is a mere speculative conversion from Paganism to Christianity : for *two essentially different conditions of mind*, not simply *two theoretically different conditions of opinion*, are plainly described.

\* 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

† Eph. v. 8.

‡ Eph. v. 14.

The one is a condition of deathlike sleep and palpable darkness ; and they, who are in this state, work the deeds of darkness : the other is a condition of life and light ; and they, who are in this state, evince their difference from those who are not in it by walking as children of light. A transition therefore from one condition of soul to another condition of soul is evidently set forth as taking place in every real Christian : and, if a transition, then of course a *commencement* of that transition.

Agreeably to such a conclusion, we find this *commencement* of holiness described by our Lord under that name which he deemed the most fitting and appropriate. As a child, when produced from the womb of its mother, passes from darkness to light and from a state of insensibility to a state of vital energy : so, when the work of Sanctification commences in every faculty of the soul, the subject of this work is similarly said, in the language of Scripture, to pass from darkness to light and from deathlike slumber to active and conscious animation. Hence the metaphor, by which our Lord has thought fit to describe the *beginning* of Sanctification in the soul of man, is taken from the natural birth of an infant. Nor could any expression be found, either more admirably adapted to point out the commencement of *a new life* as the life of a re-

generated believer may well be styled, or better suited for the accredited phraseology of a religion which was destined to be preached to the whole pagan world. When the soul of a man is altogether renewed in every faculty, he may well be said to be born again into a new state of spiritual existence altogether different from that which previously characterised him: thus exactly suitable is the metaphor in itself. And it was equally adapted for an easy reception among those of the Gentiles, to whom the Gospel was first preached. Every one, who was initiated into the ancient pagan Mysteries which were established with wonderful uniformity in almost all parts of the habitable globe, was reputed to be born again, to have passed from a region of death and darkness to a region of life and illumination, and to be admitted to certain high privileges from which the profane or the uninitiated were necessarily excluded. Now this very metaphor, which was perfectly familiar to the Gentiles, our Lord has been pleased to adopt: and his Gospel was thus prepared to shew them a more excellent way, than that in which they had hitherto walked; to invite them to partake of a better Regeneration, than the fantastical new birth of the Orgies; and to declare to them, that an initiation by God's Holy Spirit into Mysteries, which were truly divine, would indeed

emancipate them from the dark thralldom of the body, and make them in the highest sense of the words *children of light*.\*

Regeneration then, or as it is sometimes termed the New Creation, being the *commencement* of Sanctification; if Sanctification be essentially necessary to qualify fallen man for the presence of God, as the text expressly asserts it to be, Regeneration must of course be equally necessary, because Sanctification cannot clearly exist at all without *commencing* to exist. Hence, while the apostle of Christ exhorts us to *follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*; Christ himself declares, that, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*.† The one speaks of the *progress* of the divine life; the other speaks of its *commencement*: the one enforces what is styled in Scripture *a growth in grace*; the other urges the necessity of a *first implantation* of the holy principle. But the drift is still in both cases precisely the same: without a life of holiness no man can see the Lord; but a spiritual new birth is just as necessary for the existence of such a life, as a natural

\* See these ideas and other important matters, which involve a plain allusion to the phraseology of the ancient Mysteries, discussed at large in vol. ii. serm. 2 and 3.

† John iii. 3.

birth is necessary for the existence of natural life. Holiness is an indispensable qualification for heaven: and, as we are not holy by nature, as we are born in sin and the children of wrath; the very admission of the doctrine of *Original Depravity* requires and supposes the doctrine of *Regeneration* in order to our being made fit for the inheritance of the glorified saints.

7. Yet, as Regeneration is the *commencement* only of the divine life; so Sanctification, while we continue on this side of the grave, is always *progressive* but never *perfect*. Though the Christian, to adopt the allegory of St. John, gradually advances from an infant in religion to a young man, and from a young man to the condition of a spiritual father; yet, even in his best estate, he is conscious that he falls very short of the standard which an enlightened intellect proposes to him.

Hence, in every stage of his Sanctification, his language is still that of St. Paul: *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward*

*the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.\**

Nor is he less aware of his tendency to absolute sin, than he is of mere imperfection. With the same apostle, he can again feelingly confess, *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.†*

His confession in short is that of the strictly evangelical Church of England. *Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam: whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the will of God.‡*

The work of Sanctification must *begin* indeed upon earth, and must be in a state of *gradual progress and advancement*, so that a new and decisive bent is given to every faculty of the mind;

\* Philip. iii. 12, 13, 14.

† Rom. vii. 22, 23.

‡ Art. ix.

but it will be *consummated* only in a better soil and a more genial climate.

II. The apostle enforces his injunction to *follow holiness* by solemnly declaring, that *without it no man shall see the Lord.*

We might well be satisfied with the simple assertion itself, resting as it does on the divine authority of the speaker: for, if by the voice of inspiration God declares this to be the case, who shall presume to contravene his sovereign decision? Yet, as all his decisions are founded on the immutable principles of right reason, and spring not either from a blind fate or an arbitrary capriciousness; it will not be useless to shew, that such is also the characteristic of this which is at present before us.

The declaration then, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and the parallel declaration of Christ, that *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*, depend equally upon the eternal and unchangeable relation of things to each other.

It is not merely, that God *wills not* to admit the unholy into his presence; but that, consistently with his attributes, he *cannot*. As well might light and darkness, or heat and cold, subsist together in the same place at the same time, as holiness and unholiness amicably coexist in the kingdom of heaven. In each case, a direct



contradiction would be involved: and we might as well say, that the same tract could be at once both light and dark, or that the same substance could be at once both hot and cold; or that the same God could be at once both holy and unholy; as we might say, that a most holy governor of the moral world could admit into his immediate presence a race of essentially unholy beings, could view them *himself* with complacency, and could in return constitute *their* highest happiness and enjoyment. Whether we view the question, as affecting God, or as affecting the un-sanctified; in either case, the physical impossibility of amicable coexistence will be alike apparent. Rational beings can only be happy with other rational beings, whose pursuits and tastes are similar to their own. For, if we bring beings together whose pursuits and tastes are radically dissimilar, a perpetual jarring of inclination must evidently be the result: and, where such jarring takes place, it is clearly impossible that there can be any happiness. On this ground, an intimate association with the unholy is incompatible with the felicity of God: and, as a holy God by the very constitution of his nature cannot but be happy; so, because he cannot but be happy, he cannot but exclude the unholy from his presence.

On the same ground also, an intimate association with God would be incapable of produc-

ing any felicity in the souls of the unholy ; because like can only amicably amalgamate with like. Happiness does not depend upon mere locality : it is rather a constitution of the mind. If then every pursuit and every taste of God and his angels and his glorified saints be altogether loathsome to the unholy ; it is manifest, that to dwell in the perpetual presence of such blessed beings, so far from conveying any pleasure to the souls of the un sanctified, would be rather an insufferable torment. They would want that *meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light*, which the apostle so strenuously insists upon : and, wanting the meetness for it, they must in the very nature of things be incapable of the enjoyment of it. An unholy being would not be happy in heaven, even if it were possible for him to abide there. Heaven itself would be no heaven to the devil and his angels ; and as little would it be a heaven to his children of mortal origin. Even in this life, the unholy hate the society of the holy : they can abide in it with patience, *only while the characteristic difference is kept out of sight* : the moment that difference is prominently exhibited to them, either in word or deed ; their wrath and hatred and dissatisfaction is either clearly displayed, or at the best but imperfectly concealed. Now, in heaven, the characteristic difference between the holy

and unholy will never for a moment be invisible: the holy will never there appear, but palpably *as* the holy: every secular employment being then at an end, of which in this world good and bad are alike partakers, each pursuit and thought and wish of the holy will be essentially and exclusively holy. Such being the case, they, who abhor the fellowship of the holy here; and who can only tolerate them, while, in the ordinary course of necessary business, their specific character lies as it were dormant: they, who thus abhor their fellowship here, would still more energetically abhor it hereafter. The unholy in fact, by the very constitution of their nature, stand self-excluded from the kingdom of heaven. They labour under a physical incapacity of enjoyment. They must experience a radical change, ere they be *capable* of entering into the presence of God.

Thus irrevocable, in the very nature of things, is the decision, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*: and consequently, since Regeneration is the commencement of holiness, equally irrevocable is the decision, that, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*.

III. The practical conclusion from the whole is sufficiently obvious.

If Sanctification be what we have shewn it to be, and if it be essentially necessary for the en-

joyment and therefore for the acquisition of heaven; the exhortation of the apostle, that we should *follow holiness* stands self-approved and self-recommended. It is our interest therefore, no less than our duty, to beseech the gracious Father of all lights, that he would abundantly shed abroad in our hearts the Spirit of Sanctification; that so, being *born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,\** we may daily from this beginning advance to yet higher and higher degrees of holiness.

Of ourselves indeed we are not able to create ourselves anew to good works; and thus, by nature, we labour under a moral incapacity of profiting by our free Justification. But God is ever willing and ready both to quicken, to strengthen, and to stablish, us. He requires nothing at the hands of his creatures, but what he has promised that he will enable them to perform. Hence we may well be *confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.†*

With such encouragement, it remains for us to press forward, considering nothing as done, while any thing remains undone. The present

\* John i. 13.

† Philip. i. 6.

day is the seed-time for eternity. God grant, that we may so avail ourselves of it; that, when the harvest shall come, and when all things that offend are cast out as tares, we may be gathered as well grown wheat into the mystical barn of our heavenly Father.

## SERMON V.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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ROMANS II. 28, 29.

*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.*

JUSTIFICATION through the alone merits of Jesus Christ gives us a right and title to the kingdom of heaven : but Sanctification through the Holy Spirit is no less necessary, in order that we may be duly qualified for our purchased inheritance. These two therefore may well be deemed the two hinges, on which turns the whole of Christianity. Either without the other is imperfect : for, as Sanctification separated from Justification would be a qualification with-

out a right, so Justification separated from Sanctification would be a right without a qualification. In each genuine servant of the Lord, the two are ever indissolubly united : and, what God has joined together, let not man presume to separate.

Sanctification however, being a condition of soul which no person brings with him *originally* into the world, must of course have a commencement *subsequent* to the natural birth : for we are *born* by nature children of wrath ; whence it is only *afterwards*, that by the operation of God's most Holy Spirit we become sanctified children of grace. Now this *commencement* of Sanctification our Lord, by a very obvious and significant metaphor, has thought fit to denominate *Regeneration* or *a New Birth* ; because, when Sanctification commences, the subject of it enters into an altogether new life or mode of spiritual existence. And, as this conversion from darkness to light and from evil to good is a matter of the most primary importance in the case of every believer ; our Lord has further judged it expedient to represent it scenically before our eyes by outward and palpable symbolization. The emblem accordingly, which he has selected for such a purpose, is pure water as applied in the sacrament of Baptism. Thus, while in one passage he declares, that, *except a man be born of water and of the*

*Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;\** in another passage he solemnly enjoins his apostles to *go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*† Hence, as our Church rightly pronounces a sacrament in general to be *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace* : so it specially teaches, that *the outward visible sign or form indeed in Baptism is water, but that the inward and spiritual grace is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.* . Baptism then is the symbol, and Regeneration is the grace symbolized : and the due administration of the former is *a mean whereby we may receive the latter, a pledge or earnest on the part of God to assure us of it.*

Thus far perhaps all Christians are agreed, who admit the literal use of Baptism to be a divine obligatory institution : but here an important question arises, on which there has not always been an equal unanimity of sentiment. *Does the inward grace of Regeneration ALWAYS accompany the outward sign of Baptism : or is it possible, that either may subsist WITHOUT the other ?*

They, who hold the latter of these opinions, contend, that, as Baptism is professedly *the sign*

\* John iii: 5.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.



only of Regeneration, they can find no ground for believing, either from Scripture or from Reason, or from Experience or from Analogy, that the grace symbolized *invariably* accompanies its appointed symbol. They pretend not to deny, that such may *sometimes* be the case; because, as Sanctification must needs commence at *some* definite moment, it may doubtless commence in the very article of Baptism as well as at any other time; but they are constrained to state, that as yet they have seen no sufficient proof that such is the case *always*. Hence they are led to maintain, that Regeneration may occasionally take place *before* Baptism, occasionally *at* Baptism, and occasionally *after* Baptism: and they are willing to believe, that both Scripture and Experience, to say nothing of Reason and Analogy, will bear them out in this view of the subject.

They, on the contrary, who hold the former of these opinions, contend, if I mistake not, that Baptism and Regeneration are absolutely *inseparable*. They assert, that, not only is Baptism *the outward sign* of Regeneration, but also *the procuring cause* of it. Hence they teach, that, *where* Baptism is, *there* infallibly is Regeneration; and, *where* Baptism is not, *there* assuredly is no Regeneration. All the baptized therefore are regenerate; and, conversely, all the

unbaptized are unregenerate. To look, consequently, for any spiritual Regeneration *subsequent* to Baptism is plainly nugatory: for every baptized person, being *ipso facto* regenerate, cannot a second time be born again, though from his lapses into actual sin he may have need of frequent renovations. The advocates of this opinion strenuously contend, that it is the genuine doctrine of the Church of England: and they are very apt, with what controversial equity I stop not to inquire, though apparently from not having *themselves* sufficiently considered the subject in all its various tendencies; they are very apt, gratuitously to charge their opponents with an unwarrantable or even an heretical departure from the avowed sentiments of that Church, and not unfrequently to intimate (doubtless by way of satisfactorily accounting for the alleged fact of this departure) that they are lamentably deficient in the highly useful qualification of common sense.

Yet, notwithstanding this confident and somewhat indecorous assumption of superiority, the opinion, which they espouse, may not be *quite* so clearly established as they imagine. At least, as the cause of truth will ever be promoted by discussion, there can be no harm in entering somewhat at large into the subject: or indeed,

I should rather say, the subject *ought* to be fully treated.

The assertion, that a certain outward application to the human body *invariably* produces a certain inward effect upon the human mind ; that, the moment the hand of a priest sprinkles water upon the catechumen or plunges him wholly beneath its surface, reciting at the same time a formula in which our Lord has directed the right of Baptism to be administered, at that identical moment his soul *always* experiences the commencement of Sanctification and becomes radically changed in its every faculty ; in fine (for this is the sum and substance of the matter,) that God should have been pleased to confer, *without any exception to the general rule*, upon a particular outward action of his *appointed ministers* or perhaps (as some have contended with the Church of Rome) of *any baptized Christian* where a priest cannot be procured, a miraculous potency of affecting the very soul itself through the fleshly veil with which it is shrouded : an assertion like this, so extraordinary, so little agreeable to common analogy, so portentously wonderful under whatever aspect it be viewed, manifestly requires the highest possible degree of proof in order to its being rationally admitted.

I say not indeed, that it advances *an impossibility* : for with *God*, no doubt, all things, which

involve not an absolute contradiction, are possible; and he *may* invariably communicate to a priest's *external* application of water a wondrous *internal* power over the human mind. But this I say, that, to admit the truth of so very extraordinary an assertion *without the most ample proof* of its being well founded, is no better than an act of superstition worthy only of the darkest ages of Popery. The present is not a day of disgraceful credulity: and those persons will do little service to the cause of genuine religion, who would require us to admit an assertion *without adequate proof*.

We have now before us an assertion of a very remarkable nature; an assertion no less, than that *an entire change of mind ALWAYS accompanies a particular outward application of water*. Here we must carefully note, that this assertion respects, not merely *an abstract opinion*, but *an absolute matter of fact*. Hence, whether we think fit to receive the assertion or not as a theological dogma; *the infidel* will treat it with utter derision, unless, by a direct establishment of the alleged FACT, it be made good past all possibility of contradiction. For it is to be observed, that the truth of this *matter of fact*, which is maintained to be so common as even to be of daily occurrence, cannot be proved to be an infidel from a Scripture which he rejects; nor in-

deed can it be satisfactorily proved to any one *simply* from Scripture. The truth of the present alleged *fact*, like the truth of any other alleged *fact*, must at last be established by *positive evidence*. Thus, if the Bible asserted ever so unequivocally, that *the temper of the lion was remarkably mild and gentle*; as the assertion would respect a *mere matter of fact*, we could not admit its truth if it contradicted the evidence of our senses. Accordingly, as we deny the Popish miracle of Transubstantiation, because it asserts a direct *matter of fact* which our senses contradict: so must we reject the assertion before us, just as we should reject the assertion that *the lion is an animal of a gentle temper*, unless *the matter of fact*, to which it relates, can be finally established by the positive unvarying evidence of universal experience. The assertion itself we do *not* hastily reject, however extraordinary it may seem: but, as it respects a *matter of fact*, the truth of which must be proved or disproved like that of any other *matter of fact*; we conceive ourselves to act with sobriety and prudence, in requiring that its veracity should be demonstrated to us after the same manner and on the same principles that the veracity of *naked facts* ordinarily is demonstrated.\*

\* This mode of reasoning would equally apply to the doctrine of *the Trinity*, if the Supreme Being could be subjected

I. Since then the assertion before us respects, not merely *a matter of opinion*, but also *a matter*

to cognizance of our senses. But, as that is impossible, we can never affirm, that *the evidence of our senses* contradicts the assertion, that God so exists, as to be ONE in *this* point of view, and THREE in *that*. For want of attending to this plain distinction, between *the having it in our power to subject an assertion to the evidence of our senses*, and *the not having it in our power to do so*, the Socinians sometimes argue very inconclusively against the doctrine of *the Trinity* from the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. Can their senses take cognizance of the nature of the Deity, as they can take cognizance of the nature of bread and wine? If such be the case, their argument is conclusive; if not, not.

Perhaps it may be said, that *a change of mind* does not come so directly under the cognizance of our senses as *a change of bread and wine*; and consequently that I adduce cases which are not perfectly parallel.

This I readily allow: but I see not, how such an acknowledgment at all invalidates my argument. For the real question is, not *whether the two cases be exactly parallel*, but *whether they do not both come under the cognizance of our senses*. If the soul of a baptized adult ALWAYS experiences in the article of Baptism that radical change, which is maintained to be the INSEPARABLE attendant of that ordinance; the FACT of that change must inevitably come under the cognizance of his senses, so that he may be able from his own actual experience to speak positively as to its reality. For to assert, that this great change may take place in the soul of an adult at the precise moment of his Baptism; a change so great, that it is described in the language of inspiration, as a passage from darkness to light, and from moral extinction to moral animation: to assert, that such a change may take place in the soul of an adult at the specifically defined moment

*of fact* ; the discussion may properly begin with an inquiry, *how far this alleged matter of fact is*

of his Baptism, and yet that he may be all the while perfectly unconscious of the occurrence of any such FACT ; to assert this seems to be about as hopeful a proposition, as to assert the transmutation of the sacramental bread and wine into human flesh and blood, while yet the alleged FACT excites not in us the least consciousness of its having happened. So far is Holy Scripture from giving any countenance to such a gross absurdity, that it no less expressly than rationally insists, that the FACT of the regenerative change must necessarily be *known* to those in whose souls it has occurred. *Hereby KNOW we, that we dwell in him and he in us, BECAUSE he hath given us of his Spirit.* 1 John iv. 13. *We KNOW that we are of God.* 1 John v. 19. *KNOW ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.* 2 Corin. xiii. 5. But, if Regeneration be a FACT capable of being known ; then the reality of its occurrence must be proved, like that of any other FACT, by direct evidence.

As the FACT of Regeneration then, in the case of him who experiences it, is, according to Scripture, immediately subject to the cognizance of sense : so, in the case of others who may be viewed as bystanders or witnesses, it is similarly, though not in so high a degree, subjected also to the same cognizance of sense. We distinctly perceive and admit the FACT, that a lion is ferocious : and we admit it without hesitation, because his deeds prove the reality of it. Now Christ instructs us, precisely in the same manner, to subject the FACT of Regeneration in others to the cognizance of our senses. As the soul is the principle of action, our deeds will inevitably participate of the nature of our soul. Hence our Lord well argues : *Ye shall KNOW them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree bring-*

*supported in all cases by actual experience* : I say *all cases*, because a *single* exception will obviously invalidate a *general* assertion.

Now, as it appears to me, the burden of proof, by every rule of fair argument, rests with those who *make* the assertion ; not the burden of disproof, with those who *deny* it. Where then is the proof of the matter of fact, with which we are concerned ?

1. It will probably be said, that in the case of infant Baptism, it is unreasonable to expect a proof of concomitant spiritual Regeneration, because we have no means of positively ascertaining what takes place in the soul of an infant.

The child is asserted to be regenerate on the

*eth forth evil fruit. A good tree CANNOT (morally cannot) bring forth evil fruit ; neither CAN a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall KNOW them.* Matt. vii. 16, 17, 18, 20. And hence his apostle Paul argues more at length exactly on the same principle, when he contrasts together *the works of the flesh* or the deeds of the unregenerate and *the fruit of the Spirit* or the productions of the regenerate when under a divine influence. Galat. v. 19—25.

If then any one assert as a FACT, that Regeneration INVARIABLY attends Baptism ; we have a right to demand a proof of this FACT from direct evidence, just as we might demand a proof of any other FACT. Insomuch, with reverence be it spoken, even if Scripture itself asserted such a FACT (which in truth it neither *does* nor *can* do ; ) we could not admit the reality of its occurrence, if universal experience proved that it did *not* occur.



broad ground, that Baptism is *always* accompanied by Regeneration: and, if, what is very ordinarily the case, he exhibit no one evidence of a spiritual change of heart as he advances in years; it is then urged, that he was doubtless regenerated in the article of Baptism, but that he afterwards entirely fell away from his high condition. Whence, it is contended, if he should at any future time become a decidedly pious character; this change from a life of wickedness to a life of real godliness is not to be esteemed Regeneration, but is to viewed only as a recovery of what had been previously conferred in Baptism.

2. I readily acknowledge, that it is unreasonable to expect a proof of concomitant spiritual Regeneration in a baptized infant, because we cannot question a subject as to the reality of the great mental change which he is alleged to undergo: and, whatever we may think of the *probability* of an hypothesis, which maintains, that this change may be so completely obliterated with the infant's increasing years, that not a vestige or even a recollection of it may remain, and that the infant himself shall at no one period have exhibited by his views and actions the least indication that he has undergone the change; whatever, I say, we may think of *the probability* of this hypothesis, we at least cannot

*prove* it to be erroneous by referring to actual experience.

But it is to be remembered, that infants are not the *only* persons baptized within the pale of Christ's Church. That sound branch of it, the Church of England, has specially provided an office for the due Baptism of adults: and, as these have attained to years of discretion, they doubtless cannot be altogether insensible to the workings of their own minds. Such subjects then appear to be the very persons, by whose unanimous testimony the alleged *matter of fact* must be proved, if it can be proved at all.

It is asserted, that the spiritual change of heart called *Regeneration* INVARIABLY takes place in the precise article of Baptism. If this assertion therefore be well founded, the spiritual change in question will INVARIABLY take place in every adult at the identical moment when he is baptized. That is to say, at the very instant when the hand of the priest brings his body in contact with baptismal water; at that precise instant, his understanding begins to be illuminated, his will to be reformed, and his affections to be purified. HITHERTO he has walked in darkness: but now, to use the scriptural phrase, he has *passed from darkness into light*. HITHERTO he has been wrapped in a deathlike sleep of trespasses and sins: but now he *awakes and rises*

*from the dead, Christ himself giving him life.* HITHERTO he has been a chaos of vice and ignorance and spiritual confusion; *the natural man receiving not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him*: but NOW he is *created after God in righteousness and true holiness*; *being in Christ, he is a new creature*; having become *spiritual, the things of the Spirit of God are no longer foolishness unto him*; *he knows them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Such are the emphatic terms, in which Regeneration is described by the sacred writers: what we have to do therefore, I apprehend, is forthwith to inquire, whether *every* baptized adult, *without a single exception*, is INVARIABLY found to declare, that, in the precise article of Baptism, his soul experienced a change analagous to that which is so unequivocally set forth in the above-cited texts of Scripture.

The discussion in its present stage, as I have already observed, respects a simple *matter of fact*: each baptized adult either DOES, OR DOES NOT, experience the change in question: and I see not, how the point can be decided, except by a formal appeal to his own experience. Can any single instance then be adduced (we have a right to demand the adduction of *every* instance *without exception*; but, to wave that right,) can any *single* instance be adduced, in which a baptized

adult has been known to declare, that, the moment he was sprinkled with the consecrated water, he perceived a new light to dart into his understanding, a new bias to be given to his will, a new character to be stamped upon his affections ; that he distinctly found himself to pass from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; that he was sensible, in short, of his altogether becoming a new creature, wholly different, so far as spiritual matters are concerned, from the creature which he has hitherto been ?

3. Here it may possibly be said, that we are not too curiously to inquire into the precise mode in which the work of Sanctification commences, and that it may have commenced in the soul of an adult at the very moment of his Baptism, though he himself may have been all the while insensible of the circumstance.

Most readily do I allow, that we are *not* to inquire too curiously into the precise mode in which Sanctification commences ; and most fully do I concede, that, as it is acknowledged on all hands to be a progressive work, or (in the language of Scripture) *a growth in grace*, the absolute beginning of it at the moment of Regeneration may be very indistinct to the perceptions : but this does not remove the difficulty as to the alleged *matter of fact* now before us.

(1.) If we adopt the theory, that Regeneration is *not necessarily* attached to Baptism, but that it takes place at some indefinite period during the life of a Christian; it will be perfectly easy to conceive, that it may have occurred, and yet from its very faintness and indistinctness may not have been specially noticed at the time when it *did* occur.

The reason of this is obvious. The event WAS NOT PREVIOUSLY EXPECTED at the precise moment when it really took place: and, as God's Holy Spirit acts through the medium of our rational faculties; though the subject of Regeneration would distinctly perceive, that he now viewed religion differently from what he viewed it before, that his will was now strongly inclined to attend to it, and that his affections were now stirred up in a lively gratitude towards his gracious Creator and Benefactor; he would still not be at all aware, that it was any particular agency of the Sanctifier upon his mind. He would be apt to attribute it, either to the book which he had been reading, or to the conversation in which he had been engaged, or to that inexplicable spontaneous working of the human soul of which all must at different times have been conscious; and, as such, it would never occur to him to note down *the precise moment*, when he had made what would only appear to

him a somewhat stronger resolution than ordinary of paying a proper attention to religion. Hence, of course, as he gradually increased in divine knowledge and holy inclinations and devout affections, he would perceive himself to be a totally altered man from what he well remembers that he once was; but, if he were to be asked the identical moment when the change commenced, he would be unable to specify it.

And this I take to be the general case of those, who have indeed been born of the Spirit: *one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

(2.) But there is a most material difference between Regeneration *thus* taking place, and the alleged *matter of fact* which is now under consideration.

We see, that, according to the theory by which Regeneration is *not inseparably* tied to Baptism, whenever it occurs, it occurs UNEXPECTEDLY: while, according to the opposite theory, whenever an adult is baptized, if his Regeneration takes place at all in the article of Baptism, it takes place EXPECTEDLY.

The divine, who holds that Baptism and Regeneration are inseparable, will obviously, in his preparatory instructions to the catechumen, *first* teach him, that the solemn initiatory rite, of which he desires to be a partaker, is *the outward*

*visible sign of the inward visible grace of Regeneration: next he will explain to him, that the inward spiritual grace, typified by Baptism, is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ; adding, that by this new birth is meant a total and radical change in the condition of the soul, so that they, who are by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, are hereby made the children of grace, or, as the Anglican Church elsewhere expresses this great spiritual change, they are regenerated and as it were brought forth anew by the Holy Ghost, so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before :\** lastly he will assure him, that, although Baptism is indeed the outward sign of Regeneration, the two are so indissolubly united together, that, whenever Baptism is duly administered, the subject of it will infallibly at the same time experience the inward grace of Regeneration as it is most accurately described in the public documents of the Church of England on the sure authority of Scripture.

Now it is manifest, that, after such instructions as these, the adult catechumen cannot but EXPECT to find a most important change take place in the spiritual condition of his mind, at the precise moment when the officiating priest

\* Homil. for Whitsunday, part i. p. 390. Oxon.

sprinkles upon him the water of Baptism. He will EXPECT it, because he has been carefully *taught*, that the sign and the thing signified are *inseparably* connected together, that he must look for his Regeneration *in the very article* of Baptism, and that it is wholly nugatory to imagine that any Regeneration takes place at some indefinite time *subsequent* to the due administration of the outward rite. He will not indeed suppose, that the work of Sanctification is *completed* in his soul in the same instant that the water touches his body; because he will doubtless have been rightly taught, that it is *progressive* in its nature: but he MUST EXPECT, agreeably to the tenor of his instructions, that it *commences* at that identical instant; and, if it then commences, the man all the while EXPECTING fully the commencement of it, he must surely be *most distinctly sensible* of such a commencement.

For nothing but the most determined credulity of the most inveterate system-framer can venture to maintain the strange opinion, that, at a particular previously specified moment, a change takes place in the soul of an adult so great, that (in the language of our Church) *he is nothing like the man that he was* immediately before; that the adult himself is IN FULL EXPECTATION of this radical change, when it *does* take place; and



yet, though *he becomes by it nothing like the man he was before*, so imperceptible is the change by which this mighty renovation is effected, that he is quite insensible of any peculiar working of his mind, and can detect nothing worthy of note save the general purposes of a holy life which have recurred to him perhaps a hundred times while attending to the preparatory instructions of his pastor. He, who can believe this, may well believe also, that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are literally transmuted into the body and blood of Christ, though such a transmutation stands contradicted as a matter of fact by the direct evidence of the senses.

4. Thus we may venture to assert, that, if spiritual Regeneration universally takes place at the Baptism of every adult catechumen ; it must also universally, as being **PREVIOUSLY EXPECTED**, be **SENSIBLY PERCEIVED** by every baptized adult. Nor can he ever hereafter forget, and thus not be able distinctly to specify, the precise moment when his Regeneration took place ; as may easily, or rather indeed must generally, be the case with regenerate Christians according to the other theory for reasons which have already been amply set forth : because he never can forget the day when he was baptized ; because he can never cease to recollect that peculiar

conversion of his mind, by which he instantaneously found himself *nothing like the man he was before* ; and because, on the very principles of his preparatory instruction conducted as the theory now before us requires it to be conducted, he can never mistake for a transient good resolution of his own soul a radical change of heart which he has been authoritatively taught to view as the inseparable concomitant of Baptism.

5. On these grounds, since the whole question in its present stage respects *a matter of fact* ; we have a right to demand *a proof of that fact* from positive universal experience in the case of baptized adults, ere we assent to the reality of its occurrence. If the matter be notorious, the proof will be easily procured : meanwhile let it be remembered, that the assertion is *broad* and *universal*, and consequently that it will be invalidated even by *a single exception*. The theory maintains, that Regeneration ALWAYS accompanies Baptism : hence it is plain, that even ONE exception, if any such can be produced, must needs overturn it.

II. Leaving the advocates of this theory to establish, as best they may, *the matter of fact* which they allege ; I proceed to notice some very extraordinary conclusions, both *positive* and *negative*, which, so far as I can judge, necessarily spring from it.

1. I shall begin with pointing out the *positive* conclusions to which I allude.

Regeneration, it is allowed on all hands, places a man in a state of salvation ; for such is the necessary inference to be drawn, both from the words of our Lord, and from every passage of Scripture in which it is treated of or alluded to. If no man *can* see the kingdom of God, EXCEPT he be born again ; then, PROVIDED he be born again, he *will* see the kingdom of God ; and, in like manner, if no man *can* see the Lord WITHOUT Holiness, of which Regeneration is the commencing point ; then, WITH Holiness, he plainly *will* see the Lord. Now, by the theory, Regeneration is *always* communicated at Baptism. Hence it will follow, that Baptism, *always* communicating Regeneration, *always* places the person baptized in a state of salvation. So that, as every baptized person is *ipso facto* placed in a state of salvation ; every baptized person, who dies immediately after the rite has been administered to him and therefore forfeits not his privilege by lapsing into mortal sin, is infallibly sure of entering into the kingdom.

(1.) Now, under this view of the subject, every prudent parent, who espouses the theory before us, will carefully refrain from having his child baptized during its infancy ; because, by deferring the rite, he may almost ensure the

salvation of his offspring : and, on the same ground, every adult, who is converted from Paganism to Christianity, would do well to put off his Baptism and reserve it as a sure viaticum in his last extremity. By such an arrangement the pleasures of sin may be freely tasted with very inconsiderable danger to him who adopts it. No man indeed can absolutely guard against sudden death : but, in ordinary cases, he may have wallowed during his whole life with perfect safety and impunity in every abomination, provided only he takes care to be duly baptized when his last great enemy is approaching.

Nor let it be said, that this is a *strained* and *imaginary* case : it is a case, that has *actually occurred* more than once. The theory, with its sufficiently obvious conclusion, had become fashionable, during the fourth century, in a rapidly degenerating Church. From his earliest conversion to the last period of his life, the emperor Constantine, whose zeal for the establishment of Christianity is much less equivocal than his piety, remained in the state of a catechumen ; and was not received by Baptism into the number of the faithful until a few days before his death, when that sacred rite was administered to him at Nicomedia by Eusebius its bishop. This action, we are told, was agreeable to the ordinary practice of the times : and we have the

ground of such a practice set forth to us very explicitly. *It was a custom with many, in that century, to put off their Baptism to the last hour ; that thus, immediately after receiving by this rite the remission of their sins, they might ascend pure and spotless to the mansions of life and immortality.\**

The practice clearly emanated from the very theory now under consideration: it will be difficult to prove, that the opinion respecting the safety and utility of such a practice was not legitimately deduced from the received premises. For, if we admit the theory, what are we to believe concerning the final doom of those who thus partook of a death-bed Baptism? We may style their conduct *sinful* and *presumptuous* as long as we please, and we shall designate it no doubt by strictly appropriate appellations: but we shall not *thus* extricate ourselves from the difficulty. Bad as their conduct may be, still worse as their previous lives may have been; yet, if Regeneration *universally* accompanies Baptism, the persons thus tardily baptized were *assuredly regenerate*; and, if *assuredly regenerate*, they were *in a state of salvation*; and, if *in a state of salvation*, as their death immediately

\* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Cent. iv. part i. c. I. § 8.

followed their Baptism, they must all have been *saved*.

I see only one mode of escape from this very extraordinary conclusion ; even though the case should be adduced of some hardened profligate, who solicited and received the rite of Baptism merely through fear of perdition. The mode is this : to maintain, that the man was indeed *truly regenerated* in the article of Baptism ; but that *immediately afterwards*, ere death could seize its already sinking prey, he relapsed into mortal sin, and thus forfeited the privilege which he had so recently gained.

But who would seriously *attempt* to disentangle himself by so miserable a subterfuge ? Or, at any rate, who could soberly admit, that he had *successfully accomplished* his escape by such an expedient ? The question is plainly reducible to the following dilemma.

Either each person, thus baptized, *was* consequently regenerated ; in which case, he was received into heaven, no matter what his former life had been, and even though he approached the baptismal font in the very act of deliberate presumptuous regularly-planned hypocrisy : or each person, thus baptized, *was not* consequently regenerated ; in which case, the theory, that *Baptism and Regeneration are inseparable*, must be given up as altogether untenable.

(2.) The same train of reasoning will equally apply to the case of a Pagan, who should be baptized at the point of death, wholly unconscious of the nature of the rite, and altogether either ignorant of the name of Christ or having previously rejected him.

Now, if such a man has been duly baptized, what are we to think of his condition? Is he regenerate, or is he not regenerate? If the former, his Regeneration forthwith carries him to heaven, though in his life-time he may have been a pertinacious blasphemer and opposer of the word: if the latter, then Baptism and Regeneration are not necessarily inseparable.

A case like this is not quite an *imaginary* one; though I see not, why we should not have a right to propose a *possible* case that was *wholly* imaginary. I have heard of something similar to it occurring in the labours of the Popish missionaries: I speak however only from recollection, and cannot at present produce my authority.

2. The *negative* conclusions, which may be deduced from the theory now before us, are not less extraordinary than the *positive* ones.

As Baptism and Regeneration are pronounced to be *inseparable*, the inward grace *always* accompanying the outward sign: it will inevitably follow, that, where Baptism is, there is Regen-

eration also ; and, on the other hand, where Baptism *is not*, there likewise Regeneration is not. That is to say, as all the baptized are *ipso facto* regenerate, so all the unbaptized are *ipso facto* unregenerate. But the unregenerate, both according to the express assertion of our Lord and also in the very nature of things themselves, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. For Regeneration is the commencing point of Sanctification : whence, as none can see God without holiness, so of course no *fallen* creature can see God without having *begun* to be holy.\* But, agreeably to the theory, all the unbaptized are unregenerate. Therefore all the unbaptized are *ipso facto* excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

Such is the grand general conclusion from the theory, which we are considering ; *No unbaptized person can possibly be saved* : and, as might easily be anticipated, it branches out into various ramifications equally portentous with the parent stock.

(1.) Thus every individual Pagan, whether young or old, whether he has heard of the name of Christ or has not heard of it, in whatever age and in whatever country he may have lived, is consigned at once to irremediable perdition :

\* See this point fully discussed in Sermon IV.



for the man has not been baptized; therefore he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I stop not to discuss the very awful and difficult subject of the final condition of the virtuous heathens: such a discussion were here manifestly out of place: it is sufficient for me to observe, that the question is *at once decided*, without the least hesitation, by the undaunted theory before us.\* According to a necessary con-

\* Assuredly no pagan can see God without Regeneration; because Regeneration is the commencement of Holiness, and *without Holiness no man shall* (or even can) *see the Lord*: but this does not *necessarily* involve the eternal destruction of the whole gentile world.

When we consider the tender loving mercies of our God, who is no hard master expecting to reap where he sowed not and to gather where he had not strawed (as the wicked servant in the parable sought to misrepresent him;) and when we recollect the strenuous wish expressed by some of the better heathens for a divine instructor, who might dispel the impenetrable darkness with which they felt themselves surrounded: we may not unreasonably perhaps venture to hope, that, in numerous instances, that radical change of heart, which is so *essential* to an admission into the kingdom of heaven, may have been effected by the Holy Spirit even in the article of death; and that so, even at the eleventh hour, they may have been called into the mystical vineyard of the Lord. In this case, the ground of their justification would still be the same as our own. The all-sufficient merits of the Redeemer would be the meritorious cause of their salvation: for, as it is soundly urged in the 18th Article of the English Church, they would not be *saved by the law or sect which they professed*, on the score of their having been *diligent to frame their lives*

clusion from that theory, *not a pagan can be saved.* Hence the Romanists, who advocate it with no less steadiness than the doctrine of Transubstantiation, have ever duly and consistently maintained, that the whole pagan world will infallibly be consigned to eternal damnation.

Their conclusion is doubtless drawn with the strictest logical precision from their premises : nor can any one, who holds the premises, shrink from it, without virtually acknowledging the premises themselves to be unsound.

(2.) Thus again, on the same principles, every individual Mohammedan, whether he has had an opportunity of receiving the Gospel or not, stands in a similar predicament.

He has not been baptized : whence the ultimate conclusion is, that he cannot be saved.

(3.) Such also, according to the present theory, is the opinion which we are bound to maintain of all children, who, though born of Christ-

*according to that law and the light of nature ; but only by the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.*

What I have here stated is purely hypothetical, for Scripture has left us very much in the dark on this subject : but the theory, with which we are now concerned, settles the matter without any difficulty by a single syllogism. *None can be saved but the regenerate: the pagans however were clearly not baptized : therefore they were not regenerated ; therefore they cannot be saved.*

ian parents, die unbaptized ; of all Quakers ; and of all Jews.

(4.) As for the last of these, since their determined rejection of God's remedy for sin, many perhaps would not be disposed to urge much in their favour : but unfortunately the argument does not stop with *them* ; it equally extends to all their *ancestors* previous to the advent of Christ. Not one of these was baptized ; save latterly according to the mere *human* institution of the Jewish baptism, to which of course no efficacy can possibly be ascribed any more than to the various baptisms of the pagan Mysteries : not one of these was baptized ; not one of them therefore was regenerated ; and consequently not one of them was saved. David, Samuel, Josiah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, were all involved in the same fate and for the same reason. The principle is *universal* : its application therefore must be *universal* likewise ; otherwise we at once give up the principle itself.

To this it may be replied, that circumcision in the Levitical Church is analogous to Baptism in the Christian Church. Whence it would follow, that, as all the baptized are regenerated in the one, so all the circumcised are regenerated in the other. The circumcised therefore were universally brought into a state of holiness and

thence into a capability of salvation, no less than the baptized.

It is indeed abundantly manifest, that Circumcision in the Levitical Church corresponds with Baptism in the Christian : yet such an answer, when thoroughly sifted, will be found, I fear, to make confusion only tenfold worse confounded.

In the first place, if Circumcision in the Jewish Church *universally* conferred Regeneration, as Baptism in the Christian Church has been roundly asserted to do ; then it were plainly superfluous and nugatory to baptize any *circumcised* person : for the man was *already* regenerate by Circumcision ; and therefore could not be *again* made regenerate by Baptism. How then are we to account for the circumstance, that, when our Lord instituted the sacrament of Baptism, he himself baptized all his circumcised converts, and that he left a general injunction to his apostles to baptize all proselytes without distinction whether Jews or Gentiles ? *He*, we may be sure, would do nothing but what was consonant to the dictates of eternal wisdom. Yet, if all his Jewish converts were *already* regenerated because they had been duly circumcised, it is hard to say, according to the present hypothesis, why they should be *additionally* required to undergo the rite of Baptism. We may easily conceive, that Christ, for wise reasons,

might think fit to change the outward visible sign of Regeneration : but, in that case, they, who had been *previously* regenerated by reception of the Levitical sign, could plainly have no need to receive the Christian sign. To the converted *Gentiles* it would indeed be necessary : but to the converted *Jews* it could certainly be no more in effect than the mere bootless repetition of the appointed outward sign of Regeneration. The latter, according to the supposed answer, were *already* regenerated ; hence they clearly could not be *a second time* regenerated by *Baptism*.

In the second place, even if we allow for a moment that Circumcision bestowed Regeneration under the Law as Baptism has been said to bestow it under the Gospel, we shall still gain nothing more than a short removal of the difficulty. If Circumcision and Baptism be equally signs of Regeneration, and if they both equally confer the thing signified when they are duly administered : then none can be regenerated, and therefore none can be saved, except those, who either have been circumcised under the Law before the advent of Christ, or have been baptized under the Gospel after his advent. Now Circumcision was first instituted in the days of Abraham, and Baptism was first divinely enjoined by Christ. Previous therefore to the days of

Abraham there was neither Circumcision nor Baptism : at least neither rite existed before that time, so far as we can learn from Scripture, as a *divine* and *positive* ordinance. Hence it will follow, if the inward grace of Regeneration be *inseparable* from its outward sign, that not a single person was regenerated before the time of Abraham, and consequently that not a single person could have been saved. The old fathers might have eagerly looked forward to the manifestation of the promised seed ; Noah, in some inexplicable sense of the words, might have been a *just man and perfect in his generations* ; Abel, in an equally inexplicable sense of the term, might have been called *righteous* even by Christ himself : but all this would avail them nothing according to the present theory : not one of them was either baptized or circumcised ; therefore not one of them was regenerated ; therefore not one of them could have been admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Common sense does indeed teach us, that they *were* admitted into heaven : but what then becomes of a theory, which *inseparably* ties Regeneration to Baptism ?

(5.) There is yet another class of persons too remarkable to be passed over in silence, who are equally involved in the conclusion necessarily drawn from the present theory.

In the primitive Church, during a period of horrible persecution, it not unfrequently happened, that a devout catechumen was dragged to the stake and barbarously put to death, ere he had partaken of the initiatory rite of Baptism: and there are cases upon record of pagans being suddenly converted to Christianity, by merely witnessing the constancy of the martyred faithful; who, instantly under the first impulse of zeal professing their belief, were forthwith led to slaughter themselves. Now what must we suppose to be the final condition of these pious men? Were they saved, or were they not saved? They certainly were never baptized: therefore, if Baptism and Regeneration be *inseparable*, they were never regenerated. But, if they never were regenerated, then they cannot have entered into the kingdom of heaven: for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; and Regeneration is the commencing point of holiness. Yet this conclusion is evidently too absurd to be admitted for a single moment: no reasonable man can doubt of the salvation of such persons. If then they obtained salvation, they must have been previously regenerated: because it is a scripturally determined point, that without Regeneration and consecutive Holiness no man possibly *can* be saved. But, if they were previously regenerated, then

they must have been regenerated without having been baptized. How are we to extricate ourselves from this difficulty ?

An attempt has been made : with what success, remains to be considered. I have already observed, that the doctrine of *the inseparable union of Baptism and Regeneration* early crept into the Church : hence the remarkable case before us could not fail of attracting attention. It was clearly seen, that the salvation of such martyrs could not be reasonably doubted : it was at the same time acknowledged, that none could be saved without Regeneration. But the men had never been baptized : how then, upon the principle of *inseparability*, could they have been born again ; and how, without having been born again, could they enter into the kingdom of heaven ? It was answered, that they had been baptized in their own blood, and consequently that they had been regenerated in the very article of martyrdom.

Now, so far as I can judge, such a solution, though no doubt abundantly ingenious, is neither more nor less than a complete giving up of the question. For what is this baptism of blood, which is here adduced to solve a difficulty ? Was any such baptism ever instituted by Christ ? Did he ever connect it, either symbolically or casually, with spiritual Regeneration ? Scrip-



ture acknowledges no such ordinance. The pagans indeed had their initiatory Criobolia and Taurobolia: but the Gospel recognizes no initiatory Anthropobolium. The simple fact is, that the men were never baptized at all: yet they were rightly pronounced to have been saved; and were thence necessarily confessed to have been regenerated. I need scarcely draw the obvious conclusion from such premises.

III. Having now sufficiently pointed out the inferences both *positive* and *negative*, which must inevitably be drawn from the theory that Baptism and Regeneration are always inseparable; I shall proceed to inquire, how far this theory is supported or not supported by Analogy.

Our divine Master has been pleased to institute two sacraments in his Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Now the generic character of a sacrament is, that it consists of two parts; a certain outward visible sign, and a certain inward spiritual grace. Each therefore of the sacraments has its own two proper parts, mutually corresponding with each other; visible with visible, invisible with invisible. In Baptism, the outward visible sign is water; and the inward spiritual grace, or the things symbolically represented, is Regeneration: while, in the Lord's Supper, after a manner strictly analogi-

cal, the outward visible sign is the bread and wine ; and the inward part, or the thing symbolically represented, is the body and blood of Christ, verily indeed yet spiritually received for the sustenance and refreshing of the soul. Here we may observe, that in each sacrament like answers to like with perfect accuracy : for they both equally relate to something *inward*, shadowed out or symbolized by something *outward*.

Such being the case, it seems only natural to conclude, unless indeed we have some very strong evidence to the contrary, that, as the Analogy between the two sacraments is perfect thus far, it would also be perfect throughout. Each sacrament, we have seen, has two parts, an outward and an inward : and each outward part is symbolical of the corresponding inward part. If then the outward part in one sacrament is not only symbolical of the corresponding inward part, but likewise inseparably associated with it ; so that where the former exists the latter also exists, and where the former does not exist the latter also does not exist : it appears but reasonable to argue from Analogy, that this is equally the case with the two parts in the other sacrament. And, inversely, if the outward part in one sacrament, though doubtless symbolical of the corresponding inward part, is yet *not* inseparably associated with it ; so that the former may exist, while the

latter is absent : it again appears but reasonable to argue from Analogy, that the two parts also in the other sacrament are similarly circumstanced. This at least is abundantly manifest, that, if they be not similarly circumstanced, the Analogy between the two sacraments stops at one particular point and is not perfect throughout.

On these grounds, they, who *maintain* the universal inseparability of the two parts in Baptism, ought, would they be consistent, to *maintain* the universal inseparability of the two parts in the Lord's Supper : and, on the other hand, they, who *deny* the first proposition, ought equally, would *they* be consistent, to *deny* the other also. Of this the Romanists seem to be thoroughly aware : and, to give them their due, they may justly claim the praise of perfect analogical consistency. As they maintain, that Regeneration is inseparably united to Baptism ; so they likewise maintain, that every one, who receives the consecrated elements of bread and wine, receives also the body and blood of Christ. As for their peculiar doctrine of Transubstantiation, it has nothing to do with the present question. For the matter in debate is, not whether the consecrated elements shadow out the *literal* or the *mystical* body and blood of Christ ; but whether the reception of Christ in some sense or

another be the *universal* consequence of receiving the consecrated elements. Protestants and Papists may differ in their views of *the thing signified* by the bread and wine: but the real question, with which we are at present concerned, is this; *whether the thing signified by the consecrated elements be universally received by the person who receives the elements themselves.* Now this question the Romanists, very consistently with their views of the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration, decide in the affirmative.

But are the Protestant advocates for the inseparability of outward Baptism by water and inward Regeneration by the Holy Spirit equally consistent in *their* opinion respecting the two parts in the Lord's Supper? I fear, that it will be utterly impossible to concede to them the same praise for consistency, which has been justly conceded to the Romanists. They believe, I apprehend, no more than their opponents on the question of Regeneration, that every wicked man, who presumptuously eats the consecrated bread and drinks the consecrated wine, does by that act spiritually partake of the mystical body and blood of Christ. On this point at least, the Church of England is perfectly explicit. *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 sa-*

*crament 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.\**

Thus it appears, that they, who vehemently maintain the universal *inseparability* of the two parts in one sacrament, equally maintain the very possible and the very frequent *separability* of the two parts in the other sacrament; thus palpably and completely violating the law of Analogy. But no such violation can be ascribed to their opponents respecting the doctrine of *Regeneration being the universal concomitant of outward Baptism*. They are perfectly consistent in their views of the two sacraments, though they take a position diametrically opposite to that of the equally consistent Romanists. As they assert *the frequent separability* of the outward and inward parts in one sacrament, so they analogously assert *the frequent separability* of the outward and inward parts in the other sacrament. While, in short, they believe, that a man may carnally partake of the bread and wine without spiritually partaking of Christ's body and blood; they likewise believe, that a person may be externally baptized in water without being internally regenerated by the Holy Ghost.

\* Art. xxix.

From what has now been said, some judgment may possibly be formed, how far the theory, that *outward Baptism and inward Regeneration are universally inseparable*, can be reconciled either with actual Experience or right Reason or Analogy: it remains to be inquired, whether this theory be more agreeable to Scripture, to the decisions of the Anglican Church as deduced from Scripture, and to the views of a great body of the ablest divines of that Church. To prolong the discussion any further than is here laid down may be deemed superfluous in a member of the Church of England.

## SERMON VI.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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ROMANS II. 28, 29.

*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.*

THE theory, that *Spiritual Regeneration is the inseparable concomitant of External Baptism by water*, has frequently been maintained with a degree of confidence perhaps more dogmatical than prudent. A sober and genuine protestant inquirer however will be little disposed to receive any system, merely because it comes recommended by a somewhat overweening positiveness. He will rather be disposed to prove all things and to hold fast only that which is

good. Hence he will not lightly admit a theory, which advances one of the most extraordinary propositions upon record. He will not indeed peremptorily decide against it in the first instance, simply because it *does* advance a most extraordinary position: for he well knows, that, although we are not precisely bound to receive an extraordinary position because it is boldly and peremptorily asserted to be true, yet very extraordinary positions may after all be perfectly consistent with veracity. But he conceives it to be not only his right, but his bounden duty also, to sift such a position to the very bottom by every varied mode which he can devise; so that he may admit or reject it, according as he is determined by the weight of evidence. This was the grand principle of the Reformation: a principle, by which real Scriptural truth can never be endangered; a principle, the dereliction of which is a virtual relapse into the very spirit of Popery: Most heartily then can a genuine protestant say with a late eminent bishop of the English Church, *Would God, all the Lord's people were prophets\**. But, as this in the nature of things can never be, he will at any rate be a decided friend to a spirit of sober inquiry in those who have the means

\* Bp. Horsley.



and opportunities of embarking in theological discussion\*.

With respect to the theory before us, we have already seen that there are some considerable grounds for doubting whether it derives any support either from actual Experience or from right Reason, or from Analogy. Now, if this be the case, it is difficult to be believe, that a theory so circumstanced can rest upon the solid basis of Scriptural Authority. For (to omit the argument from Analogy, which is readily acknowledged to be rather *presumptive* than *decisive*), though Revelation may teach us many things which are *above* Reason, many things also which it is impossible for us to ascertain by the test of *actual* Experience; it is hard to conceive, that the word of God should declare to us any thing, which is directly *contrary* to right Reason, and with which actual Experience is *by no means* found to tally. Still we ought not to determine too rashly *a priori*. So limited is the human intellect, that it may easily be mistaken in various

\* Most fully is this principle recognized by the Church of England, in her sixth Article.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

matters, which yet appear to be almost self-evident. The consciousness of our own short-sightedness ought to produce in us an unfeigned diffidence and humility. After all the independent reasoning in the world, the question, with those who admit the divine inspiration of the Bible, must finally be determined by a reference to the sacred volume itself.

I. We have at present therefore to inquire, whether Scripture affords any just warrant for the theory, that *Baptism and Regeneration are so inseparably united : that, where the one is, the other also is ; and, where the one is not, the other also is not.*

1. I know not of any texts, which might seem at all to support this alleged inseparability, except the following.

*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\*.*

*According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost†.*

*He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few,*

\* John iii. 5.

† Tit. iii. 5.

*that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ\*.*

(1.) On the first of these texts it may be said, that a *birth from water* is immediately associated with a *birth from the Spirit*; that a birth from both one and the other is represented, as being a necessary qualification for the kingdom of heaven; and that an inseparable union of the two may thence be fairly inferred.

(2.) On the second of them it may be said, that in it Regeneration is styled *the washing* or *laver of Regeneration*, no less than *the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Whence it might be argued, that, if Regeneration can properly be called a *washing* or *laver*, the actual use of water must be associated with the actual reception of the grace: for, if Regeneration can be experienced without external washing by water, then there seems an impropriety in denominating that a *washing*, which in fact has no necessary connection with any washing at all.

(3.) And on the third of them it may be said, that, if we be saved by Baptism as Noah and his family were saved by water; then a capability of

\* 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, 21.

salvation, or in other words spiritual Regeneration without which no man can be saved, must be conferred in the very act of Baptism: because, otherwise, the comparison does not hold good. For if Regeneration be not conferred by Baptism, then are we not saved by Baptism. But we are declared to be saved by Baptism, just as Noah was saved by water. Therefore Baptism must invariably communicate Regeneration.

2. I readily acknowledge, that these texts in the abstract might well be deemed *ambiguous*; so that, if we had nothing else to guide us, we might not unfairly, though with some hesitation, suppose them to teach the inseparability of Regeneration and Baptism: but even under such circumstances, I could not allow them to be at all *decisive*.

It may be remarked of the three conjointly, that, as it is agreed on all hands that Baptism is the outward symbol of Regeneration, whatever may be its additional efficacy; so that it is impossible to deny, that, by one of the most common figures of rhetoric, the sign and the thing signified are conversely and indifferently used in our ordinary forms of speech. Thus we are accustomed to style the sacrament of the Lord's Supper *the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ*; and with good reason, for Jesus himself scrupled not to say of the bread

*This is my body*, and of the wine *This is my blood* : yet, when we so speak of the last Supper, we do not mean to intimate, that all, who partake of the bread and wine, are therefore partakers of the holy communion of Christ's spiritual body and blood. Thus, in a similar manner, Moses denominates the paschal lamb the *Lord's Passover* :\* yet no one supposes him to mean, that the lamb was absolutely the same thing as God's act of passing over the houses of the Israelites. Thus again, inversely, Christ denominates himself *a Door* and *a Vine* : and thus Jehovah is said to be *a Sun* and *a Shield* and *a Rock* : yet no confusion ensues. By this very common figure therefore it is perfectly natural to style Regeneration *a washing* or *a baptism*, and thence to speak of our being *saved by Baptism* or of our being *born again from water*. It is a phraseology, which we so well understand in all ordinary cases, that there seems little reason, why, in the three texts now under consideration, we should adopt a different principle of interpreting them: at least, ere we adopt such a principle, we may require a decisive proof of its propriety from other less equivocal passages, if any such can be found. †

\* Exod. xii. 11.

Abp. Usher speaks exactly to the same purpose, though in-

3. If then no other texts treated of the subject save these three, I allow that their import would be *ambiguous*: for it might be doubtful, whether they used the terms *baptism* and *washing* and *water* literally or metonymically; it might be doubtful in short, whether the outward sign was pronounced to be essentially necessary to our salvation, or whether we might not be saved solely by the inward grace without the external sign. But there are other texts, which are sufficiently plain and explicit on the subject: and according to all just rules of criticism, *what is ambiguous* ought ever to be interpreted by *what is not ambiguous*.

(1.) We read then; that *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that Circumcision*

deed it is almost needless to produce any authority for so obvious a view of the matter.

What is the cause, asks the learned Primate, that moved the Lord to grace the outward signs in the sacraments with the names of the things signified? The outward elements have the names of the spiritual things they set forth: first, because of their fit proportion and agreement, in regard of the resemblance and similitude of the elements and things signified; in which respect they are called *Signs*: secondly, to shew the inseparable conjunction of the things signified with the sign in the WORTHY receiver; in which regard they are called *Seals*, as in the person of Christ his two natures are so inseparably united that often times the properties and effects of the one are attributed to the other. Abp. Usher's *Body of Divin.* p. 383.

*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.\**

From this passage we evidently collect, that Circumcision under the Law was a sign of the very same import as Baptism under the Gospel: and, if such a view of the matter were at all doubtful, we might have our doubts removed even by the Law itself. *Circumcise the foreskin of your heart,* says Moses to the children of Israel, *and be no more stiffnecked.† The Lord thy God will circumcise 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.‡* Here we find it explicitly declared, that the literal Circumcision of the flesh symbolized a mystical Circumcision of the heart: and that mystical Circumcision of the heart is represented as consisting of such an entire change of the soul, that it now unreservedly loves God with all its powers and faculties. But this is precisely the Christian view of outward Baptism and inward Regeneration. Therefore whatever is said of external Circumcision may be considered as in effect said of external Baptism.

\* Rom. ii. 28, 29. † Deut. x. 16. ‡ Deut. xxx. 6.

Now in the leading text to which I have referred, we are certainly taught, not only that mere outward Circumcision is nothing without a corresponding inward Circumcision of the heart, but likewise that this outward Circumcision may subsist *without* inward Circumcision: for the apostle places a Jew, who has received the outward sign of Circumcision, in studied contrast with a Jew who has experienced the inward Circumcision of the heart: his argument therefore palpably requires, that the first Jew should be viewed as having received outward Circumcision *only*; otherwise there is no contrast between the two examples. But, if the first Jew has received outward Circumcision *only*, then this outward sign under the Law was not *inseparably* accompanied by the inward thing signified. Circumcision however under the one Dispensation answers to Baptism under the other Dispensation. Therefore, if Circumcision under the Law did not necessarily confer Regeneration, neither does Baptism under the Gospel.

Perhaps it may be said, that the Jew, adduced by St. Paul, had actually been regenerated in the article of Circumcision, but that he afterwards through sin fell away from his privilege; just as it is contended, that every baptized person is *ipso facto* regenerated, though he may



hereafter lapse from his Regeneration and need to be renewed by grace.

Such a mode of obviating the difficulty as this, while it runs directly counter to the plain language of Scripture, will be found to involve those who employ it in a maze from which they will not very easily extricate themselves.

In a remarkable prophecy respecting the future fortunes of the Israelites, God declares, that when for their sins he *shall have brought them into the land of their enemies, if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, he will remember his covenant with Jacob.\** Now it is manifest, that the persons here spoken of had been externally circumcised in the flesh ; yet we find God himself asserting, that, notwithstanding their due reception of the outward rite, their hearts had still remained uncircumcised : in other words, they had received the outward visible sign *without* any accompanying inward spiritual grace. The same observation equally applies to various parallel passages. *All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart,* says the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah.† *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost,* exclaims the martyr Stephen to the assembled Sanhedrim of the Jews.‡

\* Levit. xxvi. 41, 42. † Jerem. ix. 26. ‡ Acts vii. 51.

Yet the persons, thus spoken of and thus addressed, had all been outwardly circumcised. Hence it is manifest, that it was quite possible under the Law to receive the outward sign *without* the inward grace: and, as Circumcision under the Law answers to Baptism under the Gospel, it seems very extraordinary, that Regeneration should be necessarily and inseparably tied to Baptism, while yet Circumcision of the heart is no invariable concomitant of Circumcision of the flesh.

Nor is this all: we must next consider the difficulties with which those will be hampered, who should attempt to maintain, that, as Regeneration is inseparable from Baptism, so internal Circumcision is inseparable from external Circumcision. At the first preaching of the Gospel, every Jewish convert was baptized agreeably to the institution of Christ. This being the case, in what light are we to view the spiritual condition of such persons? If they were *already* regenerated by Circumcision, then they could not be a *second* time regenerated by Baptism; unless we admit that a man may experience *two* spiritual new births, an opinion (I believe) not yet advanced by any one: and again, if they were regenerated by Baptism, then they could not have been *previously* regenerated by Circumcision. One theory, or the other, must in-

evitably be given up ; for the two are plainly inconsistent. If Regeneration be inseparable from Baptism, then it must needs be separable from Circumcision : and, if it be inseparable from Circumcision, then it must needs be separable from Baptism.

The result then of the argument from the text now under consideration is this. External and internal Circumcision under the Law answer to Baptism and Regeneration under the Gospel. But a Jew may be outwardly circumcised in the flesh, *without* being inwardly circumcised in the heart: Therefore a Christian may be outwardly baptized in water, *without* being inwardly regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

(2.) There are certain other texts, which speak the same important truth, not indeed more positively, but more directly : that is to say, they require no long train of reasoning, by which we may arrive at the proper induction from them. These I shall notice conjointly.

*Love is of God : and every one, that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God\**—Unless then it can be proved, that no person ever yet experienced that divine charity, which is shed abroad in the hearts of the regenerate by the Blessed Spirit, until he had been first duly baptized ; we

\* 1 John iv. 7.

may rest assured, that the being born of God does not depend necessarily upon outward Baptism. According to the apostle, *every* one that possesses this love, whether he has been baptized or not, is born of God.

*Whosoever believeth, that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God\**—From the context of this passage it is clear, that the faith here spoken of is not a mere notional assent of the understanding, but that faith which is the gift of God himself, and which in the very nature of things must be *peculiar* to the spiritual or regenerate believer: for it is a contradiction in terms to say, that a man, who is not spiritual, can yet possess a spiritual faith. Here then we learn, that *every* one, who possesses a lively faith, is born of God: and it is incumbent upon those, who maintain the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration, to prove, that no one was ever known to possess such a faith unless he had been first baptized.

*Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*†—This passage affords us another test of Regeneration. Let a person, not from mere secular stoical pride, but from a full confidence in God's promises through Christ, rise superior to an irreligious world, and order his whole walk and conversation with a determined reference to a

\* 1 John v. 1.

† 1 John v. 4.

future state : that person we are authorized to pronounce regenerate. But was such a devotion as this never exhibited in the Christian Church, save by those who had been first baptized ?

In all these passages, St. John says not a syllable respecting outward baptism. The evident drift of them all is exactly alike. He, that loveth, and believeth, and overcometh the world, is born of God, whether outwardly baptized or not : and he, that loveth *not*, and believeth *not*, and overcometh *not* the world, is *not* born of God, even though he may have been outwardly baptized.\*

4. Additional light will be thrown upon the subject, if to these texts we subjoin examples.

It is maintained that Baptism and Regeneration

\* I need scarcely remark, that the *predominating* character of a man's principles and practice is plainly the matter designed to be set forth in these texts. As it were absurd to interpret them as teaching, that a regenerate man is distinguished by a *perfect* love, a *perfect* faith, or a *perfect* victory over the world : so it were manifestly unreasonable to object to this delineation of a regenerate man, that he may sometimes fail in each of these important particulars. The *grand, leading, permanent*, bent of the mind is that, which constitutes the special difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate. This ought never to be forgotten ; nor will it ever be forgotten, by the fair and candid disputant, whose object is not victory, but truth.

are inseparable. But Regeneration is essentially necessary for our admission into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore all, who enter into the kingdom of heaven are regenerate.

Hence, if it can be proved that any person has entered into the kingdom of heaven, it will at the same time be proved that that person has been previously regenerated. And, if it can further be proved that the person thus previously regenerated has never been baptized, we shall have as complete demonstration as can be desired, that Baptism and Regeneration are *not* inseparable.

In a similar manner, if it can be proved, either that a person was regenerated before Baptism or that he had not been regenerated immediately after Baptism; we shall still be obviously brought to the same conclusion, that Baptism may subsist *without* Regeneration, and that Regeneration may subsist *without* Baptism.

Now, if I mistake not, it is abundantly easy to establish all these several propositions by actual examples drawn from Holy Writ.

(1.) Before the time of Abraham, neither Circumcision nor Baptism had been instituted. Are all the members then of the patriarchal Church to be pronounced unregenerate, on the ground that there can be no Regeneration where there is no Baptism: and are they thence to be all excluded from the kingdom of heaven, because as-

surely no unregenerate person can in the very nature of things be admitted into the presence of God? It is presumed, that such is not the case: but we may do more than merely presume. Enoch was translated alive to heaven: therefore Enoch must have been regenerated. But Enoch was neither circumcised nor baptized, and yet he was regenerated: therefore Regeneration is not inseparably tied either to Circumcision or to Baptism.

On this it may be said, that it is unfair to adduce such an example as Enoch, who lived *before* the institution of any outward visible sign of Regeneration. At a period, when as yet there was no appointed sign, the thing signified must of course be independent of any external symbol: but, when once there *was* an appointed sign, the case becomes widely different. Though Enoch was taken up into heaven, and therefore must have been regenerated, *independently* of any outward visible sign of Regeneration; this will not prove, that, when a visible sign *has* been instituted, the grace of Regeneration can be conveyed *independently* of such sign.

Be it so: let us then at once quit the Patriarchal Church, and descend to the Christian.

Our Lord was crucified between two notorious malefactors. These hardened offenders, though suffering themselves, yet joined with one con-

sent in reviling the Saviour of mankind. Yet, even under such circumstances, God did not forget his merciful loving kindness. The heart of one of the malefactors was suddenly touched by divine grace, even in the midst of his exprobrations. *Lord*, said he to Jesus, *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* The prayer of the penitent was not unsuccessful. *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* The salvation then of this malefactor is just as certain a fact, as the salvation of Enoch: he was assuredly admitted into the beatific presence of God. But, without holiness, no man can see the Lord: and, of holiness, Regeneration is the commencing point; for it is a contradiction in terms to say, that any unregenerate person can be holy while he remains unregenerate. The malefactor however *did* see the Lord. Therefore he must have been sanctified: whence also he must necessarily have been regenerated. But the sacrament of Baptism was instituted *before* the crucifixion:\* consequently regeneration had at this time an outward visible sign, appointed by our Lord himself. Now the penitent malefactor had certainly never been baptized. Yet was he no less certainly a regenerate person: because, unless

\* John iv. 1, 2.



he had been such, he could not have entered into the kingdom of heaven ; which Christ expressly promised that he should do. The penitent malefactor therefore, *subsequent* to the institution of Baptism, was regenerated without having been baptized. Consequently, Regeneration is not inseparably tied to Baptism.

(2.) The penitent malefactor was *not baptized at all* ; yet he was certainly regenerated : let us next see, whether we cannot produce any instances of persons being regenerated *before* Baptism, and of their *afterwards* submitting to that rite as an outward sign of an inward spiritual grace.

A certain Roman centurion, named *Cornelius*, is said, in *the Acts of the Apostles*, to have been a *devout man and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always.\** Such is the general character of this person : and we find it so highly pleasing to the Supreme Being, that he was informed, even by the mouth of an angel, that *his prayers and his alms had come up for a memorial before God.†* Thus eulogized by the Omniscient himself, he is charged to send for Peter, by whom he should be instructed in his duty more fully than he had hitherto been.‡ The apostle,

\* Acts x. 1, 2.

† Acts x. 4.

‡ Acts x. 5, 6.

accordingly, came : and the *just* Cornelius, as he is well styled by his servants, expressed himself with the utmost humility, as wishing only to *hear all things that were commanded him of God.\** With this lowly and teachable mind, he became the catechumen of St. Peter : and, while the apostle was yet in the act of instructing him and his household the members of which appear to have been animated with a spirit similar to that of their master, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.†* Peter then very naturally asked, *Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?‡* Accordingly, he forthwith *commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.§*

With respect to the descent of the Holy Ghost, which is mentioned as having taken place *before* the Baptism of this devout family, I shall not urge it as any proof of their Regeneration ; because it does not appear to me to bear upon the question in hand. The *ordinary* operations of the Blessed Spirit indeed are experienced by none but the regenerate, because these relate *exclusively* to the divine work of Sanctification whereof Regeneration is the commencement :

\* Acts x. 22, 33.

† Acts x. 44.

‡ Acts x. 47.

§ Acts x. 48.

but the *extraordinary* operations of the same Spirit have been experienced alike by good and bad, by Moses and by Balaam, by David and by Saul, by Peter and by Judas. Now the descent of the Holy Ghost, as described in the present history, was plainly of an *extraordinary* nature ; because it is said, that in consequence of it Cornelius and his household *spoke with tongues*.\* Hence this descent of the Spirit is no proof, that the centurion and his family were regenerated *before* Baptism : they might, or they might not, so far as *that* part of the history is concerned. I build nothing therefore upon Cornelius having *thus* received the Holy Ghost.

The ground I would rather take is that of his *character*, as set forth to us, not by erring man, but by the infallible voice of inspiration itself. We are told, that the centurion was *a devout man, who feared God and always prayed to him*. Had this information been given us by mere *human* authority, it would have proved just nothing at all ; because fallible man, who reads not the heart, might easily mistake a decent hypocrite for a truly devout and religious person : but the information is given us by the *inspired* word of that God, who searches the very secrets of the heart and who sees all things as they really are.

\* Acts x. 46.

Here, therefore, we have no room for being mistaken : God himself pronounces Cornelius to be *a devout man*, and assures him that *his prayers and his alms are come up for a memorial before the Lord.*

! Was then Cornelius at this time a regenerate or an unregenerate man? The unregenerate are exhibited to us in Scripture, as even dead in trespasses and sins, hateful and hating God; and utterly unable *while* unregenerate to receive the things of the Spirit. Was this the character of Cornelius; or would an all-seeing God have styled a person, who *really* bore such a character whatever fair *outward* pretensions he might make, *a devout man*? We are taught in Holy Writ, that even the very prayer and sacrifice of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.\* The prayers, however, and the alms of Cornelius are positively declared to have come up for a memorial before God. Was then Cornelius a wicked, or (in other words) an unregenerate man? It is, I presume, wholly superfluous to point out the manner, in which common sense requires these questions to be answered. Cornelius had plainly been regenerated of the Holy Ghost, at the time when God pronounced him to be *a devout man*; though it was necessary, that

\* Prov. xv. 8. xxviii. 9.

he should be fully instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, ere he was formally admitted by Baptism into the communion of the Christian Church. Hence St. Peter was called in to preach the Gospel to him, which the *angel* could not do consistently with the appointed course of God's dispensation: and hence, when his mind had been thoroughly informed, he received the rite of Baptism at the hand of a man like himself.

But, if he had been regenerated of the Holy Ghost when God pronounced him *a devout man* and accepted with complacency his prayers and his alms; then he must have been regenerated *before* Baptism: because these matters occurred *previous* to his being baptized. And, if he were regenerated *before* Baptism; then we are once more brought to the same conclusion as before, that Baptism and Regeneration are *not* inseparable.

Nor is the case of Cornelius a solitary one: a similar train of reasoning may equally be applied to that of the pious Lydia, which is also recorded in *the Acts of the Apostles*.

We are assured, that *the Lord* first *opened the heart* of this woman; that next, in consequence of her heart being thus opened of God, *she attended unto the things which were spoken of*

*Paul* ; and, lastly, that *she was baptized together with her household.*\*

Here the order of events is precisely the same as it was in the case of Cornelius : *first* Regeneration, God working upon her heart through the medium of that imperfect knowledge which she already possessed ; *next* catechetical instruction ; and *lastly*, regular Baptism. If it be objected, that she was *not* regenerated when God opened her heart in affection to the word ; I would ask, how is it possible for God thus to operate upon an unregenerate heart, the heart all the while *remaining* unregenerate ? So far as I can judge, such an objection would involve a palpable contradiction in terms : for, the moment the heart is divinely and effectually inclined to godliness, that same moment it must be regenerated ; because, that same moment, the work of Sanctification *commences*.

There is yet a third instance furnished us by the same inspired book, which must by no means be passed over in silence : I mean that of the apostle Paul.

While breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Christians, he was suddenly arrested in the vicinity of Damascus by a light and voice from heaven. Trembling and astonished, he exclaimed, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to*

\* Acts xvi. 14.

do? The answer commanded him to proceed to the city, and there with submissive patience expect further directions. To this heavenly vision the blinded and humbled persecutor was not disobedient. Three days he spent at Damascus, darkling and fasting: but they were days of high import to his future destiny. His time was not misemployed: *Behold*, said the Lord himself to Ananias, *behold, he prayeth*. Such supplications, fervent and sincere and intense, did not return to him unanswered. Ananias was sent to instruct him in the Gospel: he forthwith received his sight: he arose, and was baptized, thus mystically washing away his sins.\*

Such is the history of the apostle's conversion: and now the question is, at what time did he become regenerate? Was it during the three days of blindness and supplication, which preceded his Baptism; or was it in the article of his Baptism itself? An answer will readily be obtained, if the following reasonable postulate be granted.

*As a man cannot perform any natural acts ANTERIOR to his natural birth; so, analogically, a man cannot perform any spiritual acts ANTERIOR to his spiritual birth.*

The reason in each case is precisely the same. An effect cannot subsist PRIOR to its cause: and

\* Acts ix. 1—18. xxii. 16.

we might just as well say, that a man can perform natural actions *before* he is naturally born, as that a man can perform spiritual actions *before* he is spiritually born.

The question now becomes narrowed to this: did St. Paul perform any spiritual actions during the three days, which *preceded* his Baptism?

I would not build too much upon his obedience, or upon his apparently submissive exclamation, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* because both of these might be produced by the mere operation of servile terror: but I would build upon the testimony, which Christ himself bears of his future apostle; *Behold, he prayeth.* Now, as I have just had occasion to observe from Scripture, the very prayer of the unregenerate is an abomination to God. The prayer therefore of St. Paul, thus commended by his divine master who knows the very secrets of our hearts, cannot have been the formal or terror-wrung prayer of the wicked: for such a prayer most assuredly would not have been mentioned in terms of approbation. Consequently, the prayer of St. Paul was a truly spiritual act: whence we may safely conclude, that his submissive obedience was likewise a spiritual act, and was not solely extorted from him by irreligious terror. St. Paul, therefore, performed spiritual acts during the three days **ANTERIOR** to his Baptism. But no



one can perform spiritual acts, unless he be *first* a spiritual person : and no one can become a spiritual person except by Regeneration ; for Regeneration, as the very term implies, is the *commencing* point of the spiritual life. St. Paul however performed spiritual acts during the three days ANTERIOR to his Baptism. Therefore he must have been regenerated, when he performed such acts. Hence we finally arrive at the conclusion, that he was regenerated ANTERIOR to his Baptism.

This conclusion can only be set aside by the self-contradictory assertion, that an unregenerate or non-spiritual man can yet perform spiritual actions ; for the actions of St. Paul during the three days were undeniably spiritual : in other words, the conclusion can only be set aside by vigorously maintaining the portentous proposition that *effects may PRECEDE their causes.*

Such being the case, our conclusion is not invalidated by the language of Ananias, *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.\** The washing away of sins, here attributed to the Baptism of St. Paul, plainly cannot be understood as denoting, that the apostle was *still* in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity : for he had *already* performed spiritual deeds which had

\* Acts xxii. 16.

received the approbation of Christ himself, and consequently must have been a spiritual or regenerate person. We must, therefore, if we would make Scripture consistent with itself, interpret the expression, as only intimating in the technical language of theology, that St. Paul, in order to his being publicly admitted into the church, must submit to the initiatory rite of Baptism; which, in his case, as well as in every other case, mystically shadowed out the washing away of his sins. To adopt the judicious distinction of Bishop Hopkins, though he had *already* been *internally* regenerated and thus *literally* cleansed from his sins; he had *still* need, in the face of the Church, to be *externally* or *baptismally* regenerated and thus *mystically* or *figuratively* washed from his impurities.\*

A fourth instance may well be deemed sufficient to complete the argument; that of the pious Nathanael, as it stands recorded by St. John.

After Philip had conversed with Jesus, and was satisfied that he was indeed the predicted Messiah, he forthwith imparted his momentous discovery to Nathanael. This person, sincere in his inquiries, though prejudiced against the country of our Lord, hastily exclaimed, *Can any*

\* Bp. Hopkins's Works, p. 519.

*good thing come out of Nazareth?* His friend very rationally advised him to *come and see*. To this he assented : and then it was, that Jesus made that memorable declaration respecting him, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!* A short conversation with the object of his search convinced him, that Philip had judged rightly as to the character of our Saviour : and he then unreservedly made his confession, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.\**

The whole of this transaction occurred no doubt *previous* to the Baptism of Nathanael : the question therefore is, Was he, at the time of its occurrence, a regenerate or an unregenerate man ?

Christ, we see, pronounces him with the voice of infallibility to have been *an Israelite indeed*. Now I see not what we can understand by such an expression except this : that Nathanael was an Israelite, not merely in the letter, but likewise in the spirit ; that he was one of God's people, not solely by natural descent from Jacob, but likewise by internal communion with Jacob's Lord. The expression in short seems evidently to convey the identical doctrine, which St. Paul sets forth somewhat more at large :

\* John i. 43—49.

*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.\** If then, previous to his Baptism, Nathanael was *an Israelite indeed or an Israelite internally*, as contradistinguished from *an Israelite nationally or an Israelite externally* : he clearly must have been a spiritual child of God ; that is to say, in other words, he must have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. But such is declared by our Lord himself to have been the condition of Nathanael *previous* to his Baptism. Therefore he must have been regenerated BEFORE he was baptized. Consequently, Regeneration is NOT inseparably united to Baptism.

Nor do either the ignorance or the prejudice of Nathanael at all invalidate this conclusion. A real change in the heart and the affections may undoubtedly have taken place, while the intellect is as yet very imperfectly illuminated : just as, conversely, the intellect may have been speculatively illuminated in a very high degree, while no change whatsoever has taken place in the heart and the affections. Where the soul has been disposed of to an honest and sincere

\* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

desire of serving God, though as yet it may be considerably in the dark as to the proper mode ; that soul has manifestly taken the first step in the path of holiness : that soul therefore has certainly been born again from above ; for Regeneration is the commencement of Sanctification. Such was the case of Nathanael : and, in his case, as in all other similar cases, intellectual illumination is speedily superadded to an honest and devout purpose.

(3.) We have now seen from direct scriptural examples, which cannot easily be gainsayed, that Regeneration sometimes takes place *before* Baptism, and sometimes *without* any Baptism at all administered either before or after the internal change. If then an instance can be further produced of a person's having been duly baptized and of his yet remaining unregenerate *notwithstanding* his Baptism, the argument, I conceive, will be as complete as can be desired.

In the same book of *the Acts*, which has already furnished us with three examples, the remarkable history of Simon Magus stands very fully recorded. Adopting the oriental theology, which taught that at certain successive intervals the universal herogod descends from heaven and becomes incarnate in a mortal figure, this person, we are told, infatuated the people of Samaria, and gave out that he himself was a manifes-

iation of the great father or of the great divine power. The Samaritans, whose worship was a strange compound of Judaism with the idolatry of their eastern forefathers,\* readily gave heed to him ; for the tenor of his imposture exactly chimed in with their national superstition. Such a plan no doubt was highly lucrative to him ; and his only object seems to have been to ensure its perpetuity. Accordingly, when Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and when he confirmed the truth of his mission by various signs and miracles, Simon was astonished at his supernatural powers and readily believed him to be a genuine messenger of Heaven. This led to his Baptism : but his motive for requesting to partake of that holy rite soon became sufficiently apparent. He duly continued with Philip after he had been baptized : and his whole attention was occupied by the astonishing miracles which he daily witnessed. At length Peter and John themselves were sent down by the apostles to complete the labours of Philip : and, by the imposition of their hands, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were communicated to those who had been baptized. Simon, among the rest, appears to have received these miraculous

\* 2 Kings xvii. 24—41.

powers ; but he was not content without also possessing the faculty of conferring them upon others. Hence he offered money to the two apostles, in order that he also might be enabled to confer the Holy Ghost on whomsoever he chose to lay his hands. This nefarious proposal called forth the well-merited rebuke of St. Peter—*Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may 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 thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive, that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.\**

Such is the history of Simon : we have now to inquire, whether it gives us any warrant for believing, that he was spiritually regenerated at the precise time when he was outwardly baptized.

It will obviously strike even the most superficial observer, that the character, which the inspired apostle has infallibly given us of the baptized sorcerer, is not the character of one who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit : for it is impossible to conceive, that one, who has

\* Acts viii. 20—23.

indeed brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, should yet have neither part nor lot in the Gospel, should be cursed with a heart not right in the sight of God, and should actually be in the very gall of bitterness and in the very bond of iniquity. A person, thus described, certainly cannot, in the judgment of St. Peter, have been a truly regenerate and sanctified believer.

But it may be said, that the sorcerer was indeed spiritually regenerated in the article of Baptism, but that unhappily he afterwards fell away from his high privilege.

To judge how far this is probable, we must attend to his previous conduct.

Now every part of that conduct seems most distinctly to prove, that the man from first to last never had a grain of true religion, but that he was altogether influenced by a base and sordid love of gain. Before the descent of Philip, he had established a lucrative imposture among the besotted Samaritans. The wonderful miracles, not the pure doctrines, of the holy deacon attracted his attention : and the mere force of evidence compelled him theoretically to believe, that he conversed with a servant of the Most High God. In hopes of acquiring the power of working such miracles, which he clearly saw would be not a little profitable to him, and which would mightily further his main project



of a gainful theological imposture, he readily submitted to be baptized: and, having thus obtained a creditable introduction to Philip, he never quitted his side. But why did he thus continue with him? Was it, that he might incessantly hear from his lips the words of eternal life? No such thing: we read not a syllable of his zeal for instruction or of his ardent aspirations after holiness; but we are told, that the new convert *wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.* These were the lure, which attracted him to Philip: these were the endowments, which his soul thirsted after. Presently he conversed with two extraordinary men, who not only possessed such endowments themselves, but enjoyed the yet more wonderful power of communicating them to others. And now the cupidity of the sorcerer could be no longer restrained. *Your holiness I want not: your promises of a blissful immortality I regard not. My wishes are turned to far different objects. Accept my money; and give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. Having acquired this lucrative faculty, wealth and honour and empire lie all before me.* The whole man stands here revealed in all his naked deformity. His drift, from beginning to end, was to make a gainful

merchandise of his Baptism. Not the slightest hint is given, that he had any other object in view : not a single feature in his character evinces any change of heart. From first to last, the man is consistent.

To suppose indeed, without a shadow of evidence, that Simon was spiritually regenerated in Baptism ; that he then became altogether a new creature ; and that yet, in the short space necessary for the news of Philip's success among the Samaritans to be conveyed to Jerusalem and for Peter and John to travel into Samaria, he should so entirely forfeit his recently engrafted character, as to merit the tremendous rebuke of the apostle : to suppose all this, in direct opposition to the obvious purport of the whole history, is to suppose such a monstrous combination of contrarieties, such an astonishing instance of precipitate depravity, such a strange leap from the highest good to the worst evil, as must needs make bankrupt the faith even of credulity itself. Simon, though baptized, was plainly *never* regenerated. Like the early antichrists mentioned by St. John, one of whom there is sufficient reason to believe was this identical sorcerer, *he went out from the faithful, but he was not of them : for, if he had been of them, he would no doubt have continued with them : but he went out,*

*that he might be made manifest that he was not of them.\**

But, if the baptized Simon was never regenerated: then once more we must conclude, that Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparable.

II. The sum, in short, of the whole argument may be reduced to the following syllogisms.

I. (1.) Without Regeneration it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven: because Regeneration is the commencing point of Sanctification; and, without Holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

(2.) But, if it be impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven without Regeneration; then all, who *do* enter into the kingdom of heaven, must have been regenerated.

(3.) Now the penitent malefactor on the cross certainly entered into the kingdom of heaven; because Christ himself promised that he should.

(4.) Therefore the penitent malefactor must have been previously regenerated.

(5.) But the penitent malefactor was never baptized.

(6.) Therefore the penitent malefactor was regenerated without the intervention of Baptism.

\*1 John ii. 18, 19.

(7.) Consequently, we have a direct scriptural proof, that Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparable.

2. (1.) If it can be shewn that a person has been regenerated *before* Baptism ; then Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparably united.

(2.) But it has been proved, that the Centurion Cornelius, the devout Lydia, the apostle St. Paul, and the guileless Nathanael, were regenerated *before* Baptism.

(3.) Therefore Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparably united.

3. (1.) If it can be proved, that any person has received the outward visible sign of Baptism, and that he did not at the same time receive the inward spiritual grace of Regeneration ; then Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparable.

(2.) But it has been shewn, that Simon Magus was duly baptized, and yet that he still remained unregenerate.

(3.) Therefore finally Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparable.

III. Thus it appears from direct scriptural authority, that Regeneration may subsist without Baptism, and that Baptism may subsist without Regeneration.

Hence it will follow, that Regeneration may take place at *any* indefinite point of a man's life ;

either *before* Baptism, or *in the article* of Baptism, or *after* Baptism. This great change of heart must indeed be necessarily experienced by every fallen creature, in order to his entering into the kingdom of heaven : because, without such a change, it is impossible in the very nature of things, that he could enjoy happiness in the presence of a holy God. But to assert, that *Regeneration is so inseparably tied to Baptism that all the baptized are regenerate and all the unbaptized unregenerate, that Regeneration therefore invariably takes place in the article of Baptism, and consequently that it is nugatory to expect any spiritual Regeneration after the outward rite of Baptism has been duly administered* : to assert such a theory as this is to advocate a mere unauthorized human speculation, which rests not on a more solid basis than the Transubstantiation of the Romanists, and which is alike irreconcilable with Experience and with right Reason and with Analogy and with Scripture.

## SERMON VII.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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ROMANS II. 28, 29.

*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.*

IT has now been shewn at large, that the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* is a fond notion, which will not bear the test of sober inquiry, and which bids defiance alike to Experience and right Reason and Analogy and Scripture. Here, therefore, so far as the *general* interests of truth are concerned, the argument might well be closed ; for, if the doctrine in question be advocated or maintained by any *particular* church, such a circumstance

would indeed prove that church to be in error, but it neither would nor could prove an unorthodox doctrine to be an orthodox one. Yet, though nothing more (it is trusted) need be said for the satisfaction of a member of the Catholic Church, it may be desirable to push the inquiry somewhat further for the satisfaction of many who profess themselves members of the Church of England.

Nothing is more common in the present day, than to hear it asserted with equal confidence and pertinacity, that the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* is the genuine doctrine of the Anglican Church, that those who oppose it are unsound members of that Church, that their opposition is the mere effervescence of a heated imagination, and that it cannot for one moment be made good on the principles of calm and sober scriptural reasoning.

As for the last part of the assertion, we have seen, with what perfect facility it may be retorted upon those, who perhaps somewhat too incautiously have indulged themselves in the habit of making it: we have seen, that it is in fact the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*, not the doctrine of *their separability*, which cannot be maintained on the ground either of Scripture or of right Reason: we have

seen, that it is the *former* tenet, not the *latter*, which is convicted of resting on a not more solid basis than a mere unrestrained imagination ; for, if we assert a point, which we can prove neither from Scripture nor from Experience, I see not by what better foundation such an assertion is supported than an unchastised superstitious fancy.

Let us now therefore proceed to consider the former part of the often made assertion before us : namely, that *the doctrine of the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration is the genuine doctrine of the Anglican Church.*

I. The reformers of our national church were men of great good sense, of exemplary piety, and of a deep acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures. Hence we must not lightly believe, that they maintained a doctrine marked with such very extraordinary characteristics as that before us.

1. The ground usually taken by those who assert *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* to be the genuine doctrine of the Church of England, is a peculiar phraseology which pervades the whole of her baptismal services.

Previous to the administration of the sacrament itself, she directs the officiating minister to call upon God in behalf of the infant about to be baptized, that *he, coming to his holy Baptism,*



*may receive remission of his sins by spiritual Regeneration*: and she further teaches him to pray, that the same gracious Being would *give his Holy Spirit to the infant, that he may be born again and be made an heir of everlasting salvation*. When the ceremony has been performed, the minister is required to ask the prayers of the congregation, that *the child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning*; on the express ground that *the child is now regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church*. And lastly, in perfect concordance with the charge, he is enjoined to return thanks to Almighty God for the great and good work which has been wrought in the infant at Baptism: *We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church*. The office for adult Baptism is marked by an exactly similar phraseology: so that, whatever applies to the one, applies equally to the other.

Now it is argued, that, since the minister first prays that the person about to be baptized *may be regenerated*, since he then proceeds to *baptize* him, and since he next immediately afterwards returns thanks to God for *having* regenerated him: it is argued, that, in the judgment of the Anglican Church as expressed in these offices,

the Regeneration of every baptized subject takes place in the article of Baptism.

2. This argument is sufficiently plausible; and I have endeavoured, in my statement of it, to give it all the force that I can: perhaps, however, on examination, it may turn out to be more plausible than solid.

That Baptism is the outward sign of Regeneration, and that Regeneration may sometimes take place at Baptism, is denied, I believe, by no one: neither, I apprehend, will it be denied, that the public officers of a national Church must inevitably be composed in *general* terms. Now the pious framers of our Liturgy could not possibly determine, whether *this* or *that* particular baptized infant, either in their own days or in the days which have followed them, *was* or *was not* likewise regenerated in Baptism: and as little could any individual priest speak positively on the subject. Neither again could the framers of our Liturgy ascertain, whether *this* or *that* particular baptized adult to the end of time *would* or *would not* be also regenerated in Baptism: nor, as they well knew, would it have been prudent in them to devolve upon the clergy the difficult and invidious task, of deciding upon the spiritual state of each adult immediately after his Baptism whether he *had* or *had not* been then regenerated, and of discretionally varying

the conclusion of the service accordingly. On this obvious principle then our baptismal offices have been composed. The outward visible sign admits the catechumen into the visible Church of Christ: the inward spiritual grace admits him into that invisible Church, which consists of those only who have been sanctified by the Blessed Spirit. But the former is confessedly the symbol of the latter: and the two may, without doubt, be received at the same time. Hence, as it were both dangerous and endless to subject the baptismal offices to be perpetually altered at the discretion of the priest, so as literally to suit this or that *particular* case; the Church, in the judgment and hope of charity, speaks *generally* of all the baptized as being likewise regenerated.

(1.) In adopting this principle, which in fact is the only principle that *can* be adopted in constructing offices designed for public use, she is sanctioned, both by the high authority of Scripture, and by that ordinary phraseology which is perfectly familiar to us in secular affairs.

St. Paul addresses one of his public epistles to *ALL that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.*\* Another of them he addresses *unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them*

\* Rom. i. 7.

*that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.\** A third he addresses to *the saints which are at Ephesus*; whom, in conjunction with himself, he characterizes, without any exception, as persons whom *God hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before him in love*: whence he speaks to them *ALL*, still without any exception, as *those whom God hath quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.†* And a fourth he addresses to *the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ*; adding immediately afterwards, *We give thanks to God always for you ALL, knowing brethren beloved, your election of God.‡* Exactly the same general phraseology is employed by St. Peter. He addresses the first of his epistles to *the strangers scattered throughout the Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*: he then blesses God for having *begotten us again*, namely both himself and them without specifying a single exception, *unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled*: and he after-

\* 1 Corinth. i. 2. † Ephes. i. 1, 4. ii. 1. ‡ 1 Thess. i. 1, 2, 4.

wards speaks of them ALL, as *having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit; and as being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.\**

Now, without prying too curiously into the strict meaning of the word *elect*, and without at all pledging ourselves to adopt what is styled the Calvinistic interpretation of the term; it is impossible not to see, that these various communities of Christians are all alike described, as being thus *universally* circumstanced, without any provisions or individual exceptions whatsoever. Are we then hastily to conclude, from the generalized phraseology of these public documents, that ALL *in Rome* were *beloved of God and called to be saints*? Are we to conclude, that EVERY member of the Corinthian Church was *sanctified in Christ Jesus*? Are we to conclude, that ALL the Ephesians were *chosen in Christ that they should be holy*: that ALL, without a single exception, were of the number of *those whom God hath quickened*? Are we to conclude, that, when the apostle gave thanks for ALL *the Thesalonians* professing himself to *know assuredly their election of God*, his intention was to intimate that their Church contained not one un-

\* 1 Peter i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 22, 23.

regenerate and unsound member? Or lastly are we to conclude from the sweeping phraseology of St. Peter, that ALL the strangers, scattered through many extensive provinces, had *purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, had been born again, and had been elected through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience?* It is to be feared, that, neither ecclesiastical history nor the many sharp reprimands scattered through the apostolical letters will warrant any such wild and incredible inference. Heresy and corruption existed from the very beginning: yet, if we torture the *general* phraseology of Peter and Paul into a strictly *individual* sense, as some would torture the kindred *general* phraseology of the Anglican baptismal offices; we may easily prove, that in the golden age of the Catholic Church not a single member made shipwreck of the faith. We have merely to adopt the same mode of reasoning, which has been deemed so conclusive in the case of the baptismal offices, and the matter is accomplished. An English clergyman speaks of EVERY baptized child, as having been regenerated: therefore, in the judgment of the Anglican Church EVERY baptized child is regenerated. St. Peter and St. Paul speak of EVERY member in the several churches which they address, as having been born again and sanctified by the Spirit and elect-

ed to eternal salvation through the medium of a holy obedience : therefore EVERY member in those several churches was a truly religious person, and has infallibly been admitted into the kingdom of heaven. If one of these conclusions be valid, the other is equally so : and, if one of them be invalid, the solidity of the other cannot be much depended upon.

The fact is, that in both cases *general* phraseology is employed, as it ever must be employed, in *public* documents : and so universal is this rule, that it applies to secular matters just as much as to religious. If we were gravely to argue, that, in the undoubted judgment of the king and his ministers, there was not so much as a single disaffected person in this happy land, because its sovereign in general proclamations characterizes ALL his subjects, without any exception, as equally *loving* : if, I say, we were thus gravely to argue, what might be thought of the cogency of our reasoning, the *principle* of our argument would be the very same as the *principle* of that redoubted argument, which has been thought irrefragably to prove that the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* is the true doctrine of the Church of England.

(2.) General phraseology, as might naturally be expected, is by no means exclusively charac-

teristic of the baptismal offices : it more or less pervades all the public documents of the Church ; and, in each instance, common sense teaches us that it must be interpreted in the same manner.

Thus *every* child, without exception, is taught in the Catechism to profess his belief *in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth him and all the elect people of God* : but are we thence perversely to set it down as the sober opinion of our Church, that *every* child, who repeats the Catechism, is sanctified by the Holy Spirit and fitted through obedience to enter into eternal life ? Woeful experience proves but too decisively, that many a child duly repeats this passage who exhibits not the least evidence of Sanctification.

Thus *every* person, who partakes of the Lord's Supper, is taught to say with the congregation, *We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings ; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us ; the burden of them is intolerable* : but are we thence to argue with absurd solemnity, that the Church clearly maintains *every* communicant, no matter what the general tenor of life is, to be animated by these truly Christian sentiments ? The truth is, that all she ascribes to her members sentiments, which as regenerate believers they all *ought* to feel, not which they all really *do* feel.



Thus again, in the burial service, the priest, in the name of the congregation, *gives hearty thanks to God, for that it hath pleased him to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world* ; and beseeches him, that *he would shortly accomplish the number of his elect and hasten his kingdom* : but are we from such phraseology to contend, that, in the deliberate judgment of the Anglican Church, every person, committed to the dust by one of their ministers, would indubitably be such a gainer by his death, as to have reason to rejoice that he had been delivered from the miseries of this sinful world ? The gross absurdity of such an inference is immediately perceived : yet it is by an exactly similar process, that the Church is demonstrated to uphold the unscriptural doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*. Every baptized person is spoken of, as regenerate : every buried person is spoken of, as having exchanged this world for a better. Hence, if we conclude that the Church really maintains the actual Regeneration of every baptized person ; I see not how we can consistently avoid concluding also, that the Church really maintains the actual salvation of every one who receives what is styled *Christian burial*. As the premises are in both cases alike, the conclusions must in both cases be the same.

II. We must not however forget, that the baptismal offices are not the *whole* Liturgy, and that even the *whole* Liturgy is by no means the only public authorized document of the Church of England. She employs *other* prayers, as well as those contained in the baptismal offices : and, in addition to the *entire* Liturgy, she has likewise put forth a brief Catechism for the systematic instruction of her younger members, a regular body of well-digested Articles, and two codes of more copiously explanatory Homilies. We must therefore attend to other parts of the Liturgy, as well as to the baptismal offices. Nor is this all. As the additional documents, which accompany the Liturgy, profess to give a complete systematic statement of the theological tenets which she has judged it proper to adopt : we must obviously, should the Liturgy be less explicit or somewhat ambiguous, rather have recourse to *them* for an accurate and scholastic exposition of her doctrines, than to the more popular and less definite composition of a form of prayer. Hence, if there be any *apparent* difference between the several documents of the Anglican Church, we ought to gather her genuine doctrines, rather from those writings in which she specially professes to define them with logical accuracy, than from those which are of a more loose and popular nature. I mean

not to say, that there is any *real* discrepancy ; for the passages in the baptismal offices ought manifestly, I think, to be understood in the sense which I have ascribed to them : but I would without hesitation assert, that, *supposing* there to be a real discrepancy, we ought to deduce the fixed sentiments of our Church from the Catechism and the Articles and the Homilies, rather than from any particular office in the Liturgy.

Now, in these more scholastic compositions, we either find a total silence preserved respecting the alleged inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration, or we find a doctrine in perfect opposition to such a theory expressly advanced. And again, in certain parts of the Liturgy, we may observe petitions framed upon the manifest adoption of a theory quite the reverse of that, which has too hastily been thought to be supported by the phraseology of the baptismal offices.

1. The Church of England, being fully aware that many of her adult members may not yet have been spiritually regenerated though in their infancy they have been regularly baptized with water, has judiciously provided in her Liturgy more than a single prayer FOR that radical change of heart, which our Lord styles a *New Birth*.

(1.) One of these petitions will be found in the Collect for the Circumcision of Christ.

*Almighty God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised and obedient to the Law for man, GRANT US the true circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In this excellent prayer, persons, who have been long since outwardly baptized, are yet directed to supplicate the Almighty, that he would GRANT to them the true Circumcision of the Spirit. Now what is that *Circumcision of the Spirit*, to which the Church here alludes? It may seem almost like mere trifling to go about formally to demonstrate its identity with *Spiritual Regeneration*: yet, rather than any thing should be omitted, I will readily submit to this charge.

The Church, in the Collect now before us, defines Spiritual Circumcision to be A MORTIFICATION OF A DEADENING *of our hearts and members from all worldly and carnal lusts*. But this is the precise definition, which she likewise gives of Spiritual Regeneration. For she states the inward and spiritual grace, symbolized by the outward and literal washing of the baptismal water, to be A DEATH OF A MORTIFICATION

*unto sin and A NEW BIRTH unto righteousness* :\* and she instructs her clergy to pray in behalf of every child brought to be baptized, that *all carnal affections may DIE in him* ; and that *he, being DEAD unto sin, may crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin.* † But, if in the judgment of the Church Spiritual Circumcision and Spiritual Regeneration be *alike A DEATH unto sin or A MORTIFICATION of the heart* from all worldly and carnal lusts ; then they must plainly be mutually the same with each other. Accordingly, by way of distinctly shewing what her judgment is in this matter, she has aptly selected, as a proper lesson for the festival of the Circumcision, the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans ; in which St. Paul specially sets forth the difference between outward Circumcision in the flesh and that inward Circumcision of the heart which had already been insisted upon by Moses and the prophets. It has however been the unanimous opinion of all her best divines, that literal Circumcision corresponds with literal Baptism, and Spiritual Circumcision with Spiritual Regeneration. † Nor can there be the least doubt, that St. Paul, and the Church of

\* Catechism.

† Baptismal Office.

‡ See Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Articles. Art. XXVII. Bp. Hall's Works. Dec. v. Epist. 4, Abp. Usher's Body of Divin. p. 388, 394.

England after him, consider the two under this identical aspect.

When that Church therefore provides a prayer FOR Spiritual Circumcision, she in effect provides a prayer FOR Spiritual Regeneration. But it is plainly her intention, that this prayer should be used by those baptized *adult* members of her communion, to whose case it may be suitable. Now in this prayer she directs those baptized *adult* members of her communion to supplicate God, that he WOULD GRANT to them the grace of Spiritual Regeneration. If then she directs them to pray FOR Regeneration, she must inevitably suppose them to be as yet DESTITUTE of it. But the members, whom she thus directs to pray, are BAPTIZED ADULTS. Therefore, in the judgment of the English Church, many persons may have been outwardly baptized in their infancy, WITHOUT being inwardly circumcised or regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

It is worthy of observation, that this Collect, like the baptismal offices, is couched in *general* terms. Hence, if we are to argue from the phraseology of the Baptismal offices, that ALL baptized persons are regenerate ; we may just as well argue from the phraseology of the Collect, that no baptized persons are regenerate. The collect is appointed to be used by the *minister* and the *whole* congregation of *every* parish-

church throughout the realm of England. Consequently, if we think fit to argue, that the Collect is appointed to be **GENERALLY** used ; that it contains a petition **FOR** Spiritual Regeneration ; that the offering up of such a prayer necessarily implies, that **ALL** who use it are **DESTITUTE** of Spiritual Regeneration ; and therefore that **ALL** the members of the English Church thus using it, are manifestly, in the judgment of that Church, thus **DESTITUTE** : if, I say, we should think fit to argue in such a manner from the *generalized* form of the prayer ; we should argue just as those persons do, who from the phraseology of the baptismal offices would prove, that in the judgment of the English Church **ALL** the baptized are *ipso facto* regenerate. The absurdity of this mode of reasoning appears at once, if we apply it to the Collect : but, why it should be very absurd in one case, and very wise in another, is not easy to comprehend. Doubtless both the Collect and the baptismal offices ought to be understood in the very same *generalized* sense. They are couched indeed, as all public liturgical forms *must* be, in *general* terms : but, in their strict literal import, they are alike applicable only to *particular* individuals. The Church no more means to teach by the phraseology of the baptismal offices, that **ALL** the baptized are regenerate ; than she means to teach by the

phraseology of the Collect that ALL her praying members are unregenerate.

(2.) The tenor of the Collect for the Circumcision will teach us, how we ought to understand the closely connected Collect for the Nativity.

*Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; GRANT, that we, BEING regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The construction of this prayer is somewhat ambiguous: for the clause, *BEING regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace*, may import, either a petition FOR Regeneration, or an assertion that it has already been RECEIVED; according as the participle BEING is taken in a future or a present sense. Those therefore, who contend for the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration, contend of course for the RETROSPECTIVE and not for the PROSPECTIVE interpretation of the clause.

Now I am inclined to think, that the closely parallel Collect for the Circumcision will go a good way towards settling this dispute. That Collect is *unambiguously* a prayer FOR Regeneration: and it contains a clause of a structure exactly similar to the litigated clause in the



other Collect ; *our hearts and all our members* BEING *mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts.* In this clause, the participle BEING bears undoubtedly a *future* sense : because the clause contains a definition of the Spiritual Circumcision, FOR which supplication is made. Hence there is at least a strong presumption, that the same participle BEING, in the parallel clause of the other Collect, was meant to be similarly understood in a *future* sense also. But, if this be the case ; then, so far as that presumption avails, the litigated clause in the Collect for the Nativity ought to be interpreted PROSPECTIVELY and not RETROSPECTIVELY : that is to say, the Collect is a petition FOR Regeneration, not an assertion that all who use it are ALREADY regenerated. Accordingly, the venerable Society for promoting Christian Knowledge judiciously determine in favour of the PROSPECTIVE sense : as we may unequivocally gather from one of their authorized tracts, containing an alphabetical table of the Collects reduced under proper heads, in which the Collect for the Nativity is described as being *a prayer FOR Regeneration.* The same likewise is the determination of Wheatley, though not expressed quite so definitely : for he says, that *in this Collect the Church teaches us to pray THAT WE MAY BE par-*

takers of the benefit of Christ's birth.\* Now the benefit, specially set forth in the Collect, is Regeneration. If therefore we pray FOR that benefit, we of course pray FOR Regeneration. And this I take to be the real meaning of the Collect, analogously to the *undoubted* meaning of the Collect for the Circumcision.

2. From the Liturgy, let us pass to the Catechism.

(1.) In this manual, a Sacrament *generally*, and therefore no doubt the *particular* Sacrament of Baptism, is defined to be *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same and a pledge to assure us thereof.*

Neither in the present very accurate definition, nor in any thing that follows, is there a single syllable advanced respecting a pretended inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace. In the case of *each* Sacrament alike, the outward sign is merely pronounced to symbolize the inward grace. As to their inseparability, a profound silence is in *this* place at least certainly preserved. They are not indeed *denied* to be inseparable, but neither are they *asserted* to be so.

\* Wheatley on the Common Prayer. p. 193. Oxon.

(2.) Perhaps however it may be said, that the outward sign is specified to be, not only *a mean* whereby we receive the inward grace, but likewise *a pledge* to assure us of it. Whence it may be argued, that the outward sign is at once, *a channel* through which we may expect to receive the inward grace, and moreover *a pledge* to assure us of its actual reception. But, if it be both one and the other, if it be both a channel *for* reception and a pledge *of* reception; the notion of *inseparability* seems at any rate to be strongly *implied* in such phraseology, if not absolutely *expressed* in so many words.

To this I reply, that the definition before us purports to be the definition of *a Sacrament in general*, not of *the Baptismal Sacrament in particular*: hence it is a definition, which *alike* respects *both* Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and consequently, whatever it sets forth, touches *the one* just as much as *the other*. Such being the case, if, from the expressions now under consideration, we are to infer the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in Baptism; we are equally bound to infer the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in the Lord's Supper: and, conversely, if we are *not* to infer from them the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in the Lord's Supper; then *neither* are we warranted in infer-

ring from them the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in Baptism. But the Church positively declares it to be her judgment, that the outward sign in the Lord's Supper may be received *without* any participation of the inward grace.\* Therefore she maintains, that the outward sign and the inward grace in the Lord's Supper are *not* inseparable. If then such be her opinion, the expressions in the Catechism relative to the outward sign in *a Sacrament in general* being both a mean of receiving the inward grace and a pledge to assure us of its actual reception, cannot possibly be meant to assert the *inseparability* of the sign and the grace: because this interpretation of them, by proving too much, would exhibit the Church as palpably contradicting herself. For, a *Sacrament in general* being the subject of the definition, if the expressions in question assert the *inseparability* of the sign and the grace, they necessarily assert it in the case of *each Sacrament in particular*. But the church declares, that the sign and the grace are *not* inseparable in the Lord's Supper. Therefore the expressions in question must not be understood, as asserting, in the case of the Lord's Supper, their *inseparability*. But, if they assert not their *inseparability* in the Lord's

\* Art. xxix.

Supper, then neither do they assert their *inseparability* in Baptism. For the expressions occur in the definition of *a Sacrament in general*. Therefore they must be interpreted *homogeneously* in regard to *each Sacrament in particular*. For, by no rule of sound criticism, can we be allowed to say, that the expressions *assert* indeed the *inseparability* of the outward sign and the inward grace in the Sacrament of *Baptism*, but that they do *not assert* the *inseparability* of the outward sign and the inward grace in the Sacrament of *the Lord's Supper*.

(3.) Thus it is clear, that whatever may be the purport of the expressions before us, they cannot be consistently interpreted, as maintaining the *inseparability* of the outward sign and the inward grace in Baptism. The meaning of them therefore I take to be this: that in each Sacrament the outward sign is an *appointed* mean of obtaining the inward grace, though not an *indispensable* mean; and that it is likewise on God's part a pledge, that, in his own good time, and so far as is consistent with his own providential dispensations, he will superadd the inward grace. *More* than this we cannot allow their meaning to be: because, otherwise, we shall be brought to the absurdity of maintaining, that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are an infallible pledge to the wicked who receive them

that they shall thereby also partake of the inward grace.

(4.) So far then as the Catechism is concerned, instead of the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration being *asserted*, it is in effect *denied*: for, as in a general definition of the term *Sacrament* Baptism and the Lord's Supper are placed exactly upon the same footing with regard to their respective signs and things signified, and as in the Lord's Supper the sign and the thing signified are confessedly *not* inseparable; the obvious inference is, that we are to understand such also to be the case with the Sacrament of Baptism.

3. If from the Catechism we proceed to the Articles, our search for the pretended inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in the Baptismal Sacrament will be equally fruitless.

The Articles furnish us with two definitions respecting Baptism, the one general, and the other particular: and they likewise contain an explanatory statement, which alone is sufficient to set the question at rest for ever.

(1.) The *general* definition regards of course *both* Sacraments, and it is couched in the following terms:

*Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession: but*

*rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.\**

On this definition it will be sufficient to remark, that, being a *general* one, no argument can be deduced from it to prove the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace in the *one* Sacrament, which will not equally prove their inseparability in the *other* Sacrament. But it is acknowledged, that they are *not* inseparable in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Therefore the present definition cannot be adduced, as proving their inseparability in the Sacrament of Baptism.

(2.) The *particular* definition, which regards Baptism *alone* runs as follows :

*Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened : but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of the forgiveness of sins and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed, faith is confirmed, and*

\* Art. xxv.

*grace is increased by virtue of prayer unto God.\**

In this definition it is not very easy to discover any assertion of the necessary inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration: if however some lynx-eyed inquirer should fancy, that he *does* discern something of the kind, let him reconcile it, if he be able, with the explanatory statement which now remains to be brought forward.

(3.) The statement is this:

*The Sacraments, not ONE only, but BOTH the Sacraments: the Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And, in such ONLY as WORTHILY receive the same, they have a wholesome effect and operation: but they, that receive them UNWORTHILY, purchase to themselves damnation.†*

Now it is manifest, that in this statement the unorthodox doctrine of the inseparability of the outward sign and the inward grace is distinctly and explicitly disavowed. For we are positively assured, that, in the case of *each* Sacrament, not *solely* the Lord's Supper but Baptism *also*: we are positively assured, that, in the case of *each* Sacrament, a wholesome effect is produced by its administration ONLY in such as WORTHILY receive the same: whence it obviously and neces-

\* Art. xxvii.

† Art. xxv.



sarily follows, that in such as do NOT worthily receive *either* Sacrament NO wholesome effect is produced on the recipient by its administration. If then the Sacrament of Baptism be UNWORTHILY received, NO wholesome effect (according to this explanatory statement) is experienced by the recipient: in other words, for such only can be the sense of the proposition, the person so baptized partakes of the outward visible sign WITHOUT partaking of the inward invisible grace: that is to say, he is baptized WITHOUT being regenerated. But, if he be baptized WITHOUT being regenerated, which this authoritative statement of the Anglican Church declares to be the case with him; then it is the manifest decision of that Church, that Baptism and Regeneration are NOT necessarily inseparable.

From such a decision it inevitably follows, that Regeneration, so far from being *indissolubly* tied to Baptism, may take place in the soul *long after* Baptism has been outwardly administered to the body. For, otherwise, what would be the condition of the man who had been *unworthily* baptized, and who therefore (agreeably to the statement of the Church now before us) had *not* been regenerated? Are we to say, that such a subject is utterly incapable of any *future* Regeneration; that his day of grace *irrevocably* passed

away at Baptism ; that, as he was not *then* regenerated, he *never* can be regenerated ; and, consequently, that, as he *never* can be regenerated, he *never* can enter into the kingdom of heaven ? Are we to saddle the venerable Church of England with such gross and impious absurdities as these ? Surely not : but what then will follow ? Why, no doubt, the conclusion, that Regeneration may take place *long after* the outward administration of Baptism. The Church supposes the case of an *unworthy* recipient of Baptism ; and determines most rationally, that such a recipient is *not* thereby regenerated. She presumes not however to limit God's mercy : nor does she arrogantly decide, that this recipient of the external sign can *never* be regenerated *at all*, because he has certainly *not* been regenerated in the article of Baptism. On the contrary, she leaves us to infer, as common sense requires that we *should* infer, that what has *hitherto* been wanting may *hereafter* be supplied ; that this unregenerated, though baptized, person may *at some future period* become regenerate ; and that thus, by a spiritual New Birth to which *as yet* he has been a stranger, he may be made meet for an inheritance with the glorified saints.

(4.) Here it may probably be said, that such an expression as *the unworthy reception of the Baptismal Sacrament* can only relate to adults,

that infants cannot be baptized *unworthily*, and therefore that all baptized infants must also be regenerated.

To this it might be sufficient to reply, that the person, who uses such an argument, does, by his very use of it, completely give up the leading point in debate; namely, that *Baptism and Regeneration are so necessarily inseparable that it is folly to expect any Regeneration* SUBSEQUENT TO *Baptism*: for, being compelled to acknowledge that in the judgment of the Anglican Church an adult may be baptized *without* being regenerated, he merely attempts to take refuge behind the shield of Pedobaptism, if that peradventure may afford him a temporary shelter. Such a reply would be sufficient: but I shall not let the matter rest here.

Our knowledge both of the divine government and of the nature of spirit is so very limited, that I see not, how we can peremptorily determine beforehand as to the worthy or unworthy reception of Baptism by *any* subject according to *God's* estimation of worthiness or unworthiness. We have no authority that I am aware of for dogmatically asserting, that every infant *must*, from the mere circumstance of its infancy, be a worthy recipient of Baptism. Scripture and the Church perfectly concur in declaring with one mouth, that we are all *by nature born*

*in sin and the children of wrath*, and that we continue in this miserable condition until we are *made the children of grace by a death unto sin and a New Birth unto righteousness*. Now, if such be the state of all infants *before* Regeneration, and if no infants are regenerated *until* they be baptized, how can any infant whatsoever be a worthy recipient of Baptism? Each infant plainly, according to the theory which makes Regeneration the immediate *consequence* of Pedobaptism, is *a child of wrath* at the precise moment of its being baptized; because the act of Baptism immediately *precedes* the communicated grace of Regeneration. But, if each infant be *a child of wrath* at the precise moment of its being baptized, which the present theory necessarily makes it to be: an infant, thus characterized, cannot be *a worthy recipient of Baptism*; unless we allow, that a person may be at once *a worthy recipient of Baptism* and *a child of wrath*, which (so far as I can judge) involves a direct contradiction. Hence it is manifest, that, unless we can *prove* all infants to receive Baptism worthily, we shall not much advance the cause of truth by only sturdily *asserting* that they *do* so receive it.

For my own part, I venture not to pry into the mysteries of God's moral government, nor do I pretend to solve the immense difficulties

which encompass that most intricate problem: this only I will say, that the experience of absolute matter of fact determines, that *all* baptized infants are *not* regenerated.

Our Lord has furnished us with a sure method of judging with respect to character; *by their fruits shall ye know them*: and his apostle has drawn out this brief sketch into a full-length picture by exhibiting to us at large, what are the deeds of the flesh and what the fruits of the Spirit; or, in other words, what are the distinguishing marks of the unregenerate and what of the regenerate.\*

Now, when we behold duly baptized persons displaying from their very infancy every mark of unregeneracy, a circumstance the complete reverse of being uncommon; how can we reasonably believe, that they have ever been born again of the Spirit? To suppose, in defiance of all evidence, that they were regenerated while infants at Baptism, but that their Regeneration was almost immediately afterwards so obliterated *during absolute childhood* as to leave not a single trace behind; is to suppose, that God acts altogether in vain, that he stamps indeed his image on the soul but that he suffers it to be effaced before the unhappy subject knows his right

\* Galat. v. 19—25.

hand from his left, and that he withdraws his powerful grace ere the wretched infant has forfeited it by any deed of *actual* criminality : it is to suppose a strangely incredible circumstance, which at once puts dishonour upon God and is revolting to the intellect of man, merely to serve a turn in a theological argument.

Nor is this all. When we see baptized persons living for years without God in the world ; when we afterwards observe a decided and permanent change in the conduct of such persons ; and when we hear them declaring with one consent, that they are conscious of a corresponding change of heart which makes them altogether different men from what they well remember themselves to have once been, though they may not be able to specify the precise moment when the change commenced : when the whole of this passes in review before us : can we doubt, that these persons have been regenerated **AFTER** Baptism, and consequently that they were not regenerated *in* Baptism ?

If then we put these various matters together, we must, I think, on every principle both of Scripture and Reason, decide, that *all* baptized infants are *not* regenerated. But, if *all* baptized infants are *not* regenerated, *some* baptized infants must have been *unworthy* recipients of Baptism : that is to say, they must at the time of Baptism have

been *children of wrath* and therefore *unworthy*. To such a conclusion we are, as it appears to me, brought by the irresistible force of *actual experience*, against which no mere abstract argument can possibly hold good. The strong evidence of *facts*, reasoned upon in the very manner which Christ and St. Paul teach us to reason upon them, demonstrates, unless we are prepared to uphold a crazy system by identifying darkness with light, that many baptized infants have *not* been regenerated.

*Why* the existence of this yet palpable and undeniable circumstance should be permitted by the Supreme Being, I pretend not to determine: I can only refer it, as the last resort, with various other equally inexplicable and equally certain matters in the moral world, to the good pleasure of an all-seeing God who orders every thing according to the dictates of his infinite wisdom. At this point, ignorant and erring man must stop short: at least, here he must stop, until he shall have satisfactorily accounted for moral evil, until he shall have reconciled divine prescience and human free-agency, and until he shall have shewn why the Christian is placed in a more favourable situation than the Heathen for ensuring an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven. On these and such like points we are completely in the dark; and, the

less we bewilder ourselves with vainly seeking to unravel their intricacies, the more prudently and soberly we shall act.

To return however to the matter in debate : this, at any rate, is abundantly clear, that the Church of England, speaking through her Articles, decidedly rejects the unscriptural doctrine of *the necessary inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration.*

4. Let us now proceed to the Homilies, which will probably throw additional light on the real sentiments of the Anglican Church.

(1.) In the first part of the Sermon for Rogation week, we read as follows.

*Let them all come together that be now glorified in heaven, and let us hear what answer they will make, whether their first creation was in God's goodness or of themselves. Forsooth, David would make answer for them all and say, Know ye for surety, even the Lord is God ; he hath made us, and not we ourselves. If they were asked again, who should be thanked for their Regeneration, for their Justification, and for their Salvation ; whether their deserts, or God's goodness only : although in this point every one confess sufficiently the truth of this matter in his own person, yet let David answer by the mouth of them all, Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name*



give all the thanks, for thy loving mercy and for thy truth sake.\*

We are here taught, that the glorified saints in heaven are all ready to acknowledge, that they owe not their Regeneration to their own merits but solely to the goodness of God. Now, as many of these saints have doubtless been baptized during their infancy, if the Church had judged that their Regeneration universally took place in the article of their Baptism ; it were mere idle trifling with words for her gravely to assure us, that they ascribed not their Regeneration to their own deserts. For, if they were regenerated at Baptism during their infancy, it is indeed an abundantly clear case, that they could not rationally ascribe that privilege to their own merits : but then it is clear for so very childish a reason, that we are not doing much honour to the intellects of our reformers by making them argue so ridiculously. Had each glorified saint, that was baptized during his infancy, been regenerated also in the article of Baptism ; he most indisputably could have done nothing to *merit* his Regeneration, for a very obvious reason : he would in fact, being a mere infant, have done *nothing at all* previous to his Regeneration, neither *good, bad, nor indifferent* ; so that of

\* Serm. for Rogat. Week i. p. 402, 403. Oxon.

course he could not have merited it by any righteous deeds, which he had *anteriorly* performed. All this, no doubt, is quite plain; and we must certainly concede, that no person, who is regenerated at the age of a week or a month, can have *previously* done any thing to *deserve* his Regeneration. But would our wise and venerable reformers have been guilty of such egregious trifling? I should conceive not. The whole tenor of the passage manifestly implies, that at least a very great part of the glorified saints had been regenerated at an *adult* age and long *subsequent* to their Baptism; but that, viewing even their most specious actions as every Christian *must* view them, they ascribed not their Regeneration in the slightest degree to their own *antecedent* meritoriousness but solely to the undeserved goodness of God.

Understand the citation in *this* manner, which is evidently the manner in which it *ought* to be understood; and we have excellent sense: but, in that case, we must give up the notion, that the Anglican Church maintains *the necessary inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration.*

(2.) But there is a yet more decisive passage in the first part of the Sermon for Whitsunday.

*Where the Holy Ghost worketh, there nothing is impossible, as may 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, he was greatly amazed in his mind, and began to reason with Christ, demanding, how a man might be born which is 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 rather take occasion thereby to praise and glorify 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 understanding, the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty workings 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 perverse nature they should never have. That, which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. 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 virtuous 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—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 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—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 : otherwise, in thinking well of thyself, thou dost nothing else but deceive thyself.\**

\* Serm. for Whitsund. i. p. 389, 390, 391.

Let any one judge, whether the whole tenor of this passage does not plainly shew, that the persons treated of in it are not *infants* but *adults*.

We are first told, that, when God's Holy Spirit quickens or regenerates the minds of men, he stirs up good and godly motions in their hearts ; that, in consequence of this divine action in their souls, they are made new men in Christ Jesus : and that, when they are so regenerated and brought forth anew, they are nothing like the men they were before. We are next very methodically taught the manner of this great dissimilitude to their former selves. The Spirit, we learn, having inwardly wrought the new birth of man, continues also to dwell and abide in him for the purpose of Sanctification. Hitherto he was fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds : but now, in consequence of his Regeneration, a mighty change has taken place, which makes him an altogether different man from what he was previously ; for his works are become virtuous and good, consonant to the rule of God's word, savouring and tasting not of the flesh but of the Spirit. Such is the nature of the change, commencing at Regeneration and afterwards fully developing itself in the course of Sanctification : so that, as the man, who before wrought with

greediness the deeds of the flesh, now brings forth the fruits of the Spirit ; even all his neighbours (which indeed they are generally quick enough to do) may distinctly perceive the reality of it by his altered views and conduct. Lastly, with much wisdom and piety, we are warned of the fatal mistake of fancying ourselves regenerate, when our lives and dispositions prove us to be unregenerate. If these savour and taste, not of the Spirit, but of the flesh ; we are but falling into a miserable self-deception in thinking well of ourselves. For, in fact, it is a palpable contradiction in terms, that a man, whose whole life demonstrates him to be *carnal*, should yet be *spiritually* regenerated and born again of God.

On the whole, I see not what sense can be made of the passage, if we think fit to refer it to *infants* and not to *adults*. An infant is indeed *corrupt by nature* : but how has he ever been *actually disobedient* to God, or how has he ever been *actually given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds* ; which the passage represents to be the case with those unregenerate persons of whom it is treating ? The change is said to consist in ceasing to work *the deeds of the flesh* and in beginning to bring forth *the fruits of the Spirit* ; so that the man, by reason of this change, is perceptibly nothing like the man that he was

before : but what *deeds of the flesh*, as enumerated by St. Paul, has an infant wrought ; what *fruits of the Spirit*, as specified by the same apostle, has an infant manifested ; how, by ceasing to work the former and by beginning to bring forth the latter, has an infant exhibited a perfect dissimilitude to his original self ? It is impossible to comprehend, how phraseology like this can respect *a mere child* : the author of the Homily is most palpably treating of some great internal change in the soul of *an adult*, which altogether influences his external conduct. But, if this be the case, then the change treated of must necessarily be viewed as having taken place in this adult *long after* his outward Baptism.

The only loop-hole, by which a disputant might escape from so obvious a conclusion, is this : *the persons spoken of are heathens previous to their baptism into a Christian Church ; not persons within the pale of such a Church, who have been duly baptized in their infancy.*

To this barely possible subterfuge the close of the passage affords a complete answer. The Homilies were Sermons appointed to be parochially read to *the members of the Church of England*. Now, at the end of a most sound and judicious account of Regeneration, the reading minister addresses each of those members, who

are present, individually and in the second person : *here is that glass, wherein THOU must behold THYSELF, and discern whether THOU have the Holy Ghost within THEE or the spirit of the flesh.* I need scarcely say, that, according to the entire foregoing account of Regeneration which had just been read to the assembled members of the Church, *the having the Holy Spirit, or the having the spirit of the flesh,* is made the grand test of a man's being regenerate or unregenerate. Yet, at the close of it, the minister calls upon all present to examine themselves and discern, whether THEY have the one Spirit or the other spirit. Hence he plainly calls upon them to judge by their fruits, whether THEY be regenerate or unregenerate. The persons then, who are concerned in the foregoing account of Regeneration, are no *mere unbaptized heathens* ; but *regularly baptized members of the Anglican Church,* young and old, male and female, assembled together for the laudable purpose of receiving ministerial instruction. *These* therefore are the persons, who are taught what a great change Regeneration is : *these* are the persons called upon to discern, whether THEY be regenerate or not. But, though it is presumed that *some* of these may very possibly have never been regenerated by the Holy Spirit,



yet they have *all* been outwardly baptized with water.

Hence it is plain, that, in the judgment of the Church, Baptism and Regeneration are by no means inseparable : and hence it is equally plain, that this same Church directs all her ministers to call upon their congregations, after a godly manner, to discern whether they be individually regenerate or unregenerate.

III. Thus have I endeavoured to vindicate the Church of England from an aspersion, which has not unfrequently been cast upon her, of teaching a doctrine at once irreconcilable with right Reason and contradictory to Holy Scripture. If I have at all succeeded in this attempt, my end has been answered : and I shall consider myself as having done good service to the venerable and truly apostolical communion, of which I am a member.

## SERMON VIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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ROMANS II. 28, 29.

*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.*

**PERTINACITY** in error is so very common an infirmity of the human mind, that, although it has now been shewn most fully that the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* is not the doctrine of the Church of England, it may probably be still urged that the ablest divines of that Church have ever maintained it as a genuine tenet of the communion to which they belong. Whence it may be argued, that, as such is the universal opinion of her ablest divines, it seems most strangely in-

credible, that from age to age they should have agreed in misunderstanding the sentiments of the Anglican Church. The fair presumption therefore from these premises is, that they have *not* misunderstood her sentiments; and consequently that, notwithstanding all which has been said to the contrary, she really *does* the doctrine of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*.

I know not that I have ever seen the argument *formally drawn out* in this manner; but I have often seen it *insinuated* with as much pomp of confidence, as if it were plainly and confessedly unanswerable. Now I will readily acknowledge, that, although we might not be absolutely *bound* discretionally to surrender our intellects to the conclusion of such an argument, we should at least be somewhat *puzzled* with it; for the conclusion no doubt is very legitimately deduced from the premises: *all the ablest divines of the English Church have ever held the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration: THEREFORE it is incredible, that the Church herself should all the while have held a precisely opposite doctrine.* But, before we perplex ourselves with this knotty conclusion, it may perhaps be as prudent to inquire, whether the premises, from which it has been deduced, are *themselves* valid: it may perhaps be as prudent to inquire, whether all the ablest divines of the

English Church *have* ever held the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration. If such premises can *indeed* be established ; it will then be quite time enough to consider what we can make of the conclusion : if, on the other hand, they *cannot* be established ; then of course we need not trouble ourselves with a conclusion deduced from a palpable falsehood. In that case, the premises being unsound, the conclusion must needs be unsound likewise.

I. Would we then know the sentiments of our standard divines, we must obviously regard, not what may have been boldly *asserted* of them, but what *they themselves have advanced* on the subject before us : that is to say, we must consult those *writings*, which they have left for the instruction of posterity.

1. A brief confession of faith has come down to us, drawn up and signed by the following protestant bishops and martyrs while imprisoned in London ; Robert Ferrar late Bishop of St. David's, Rowland Taylor, John Philpot, John Bradford, Laurence Saunders, John Hooper late Bishop of Worcester and Gloucester, Edward Crome, John Rogers, and Edmund Lawrence. It bears date the eighth day of May, in the year 1554 ; and to it is annexed the subsequent declaration : *To these things aforesaid, do I, Miles Coverdale late Bishop of Exeter, consent and agree*

*with these mine afflicted brethren being prisoners. Mine own hand, Miles Coverdale. And now let us hear the solemn testimony of the eminent men, whose names are here recited.*

*We believe and confess concerning Justification, that, as it cometh only from God's mercy through Christ, so it is perceived and had of none who be of years of discretion, otherwise than by faith only. Which faith is not an opinion, but a certain persuasion wrought by the Holy Ghost in the mind and heart of man ; wherethrough, as the mind is illuminated, so the heart is supplied to submit itself to the will of God unfeignedly, and so sheweth forth an inherent righteousness ; which is to be discerned in the article of justification from the righteousness which God endueth us withal in justifying us, although inseparably they go together. And this we do, not for curiosity or contention sake, but for conscience sake that it might be quiet ; which it can never be, if we confound, without distinction, forgiveness of sin and Christ's justice imputed to us, with Regeneration and inherent Righteousness.*

In this passage, Regeneration and inherent Righteousness, which is but another name for Sanctification, are carefully and accurately distinguished from that imputed Righteousness of Christ by which alone we are forensically justified. Now such Regeneration and Sanctifica-

tion are described, as consisting of *an illumination of the mind and a suppling of the heart to submit itself to the will of God unfeignedly*. But these internal operations necessarily imply, that the subject of them is an *adult* and not a mere *infant*. Hence it is expressly said, that, in those *who be of years of discretion*, such graces are the result of *a faith*, which is not a mere theoretical opinion, but *a certain persuasion wrought by the Holy Ghost in the mind and heart of man*. The whole drift however of the Confession clearly shews, that it treats of *persons who have been born and baptized and bred in a Christian country*, not of *unbaptized heathens who never heard of the name of Jesus until they came to years of discretion*. Consequently, it teaches us, that Regeneration and Sanctification, rightly described as consisting of *an illumination of the mind and a suppling of the heart to submit itself unfeignedly to the will of God*, sometimes take place in the souls of those *who be of years of discretion*; notwithstanding these declared adults have been already baptized in their infancy.

Here then we find many venerable fathers of the Anglican Church; one of whom, Bp. Ferrar, was (according to Bp. Burnet) a member of the committee nominated to compile the Liturgy, and therefore doubtless well acquainted with the genuine doctrines of that Church: here we

find many venerable fathers arguing on the express supposition, which they plainly view as incontrovertible, that Regeneration and its consequent Sanctification *may* and often *do* take place in the souls of adults, who have been *long before* outwardly baptized.

Hence they speak exactly to the same purpose in what they say of the two Sacraments.

*We confess and believe the Sacraments of Christ, which be Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that they ought to be ministered according to the institution of Christ, concerning the substantial parts of them ; and that they be no longer Sacraments, than they be had in use and used to the end for which they were instituted.*

This article is chiefly levelled at the errors of the Romanists respecting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; but it applies with equal force to any superstitious notions respecting the Sacrament of Baptism, and ought clearly to be understood with reference to what had been already said on the subject of Regeneration and inherent Righteousness. Hence, in the judgment of these venerable men, if Baptism be viewed as a sort of mechanical process by which the soul of an infant may be spiritually regenerated, it becomes no better than a mere form. At least, when we consider the general context of the first-cited passage, I know not any other sense in which

we can understand them, when they speak of Baptism being had in use and used to a different end from that to which it was instituted: for what other abuse can there be of Baptism than to administer it with the vain notion, that the baptized subject will infallibly and *ipso facto* become regenerate?

Thus we find, even *in limine*, that three bishops and seven presbyters of the primitive English Reformed Church, one of those bishops moreover concerned in compiling the Liturgy, esteem it a matter perfectly indisputable, that Regeneration may take place in adult subjects who have received infant baptism, and consequently that Baptism and Regeneration are not inseparable.

2. In addition to this brief confession of faith, a code of forty one articles has come down to us: which (according to Bp. Burnet,) *it is more than probable*, were framed by Cranmer and Ridley, and sent about to others that they might correct or add to them as they saw cause. The twenty sixth article is couched in the following terms.

*There are two Sacraments, which are not bare tokens of our profession, but effectual signs of God's good will to us: which strengthen our faith, yet not by virtue only of the work wrought, but in those who receive them WORTHILY.*



If then any one receive Baptism UNWORTHILY ; the inward grace of Regeneration, in the opinion of Cranmer and Ridley, does NOT attend it. Therefore, according to these two prelates, Baptism and Regeneration are inseparable.

3. We have now heard the sentiments of five English bishops who flourished at the time of the Reformation, let us next attend to those of their venerable brother Bp. Latimer.

*The preaching of the Gospel is the power of God to every man that doth believe. Paul means, God's word opened is the instrument and the thing whereby ye are saved. Beware, beware, that ye diminish not this office : for, if ye do, ye decay God's power to them that believe. Christ saith consonant to the same, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He must have a Regeneration. And what is this Regeneration ? It is not to be christened in water, as those firebrands do expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then ? St. Peter sheweth, that one place of Scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collation of places, that make Scripture plain. 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.\**

In this very explicit passage the holy martyr declares, that to confound mere Baptism with spiritual Regeneration, so as to maintain that every baptized person is thence *ipso facto* regenerate, is a palpable heresy advocated by none save those whom (in the rough phraseology of of the day) he calls *firebrands* : and, to prevent the possibility of any escape, he afterwards asserts, that *our new birth cometh in by the word of God preached and opened*. Now, since it is plain that a baptized infant cannot hear the word of God preached, and since it is nevertheless declared by the bishop that the hearing of this word preached is the instrumental cause of Regeneration ; we must necessarily conclude, that, in his judgment, both many baptized persons were still unregenerate, and likewise that their Regeneration was to be effected at an adult age by hearing the word of God faithfully preached to them.

Nor is this the whole, which we are obliged to conclude from the important passage before us. As Latimer stigmatizes all those, who taught an *opposite* doctrine, with the uncourly appellation of *firebrands* ; we may be sure, that

\* Latimer's Serm. vol. i. p. 72.

this *opposite* doctrine was maintained in *his* day only by the Romanists, and that the protestant reformers with whom he himself symbolized unanimously rejected it as an evident corruption of Popery. Here then we learn, in exact accordance with the authorities which have been already cited, that the general doctrine of the Church of England, at the time when her authorized documents were composed, was not *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*, as some modern authors have very incautiously asserted, but *their possible and frequent separability*.

4. Another prelate, who lived during the eventful period of the reformation of the Anglican Church, is Bp. Jewel : and his sentiments, as expressed in his Apology, perfectly harmonize with those of Bp. Latimer.

*We believe, that the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the blessed Trinity, is truly God ; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding after an ineffable manner both from the Father and the Son. It is his office to soften the hardness of the human heart ; when he is received into the breasts of men, either by the wholesome preaching of the Gospel, or through any other channel. He illuminates them : and thus brings them to the knowledge of God, to the entire*

*way of truth, to a renovation of the whole life, and to a perpetual hope of salvation.\**

The bishop is here plainly speaking of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit : for what is Regeneration, but the commencement of Sanctification ; and what is Sanctification, but an enlightening of the intellect, a turning of the regenerate to the real knowledge of God, a renovation of life, and a well-grounded faith in the divine promises. Now, while he declares this great internal change to be the special work of the Holy Ghost ; he expressly states, that *the medium*, through which that blessed agent operates upon the soul, is, either *the wholesome public preaching of the Gospel* ; or *any other more private channel*, such as reading of the word, or conversation, or something analogous. But *adults* only are capable of being benefited in such modes as these. Therefore, in the opinion of Bp. Jewel, *adults*, even in a pure Christ-

\* Credimus Spiritum Sanctum, qui est tertia persona in sacra Triade, illum verum esse Deum ; non factum, non creatum, non genitum, sed ab utroque, Patre scilicet et Filio, ratione quadam mortalibus incognita ac ineffabili, procedentem. Illius esse duritiem humani cordis emollire, cum aut per salutiferam prædicationem Evangelii, aut alia quacunq̄ue ratione, in pectora hominum recipitur ; illum eos illuminare, et in agnitionem Dei atque in omnem viam veritatis et in totius vitæ novitatem et perpetuam salutis spem perducere. Juell. Apolog. p. 207. in Randolph's Enchir. Theol. vol. i.

ian Church, may still after infant baptism have need to be spiritually regenerated.

5. Contemporary with the worthies, who have already passed in review before us, was Alexander Noel, Dean of St. Paul's : and, agreeably to the inference which was drawn from a somewhat unceremonious expression of Bp. Latimer, he perfectly harmonizes with his brethren in his views of Regeneration.

Having stated that Baptism is the outward sign of a new birth unto righteousness, he asks, *Whence then have we Regeneration itself?* The reply is, *From no other source, than from the death and resurrection of Christ. For, by the force of his death, our old man is crucified and mortified : while, through the benefit of his resurrection, we are reformed to newness of life and a holy obedience to the justice of God.\** He next asks, *Do ALL commonly and promiscuously attain to this grace?* The reply is, *Such fruit is received by the FAITHFUL ALONE : as for the un-*

\* Regenerationem vero unde habemus? Non aliunde quam a morte et resurrectione Christi : nam per mortis suæ vim vetus homo noster quodam modo crucifigitur et mortificatur, et naturæ nostræ vitiositas quasi sepelitur, ne amplius in nobis vivat et vigeat. Resurrectionis vero suæ beneficio nobis largitur, ut in novam vitam ad obediendum Dei justitiæ reformemur. Noell. Catechism. p. 215. in Randolph's Enchir. Theol. vol. ii.

*faithful, by slighting the promises of God, they preclude their own admission and go away empty; yet the Sacraments do not, by reason of their culpability, lose their force and nature.\** Sacraments they still are, as *representing* an inward grace; although such grace is withheld from those, who partake of either of them unworthily.

Afterwards indeed he speaks of our being *regenerated in Baptism*, agreeably to the phraseology used in the offices of our Church; but, since he had already limited the grace of Regeneration to worthy recipients *alone*, he cannot be understood as asserting *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*; because, in that case, even within the space of a few pages, he would be guilty of a most absurd self-contradiction.†

\* An gratiam hanc OMNES communiter et promiscue consequuntur? SOLI FIDELES hunc fructum percipiunt: increduli vero oblatas illic a Deo promissiones respuendo, aditum sibi præcludentes, inanes abeunt; non tamen id efficiunt, ut suam sacramenta vim et naturam amittant. Ibid.

† Sicuti in Baptismo semel renati sumus; ita Cœna Dominica ad vitam spiritualem atque sempiternam jugiter alamur atque sustentemur. Ibid. p. 222. Sicuti per Baptismum semel regeneramur in Christo, et in ejus corpus primum quasi cooptamur et inserimur; ita Cœnam Dominicam rite percipientes, corporis et sanguinis sui nutrimento plane divino et salutis atque immortalitatis plenissimo, Spiritus Sancti opera nobis communicato, a nobis vero fide quasi animæ nostræ ore excepto, ad æternam vitam jugiter alamur atque sustentemur;

6. Let us now descend a generation lower, and begin with inquiring into the sentiments of Bp. Hall.

utrobique in unum cum Christo corpus coalescentes. Ibid. p. 226.

Independent indeed of what the Dean had said *before* respecting the FAITHFUL ONLY attaining the grace of Regeneration by Baptism, the very context of the two passages, in which he speaks of *our being born again through Baptism*, determines unequivocally the sense in which he uses that expression. He describes us, as being regenerated in Baptism, and afterwards as being sustained in our pilgrimage heavenward by the spiritual nutriment of the Lord's Supper. Now, since he thus brings the two sacraments together into a single sentence, every rule of sound criticism requires us to suppose, that he means to treat of them *homogeneously*. If then he would intimate, that ALL baptized persons are regenerated; he must also intimate, that ALL partakers of the Lord's Supper receive it worthily: and conversely, if he would intimate, that ONLY SOME receive the Lord's Supper spiritually; he must also intimate, that ONLY SOME are spiritually regenerated in Baptism. But to imagine, that he maintains ALL partakers of the bread and wine to be spiritually nourished by the Lord's Supper, were no less contrary to common sense than to his own express declaration, SOLI FIDELES corpori et sanguine Christi pascuntur (Ibid. p. 229.) Therefore, as he limits a spiritual participation of the Lord's Supper to the FAITHFUL ALONE; he must be understood, as similarly limiting a spiritual participation of Baptism, even at the very time when he speaks of our being born again through that ordinance. Accordingly, this interpretation, and this only, will make him consistent with himself: for he elsewhere expressly *does* thus limit a spiritual participation of Baptism.

*From our creation we may look to our Regeneration. If we be the sons of God, we are renewed : and how shall it appear, whether we be the sons of God ? It is a golden rule, Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Yet, if in both of these life could be counterfeited, death cannot. Mortify your members, which are on earth. There is a death of this body of sin ; and what manner of death ? Those, that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Lo, as impossible as it is for a dead man to come down from his gibbet or up from his coffin and to do the works of his former life ; so impossible it is, that a renewed man should do the works of his unregeneration. If therefore you find your hearts unclean, your hands idle and unprofitable, your ways crooked and unholy, your corruptions alive and lively ; never pretend to any renewing. You are the old men still : and, however ye may go for Christians, yet ye have denied the power of Christianity in your lives. And, if ye so continue, the fire of hell*

SOLI FIDELES hunc fructum (scil. gratiam Regenerationis) percipiunt. Ibid. p. 215.

Those writers on the side of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration*, who are fond of quoting Dean Noel as advocating *their* opinion, ought to quote him fairly ; and not garble his sentiments, by citing only his expression *in Baptisma semel renati sumus*, and omitting all the rest. The Dean *really* advocates the directly *opposite* opinion.



*shall have so much more power over you for that it finds the baptismal water upon your faces.\**

Here, if I mistake not, Bp. Hall teaches us, that we are to judge, whether we be regenerate or no, by the fruits which we bring forth. If our fruits be of the Spirit, we are regenerate: if of the flesh, we are *not* regenerate; notwithstanding we may have been duly baptized in our infancy. In that case, says the pious prelate, *never pretend to any renewing*: the baptismal water on your faces, so far from having made you new-born children of God, will only have rendered you more fit subjects for eternal condemnation.

In perfect accordance with such a view of the question, as he here teaches us that a child may be baptized without having been regenerated; so he elsewhere avows his belief, that a man may be regenerated without having been baptized.

*No man that hath faith, can be condemned; for Christ dwells in our hearts by faith: and he, in whom Christ dwells, cannot be a reprobate. Now it is possible, that a man may have a saving faith BEFORE Baptism. Abraham first believed to justification: then, AFTER, received the sign of circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of that*

\* Bp. Hall's Works, vol. v. Serm. XX. p. 296.

*faith which he had when he was uncircumcised. Therefore some, dying BEFORE their Baptism, may, yea, must be saved. Neither was Abraham's case singular: he was the father of all them also, which believe, not being circumcised. These, as they are his sons in faith, so in righteousness, so in salvation. Uncircumcision cannot hinder, where faith admitteth. These, following his steps of belief BEFORE the Sacrament, shall doubtless rest in his bosom WITHOUT the Sacrament; without it, as fatally absent, not as willingly neglected. Who takes Baptism without a full faith, saith Jerome, takes the water, takes not the Spirit. Baptism therefore, without faith, cannot save a man; and, by faith doth save him. And faith, WITHOUT Baptism, where it cannot be had; not where it may be had, and is contemned; may save him. That Spirit, which works by means, will not be tied to means.\**

The bishop in this passage does not indeed use the precise word *Regeneration*, but he sufficiently describes the thing. Those persons, in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith, *cannot*, as he well remarks, be reprobate: that is to say, such persons *must* be regenerate; for it is a contradiction in terms to say, that Christ can dwell by faith in the hearts of the unregenerate,

\* Bp. Hall's Works, vol. vii. Dec. V. Epist. 4. p. 236, 237.

so that *even while unregenerate* they nevertheless shall have a saving faith. Now he asserts, that a man may have a saving faith, through Christ dwelling in his heart, *before* Baptism. Consequently, he asserts in effect, that a man may be regenerated *previous* to his being baptized. Agreeably to this assertion, he adds in conclusion, that Baptism may exist *without* faith, and faith *without* Baptism ; the Spirit of God not being confined to the outward means. But faith is essential to the character of the regenerate ; for no regenerate man can be an unbeliever. If then Baptism may exist *without* faith ; it clearly, in the judgment of Bp. Hall, may exist *without* Regeneration.

7. As the protestant episcopal Church of England is now legislatively united to the protestant episcopal Church of Ireland, and as the two have ever been rightly esteemed sisters in the faith of Christ, I feel myself perfectly at liberty to adduce in the present question the high authority of Abp. Usher ; a worthy and eminently learned contemporary of Bp. Hall.

Speaking jointly of the two Sacraments, the archbishop asks, *Is God ALWAYS present to give the thing signified to ALL them that the minister giveth the sign?* To this he replies, *NO, not to ALL : for SOME, in receiving the signs, receive together with them their own judgment.* After-

wards, descending more to particulars, he asks, *Are ALL they then, that are partakers of the outward washing of Baptism, partakers also of the inward washing of the Spirit? Doth this Sacrament seal up their spiritual ingrafting into Christ to ALL who externally receive it?* The answer is, *Surely NO.* Though God hath ordained these outward means for the conveyance of the inward grace to our souls; yet there is no necessity, that we should tie the workings of God's Spirit to the Sacraments more than to the word. The promises of salvation, Christ and all his benefits, are preached and offered to all in the ministry of the word: yet all hearers have them not conveyed to their souls by the Spirit, but those whom God hath ordained to life. So, in the Sacraments, the outward elements are dispensed to all who make an outward profession of the Gospel, (for, in infants, their being born in the bosom of the Church is instead of an outward profession,) because man is not able to distinguish corn from chaff: but the inward grace of the Sacrament is NOT communicated to ALL, but to those only who are heirs of those promises whereof the Sacraments are seals. He next asks, *What is the advantage then or benefit of Baptism to a common Christian?* He replies, *The same as was the benefit of Circumcision to the Jew outward.* There is a general grace of Baptism, which all the bap-

tized partake of as of a common favour : and that is their admission into the visible body of the Church, their matriculation and outward incorporating into the number of the worshippers of God by external communion. And so, as Circumcision was not only a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, but as an overplus, God appointed it to be like a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile : so is Baptism a badge of an outward member of the Church, a distinction from the common rout of heathen ; and God thereby seals a right upon the party baptized to his ordinances, that he may use them as his privileges and wait for an inward blessing by them. Yet this is but the porch, the shell, and outside : ALL, that are outwardly received into the visible Church, are NOT spiritually ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ. Baptism always is attended upon by that GENERAL grace, but not always with this SPECIAL. Again he asks, *Doth the inward grace ALWAYS accompany the outward sign in those of years baptized ?* To this he replies, NO ; but only then, when the profession of their faith is not outward only and counterfeit, but sincere and hearty. Next he asks, *But what say you of infants baptized that are born in the Church : doth the inward grace in that Baptism ALWAYS attend upon the outward sign ?* The answer is, Surely NO : the Sacrament of Baptism is effectual in in-

*infants, only to those and to all those who belong unto the election of grace. Which thing, though we, in the judgment of charity, do judge of every particular infant; yet we have no ground to judge so of all in general: or, if we should judge so, yet it is not any judgment of certainty: we may be mistaken.\** The learned prelate finally sums up the whole question in the following passage. *When God affordeth means, we must wait upon him for a blessing in them and by them: when he doth not afford means, we must not tie the working of his grace to them. God, who sanctifieth some in the womb, knows how to sanctify all his elect infants and by his Spirit apply the merits of Christ unto them WITHOUT the outward water. Some have the outward sign, and NOT the inward grace; some have the inward grace, and NOT the outward sign: we must not commit idolatry by deifying the outward element.\**

So complete a statement of the matter as this requires no comment: it is sufficient to say, that, as for the Calvinistic mode in which the great Abp. of Armagh treats the case of baptized infants, not being a Calvinist myself, I have

\* The Archbishop here plainly alludes to the phraseology of the baptismal office of the Anglican Church: and it is manifest, that he understands it precisely in the same manner as I have done.

† Usher's Body of Divin. p. 385, 391, 392, 396.

no concern with it, neither do I see the necessity for treating it in any such manner;\* my sole business is to inquire into the sentiments of Usher, respecting a pretended inseparability of *Baptism and Regeneration* which some in the present day would fain impose upon us as a genuine doctrine of the English Church. Now it is abundantly manifest from the preceding citations, that this illustrious divine no more thought of advocating such a wild superstitious fancy, than his brethren who flourished during the period of the Reformation.

8. Contemporary with Abp. Usher and Bp. Hall was the judicious Hooker : and him also we find holding the same views, though he has not stated them with equal precision. After maintaining that, where Baptism is rightly administered, we may expect it to be attended by the inward grace of Regeneration, though we are not vainly to deem the one the mechanical cause of the other ; and after acknowledging, that, so far from the two being *inseparably* tied together, it is both known and confessed that a man may receive grace *before* Baptism : after these preliminaries, he proceeds as follows.

*The Law of Christ must be construed and understood according to rules of natural equity.*

\* See above Serm. VII. § II. 3. (4.)

*And, because equity so teacheth, it is on all parts gladly confessed, that there may be in diverse cases life by virtue of INWARD Baptism, where OUTWARD is NOT found. For example, to think, that a man, whose Baptism the crown of martyrdom preventeth, doth lose in that case the happiness which so many thousands enjoy that have only had the grace to believe and not the honour to seal the testimony thereof with death, were almost barbarous. Again, when some certain opinionative men in St. Bernard's time began privately to hold, that, because our Lord had said Unless a man be born again of water, therefore life, without either actual Baptism or Martyrdom instead of Baptism, cannot possibly be obtained at the hands of God: Bernard, considering, that the same equity which had moved them to think the necessity of Baptism no bar against the happy estate of unbaptized martyrs, is as forcible for the warrant of their salvation, in whom, although there be not the sufferings of holy martyrs, there are the virtues which sanctified those sufferings and made them precious in God's sight; professed himself an enemy to that severity and strictness, which admitteth no exception but of martyrs only. Touching infants which die unbaptized, sith they neither have this sacrament itself nor any sense or conceit thereof, the judgment of many hath gone hard against them. But yet, SEEING GRACE IS NOT ABSOLUTELY TIED*



UNTO SACRAMENTS, remorse of equity hath moved diverse of the school-divines to grant, that God, all-merciful to such as are not in themselves able to desire Baptism, imputeth the secret desire that others have in their behalf, and accepteth the same as theirs rather than casteth away their souls for that which no man is able to help. We are plainly taught of God, that the seed of faithful parentage is holy from the very birth. Which, albeit we may not so understand, as if the children of believing parents were without sin: yet it is not to be thought, that he, which, as it were from heaven, hath nominated and designated them unto holiness by special privilege of their very birth, will himself deprive them of Regeneration and inward grace, only because necessity depriveth them of outward Sacraments.\*

In this passage Hooker maintains, that inward Baptism or Regeneration may subsist where outward Baptism is not found, that grace is not absolutely tied unto Sacraments, and consequently that infants may partake of Regeneration and inward grace though the outward Sacrament has never been administered to them. Nor was such an opinion in his day at all singular or unusual: he tells us, as a thing quite familiar and well known, that IT IS ON ALL PARTS

\* Hooker's Eccles. Pol. b. v. § 60.

GLADLY CONFESSED *that there may be in diverse cases* LIFE (that is, spiritual life, of which Regeneration is the commencement) *by virtue of INWARD Baptism, when OUTWARD Baptism is NOT found.* The doctrine then, that *Regeneration is NOT inseparably tied to Baptism, but that it may take place in the human soul either BEFORE or AT or AFTER Baptism,* so far from being a fond and novel speculation in Hooker's time, was, we see, ON ALL PARTS GLADLY CONFESSED.

9. Let us now descend a step yet lower, and inquire what the divines of the English and Irish Churches say in the next generation. Bishop Reynolds shall first declare *his* sentiments.

*Unregenerate men are often secure men, making principles and premises of their own to build the conclusions of their salvation upon.\**

Now, as these unregenerate men *argue and draw conclusions,* they must plainly be *adults.* But the context manifestly shews, that they are *outwardly* at least members of the Christian Church ; because they are described as speculating upon that salvation, which God has offered to all men through the merits of his Son. Therefore, in the judgment of Bp. Reynolds, baptized adults may still be unregenerate.

\* Bp. Reynold's Works. p. 46.

*The unregenerate are of several sorts and stamps. Some are apparently and in conspectu hominum outrageous sinners ; upon whom every man, that sees them, may without breach of charity pass this sentence, There goes a man who declares himself in the eyes of the world to be a servant of sin. Others there are of a more calm, civil, composed, course, men much wiser, but not a dram holier than those before. In those men there appeareth not so sovereign and absolute a dominion of sin as hath been spoken of, inasmuch as they seem to live in a fair external conformity to the truths which they have learned. These more moderate sort of unregenerate men seem to shift off from themselves the charge of being subject to the reign of sin, inasmuch as they abhor many sins, and do many things which the rule requires.\**

Here again the unregenerate men, of whom the bishop is treating, are certainly *adults* ; and they are no less certainly *outward* members of the Christian Church ; because they are described, as living in some measure conformably to the truths which they have learned, and as doing many things which the rule of God's word requires at their hands. The men therefore have been baptized : yet the bishop scruples

\* Bp. Reynold's Works. p. 111, 113.

not to pronounce them unregenerate, notwithstanding their outward Baptism.

*Unregenerate men of a more calm and civil temper may conceive themselves delivered from the reign of sin, because they have many conflicts with it and reluctancies against it ; and so afford not such a plenary and resolved obedience to it, as so absolute a power requireth.\**

In this passage likewise the *unregenerate men* are evidently *baptized adults* ; because they are exhibited, as being outwardly in a Christian Church, and as avowedly receiving the word of God for their rule of duty. Yet, baptized as they are, they are nevertheless styled *unregenerate*.

10. It were easy to multiply citations of a similar purport from the works of Bp. Reynolds, for he invariably takes it for granted and considers it as a point which no person would think of denying, that *many baptized persons are still unregenerate* : but, as I wish to avoid prolixity, I will pass forward to Bp. Hopkins.

This prelate is the author of four very valuable sermons on the express subject of Regeneration ; and, throughout the whole of them, he uniformly argues on the ground, that the outward visible sign in Baptism is FREQUENTLY UN-

\* Bp. Reynold's Works. p. 118.

attended by the inward spiritual grace. Let us however, in some detached passages, hear him speak his own words.

*Very difficult it is to persuade men against the prejudices of their corrupt hearts. This great change, say they, is more than needs. Regeneration begins now to be descried by as great masters in Israel as ever Nicodemus was. Many understand not to what end the fabric of corrupt nature should be demolished, and men as it were turned out of themselves. They think, if they are but baptized, whereby, as they suppose, the guilt of original sin is washed away, that a sober religious life, keeping from gross actual sins, is sufficient for the obtaining of heaven, without those hard and inexplicable notions of Regeneration. I shall therefore endeavour to convince you of the indispensable necessity that there is of being born again; that so, when you are persuaded of it, you may give no rest unto yourselves nor unto God, till he cause his Spirit, which is that wind that bloweth where it listeth, to breathe spiritual life into you, without which it is impossible that you should inherit eternal life.\**

The bishop here exhorts his congregation, which doubtless contained *many baptized adults*, to beseech God that he would regenerate them

\* Bp. Hopkins's Works. p. 535.

by his Holy Spirit. Hence he certainly believed, that several of his hearers might very possibly WANT the grace of spiritual Regeneration, though they had been duly baptized with water in their infancy. We may additionally gather from this passage, that the old Popish superstition of *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* was then *beginning* (as the bishop speaks) to rear its head and even to be fostered by some of the clergy themselves. From the time of the Reformation, it had been in a manner unknown among protestants : but NOW the genuine doctrine of the reformed *BEGAN to be decried by as great masters in Israel as ever Nicodemus was.* The bishop of Derry however manfully bore his testimony against the revival of such an unscriptural corruption : and that testimony has come down to us, couched in terms which can neither be misunderstood nor explained away.

*By water is meant Baptism, the element being put for the ordinance, which is the Sacrament of our Regeneration : and thus you have it in Ephes. v. 26. where the Church is said to be sanctified and cleansed through the washing of water. There is indeed a baptismal Regeneration, whereby all that are made partakers of that ordinance are, according to Scripture language, sanctified, renewed, 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 ordinance entered members of the visible Church. Now this EXTERNAL Regeneration 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.\*

Here the bishop asserts, what no person will be disposed to deny, that Regeneration does SOMETIMES accompany Baptism: but his very use of the word SOMETIMES implies, if indeed it were any necessary to gather his sentiments by mere implication, that such is very far from being ALWAYS the case. Afterwards he teaches, in exact conformity with the authorities already cited, that the instrument in God's hand, whereby the soul is ordinarily regenerated, is the inspired word of Holy Scripture. Hence it plainly follows, that, so far from bolstering up our hearers in the vain notion that they are *already* regenerated simply because they have been baptized; we ought rather to urge upon their consciences, with much sincerity of speech, the powerful word of God, that they who have *not yet* been regenerated *may* by his blessing be really born again of his Spirit as they have *heretofore* been typically born again of water.

\* Bp. Hopkins's Works, p. 519.

*The seminal virtue or means, by which this New Birth is effected, is the word of God. So you have it expressly in James i. 18. Of his own good will begat he us with the word of truth. The preaching of the word is the great means, which God hath appointed for Regeneration in Rom. x. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. When God first created man, it is said that he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. But, when God new creates man, he breathes into his ears. This is that word, that raiseth the dead, calleth them out of the grave, opens the eyes of the blind, turns the hearts of the disobedient and rebellious. Such an energy is there in the word of God, when the Spirit of God cloathes it with power, that it breaks in upon the conscience, ruins and demolishes the frame of sinful nature, and in an instant conveys spiritual light and warmth and quickening into the soul.\**

11. After Bp. Hopkins, we may profitably attend to Bp. Pearson, who still speaks to the same effect.

*The second part of the office of the Holy Ghost in the Sanctification of man, is the Regeneration and Renovation of him. For, our natural corruption consisting in an aversation of our wills*

\* Bp. Hopkins's Works. p. 533.



*and a depravation of our affections, an inclination of them to the will of God is wrought within us by the Spirit of God. For according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and Renewing of the Holy Ghost. So that, except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. We are all at first defiled by the corruption of our nature and the pollution of our sins : but we are washed, but we are sanctified, but we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The second part then of the office of the Holy Ghost is the renewing of man in all the parts and faculties of his soul : as the first was an internal illumination, by which we are inclined to the obedience of faith, in assenting to those truths which unto a natural and carnal man are foolishness—What the apostle then wished to the Corinthians ought to be the earnest petition of every Christian, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. For, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his : if ye have not that which maketh the union, he cannot be united ; if he acknowledge him not to be his Lord, he cannot be his servant : and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. That, which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit ; such is their felicity that have it : that,*

which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; *such is their infelicity that want it.\**

It is supposed, we here see, by Bp. Pearson, that the first work of the Holy Ghost in the Sanctification of man is *the internal illumination* of his intellect ; *by which he is inclined to the obedience of faith, in assenting to those truths which to a natural and carnal man are foolishness* : and that the second work of the same blessed Spirit in man's Sanctification is *the Regeneration and Renovation of him*. I think it more logically accurate to say, that Regeneration is the commencing point of Sanctification ; and that the enlightening of the intellect, the influencing of the will, and the purifying of the affections, begin with, or follow in regular order after, Regeneration : for, as the natural birth is the inchoation of the natural life, so the spiritual birth must analogously be the inchoation of the spiritual life. This however is of no importance, so far as the sentiments of the bishop are concerned respecting the pretended inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration. The enlightening of the intellect, by which a man is inclined to the obedience of faith and is made to assent to the truths of the Gospel, is clearly an operation, which in the very nature of things can only take

\* Bp. Pearson on the Creed. Art. VIII. vol. i. p. 496, 500.

place in *an adult*. But this operation, according to the bishop, *precedes* Regeneration. Therefore he necessarily considers Regeneration also, as taking place in *an adult*. Now the adults, whom he thus supposes to be regenerated *subsequent* to the illumination of their intellect, are undoubtedly, not unbaptized pagans, but baptized members of the Christian Church: for he speaks of them plurally in the first person;—*an internal illumination, by which WE are inclined to the obedience of faith.* Hence it is manifest, that the bishop considers it as a matter perfectly indisputable that adults might be inwardly regenerated *long after* they had been outwardly baptized during their infancy. Accordingly, the whole of his subsequent discourse hinges upon this very point. *If any man, a case quite possible even in a visible Christian Church, according to the opinion of Bp. Pearson: If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; if he have not that which maketh the union, he cannot be united.*

12. Let us next hear Bp. Wilkins on the same subject.

This prelate advises us to pray earnestly to God, *that he would give unto us a new heart, and put a new spirit within us; that thus we MAY be regenerate and BECOME new creatures,*

*being born again of that incorruptible seed the word of God.\**

The persons, to whom such advice is given, are baptized Christians. Now, if the bishop had held the strange notion that all who are baptized are thence *ipso facto* regenerated, it is a clear case, that he never would have exhorted baptized Christians to pray that they *might* be regenerated. Hence it is evident, that, in his judgment, many may have been baptized, who yet need the inward Regeneration of the Holy Spirit. We may note, that, in exact accordance with the preceding authorities, he maintains the word of God to be the instrumental cause of Regeneration. He teaches therefore, that spiritual Regeneration *in baptized adults* is effected by the faithful preaching of God's word: for it is superfluous to observe, that no *infant* can possibly be regenerated through the medium of hearing the Scriptures read or expounded.

13. A slight descent in the chronological scale will bring us to another class of eminent divines: but still we find the same important truth sedulously inculcated, and the same dangerous superstition carefully discountenanced. Bp. Burnet is remarkably strong and decisive upon the question: so that we cannot do better than let him be the first spokesman.

\* Bp. Wilkins on Prayer. c. xvii.

*Baptism makes us the visible members of that one body, into which we are baptized or admitted by Baptism: but that, which saves us in it, which both deadens and quickens us, must be a thing of another nature—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 determined by—One of these was the mixing of the outward and the inward effects of Baptism; it being believed, that every person that was born of the water was also born of the Spirit, and that the renewing of the Holy Ghost did not always accompany the washing of Regeneration.\* And this obliged St. Austin to make that difference between the Regenerate and the predestinated: for he thought, that all who were baptized were also*

\* I have already noticed the gross immoral tendency of this superstition, as it displayed itself in the third and fourth centuries. Men systematically refused to be baptized, in order that they might freely live in sin: for, Baptism and Regeneration being in the fashionable theology of the day esteemed inseparable, all that they had to do to make sure of heaven was to be baptized in the article of death.

Whatever may be thought of the premises, no one can deny that the conclusion from *such* premises was strictly logical. The *reasoning* was accurate enough: but, unfortunately, the *basis* was assumed as truth, instead of being demonstrated to be so.

*regenerated—But 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 that it is a very natural distinction to say, that the outward 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, these may be AFTERWARDS renewed and that WANT may be made up by repentance.\**

\* Bp. Burnet on the Articles. Art. xxvii. p. 382, 383, 384. Oxon. I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity of noticing, in terms of deserved commendation, the service which the University of Oxford has rendered to sound Christianity, by reprinting beautiful and convenient editions of our standard earlier divines. Thus, as far as in them lies, the leading members of that great seminary have laudably stepped forward to oppose the groundless notion that *Baptism and Regeneration are inseparable*: for those divines, thus prominently brought forward to the public notice under academical sanction, are unanimous, we see, in protesting against the unscriptural dogma now under discussion.

Nothing can be more explicit than the truly orthodox passage, which I have just cited. The bishop begins with stating, that we are not superstitiously to fancy that the very act of Baptism, like some magical charm, carries *always* with it an inward Regeneration ; though he acknowledges, that the corruption crept very early into the Christian Church. *WE however,* says he, *of the Anglican Church cannot be determined by any such abuse of sound doctrine. OUR sentiments are widely different. If the inward grace of Regeneration has been WANTING to the outward act of Baptism, that WANT must AFTERWARDS be made up.*

14. To the same effect also speaks Dr. Isaac Barrow.

*We are naturally void of those good dispositions in understanding, will, and affections ; which are needful to render us acceptable unto God, fit to serve and please him, capable of any favour from him and of any true happiness in ourselves. To remove which bad dispositions, and to beget those contrary to them, God in mercy doth grant to us the virtue of his Holy Spirit ; who, first opening our hearts, begetteth divine knowledge, wisdom, and faith, in our minds, which is the work of illumination and instruction. Then by continual impressions he bendeth our inclinations, and mollifieth our hearts, and tempereth our af-*

*fections to a willing compliance with God's will and a hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to God : which is the work of Sanctification, another great part of his office. Both these operations together ( Enlightening our minds, and Sanctifying our wills and affections ) do constitute and accomplish that work, which is styled the Regeneration, Renovation, Vivification, New Creation, Resurrection, of a 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.\**

It is perfectly evident, that Dr. Barrow is here speaking, not of *pagans* who never heard the sound of the Gospel, nor yet of *infants* who from the circumstance of their infancy are necessarily incapable of *knowledge* and *wisdom* and *faith* and a *hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to God* ; but of *baptized adults in a Christian Church*, for to them, and to them only, is such language applicable. Now he tells us, that the Enlightening the minds of these adults, so that they shall henceforth possess divine knowledge and wisdom and faith ; and the Sanctifying their wills and affections, so that henceforth they shall cheerfully comply with God's will and

\* Barrow's Works, vol. ii. p. 504.



feel a hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to him : he tells us, that these two operations, which inevitably presuppose the subject of them to be *an adult*, do constitute and accomplish that work which is styled *the Regeneration of a man*. But this he plainly could not have told us, unless he had held, that a baptized adult, notwithstanding his Baptism, might yet have never received the inward grace of spiritual Regeneration : for, if he had believed that every baptized person was thence *ipso facto* regenerate, the whole tenor of his discourse were to all intents and purposes nugatory and impertinent. We may conclude therefore, that Dr. Barrow, like the other eminent divines who have been already adduced, held the sound doctrine, that Baptism may be outwardly administered without having for its necessary concomitant the inward grace of Regeneration.

15. Yet more strong and decisive on the point is Abp. Tillotson, whose opinion may here be cited with peculiar advantage, because he is so generally esteemed the very standard of Anglican orthodoxy.

Speaking of the final prevalence of grace over nature in those *adults*, who are really sanctified by the blessed Spirit ; an operation, which with much justice he had previously stated to be immediately connected with Regeneration, the two

being equally ascribed in Holy Writ to the Spirit of God and to the word of God: speaking of the final prevalence of grace over nature in all truly sanctified *adults*, the archbishop proceeds. *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.\*

Here we see, that the archbishop, like his venerable predecessors in the Church, ascribes Regeneration and its consequent Sanctification to a spiritual hearing of God's word, which of course none but *an adult* can do; for it is physically impossible, that *a child* of a month old should derive any benefit from *hearing* God's word. And, agreeably to this very accurate view of the subject he afterwards describes an internal conflict and victory, the lusts and evil habits of the flesh striving against that better resolution which is injected into the soul by the Divine Spirit: a conflict therefore which can only be experienced, and a victory which can only be gained by *an adult*. Having thus stated the matter, he concludes with pronouncing, that men are said to

\* Abp. Tillotson's Serm. on Gal. vi. 15.

be regenerate, when a real change has taken place both in the temper of their minds and in the course of their lives : and, as if to cut off all occasion of cavil on the part of the unorthodox, he adds, that we are only to deem men regenerate, when this change has actually taken place, **AND NOT BEFORE**, though they may have been regularly baptized with water in their infancy.

16. Descending a step nearer to our own times, let us next attend to the language used by that close and proverbially acute reasoner, Bp. Butler.

*If mankind are corrupted and depraved in their moral character and so are unfit for that state which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples, and if the assistance of God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature in the degree requisite to their being qualified for that state ; all which is implied in the express though figurative declaration, Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God : supposing this, is it possible that any serious person can think it a slight matter, whether or no he makes use of the means, expressly commanded by God, for obtaining this divine assistance ? Especially since the whole analogy of nature shews, that we are not to expect any benefits without*

*making use of the appointed means for obtaining or enjoying them.\**

Such language as this could obviously have never been used by one, who held the notion that all baptized infants are by the very circumstance of their Baptism spiritually regenerate. So far from Bp. Butler being an advocate for this groundless fancy, his whole argument necessarily supposes that the very opposite doctrine is to be received as an undoubted truth.

He begins with stating, that depraved man is naturally unfit for heaven. Next he intimates, that, in order to his being qualified for the presence of God, his nature must be renewed by the Holy Spirit. Then he informs us, that the whole of this is implied and set forth in our Lord's figurative declaration, *Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Having thus opened the doctrine in a manner quite agreeable to Scripture, he very solemnly and emphatically asks, how any serious and thinking person can deem it a slight matter, whether or no HE (namely the serious person) makes use of the means, expressly appointed by God, for obtaining this divine assistance in order to his being born again? Now the serious person, who is to make use of means that HE may

\* Bp. Butler's Anal. part ii. c. 1.

be spiritually regenerated and so become qualified for the kingdom of heaven, is plainly no *infant* in his nurse's arms: for how can *an infant* think at all upon the subject, whether a neglect of the means be or be not a slight matter; which yet the serious person is exhorted to do. The serious or thinking person therefore, who has need of spiritual Regeneration, and who accordingly is advised to seek the divine assistance in order to it, is manifestly *an adult*. But the whole tenor of the argument shews, that he is not a *pagan* adult who is altogether ignorant of God's revealed will, but a *baptized* adult in a Christian Church who fully acknowledges the authority of Scripture and who is thence addressed as one who *does* fully acknowledge it. Therefore, in the judgment of Bp. Butler, a baptized adult might still *want* spiritual Regeneration, and might therefore be properly exhorted to use the appointed means for *obtaining* it. These means, expressly commanded by God, are the diligent hearing of his holy word; as most of the divines, whose opinions have passed in review before us, very soundly maintain: agreeably to that of St. Peter, *Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.\**

\* 1 Peter, i. 23.

17. Nor is the genuine doctrine of the Anglican Church respecting the matter of Regeneration without its advocates even in the present day, though some individuals may have unhappily turned aside from the faith once delivered to the saints. Out of these, it will be amply sufficient to my purpose, if I select two, whose names are deservedly held in reverence by every orthodox and sober-minded churchman.

The sentiments of Bp. Horsley are conveyed in the following sufficiently explicit passage.

*That image of God, in which Adam was created, in our Lord appeared perfect and entire ; in the unspotted innocency of his life, the sanctity of his manners, and his perfect obedience to the Law of God : in the vast powers of his mind, intellectual and moral ; intellectual, in his comprehension of all knowledge ; moral, in his power of resisting all the allurements of vice and of encountering all the difficulties of virtue and religion— In him, the beauty of the divine image was resplendent in its original perfection : in all the sons of Adam, it is obscured and marred in a degree to be scarce perceptible ; the will depraved, the imagination debauched, the reason weak, the passions rampant ! This deformity is not externally visible, nor the spiritual beauty which is its opposite : but, could the eye be turned upon the internal man. we should see the hideous shape of a will at enmi-*

*ty with God, a heart disregarding his Law, insensible of his goodness, fearless of his wrath, swelling with the passions of ambition, avarice, vain glory, lust. Yet this is the picture of the UNREGENERATED MAN by the depravity consequent upon the fall, born in iniquity and conceived in sin.\**

Would we know the sentiments of this truly orthodox and learned prelate on the subject of Baptism, we have simply to ascertain what sort of person he is describing to us in his accurate and highly-wrought *picture of the unregenerated man.*

The person then, whose mental lineaments he exhibits, is clearly not *an infant* ; because certain operations of the soul are attributed to him, which cannot be predicated of a mere child as yet unconscious *how to refuse the evil and choose the good.*† A babe at the breast cannot be said to *disregard God's Law*, to be *insensible of his goodness*, to be *fearless of his wrath*, and to *swell with the passions of ambition, avarice, vain glory, lust.* Such language, on the very face of it, is solely applicable to *an adult* and not *an infant.*

\* Bp. Horsley's Sermons. vol. i. serm. V. p. 94, 95.

† Isaiah vii. 16.

He is not however *an adult only, as contradistinguished from an infant* : he is likewise a *baptized adult in a Christian Church, as contradistinguished from an unbaptized adult in a heathen community.* The bishop, at the commencement of the description, rightly states in general terms, that *the divine image is obscured and marred in ALL the sons of Adam* : but, as he had to deal with a congregation, every member of which professed his belief in the Gospel, he turns immediately to what would be much more edifying to such a congregation ; namely the condition of some, who had been baptized, and who were nevertheless still in the very bondage of iniquity. *The unregenerated man, whom he would specifically hold up to the serious attention of all his hearers, is a person, who disregards the Law of God, and whose heart swells with the passions of ambition and avarice and lust and vain glory.* This *unregenerated man* therefore *knows* the revealed Law of God ; for we cannot be said to *disregard* that, of which we are wholly *ignorant* : he *knows* it however only to *refuse obedience* to its precepts ; for his heart, being as yet unchanged by grace, swells with every evil and fiendlike passion. Hence it is clear, that the bishop is describing a man, who has been duly baptized, and who from his youth by reason of a Christian education has specula-



tively known the revealed Law of God : a man nevertheless, who knows that Law only to disregard it, and who (like too many nominal believers) bears within him a heart perfectly unreclaimed and altogether disobedient. Therefore *the unregenerated man*, whom the bishop describes, is no *ignorant pagan adult*, but a *baptized adult in a Christian Church*.

Hence it is evident, that, in the opinion of Bp. Horsley, a *baptized adult*, living outwardly in the pale of a Christian Church, and knowing though disregarding the Law of God, might be appropriately designated by the title of *an unregenerated man*.

18. Exactly similar is the doctrine of the venerable and excellent Bp. Barrington, as authoritatively delivered to his clergy from the chair which he has so long worthily filled.

*It cannot be from any defect of external evidence, that our modern philosophers deny or doubt the truth of Christianity. No : it is an unconsciousness of their want of a Redeemer that obstructs the light of the Gospel ; it is the vanity of a disputatious temper ; the hardness of an unhumiliated heart ; the opposing interests of a worldly spirit. In short, it is the repugnance and delusion of AN UNREGENERATED MIND, that blinds*

*them against the plainest and most obvious conclusions.\**

The *modern philosophers*, to whom the bishop here alludes, are Voltaire, Gibbon, Hume, and others of a similar stamp ; as appears from his immediately afterwards specially adducing the notorious Thomas Paine as an example. Now all these men had been baptized in their infancy, and during their youth had been brought up in outward conformity to a Christian Church : therefore, according to the extraordinary theory which inseparably ties Regeneration to Baptism, they were all spiritually regenerate, notwithstanding their avowed and open infidelity. The pious bishop of Durham however, both with much sound sense and much scriptural knowledge, scruples not to ascribe their unbelief to *the repugnance and delusion of AN UNREGENERATED MIND*. Thus he gives it as his decided opinion, an opinion in which all the eminent divines already cited would heartily agree with him, that the baptized philosophers, of whom he is speaking, shewed plainly by their deeds, that, notwithstanding their Baptism, they had never received the grace of spiritual Regeneration.

\* Charge to the clergy of Durham in 1797. in Sermons, Charges, and Tracts. p, 211, 212.

*There is in our corrupt and unreformed nature an indolence, a sloth, a reluctance to the constant and regular performance even of the ordinary duties of religion ; which, to many, renders prayer a burden, and the public service of God a wearisome constraint instead of perfect freedom—To the REGENERATE Christian, to the new man created in Christ Jesus to good works, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, the yoke of Christ is certainly easy, and his burden light : but to the corrupt passions of mere animal nature, to the selfish inclinations of the OLD MAN, nothing can be more irksome and painful.\**

In this passage the bishop describes, with much accurate knowledge of the human heart, two different classes of men, which equally though with very dissimilar feelings attend the public worship of the Church, which equally therefore consist of professed and baptized Christians. The first of these classes he represents, as being yet in a state of *corrupt and unreformed nature*, and as experiencing all the *selfish inclinations of the OLD MAN* : the second of them he exhibits, as comprehending no one save the *REGENERATE Christian* or the *NEW MAN created in Christ Jesus to good works*. Nothing

\* Charge to the clergy of Durham in 1801. in Sermons, Charges, and Tracts. p. 297, 298.

can be more agreeable either to Scripture or to actual matter of fact, than such an arrangement: but then the conclusion from it is abundantly obvious. Though the bishop is speaking of none but *baptized* persons, he most soundly pronounces, that *some* only of these baptized persons are regenerate Christians and new men, while *others* of them still remain in the unreformed or unregenerated nature of the old man.

*Lest however the great and precious promises of God should be wrested to sinister purposes, your hearers should be sedulously taught, that without sanctification there can be for them no atonement: for them Christ will have died in vain; they will be, on the authority of St. Paul, still in their sins, that is, obnoxious to the curse and punishment of sin. It is true indeed, that, whom God is willing to justify, he sanctifies; and he sanctifies whom he will: for he hath mercy, on whom he will have mercy; and, whom he will, he hardeneth; that is, he leaves the sinner to the natural corruption of his own heart and the unsubdued power of sin. The sinner, who is thus left, continues an UNREGENERATE and UNSANCTIFIED, that is, in a reprobate and lost, state.\**

\* Charge to the clergy of Durham in 1801. in Sermons, Charges, and Tracts. p. 310.

As the bishop is here instructing his clergy how they ought to teach their hearers, those hearers are of course baptized persons within the pale of the English Church. Yet he supposes it to be very probable, that, in the course of their ministry, they may have to deal with persons, who, notwithstanding their Baptism, being left by the sovereign will of God to the natural corruption of their own hearts, continue in an unregenerate and unsanctified condition.

*From the Scriptures we must collect, what human nature was at first, and what it soon became. From the world at present and from our own hearts we must learn, what it is now. A serious and impartial study of human nature, as exhibited in the Scriptures, the world, and ourselves, will lead to the same unavoidable conviction, and shew what our nature became, when left to itself, when turned from God to the world, from light to darkness, from holy obedience to earthly and sensual appetites. Upon this foundation may be built those humiliating considerations, which are most in consonance with the end of our Saviour's incarnation: and in this view it will not be difficult to convince an unhardened mind, thrt the heart of the disobedient can never be turned to the wisdom of the just and restored to the image of the divine goodness in which it was created, but by repent-*

*ance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. In a state of sincere repentance and true faith the mind has acquired that newness of spirit and rectitude of heart, which constitutes the NEW BIRTH, and is the source of every spiritual comfort here and all our hopes hereafter.\**

This passage is so explicit, that it scarcely requires any comment. The bishop enforces it upon his clergy to teach their people, that the heart of the disobedient can only be turned to the wisdom of the just and restored to the image of the divine goodness, in other words, can only be regenerated, by repentance towards God and faith towards Christ: and he then adds, that it is in this state of sincere repentance and true faith that the mind acquires that newness of spirit and rectitude of heart which constitutes the New Birth or Regeneration. Such language is solely applicable to *adults*. Consequently this sound and orthodox prelate rightly informs us, that, however a man may have been baptized in his infancy, he cannot be deemed regenerate, until by repentance and faith his mind shall have acquired that newness of spirit and rectitude of heart which constitutes the New Birth. Unless he can produce this evidence of spiritual Rege-

\* Charge to the clergy of Durham in 1801, in Sermons, Charges, and Tracts, p. 311, 312.

neration, he is as yet dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding his admission by the water of Baptism into the visible Church of Christ.

Such in all ages has ever been the language of the best reformed English divines ; and happy is the lot of the clergy, who receive from their spiritual superior such instructions as to the proper mode of feeding their respective flocks !

II. It were easy to adduce many others, who still, with strict uniformity, maintain the same truly scriptural doctrine : but it may amply suffice to have brought forward eighteen prelates and ten distinguished presbyters of the Church of England and Ireland, in regular succession from the time of the Reformation down even to the present day.

As protestants, indeed, we claim to call no man *master* save Christ alone ; nor do we hold ourselves *bound* by the authority of these eminent divines one jot further, than as the opinion which they advocate *may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Writ*. They have not therefore been alleged, *in order to establish a doctrine ; but in order to shew, that, as a particular doctrine is the undoubted doctrine of the Church of England, so that particular doctrine has been consistently enforced in every age since the Reforma-*

*tion by the best and most orthodox divines of that Church.*

This task has now been performed at considerable length : and it is to be hoped, that in future we may no longer be encountered by the hardy, though ignorantly rash, assertions, that *the Church of England and all her soundest divines in every age concur in teaching the necessary inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration, and that the Regeneration by God's Blessed Spirit of those who have been already baptized is a mere novel doctrine by which in the present day the weakness of palpable credulity can alone be imposed upon.*

An overweening confidence is no sure proof of strength : and the vain affectation of superiority, evinced by such language, is rendered doubly indecorous by the unfortunate circumstance of its direct contrariety to *matter of fact*. The doctrine of Scripture, of the English Church, and of the best divines of that Church in every age since the Reformation, is, that *Baptism and Regeneration are NOT inseparable* : and, as for the charge of a weak credulity which has been so incautiously made against those who advocate this sound and orthodox tenet, it may, I apprehend, be retorted (if need were) with two-fold energy against persons ; who can believe, against even the very evidence of *actual matter*



*of fact*, that an outward symbolical sprinkling of water *invariably* produces a complete inward change of the human soul in all its operations and affections. He who, without a shadow of proof from either Scripture or Reason, can believe so marvellous an alleged fact as this, stands prepared to admit, as an undoubted verity, Transubstantiation, or any other monstrous figment, provided only it be imposed upon him in a high tone of authoritative confidence. But he, who beholds a neighbour turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; who perceives, by the decisive evidence of perfectly altered affections and an entirely changed course of life, that this neighbour is altogether a different man from what he heretofore was; and who reads in his Bible, that precisely such a change is styled *Regeneration*, and that it is absolutely necessary for admission into the kingdom of heaven: he, who sees all this with his own eyes, and who thence believes that his neighbour has been *born again by the word of God*, acts, so far as I can judge, only according to the dictates of right reason: for he believes, not because he is credulous, but because he cannot *avoid* believing; not because he wishes to impose upon himself, but because *facts* irresistibly *compel* him to believe. In reality, he is by no means the *only* person, who discovers the

change in question. The world is quick-sighted enough in this particular: and it ordinarily evinces its dislike to the alteration, by greeting the subject of it with sundry compellations sufficiently expressive of its disapproval. Thus it is manifest, that, in the one case, belief rests upon *facts*: while, in the other case, it not only does *not* rest upon facts, but is taken up in direct *contradiction* to them. To whom therefore the charge of a blind credulity most justly applies, let any sober-minded and reasonable enquirer determine.

Mere charges however on either side, prove just nothing at all, so far as *the real merits* of the question are concerned.

These must *intrinsically* be determined by Reason, Experience, and Scripture; which, *last* indeed in enumeration though *first* in direct authority, can never contradict the other two. Thus, and thus only, must the merits of the question be *intrinsically* determined.

But, when we are gravely assured, that the doctrine, here contended for, is a novel doctrine, *quite unknown* to the Church of England and all her best divines; and when we are further told with much confidence, that, in the judgment of that Church, it is a dreadfully unorthodox, not to say an heretical, doctrine: we have then to take a different ground; and, by patiently inquiring

what the English Church and its standard divines really *do* say on the subject, we have next to determine the merits of the question *extrinsically*.

Both these investigations have now been painfully completed : and, unless some *very* strong evidence should arise to the contrary, evidence which we can scarcely expect *will* arise, we seem compelled to rest in the general conclusion, that *the separability of Baptism and Regeneration* must be admitted as a sound and orthodox doctrine, while *the inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration* must be rejected as palpably unsound and unorthodox.

# SERMON IX.

## THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

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MATT. XXVIII. 19, 20.

*Go ye therefore and teach all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*

THE rite of Baptism by water had been instituted by our Lord from the very commencement of his ministry ; though, after *himself* baptizing his earliest followers, he committed to *them* the task of similarly initiating into his religion those who should subsequently become his disciples.\* But the authoritative appointment of it, as *an ordinance of perpetual and universal obligation*, did not take place until after the resurrection when Jesus was on the eve of ascend-

\* John iii. 26. iv. 1, 2.

ing to the right hand of his Father in heaven. Then it was, that his apostles formally received their commission, to bear the everlasting Gospel to the utmost extremities of the habitable globe, and to transmit to their successors the same authority as what had been conferred upon themselves. For then it was, that he promised to be with his faithful evangelists to the very end of time ; supporting them, and strengthening them, and ever rendering them more or less successful in their efforts, until at length the universal *earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.\** But then also it was, that he charged his appointed servants to admit every new convert into the fellowship of his Church by the highly significant rite, which was already familiar to them, according to a form of words specially appointed by himself.

The commission, as it is exhibited by St. Matthew, runs in the following terms. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*

\* Isaiah xi. 9.

By St. Mark, in the parallel passage, it is exhibited imperfectly, so far as respects the form in which Baptism was to be administered : but this evangelist subjoins a very important declaration, which is omitted by the other. *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.\**

I. In these two passages viewed conjointly, our Lord marks out the obvious and natural course to be observed by his apostles and their successors in the course of their ministry ; communicates to them the form, in which he would have every new convert baptized ; assigns its respective proper dignity to Faith and Baptism ; and promises, that, although invisible, he would never cease to be present with all his faithful evangelists, until the grand scheme of the Christian dispensation should be finally consummated.

1. The first step, to be taken by the apostles, was *to go forth and to teach all nations*, or rather (according to a somewhat more exact rendering of the original) *to make all nations their disciples.*† This attempt is expressed by St. Mark, under the slightly varied though synonymous terms, of *going out into all the world and preach-*

\* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

† μαθητεύσατε.

*ing the Gospel to every creature.* The making disciples therefore of the nations was to be effected by preaching the Gospel to them. The apostles, relying upon the assistance of their divine Master, were boldly to go forth among a race of prejudiced idolaters, and were to set forth to them those great truths which peculiarly characterize the Gospel. They were to declare to them, that, although God had for a season winked at an almost universal apostacy from his holy name and worship, that season was now gone by. They were to assure them, that henceforth one Supreme Being was to be adored, though after such a manner and under such a dispensation as he himself had chosen to reveal. They were to set before them the doctrine of the fall and the consequent need of an atonement by which sinful man might be reconciled to his Creator. They were to shew them, that an illustrious person had been foretold by the ancient prophets of a nation, which had been selected by the Most High, as the depository of his purposes, and as the instrument of preserving the doctrine of his unity, while the rest of mankind had been bewildered in the thick darkness of Paganism: they were to shew them, that by those ancient prophets an illustrious person had been foretold, who should appear on earth at a distinctly specified time, and who should

make that atonement which the transgressions of the whole human race had rendered so imperiously necessary. They were then to convince them, that this predicted illustrious person *had* been manifested, and *had* made atonement for the sins of the world by his voluntary sacrifice of himself upon the cross. They were to teach them, that Jesus of Nazareth was the person in question; that he was the true Messiah; that he had been anointed of God for his important office; that the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon him without measure; that he had been sent to save and redeem all mankind from their sins here, that so he might save and redeem them from eternal misery hereafter; that, after a life of unwearied benevolence and unexampled purity, he had submitted to a painful death in their stead, thus bearing in his own person the wrath justly due to them; and that this self-devotion had been freely accepted by his heavenly Father, as a full and complete ransom for those, who must otherwise, on the unbending principles of eternal righteousness, have been consigned to all the horrors of a tremendous punishment. They were to confirm the truth of their mission, both by an appeal to the strong evidence of facts, for these things were not done in a corner; and likewise by no less working miracles themselves of a most stupendous de-



scription, than by communicating the same preternatural power to all those who should believe in the holy name of Jesus.\* Finally, they were to offer to them every benefit which this great deliverer had purchased: they were to proclaim a free pardon of sins through his all-prevailing merits: they were to exhort them not to put away from themselves the words of eternal life: they were to invite them to receive the Saviour, as their king and their priest and their prophet: and they were to promise to all such, as should hear and obey, everlasting happiness in the presence of God whenever they should be removed from the fleeting vanities of this sublunary world.

This then was obviously the first step, which the apostles were to take. As the gentiles were ignorant of Christ, they were to declare him to them: and by this declaration of him in all his offices, which is equivalent to preaching the Gospel or to proclaiming glad tidings of eternal life, they were to labour to make all nations their disciples.†

\* Mark xvi. 17, 18.

† By the first teaching or making of disciples that must go before Baptism, is to be meant the convincing of the world, that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messias, anointed of God, with a fulness of grace and of the Spirit without measure, and sent to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix. Art. Art. XXVII.

2. If they met with success ; if any one professed himself convinced by their arguments and desirous of receiving Christ as his Saviour : they were then forthwith to baptize him, according to the form which their Lord had prescribed, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

By this ceremony, men were formally admitted members of Christ's Church, though as yet but imperfectly instructed in the great Mysteries of the Gospel. They had shewn a good disposition ; they had given reasonable hopes of their sincerity, by the willingness which they evinced to turn from darkness to light ; and they had listened with readiness and apparent conviction to the apostolic call. Hence, though God only could read their hearts, and though his servants could not positively pronounce upon their inward condition ; they were in no wise to detrude them from the right of Baptism, on the ground that they might prove to be hypocrites or unsound or instable. Christ himself, in common with the other apostles, may be presumed to have baptized the traitor Judas ; though, as

Christ gave order to his apostles, that, after they have taught and men believe, they shall baptize them ; that so they may be enrolled amongst those of the household of God, and entered into the number of the citizens and burgesses of the heavenly Jerusalem. Abp. Usher's Body of Div. p. 388,

the great searcher of hearts, he distinctly perceived his glozing avaricious insincerity, though he saw that his false soul had no love either for his outwardly acknowledged Master or for his doctrines, and though he clearly foreknew that he would sell him for a paltry sum of money. If the Lord then was pleased to admit by Baptism this monster into his Church, though perfectly aware of his real disposition: ill might his disciples claim the right of repelling any apparently serious person from the holy ordinance of initiation, on the plea of his future possible unworthiness or his present possible insincerity. They acted accordingly on this very principle: and the natural result was, that more than one person, who had *seemed* to be a real convert, was added to the Church by Baptism, without being added to our Lord's spiritual members by a secret mysterious union with Christ the head. Of this inevitable circumstance, Ananias and Sapphira, Demas and Simon Magus, Hymeneus and Philetus, may be adduced as pregnant and woeful instances. The apostles therefore were not to be deterred from baptizing those, who with apparent seriousness might offer themselves for Baptism; though, in various cases, they might thus be admitted only as outward and simulated members of the Church

without deriving any inward saving benefit by their participation of the ordinance.

After they had now been initiated into the visible communion of believers, *they were to be further instructed*, as it is well expressed in our Anglican baptismal office, *in all things which a Christian ought to know and believe for his soul's health*. For this, the very form of Baptism, prescribed with such exact wisdom by our Lord, would be an admirable preparative. The new converts, who were thus solemnly baptized in or rather into the three names of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, would not fail to ask, what these three beings were, to whom they were thus specifically devoted, and whose titles were thus mysteriously conjoined in apparent mutual importance and equality. In reply, they would be taught, that the Father is the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth;\* that the Son is no other than that Jesus, who had been preached to them as making propitiation for their sins in his own body on the cross;† and that the Holy Ghost was one, whom the Father would send in the name of the Son to comfort all true believers, and who consequently is alike distinct both from the Son and from the Fa-

\* Matt. xi. 25.

† Mark i. 1.

ther.\* Such a reply would naturally produce the question, why the man Jesus Christ was placed upon the same footing of dignity with the Supreme Being, and who that Holy Spirit was who is thus joined with them both in honour though exhibited as distinct from either? This would lead to a complete developement of all the leading and essential doctrines of the Gospel: and, if the catechumen afterwards fell short of his duty or if he apostatised from the faith delivered to the saints, he at least would not be able to plead ignorance either of the tenets or precepts of Christianity.†

\* John xiv. 26.

† And, when any were brought to acknowledge this, then they were to baptize them, to initiate them to this religion, by obliging them to renounce all idolatry and ungodliness as well as all secular and carnal lusts; and then they led them into the water, and, with no other garments than what might cover nature, they first laid them down in the water as a man is laid in a grave, and then they said those words, I baptize or wash thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then they raised them up again; and clean garments were put upon them: from whence came the phrases of being baptized into Christ's death, of being buried with him by Baptism into death, of our being risen with Christ, of putting off the old man and putting on the new. After Baptism was thus performed, the baptized person was to be further instructed in all the specialties of the Christian religion, and in all the rules of life that Christ had prescribed. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. XXVII.

3. It was however both to be feared and expected, that many would hear the sound of the Gospel without receiving it as the word of God. Though it freely offered them salvation through the merits of the long predicted and now revealed Saviour, numbers would reject the proffered invitation, their hearing not being mixed with faith. The report of Christ's ambassadors would not be believed by them : they would appear to them in the light of mere babblers : and the things of God's Spirit would seem in their eyes no better than so much absolute foolishness. Where a few humble-minded persons heard the word with joy, many would remain determined infidels.

Now it is obvious, that, whatever benefits might result from believing in Christ as a redeeming Saviour and from thankfully submitting to him in all his varied offices as declared by his

Him that believeth in Christ, professeth the articles of the Christian religion, and mindeth to be baptized (I speak now of them that be grown to ripe years of discretion, sith for the young babes their parents' or the Church's profession sufficeth,) the minister dippeth in or washeth with pure and clean water only, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost : and then commendeth him by prayer to God, into whose Church he is now openly (as it were) enrolled, that it may please God to grant him his grace, whereby he may answer in belief and life agreeably to his profession. King Edward's Catech. p. 51.

holy evangelists ; precisely those benefits would be lost or forfeited by the *not* thus believing in him and by the *not* thus submitting to him. For, as well might we expect, that a sick man would derive health from the mere existence of a medicine, which he refused to swallow through a resolute disbelief in the skill and competency of his physician ; as imagine, that Christ could be a Saviour or spiritual physician to those who determined not to receive him in that capacity. In either case, such a notion would alike involve a direct contradiction in terms.

The sick man is cured, by giving himself up implicitly to the orders of his medical friend, by carefully obeying all his directions, and by duly receiving the salutiferous drugs which in his peculiar case the wisdom of his attendant judges to be necessary. But why does the sick man thus submit to the commands of his physician ? Why does he yield to him so entirely, as not to presume to set up his own judgment in opposition for a single moment ? Doubtless because he BELIEVES, that the physician is a man of great professional skill ; that he understands what is really good for him, much better than he himself does ; that he will prescribe for him nothing but what is proper, though the medicine or the operation which he recommends be far from palatable ; that, if he be obedient, he may

recover ; but that, if he be disobedient, death or acute suffering will be the infallible result of his folly. Here the whole principle of his actions is BELIEF : and *that* too, not a mere vague general indefinite belief that his physician is a man of science and talent, while yet he is determined not to follow a single plan which he recommends ; but a belief, which leads immediately to practice, which induces him freely and voluntarily forthwith to request the aid of the person whose skill he acknowledges, which prompts him to submit patiently and even cheerfully to all his orders, and which inspires him with a lively hope that by so doing he shall at last be amply recompensed. But, if he have NO BELIEF, the entire tissue of his conduct will be perfectly analogous to his opinion. His neighbourhood may provide him with the most skilful physician in the world ; and the physician himself may be most strongly recommended to him by those, who have actually derived benefit from his medical knowledge : but all this will be of no avail, if the man have obstinately taken up a persuasion, that the person, of whom he hears so much, is an ignorant empiric and a mere pretender to science. Under such an impression of UNBELIEF, a principle quite as operative in *its* way as BELIEF can be, he will neither call in the practitioner, nor swallow his medicines, nor



pay the least regard to his directions: and thus, in the natural way of cause and effect, unless God should be pleased to work a gratuitous miracle in his favour, he will lose his life under the very eye of consummate talent, because he could not bring himself to believe that any such talent existed.

From the noble science of healing, agreeably to the ordinary practice of the inspired writers who delight to exemplify things spiritual by things natural, our Lord has been pleased to draw an illustration of the peculiarity of his own mission. He speaks of himself as the great physician of souls: and, in that capacity, he is recommended by his evangelists to all who labour under the spiritual malady of sin; that is to say, to all mankind. He declares however, that, without BELIEF on the part of the sufferers, even he himself can effect no cure: and the reason in this case is precisely the same as it was in the other case, whence he draws his illustration. They, who reject the great spiritual physician as an impostor, that is to say, who have NO BELIEF in his skill; and they, who vaguely acknowledge his skill indeed, but are determined not to avail themselves of his medicines: both these can plainly derive no benefit from him, however undeniable and uncontroled may be his sway over each spiritual malady.

The ground of such a lamentable circumstance is manifest. Their souls, not being healed, have as necessary a tendency to spiritual death; as a body, not healed of some mortal distemper, has to natural death. Disbelieving, and therefore rejecting, the physician, they of course reject his prescribed method of cure, and pay not the slightest attention to his directions. Hence, as his office is specially set forth to be that of a Saviour; it inevitably follows from the very term itself, that they, who submit not themselves to him, cannot be saved by him: or, in other words, that they, who disbelieve, must perish in their sins.

Nor can the reverse be possible, unless the whole analogy of nature be violated. We sometimes hear ignorant and unthinking men complain, that it is hard for a person to suffer, merely because he cannot believe. This complaint springs altogether from their grossly misapprehending the nature of Faith. They seem almost to fancy, that it is a kind of cabalistical word, a sort of *Open Sesame*, which well-meaning though prejudiced Christians suppose will infallibly unlock the gates of heaven to all who have the good fortune to possess such a key. But nothing can be further removed from the truth than this groundless notion. No man will perish hereafter for a mere simple act of UNBE-

LIEF, neither will any man be saved hereafter for a mere simple act of BELIEF. It is the different trains of *consequences*, which necessarily result from these two highly operative principles, and *that* too merely and absolutely in the way of cause and effect, which produce two such opposite final results. BELIEF, as a casual principle, produces, just like any other casual principle, its own proper effects : and UNBELIEF, as a casual principle, produces, in like manner, *its* own proper effects. Now we might just as profitably seek to unhinge the whole frame of nature, as to maintain, that the proper effects of UNBELIEF will produce no different final result from that which will be produced by the proper effects of BELIEF. The analogy of all nature through all its works invariably teaches, that opposite causes must produce opposite effects; and common sense shews, that those *opposite* effects can never issue in a *similar* result. Hence we may with like emolument complain, how hard it is that a man should be excluded from heaven merely because he could not believe that Christ is the only physician of souls, and how hard it is that a man should scorch his hand by thrusting it into the fire merely because he could not believe that that element would burn. In each case, it is not *the bare unbelief* that produces the mischief, but *the line of*

*action* springing from the principle : and men may complain as long as they please of the extreme hardship of forfeiting heaven through unbelief ; but, until they can contrive to order matters so that cause shall cease to produce its effect, until they can manage so to arrange things that *similar* effects shall flow from *opposite* causes, they must be content to find, that the *same* ultimate result can never spring from two diametrically *opposite* principles of BELIEF and UNBELIEF.

On this ground, If I mistake not, our Saviour, as his words stand recorded by St. Mark, when commissioning his apostles to preach the Gospel through all the world, and when charging them at the same time to initiate every convert by the rite of Baptism, solemnly adds : *He, that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he, that believeth not, shall be damned.* The two opposite principles, inevitably and in the way of cause and effect, produce two such opposite lines of conduct, that the *practical* believer is by the same philosophical necessity brought to final happiness, as the *practical* unbeliever is to final misery. Nor can this ever cease to be the case ; until, through the universal constitution of nature, BELIEF and UNBELIEF shall no more have any operative influence upon human actions and affections.

Thus does our Lord assign its due prominence to FAITH, making it the turning hinge of future happiness or misery : but, while he places it thus high as the cardinal Christian grace, the fruitful mother and living fountain whence every other grace originates, he assigns likewise its own due rank to the ordinance of BAPTISM. This he does by making a marked difference in the form of the two propositions, which he lays down to his disciples. *He, that BELIEVETH and IS BAPTIZED, shall be saved* : in this proposition FAITH and BAPTISM are *both* specified. *But he, that BELIEVETH NOT, shall be damned* : in this proposition UNBELIEF *alone* is specified ; nothing is said respecting THE OMISSION OF BAPTISM. It appears then, that, while every one who BELIEVETH and IS BAPTIZED shall be saved, UNBELIEF, viewed as producing a long train of baneful effects, is that ALONE which will exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord does not say, *He, that BELIEVETH NOT and IS NOT BAPTIZED, shall be damned* : but only, *He, that BELIEVETH NOT, shall be damned* ; thus studiously varying the form of the two propositions, which respect our final happiness or misery. Now, as we may be sure that Christ neither *says* nor *omits* any thing without ample reason, we may be sure that THE DEFECT OF BAPTISM is not *accidentally* omitted in the second proposition :

we may be sure, that it is omitted for very sufficient cause: and the cause I take to be this. Our Lord wished to point out a radical difference between FAITH and BAPTISM, in regard to their importance: accordingly, he defines FAITH to be so vitally essential to salvation, that a man cannot possibly be saved *without* it; but, though he commands that every believer should be baptized, he lays not the same stress upon BAPTISM, he carefully refrains from intimating that *without* it no man can be saved. Every one that BELIEVETH and IS BAPTIZED, shall be saved: but only every one that BELIEVETH NOT, shall be damned. Provided a man have REAL FAITH, which he assuredly may have *before* Baptism; THE OMISSION OF THE BAPTISMAL RITE, provided that omission be not the result of a contemptuous neglect of Christ's commandment (a sin, which no real believer would be guilty of), shall be no bar to his entrance into the kingdom of heaven. His faith shall save him, even though he may not have been outwardly baptized.

We may infer then from our Lord's studiously varied phraseology, that FAITH is *essential* to salvation, but that BAPTISM is *not essential* to it. And this inference will both teach us, how to assign to Baptism its proper place in the Christian scale; and will clearly shew, that there is no

such inseparable conjunction of outward Baptism and inward Regeneration that the one cannot subsist distinct from the other. If the two were indissolubly united, BAPTISM would be just as essential to salvation as FAITH. For, since it is impossible in the very nature of things for a man to enter into heaven without Regeneration; if Regeneration were inseparable from Baptism, it is plain that no one could enter into heaven without Baptism: in other words, HE THAT IS NOT BAPTIZED, quite as much as HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT, must be damned. But our Lord makes no such assertion: so far from it, even while in the very act of enjoining the baptismal rite, even while associating its due reception with Faith itself, he industriously refrains from annexing the penalty of damnation to the omission of Baptism; thus tacitly insinuating, that Regeneration, which he himself peremptorily declares to be *essential* to salvation, may exist without the external symbolic ordinance.

Hence we may learn, how we are to understand the language which he employs in his conversation with Nicodemus. He says indeed on that occasion, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*: but, that the emphasis is to be laid on *the Spirit* and not on *water*, it is evident, both from

the marked difference which he makes between FAITH and BAPTISM as to the final consequences resulting from their presence or their absence, and from what he immediately and guardedly subjoins to the assertion itself; *That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that, which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.\** Here we see, that the mention of water is entirely dropped, and the agency of the Holy Ghost is alone insisted upon. Consequently, from comparing together the language of our Lord while conversing with Nicodemus and his language while delivering his last charge to his disciples, we may safely conclude, that he never meant to pronounce Baptism by water so essential to salvation that every unbaptized person will infallibly be damned; a tenet however, which, extravagant and shocking as it is, necessarily flows from the doctrine that Baptism and Regeneration are inseparable.

4. When Christ thus sent forth his apostles to evangelize and baptize the whole world, it was highly necessary that he should give them a word of comfort and encouragement; for, considering the temper and practices both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, no task could be more thoroughly hopeless and disheartening. He as-

\* John iii. 5, 6.



sures them, therefore, that *he would be with them always, even unto the end of the world.*

The declaration is highly remarkable, and well worth our serious attention.

Had Christ been a mere man, as some would fain persuade us, it is not very easy to conceive, either how he could make good such a promise, or what great comfort the apostles could derive even from its accomplishment. Granting for a moment the possibility of a departed human spirit being every where invisibly present; unless that spirit possessed some extraordinary powers of acting upon the mind of man and of controuling and overruling the course of events, it is difficult to comprehend what particular benefit his invisible presence could confer: and, if he possessed such powers, it is equally difficult to comprehend how a mere creature could be capable of participating the special attributes of Deity; for, though Christ indeed says of himself *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts,* this does not make it at all more easy to conceive with what propriety a glorified human spirit could adopt the very language of Jehovah, *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins.\**

\* Rev. ii. 23. Jerem. xvii. 9, 10.

But, even supposing that a glorified human spirit might have the power communicated to him of acting upon the mind of man and of controuling the course of events, still we have to inquire into the possibility of his being characterized by a yet more incomprehensible attribute ; no less an attribute than that of omnipresence. With whatever velocity a spirit may be supposed to flit from place to place, as every creature is necessarily a finite being, the most rapid created spirit could never be present in more than a single place at a single moment of time : nor is it possible (with reverence be it spoken) for an infinite being to communicate to a finite being any attribute, which specially belongs to him as an infinite being ; because such a communication involves a direct contradiction, for it is tantamount to saying that a being can at once be both finite and infinite. Now omnipresence, like omnipotence and omniscience, necessarily involves the idea of infinity. Hence it is incapable of communication to a finite being. But Christ, in his last declaration to his apostles, as well as in his former promise that *where two or three are gathered together in his name there would he be in the midst of them*,\* manifestly claims the attribute of omnipresence. For how

\* Matt. xviii. 20.

could he be present at the same time with all his numerous evangelists in every quarter of the globe, how could he at once be in the midst of each small assembly of devout Christians, and how could he be nevertheless scynchronically in heaven itself *until the times of restitution of all things* :\* how could a mere man, or rather how could any created being, be thus present in innumerable places at once, unless he had possessed the attribute of ubiquity? But such an attribute is necessarily incommunicable : and yet we see, that Christ claims it to himself. Hence I perceive not what inference can be drawn, but that Christ is perfect God as well as perfect man.

Now, in *this* view of the subject, it is easy to see what boundless consolation the apostles would derive from their Lord's promise, that he would be with them always even to the end of the world. They would feel assured, that they had no real cause of fear; since that divine person, into whose name with complete equality to the names of the Father and the Holy Ghost every new convert was to be baptized, would never cease to be invisibly present with all and each of them, whether they were engaged in teaching the frozen inhabitants of the north, or

\* Acts iii. 21.

employed in bearing the glad tidings of the Gospel to the parched tenants of the sultry south. They would feel assured, that he, at whose disposal are all hearts and to whose irresistible controul is subjected every contingent event, could so overrule both the purposes of men and the intricate maze of circumstances, as to make them all co-operate to his own glory and the final salvation of his faithful people.

II. These remarks on the order of conduct which Christ prescribed to his evangelists, and on the place which he assigns to Baptism when beheld by the side of Faith, will prepare us to inquire into the object of this symbolical rite and into the nature of those privileges by which it is accompanied.

1. From the numerous purifications by water enjoined under the Law of Moses, it was natural for the ancient Israelites to adopt the rite of Baptism as a fit mode of initiating their proselytes into the Mysteries of the Levitical Church: for, as water cleanses the body from outward pollution, and as they found it thence ordained to be used as symbolizing an inward ablution of spirit from the stains contracted by a breach of God's commandments; they would obviously employ it to represent that new and better condition, into which a pagan was brought by for-

saking his idolatrous superstition and by embracing the pure worship of the one true God.

Yet I have my suspicion, that the form of Baptism did not absolutely *originate* in this manner. I am much inclined to believe, that it was an ancient patriarchal ordinance, at least as old as the time of Noah, if not as old even as the time of Adam; and that, under the dispensation of the Fathers, no less than under the dispensation of the Gospel, it shadowed out a restoration to that integrity of soul which our first parents lost at the fall.\*

To this opinion I lean, because I find the rite of Baptism equally prevalent and equally connected with some ideas of a mystic renovation both among Jews and Gentiles long prior to its authoritative institution by our Lord. The general pagan belief, that the immersion of the body in water could cleanse it from any contracted pollution and thus render the votary meet to approach the objects of his veneration, is familiar to every classical reader:† but it may not

\* I mean not to assert its *divine* institution in the patriarchal Church, but only its probable *existence*. The Bible gives us no warrant for supposing the former.

† Such is the language of Eneas, when he deems it unlawful for him to touch the Penates on account of the impurity which he had contracted by blood shed in battle.

perhaps be quite so commonly known, that a Baptism by water was in perhaps every quarter of the world one of the modes, by which aspirants were initiated into the Mysteries, and in consequence of which they were said to be regenerated or to be born into a new state of existence.\* This pagan regeneration indeed was

Tu, genitor, cape sacra manu, patriosque Penates.  
 Me, bello e tanto digressum et cæde recenti,  
 Attrectare nefas ; donec me flumine vivo  
 Abluero. Æneid. lib. ii. ver. 717—720.

\* Nam et sacris quibusdam per lavacrum initiantur, Isidis alicujus aut Mithræ, ipsos etiam deos suos lavationibus efferrunt—Idque se in regenerationem et impunitatem perjuriorum suorum agere præsumunt. Tertull. de Baptism. c. v.

Sed quæritur, a quo intellectus interpretetur, eorum quæ ad hæreses faciant? A diabolo scilicet, cujus sunt partes intervertendi veritatem, ipsas quoque res sacramentorum divinorum in idolorum Mysteriis æmulatur. Tinguunt et ipse quosdam, utique credentes et fideles suos : expiationem delictorum de lavacro repromittit, et sic adhuc initiat Mithræ. Signat illic in frontibus milites suos, celebrat et panis oblationem, et imaginem resurrectionis inducit. Tertull. de præscript. adv. Hær. c. 40.

A Brahmin is purified by water that reaches his bosom ; a Chatrya, by water descending to the throat ; a Vaisya, by water barely taken into his mouth ; a Sudra, by water touched with the extremity of his lips—Such is the real law of institution for the twice born—of him who gives natural birth, and him who gives knowledge of the whole Veda, the giver of sacred knowledge is the more venerable father ; since the second or divine birth ensures life to the twice-born both in

strangely perverted from any genuine spiritual sense to certain philosophical speculations and remarkable traditions, which have ever formed the entire basis of gentile idolatry : yet the notion of some attendant purification, of some entrance into a more eligible condition, was never entirely obliterated. Now it is difficult to conceive, how such an ordinance could have been so universally adopted both by Jews and Gentiles, if, like sacrifice, they had not derived it from some common source. But the point, where the Israelites and the Pagans separated, was the close of the patriarchal dispensation ; and, whatever *general* opinions and practices the Pagans had among them, provided only they were of an arbitrary nature, they must have se-

this world and hereafter eternally. Let a man consider that as a mere human birth, which his parents gave him, and which he receives after lying in the womb : but that birth, which his principal Acharya, who knows the whole Veda, procures for him by his divine mother the Gayatri, is a true birth ; that birth is exempt from age and from death. Instit. of Menu. chap. ii. § 62, 68, 146, 147, 148.

With Tertullian's mode of accounting for the Baptism of the Mysteries I am no way concerned : I cite him only for the fact. Now from these citations it is evident, that the ancient pagans used a Baptism by way of initiating aspirants into their most sacred doctrines, and that this Baptism was thought to symbolize a second birth or a transition into a new state of existence.

verally carried off into the lands which they planted at the time of the dispersion from Babel.\* Hence, as the rite of Baptism was alike familiar both to Jews and to Gentiles, the obvious inference is, that they equally received it from patriarchal antiquity.

Both among Jews and Gentiles, however, it was used as an ordinance of admission or initiation. Whence we may presume, that such also was its use in the patriarchal Church, and that it is still to be viewed in the same light as adopted into the Church of Christ.

But the Jews and the Gentiles additionally esteemed it, as being emblematical of purification, and as shadowing out a sort of birth from a worse state of existence into a better.† Nor was this, at least among the Gentiles, confined to the human species: they extended it likewise to universal nature, and eminently applied it to the history of the deluge. The whole earth, polluted by the sins of its inhabitants, was thought to have been baptismally purified by water, and afterwards to have been born again from the mighty inundation renewed in youth and holiness.

\* For this argument unfolded to a great length, see my work on the origin of Pagan Idolatry. It constitutes in fact the basis of that entire Dissertation.

† Hence the formula of the *Mystæ*, *Ἐφυγον κακόν, εἶρον ἀμεττον.*



To this opinion, which I conjecture to have descended from the times of early postdiluvian Patriarchism, St. Peter seems to allude in a well known curiously mystical passage. *The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.\** At any rate, in whatever precise manner the apostle's allusion to the deluge ought to be understood, he clearly ascribes to Baptism a purifying effect. Not indeed that the mere water possesses any cleansing potency: that were a vain superstition, against which St. Peter carefully and expressly warns us. But he certainly intimates, that, although the washing away of the outward filth of the flesh be in itself unable to save us, yet this baptismal ablution shadows out the purification of the soul so that the answer of a good conscience towards God may by such inward purification be effectually obtained. Hence also we may infer, that in the patriarchal Church the idea of purification was associated with baptismal washing.

\* 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

2. While Christ however has thus been pleased to adopt into his Church, and so to make his own, the ancient rite of Baptism; the erection of it into one of his sacraments specially vindicates it into the place, not of the Jewish proselytical baptisms, but of the divinely-ordained rite of Circumcision. For, as the Christian Church is but the completion and perfection of the Levitical; the same ordinances, which had been established in the one, were transferred in spirit, if not absolutely in letter, to the other. Hence the Dominical Supper having succeeded to the place of the Passover, analogy requires us to conclude that Baptism has succeeded to the place of Circumcision. Accordingly St. Paul, while he denies the existence of any necessary connexion between outward Circumcision and that inward Renovation which he describes it as symbolizing, speaks of it in terms, which compel us to identify it in the Spirit with Baptism. For, after the example of the old prophets, he represents it as being the ordinance, which shadowed out, by an external and visible sign, that internal and invisible change of heart without which it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven.\* *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in*

\* See Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Exod. vi. 12. Levit. xxvi. 41. Isaiah lii. 1. Jerem. vi. 10. ix. 26. Ezek. xlv. 7.

*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.\** Now this identical inward change of heart is also symbolized by Baptism. Hence, as Circumcision and Baptism symbolize the self-same thing, they must plainly be one and the same sacrament ; whatever difference may subsist between their mere external forms. And such, accordingly, we find to be the opinion universally entertained by our best divines.†

Circumcision then being in effect and substance the same as Baptism, would we ascertain the nature and privileges of the latter, we

\* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

† Now since Christ took Baptism from the Jews and appointed it to be the federal admission to his religion, as Circumcision had been in the Mosaical dispensation, it is reasonable to believe, that, except where he declared a change to be made in it, in all other respects it was to go on and to continue as before. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. xxvii.

Look unto that legal sacrament of Circumcision ; which, contrary to the fancies of our Anabaptists, directly answer this evangelical one of Baptism. Bp. Hall's Works. Decade v. Epist. 4.

What sacraments be there of the New Testament ? Only two : to wit, Baptism, succeeding to the place of Circumcision ; and the Supper of the Lord, answering to the Passover. By the former we have our admission into the true Church of God : by the latter we are nourished and preserved in the Church after our admission. Abp. Usher's Body of Div. p. 388. See also p. 394.

must inquire into the nature and privileges of the former.

Now Circumcision, though (as St. Paul assures us) not inseparably connected with Regeneration; for a man might be a complete Jew outwardly, and yet be no better than a mere Heathen inwardly: Circumcision evidently shadowed out Regeneration; for such is the necessary inference, both from the language of the Apostle, and from that of the ancient prophets before him. Consequently, as Regeneration is an admission or initiation into the invisible spiritual Church of God, so its symbol Circumcision must analogically be viewed as an admission or initiation into the visible carnal Church. In exact accordance with this obvious conclusion, we are told, that Circumcision was a token of the covenant betwixt God and his chosen people; and that every man child, in order to his being admitted into that covenant, was to be circumcised on the eighth day.\* We are further told, that, if a sojourner wished to become a proselyte and thus to eat of the Passover, it was necessary, that he should first be initiated into the religion of God's people by the rite of Circumcision.† It is manifest therefore, that Circumcision was an admission into the

\* Gen. xvii. 7—14.

† Exod. xii. 48, 49.

outward Levitical Church, symbolizing indeed an admission by what the prophets style *Circumcision of heart* into the spiritual and invisible Church, but not inseparably or necessarily associated with such admission.

Circumcision then being an initiation into the outward Levitical Church, the person thus initiated was admitted into all the high privileges of God's people. He had the means of grace abundantly supplied to him: he was introduced to the knowledge and worship of the one true God: he had the opportunity of learning and performing his will: he enjoyed religious advantages denied to the Gentiles, which, if duly and faithfully improved, would be the powerful instrument of making him an Israelite indeed, and of thus procuring him admission into the general Church and Assembly of the first-born.

Yet, as Circumcision in itself could do no more than initiate a man into the outward Church; though the wilful and contemptuous neglect of it justly subjected the offender to the severest punishment, it was not so absolutely necessary to bring a Hebrew into covenant with God that without it he could *not* be in covenant. Here, as must inevitably be the case, the parallel failed between the sign and the thing signified. Without the latter, it is morally impossible that any one should be included in the pale of the

invisible Church : but there is no such moral impossibility as to a man's being included in the pale of the visible Levitical Church without the former. Accordingly we find, that none of the Israelites, who were born in the wilderness for the space of forty years together, were circumcised : yet were they not on that account less within the pale of the Levitical Church. An order indeed came forth, as soon as they had entered the promised land, that they should all forthwith submit to the initiative rite : but are we on this account to imagine, that they had hitherto been aliens from God's covenant, that in his estimation they had been as uncircumcised heathens, and that they had never during that period been viewed as his people ? Plainly not : their whole history proves the reverse to be the truth ; their whole history demonstrates them to have been in covenant with God, notwithstanding they had never been circumcised ; their whole history therefore warrants the belief, that those of them, who died uncircumcised in the wilderness, would not on that account merely be excluded from the beatific presence of the Lord, provided only they had experienced an inward Circumcision of heart.\*

Circumcision therefore under the Law we find to be no more *indispensably* necessary to

\* Joshua v. 2—7.

salvation, than Baptism under the Gospel: and the reason in each case is the very same. Both are alike *symbols* of Regeneration: but neither of them is Regeneration *itself*. Hence, though the thing signified be *absolutely* indispensable, inasmuch as it is the first step of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: the sign, whether under the Law or under the Gospel, is by no means to be viewed under the same alarming aspect.\*

Yet, with whatever degree of plainness the real nature of Circumcision is set forth by Moses and the prophets, so lamentably prone is man to a superstitious reliance upon outward ceremonies, that the Jews seem early and too generally to have mistaken it. Running unhappily into the contrary extreme from insolent and profane neglect of the ordinance, they built upon it as capable *in itself* of making them really God's people. Thus we find even some He-

\* Baptism is a high ordinance of God, and a mean whereby he hath appointed to communicate Christ and his benefits to our souls; and therefore not to be neglected or slightly esteemed, but used with all reverence and thankful devotion when it may be had. Yet, where God denieth it, either in regard of the shortness of the infant's life or by any other unavoidable necessity, there comes no danger from the want of the sacraments but only from the contempt of them. Abp. Usher's Body of Div. p. 395.

brew converts to Christianity, who should have known better, insisting upon the impossibility of being saved without Circumcision:\* whence St. Paul was compelled to enforce upon the Galatians the sound spiritual doctrine, that *in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by love.*† Here we may observe the Apostle laying the very same stress upon Faith in contradistinction to any outward rite when beheld with a superstitious reverence, that his great Master had done before him. Our Lord teaches, that, while *the baptized believer* shall be saved, *the unbeliever* only shall be damned: and in like manner St. Paul maintains, that no external ceremony can *in itself* avail any thing to salvation, but only Faith which shews itself to be genuine by its effects. It was doubtless to guard against such dangerous mistakes respecting Circumcision, that Moses insinuates what it was intended to represent. *Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.*‡ *The Lord thy God will circumcise 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.*§ And it was doubtless with the same purpose, that Jeremiah so energetically points out the little

\* Acts xv. 1.

† Gal. v. 6.

‡ Deut. x. 16.

§ Deut. xxx. 6.



use of outward Circumcision, if the heart meanwhile remained uncircumcised. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all the circumcised with the uncircumcised. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.\**

3. We may now specify, it is hoped, without much difficulty, the nature and privileges of Baptism.

(1.) This ordinance, then, appointed by Christ himself, may be viewed as the door of entrance into God's visible house the Church.

It is a federal admission into the pale of Christianity. It is an initiation into the Mysteries of the Gospel. And, as it shadows out an inward and spiritual new birth into the invisible Church of the faithful, so itself may well be deemed an outward and figurative new birth from a state of Gentilism into the visible Church: for every person when duly baptized, quits a former mode of existence and enters upon a new one.†

\* Jerem. ix. 25, 26.

\* We justly hold Baptism to be the door of our actual entrance into God's house. Hooker's Eccles. Pol. book v. § 60.

(2.) Baptism, being thus the instrument of admission into the visible Church, becomes of course the special mark or badge of a professing Christian ; just as Circumcision was the special mark or badge of a professing Israelite.

The institution of Baptism, as it is a federal act of the Christian religion, must be taken from the commission of our Saviour given to his Disciples. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. xxvii. As for the ends and purposes of Baptism, St. Paul gives us two : the one is, that we are all baptized into one body, we are made members one of another : we are admitted to the society of Christians, and to all the rights and privileges of that body which is the Church.—But a second end of Baptism is internal and spiritual.—Baptism makes us the visible members of that one body, into which we are baptized or admitted by Baptism : but that which saves us in it, which both deadens and quickens us, must be a thing of another nature.—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 determined by. *Ibid.*

There is a baptismal Regeneration, 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 ordinance entered members of the visible Church. Now this external Regeneration 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. Bp. Hopkins's Works. Sermon. xi. p. 519.

Hence, as it is the outward sign of our having received the Gospel, no one can presumptuously slight or neglect it, without at the same time throwing contempt upon the Gospel itself : just as, among men, he, who treats with studied contumely the peculiar badge of any party or community, is ever esteemed decidedly hostile to that party or community,\*

(3.) As Baptism admits us into the visible Church, so does it likewise admit us into all the privileges enjoyed by members of that Church.

God's promises, that our sins shall be forgiven on sincere repentance, and that we ourselves shall become his adopted children through the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed to us.

\* *Ecqua alia causa subest, quare Dominus externorum etiam signorum usum adhiberi voluerit? Dominus mysteria sua in hunc præterea usum instituit, ut professionis nostræ notæ atque indicia quædam essent, quibus de fide nostra quasi testimonium coram hominibus diceremus, patefacere nos cum aliis piis divinorum beneficiorum participes esse, et unum cum illis religionis quasi concentum atque consensum habere, Christianique nominis atque appellationis discipulorum Christi nos minime pudere palam testificaremur. Quid ergo de illis judicas, qui mysteriis divinis tanquam minus necessariis, carere se censent? Primum, huic in Deum patrem ac Servatorem nostrum Jesum Christum, atque ejus etiam Ecclesiam, officio tam pio atque debito deesse sine summo scelere non possunt. Nam quid hoc aliud esset, quam Christum oblique denegare? Noelli Catech. p. 210.*

We may henceforth, not by a mere vague supplication, but on the express ground of our federal relation to Christ, claim with confidence every benefit which he has purchased for his Church : so that, if we ask faithfully, we cannot doubt but that we shall receive effectually.

Nor does Baptism simply confer this privilege upon us, while at the same time it leaves us in a state of incapacity to avail ourselves of it. On the contrary, by rightly grafting us into the Church, it brings us into the way of being fully instructed in all the doctrines and precepts of Christianity : whence, being no longer involved in that thick intellectual and moral darkness which overspreads the entire pagan world, we are led clearly to discern both our duties and our privileges ; and feel ourselves assured, on the express authority of God's own word, that we have but to ask in order that we may receive, to seek in order that we may find, and to knock in order that the door of heaven may be opened to us.

In short, nothing will better teach us how to estimate properly the great benefits which we derive from this admission into Christ's visible Church, than to consider the condition of the Gentiles when left to the mere light, or rather to the palpable darkness of nature. St. Paul, at the beginning of his epistle to the Romans, has

given us a lamentable account of their state. We find them perishing, as the prophet assures us men *may* perish, *for lack of knowledge.*\* So far from having any distinct conceptions of what God requires at the hands of all those who are admitted into his presence, they were intangled in the mazes of a vile superstition which proposed evil as their highest good. Gross as were the enormities in which they wallowed, they plunged into them, not more from the natural corruption of the human heart, than from the very precepts and speculations of their theology itself. The fountain of knowledge was polluted: the streams therefore, which it sent forth, could not but be bitter. Doubtless many baptized persons within the pale of every visible Church shew too plainly by their fruits, that they have never been inwardly baptized by the Holy Ghost: but, between their condition and that of the unenlightened pagan, there is this grand, this essential, difference. The Gentiles committed various abominations, believing that they did acceptable service to their false gods; so that, with such a conviction on their minds, all thorough amendment was rendered impossible: but every person, who in consequence of his Baptism has from his earliest youth been ini-

\* Hos. iv. 6.

tiated into the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, has a clear perception of the radical distinction between right and wrong. A pagan did evil, under the persuasion that his evil was absolutely meritorious : but no one, who has been instructed by the Church, can *thus* commit iniquity. He may indeed break his baptismal vows, and may conduct himself as if he were indeed a heathen : but he knows all the while full well, that he is acting wrong, and that for all these things God will call him to judgment. Hence he has within him a principle of reformation, to which the pagan is an utter stranger. His conscience is enlightened, though his practice may be thoroughly unworthy of a Christian. He does not sin through ignorance or misapprehension. Hence a door is ever open for his returning to that gracious God, who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but who is always ready to welcome into his paternal arms each broken-hearted returning prodigal. There is reason to believe, that an early Christian education, however for a time it may seem ineffectual, is much more frequently, than some are apt to imagine, a powerful instrument in God's hand for effectually gathering to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Thus great and numerous are the privileges and benefits attached to Baptism.\*

(4.) Baptism then is not only an outward badge of our Christian profession ; but it is likewise, as our Church rightly defines it to be, an efficacious mean of grace and a pledge to assure us of its reception, unless with a high hand we shut ourselves out from God's covenant and thus declare ourselves unworthy to participate its benefits.

Such a modification of the doctrine, that *it is a mean and a pledge*, is evidently required both by experience and common sense. So far as matter of fact is concerned, we do *not* find that Baptism is a mean and a pledge of grace to *all* who receive it: nor is it agreeable to right reason or to the general analogy of nature, that it should be so. Baptism acts not as a charm: it imposes upon no one an invincible necessity of

\* Sacraments are seals of the promise of God in Christ: wherein, by certain outward signs (and sacramental actions concerning the same,) commanded by God, and delivered by his minister, Christ Jesus, with all his saving graces, is signified, conveyed, and sealed, unto the heart of a Christian. For sacraments are seals annexed by God to the word of the covenant of grace; to instruct, assure, and possess, us of our part in Christ and his benefits, and to bind us to all thankful obedience unto God in him. Abp. Usher's Body of Div. p. 381. See the matter further explained in p. 388, 393, 395.

holiness. It is *a mean* of God's grace, only so far as we avail ourselves of the privileges to which it entitles us ; it is a *pledge* of our receiving it, only so far as we take those intermediate steps upon which God has suspended its communication. A brave army is a powerful mean of victory : but, if it be ill supplied and worse conducted, no victory will be obtained. The delivering of a turf may be the pledge of a large estate : but, if the estate be never claimed-or if all right to it be forfeited by treason, the receiver of the turf will derive no benefit from the most regularly and authentically witnessed reception of it. Just so is it with Baptism : as *a precept*, it is *positive* ; as *a mean* and *a pledge* of receiving divine grace, it is *conditional*. The whole analogy of nature cannot be violated to drive men to heaven, nor yet in some cabalistical manner to convey them thither. Baptism, though in a modified sense of the words both *a mean* and *a pledge*, can no more *in itself* secure an admission into the presence of God, than the fabulous efficacy attributed by monkish superstition to the cloak and scapulary of St. Francis. We must do our parts in the Christian covenant, just as we must plow and sow the ground with an eye to a future plentiful harvest : and if we



thus act, we shall then find, that Baptism is both a mean and a pledge of grace.\*

\* Bp. Burnet, by giving too strict a definition of the word *mean*, is thence led to deny that Baptism is a mean of salvation. According to his own definition, he is certainly in the right: but why cannot we understand the word *mean* in the more limited sense, in which it is used in our Church catechism? Why may we not suppose it to denote a powerful indeed, though not an infallible, instrument of procuring grace first and afterwards salvation?

Our Saviour, says the Bishop, has made Baptism one of the *precepts*, though not one of the *means* necessary to salvation. A *mean* is that, which does so certainly procure a thing, that, it being had, the thing, to which it is a certain and necessary *mean*, is also had; and without it the thing cannot be had: there being a natural connexion between it and the end. Whereas a *precept* is an institution, in which there is no such natural efficiency; but it is positively commanded, so that the neglecting of it is a contempt of the authority that commanded it: and therefore, in obeying the precept, the value or virtue of the action lies only in the obedience. This distinction appears very clearly in what our Saviour has said both of *Faith* and *Baptism*. *He, that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he, that believeth not, shall be damned.* Where it appears, that Faith is the *mean* of salvation, with which it is to be had, and not without it:—and is so put by Christ, since upon our having it we shall be *saved*, as well as *damned* upon our not having it. On the other hand, the nature of a ritual action, even when commanded, is such, that, unless we could imagine that there is a charm in it, which is contrary to the spirit and genius of the Gospel which designs to save us by reforming our natures, we cannot think that there can be any thing in it, that is of itself effectual as a *mean*: therefore it must only be considered as a command that is given us, which we are bound to obey if we acknow-

5. These remarks necessarily suppose, that many unworthy persons, both infants and adults, may be admitted into the visible Church by Baptism.

Experience accordingly proves the truth of the supposition: and the fact itself is nothing more, than what our Lord prepares us to expect in more than a single parable.

The wheat and the tares grow up together, from first to last, in the same field; nor is any separation made, until the time of harvest: fishes, both good and bad, are comprehended within the same net: nor do they cease to company together, until the net is drawn forth from the water.\* Yet, during every period of their ex-

ledge the authority of the command. But, this being an action that is not always in our power but is to be done by another, it were to put our salvation or damnation in the power of another, to imagine that we cannot be saved without Baptism. And therefore it is only a *precept*, which obliges us in order to our salvation: and our Saviour, by leaving it out when he reversed the words, saying only *he that believeth not*, without adding *and is not baptized*, shall be *damned*, does plainly insinuate, that it is not a *mean*, but only a *precept* in order to our salvation. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. XXVII.

It will be perceived, that the Bishop argues from the omission of the words *and is not baptized* in the second clause of our Lord's declaration, precisely as I have done, and as I think must inevitably be done.

\* Matt. xiii. 24—30, 47—50. Our Lord says, that the field is the world: whence it might perhaps be argued, that

istence, the tares were still tares, the bad fishes were still worthless. No alteration took place

the tares are heathens, and the wheat Christians. The whole tenor however both of the parable and of its explanation clearly shews, that this is not the case. The tares, we are told, were sown *among* the wheat: and their final separation from the wheat is said to be a gathering of all things that offend and of them that do iniquity *from out of Christ's kingdom*. Ver. 25, 40, 41. If then at the last day the tares are to be gathered *from out of Christ's kingdom*, they must previously have been *in Christ's kingdom*: for they plainly cannot be gathered *out of that, in which they never were*. But Christ's kingdom here denotes his visible Church upon earth. The tares therefore, until the day of the figurative harvest, are *in the visible Church*. Thus it evidently appears, that in *outward* profession they are Christians, and not Pagans. Hence it will follow, that the sowing of the tares and the wheat means the baptismal initiation of certain very opposite characters into the visible Church: and they are said to be sown in a field which represents the world, because the universal Church is spread abroad through every part of the globe. Such being the case, the tares no more cease to be tares in consequence of their undergoing the same outward operation as the wheat, than unregenerate men cease to be unregenerate men merely because they are baptismally introduced into the same visible Church with the spiritually regenerate. They are brought indeed into the visible Church by an external ordinance; but, as the parable teaches us, their real introducer is the devil. Not that the priest, who gave them Baptism, is at all to blame; for *he* professes not to be a reader of hearts: yet his innocence does not the less make Satan the author of all evil in the Church. The case of Simon Magus perfectly explains this part of the parable. He was duly baptized by the holy evangelist Philip, and thus rightly admitted into the visible Church. Yet his secret introducer was the devil: for, as

in the *nature* of the tares, from the circumstance of their being sown in the self-same field with the wheat: no alteration took place in the *nature* of the bad fish, from the circumstance of their being comprehended within the self-same net as the good. Though they were *visibly* admitted into the same *outward* condition with what was truly valuable, their admission rested *solely* on *externals*. The tares were not transmuted into wheat, by their being sown in a wheat-field: neither did the bad fishes suddenly become good, in consequence of their being inclosed in the same net with the excellent.

Behold here, delineated by unerring wisdom itself, a lively picture of the state of Christ's visible Church and the nature of Baptism. All indeed are admitted into that Church by Baptism: but just as rationally might we expect, that tares would become wheat by their being sown in the same field with wheat, or that bad fishes would become good by their being comprehended in the same net with good; as that every man, who was admitted into the visible Church by

the tares in the parable are said, notwithstanding their being comprehended *within* the kingdom of Christ, to be *the children of the wicked one*; so the magician is declared, notwithstanding his being brought *within* the pale of the visible Church by Baptism, to be still *in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity*.

Baptism, necessarily therefore changed his nature and became truly regenerate. It was not, that the tares *became* wheat by the act of sowing, and afterwards *fell back* to the condition of tares; neither was it, that the bad fish *became* good by the act of inclosure within the net, and afterwards *fell back* to their pristine condition of bad ones: on the contrary, each by the act, to which they were respectively subjected, experienced no change, save what was altogether *external*. Their *outward condition*, not their *inward nature*, was the thing that was altered. Just so is it with the ordinance of Baptism. It brings men indeed into the society of Christians, and admits them to all the rights and privileges of the Church. For this the mere outward action is sufficient: nor, as we are unable to read the human heart, are we to repel any from Baptism who with apparent devoutness may wish to partake of it; though the consequence may be, that many unworthy persons are thence baptized. But that, which saves in Baptism, must be something internal: and this the Spirit of God, who moves upon the surface of the water, can alone confer. In each sacrament, God himself is always ready to give with the sign the thing signified: yet it cannot be doubted, that some,

in receiving the signs, receive them only to their own judgment.\*

(6.) As Baptism is a federal admission into the Church of Christ, it necessarily follows, that a baptism into what is *not* the Church of Christ is itself *no* Baptism at all.

Now *the visible Church of Christ*, as it is well defined in our nineteenth Article, *is a congregation of FAITHFUL MEN, in which THE PURE WORD of God is preached, and in which the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite.*

In this definition, our reformers did not mean to shut out from the character of a true Church

\* In order to admit us into the society of Christians and into all the rights and privileges of the Church, the outward act of Baptism, when regularly gone about, is sufficient. We cannot see into the sincerity of men's hearts: outward professions and regular actions are all that fall under men's observation and judgment. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. XXVII.

Doth the minister with the signs give the things signified also? No: he only dispenseth the signs; but it is God that giveth and dispenseth the things signified. Is God always present to give the thing signified to all them that the minister giveth the sign? No, not to all: for some, in receiving the signs, receive together with them their own judgment. Yet he is always ready to give the thing signified to all those, that are fit to receive the sacraments: and to such persons the signs and things signified are always conjoined. Abp. Usher's Body of Div. p. 385.

every society of Christians, which might have encumbered the pure word of God with unauthorized human ADDITIONS ; for, in that case, small indeed would be the congregation of faithful men : but, if I mistake not, they only excluded from that character those, who subtracted from the pure word by daring heretical CURTAILMENTS. The reason is obvious : in the one case, we still have faithful men or men professing the genuine Faith, and we still have the pure word of God in all its grand essentials ; though unhappily much error and much superstition may have been superinduced : but, in the other case, we have neither faithful men nor the pure word ; for the men have relinquished the Faith once delivered to the saints, and the word by presumptuous mutilation has ceased to be the word of God. If then a person be baptized into a society which holds not the fundamentals of Christianity ; his Baptism is just as invalid, as if he had been baptized into the communion of the Mohammedans. His pretended Baptism is a mere washing of the flesh with water : and, since it has not been administered as God willed and commanded that it should be administered, it were nugatory to believe that it can be accompanied with his blessing.

On these principles, we readily admit the validity of Baptism in the Latin and Greek Churches :

*Faber.* 45

nor do I think, that, according to the sound definition contained in our nineteenth article, we can consistently deny its validity in any orthodox communion of Christians, though the external form of that communion may not be precisely the same as the form of the Church of England. There is indeed, so far as I can judge, most ample warrant from ecclesiastical history for believing, that Episcopacy is not only the most ancient discipline, but that it is even of apostolical institution. Yet, while *thus far* is sufficiently clear, still so to urge its *absolute indispensability*, as to shut out from God's covenant every Christian community which has it not, is a hard saying, which I dare not hazard, and which I cannot receive. Arguments may long be held respecting matters of opinion ; but positive facts are not easily set aside. When therefore we behold such men as a Doddridge and a Swartz, to omit many others similarly circumstanced ; men who belonged not to nor were baptized into an episcopal Church, yet men on whom rested as a pencil of light the regenerative Spirit of the great God : when we behold such men receiving the *substance*, can we rationally deny to them the due and canonical reception of the *symbol* ? To say that these men (and blessed be the God of our fathers, many such are to be found throughout the non-episcopal pro-



testant churches of Christendom), whose fruits proclaim them to have been born again of the Spirit and so to be heirs or possessors of eternal life : to say, that these holy men have never been validly admitted by the outward sign of Baptism into the visible Church of Christ as defined by our godly and learned reformers, is an assertion, which may indeed be lightly thrown out, but which cannot easily be made good.\*

\* This matter is stated very prudently and judiciously by Bp. Burnet.

It would seem reasonable by the method of all creeds, in particular of that called the Apostles' Creed, that we ought first to settle our faith as to the great points of the Christian religion, and from thence go to settle the notion of a true Church : and that we ought not to begin with the notion of a Church, and from thence go to the doctrine. The doctrine of Christianity must be first stated, and from this we are to take our measure of all Churches ; and that chiefly with respect to that doctrine, which every Christian is bound to believe. Here a distinction is to be made between those capital and fundamental articles, without which a man cannot be esteemed a true Christian, nor a Church a true Church ; and other truths, which being delivered in Scripture, all men are indeed obliged to believe them, yet they are not of that nature, that the ignorance of them or an error in them can exclude from salvation.

The covenant of grace, the terms of salvation, and the grounds on which we expect it, seem to be things of another nature than all other truths ; which, though revealed, are not of themselves the means or conditions of salvation. Wheresoever true Baptism is, there it seems the essentials of this covenant are preserved : for, if we look on Baptism as a fede-

III. The manifest identity of Circumcision and Baptism, even to say nothing of the universal practice of the Church in all ages, seems abundantly to determine the question of infant Baptism.

As Circumcision under the Law is the avowed symbol of Regeneration, and as Baptism under the Gospel is likewise the avowed symbol of Regeneration; Circumcision and Baptism are evidently two outward sacramental signs of exactly the same import. But, if they be signs of the same spiritual grace, they must to all effective purposes be mutually the same with each other: for, a sign being altogether arbitrary, if it had pleased God to shadow out Regeneration by a hundred different signs, all those hundred signs would still constitute but a single sacrament.

ral admission into Christianity, there can be no Baptism where the essence of Christianity is not preserved. As far then as we believe that any society has preserved that, so far we are bound to receive her Baptism, and no further—

From hence it will follow, that all, who have a true Baptism that makes men believers and Christians, must also have the true Faith as to the essentials of Christianity; the fundamentals of Christianity seem to be all, that is necessary to make Baptism true and valid—When we acknowledge that any society is a true Church, we ought to be supposed to mean no other, than that the covenant of grace in its essential constituent parts is preserved entire in that body; and not that it is true in all its doctrines and decisions. Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. xix.

Such then being the case, as *God* judged mere children under the Law to be fully capable of entering into covenant with him by Circumcision on the eighth day, *man* can have no right to pronounce mere children under the Gospel incapable of entering into covenant with him by Baptism. Every argument against infant Baptism, derived from the necessary want of active Faith on the part of children, will be equally cogent against infant Circumcision: for Faith was so much the grand principle of the Law as well as of the Gospel, that the pious patriarch of the Israelites is specially decorated with the title of *the father of the faithful*. But God has decided the question in the matter of Circumcision. Therefore, Circumcision being effectively the same as Baptism, he has equally decided it in the matter of Baptism. Hence, in every age and in every country, with the sole exception of a modern innovating sect, Pedobaptism has invariably been adopted: and hence the Church of England well determines, that *the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ*.\*

IV. The efficacious administration of Baptism doubtless consists in the administering of it pre-

\* Art. xxvii.

cisely according to the direction of Christ: that is to say, the officiating minister is to wash with water the person who is brought to receive the sacrament, pronouncing at the same time the formula enjoined by our Lord; *I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.* Nothing beyond this is necessary to constitute a valid Baptism.

1. Yet, while the Church presumes not to baptize after any other formula, she is at full liberty to *add* to it whatever she may rationally judge conducive to edification; agreeably to the apostolic precept, *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

On this ground, while she has immemorially called upon the assembled congregation to beseech God, in a suitable form of prayer, that the child may lead the rest of his life according to the tenor of his baptismal initiation: well knowing, that we are not to expect an end without the use of adequate means, and that the parents of a child have not always either the ability or the inclination to see that it be virtuously brought up and instructed; from a laudable wish to make assurance doubly sure, she has wisely ordained, that every baptized infant shall have certain sponsors or sureties distinct from his natural parents, who shall both take upon them in his behalf the federal vows of a Christian, and shall

engage to see that he is duly instituted in the Mysteries of the Gospel if his own father and mother should wickedly neglect their duty.

The custom, like the rite of Baptism itself, was borrowed from the Jews: for, since our Lord did not disdain to adopt the rite into his own dispensation, the primitive Church might well feel herself fully warranted still to associate with that rite its ancient and usual concomitant.\* At all events, nothing can be more judicious and better conceived than such a regulation; the Church thus requiring and obtaining a two-fold assurance, that the baptized child shall not grow up in the state of an unbaptized heathen.

Nor is aught detracted from the wisdom and piety of the regulation, by the too frequent considering of it as a mere empty form. If sponsors pledge themselves to an office, which in the event of parental negligence, they have not the least intention of fulfilling; the fault rests at *their* door, not at that of the Church. She, like a faithful and provident mother, has at least done *her* part: nor is she to be blamed, because the sponsors have not performed *their* part. If *they* have neglected a purely voluntary engage-

\* Wheatley on the Common Prayer. chap. vii. sect. 1. p. 314. Oxon.

ment, let *them* see to it: the Church is clear in this matter.

2. But, that souls may not perish for lack of knowledge and through the criminal negligence of parents or sponsors, the Church, still rationally looking for no effects save in the diligent use of suitable means, enjoins, that her appointed ministers shall regularly instruct children after Baptism, as they attain to a fit age, in all the doctrines and duties of Christianity; that so they be not through gross ignorance rendered physically incapable of deriving benefit from the gracious aspirations of God's most Holy Spirit.

For this purpose the Church of England, after the example of the primitive Church, has provided an excellent catechetical compendium: and, if this, agreeably to her express injunction, be duly explained to children in a manner suitable to their comprehensions, and if both by the clergy and the parents the blessing of God be devoutly invoked upon these instrumental means of grace; we may then rest in a well-founded hope, that, where any baptized person (to adopt the sound words of Bp. Burnet) *has been wanting in the inward acts of spiritual Regeneration, those may be afterwards renewed and that want may be made up by repentance.\**

\* Bp. Burnet on the xxxix Art. Art. xxvii.

At any rate, whatever may be the final and inscrutable purpose of the Most High, though the utmost diligence and faithfulness in the use of means will unhappily not always produce the desired effect ; still let parents and sponsors and pastors severally exert themselves in their respective spheres of action, and they may then rest fully assured that to *them* in the sight of God no blame will attach itself. They will have delivered their own souls, though their precious seed may have been scattered in a barren and dry land, and though they may have to lament in too many instances that the figurative Circumcision of their youthful charge has in adult age evinced itself to be mere Uncircumcision.

## SERMON X.

### THE PREDESTINARIAN CONTROVERSY.

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1 THESSAL. V. 21.

*Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.*

AT the time of the Reformation from Popery, one great point insisted on by the godly men who conducted it was the right of private judgment possessed by all Christians. They determined, that the Bible, and the Bible alone, contained the religion of Protestants : and, as they found our Lord himself directing men to search the Scriptures in quest of divine truth, as they observed the Bereans commended because they searched the Scriptures daily whether the things taught even by the Apostles were so, and as they perceived that the Thessalonians were enjoined to prove all things in order that thus by a judicious selection they might hold fast that which is



good;\* they naturally concluded, that, in every grand essential, the book would be so plain, that he might run who readeth. They were aware indeed that it contained various matters, the full elucidation of which might require a considerable degree of learning: but, in all points necessary to be understood and believed by Christian men, they beheld it setting forth propositions in themselves so plain and so perfectly intelligible, that these scarcely could be misapprehended except by wilful perverseness.

Thus, whatever mystery there may be in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in the atonement effected by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in the necessity of a belief in him with a view to salvation, and in a taint of original corruption derived from our first parents: whatever mystery there may be in all these as *facts*, there is no difficulty whatsoever in understanding them as naked *propositions*. Hence, while the catholic Church adopts them as articles of Faith, she need not fear exhorting the plainest Christian to search the Scriptures whether these things be so indeed. Much as we require spiritual illumination to enable us to *comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which pas-*

\* John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. 1 Thess. v. 21.

*seth knowledge* :\* still, to understand the sense conveyed in any mere proposition of *any* writer whether inspired or uninspired, nothing is wanted beyond a sound intellect and an honest heart. For instance, *He that believeth not shall be damned* is a proposition, of which the most illiterate peasant cannot mistake the import : though the suspending of man's final salvation upon Faith in a Redeemer is a mystery, into which the very angels desire to look.

In reality, wherever spiritual illumination is needed, it is needed just as much by the learned as by the unlearned. We are not told, that *the IGNORANT man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, while the LITERATE man *does* receive them : but we are told, that *the NATURAL man*, whether ignorant or literate, *receiveth them not* ; and the reason assigned is, that *they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned*.† With respect to the mere naked setting forth of these things of God, it is not that *that* is unintelligible either to the one or to the other. *This* they understand fully, so far as the bare propositions themselves are concerned ; otherwise, it is obvious that they could pass no judgment upon them, which they manifestly do by pronouncing

\* Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

† 1 Corin. ii. 14.

them to be foolishness : but the purpose, for which they *equally* need the teaching of the Blessed Spirit, is this ; that, understanding by the ordinary exertion of their intellect the grammatical meaning of such propositions, they may be further led to receive them cordially, to build upon them all their best hopes, and to view them (as they are indeed) *the wisdom of God in a mystery*. In both these particulars then, the learned and the unlearned stand exactly on the same footing : they are equally *able* to understand the purport of the naked propositions themselves, and they are equally *unable* to receive them as saving truths without the gracious illumination of God's Holy Spirit. If indeed it were otherwise, the Gospel would be deprived of its grand characteristic, that it should be preached to the poor : for, supposing it to contain only a string of propositions couched in such abstruse metaphysical language that they could not comprehend the meaning of a single syllable, it is perfectly clear, that, in the very nature of things, they never could be one jot the wiser for what they heard. But of this the very reverse is the case. The Bible does indeed treat of the deep things of God : but those deep things are set forth in *terms*, which cannot be misapprehended by the meanest capacity, though the *things* themselves must ever remain mysteries

to the wisest among us just as much as to the most ignorant.

Exactly on the same principle, as the *terms* are intelligible; so any plain unlettered man may distinctly see and judge for himself, whether the Bible does not contain certain *propositions* exhibited in perfectly intelligible *terms*. A vast and cumbrous mass of superstition may no doubt be added by human contrivance and for human purposes; but the scriptural propositions still remain unaltered. Our reformers therefore did wisely, in making the Bible the only standard of truth; and, as it was written for popular comprehension, in claiming a right for every Christian to examine its contents agreeably to the rule of plain common sense and according to the grammatical principles on which we should examine any other book. Now any other book might set forth a *thing* hard to be comprehended, in *terms* perfectly clear and perspicuous; so that, whether we chose to admit the *thing* or not, we should be in no danger of misapprehending the *terms*: thus, if you informed a peasant from a work on mathematics that two lines might for ever be approaching to each other and yet never meet, he would fully understand the *terms* in which the thing was declared, though he would not at all understand the *thing* itself. Precisely in the same manner, the Bible may very un-

ambiguously ascribe the divine titles and attributes to our Lord Jesus Christ, for instance; and the most ordinary day-labourer will find no difficulty in comprehending what his Saviour means, when he asserts of himself, *I am the beginning and the ending, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.*\* Yet, though he will find no difficulty in understanding the *terms* of this assertion: he will still be utterly unable to form any distinct conception within himself of the *doctrine* conveyed by those terms; he will still be profoundly ignorant as to the *mode*, in which Christ can be almighty and eternal and yet a *different* person from the Father and the Spirit, while his Bible positively assures him that there is but *one* God. In this difficulty however he finds himself placed, not because he is UNLETTERED, but because he is A FINITE CREATURE. If he possessed all the learning in the world, he would still be placed in the very same difficulty; he would still find himself as far removed as ever from a comprehension of the mystery. His acquired learning would not enable him to understand the *terms* of the proposition at all more clearly than he does at present: neither would it enable him to comprehend the *doctrine* set forth in that proposition a

\* Rev. i. 8, 11, 17, 18.

whit more distinctly than he did in his state of ignorance. The lettered and the unlettered here find themselves on a footing of perfect equality. They can alike understand the *terms*; because for *that* nothing more is required, than plain common sense and a competent knowledge of their mother tongue: they are alike unable to comprehend the *doctrine*; because *that* relates to the essence of an infinite God, while *they* are *both* finite creatures.

Such being the nature of Scripture, it will be found of sovereign use in determining the truth or falsehood of any proposition, to which we may be brought by a train of abstract reasoning from a particular text. It may perhaps be no easy matter to detect a flaw in the reasoning itself: step may seem to follow step with irrefragable necessity: and we may appear, so far as metaphysical induction is concerned, absolutely compelled to adopt a very unexpected system of theology. But here we find the infinite value of those plain *terms*, in which every scriptural proposition is declared. We must bring our imagined invincible conclusions to the law and to the testimony: we must prove all things by the express word of God: we must search the Scriptures to learn, whether these matters be so indeed. If *they* contradict our conclusions; we may be sure that there is some error in our rea-

soning, though we may not be able to point out the precise link in the chain where it can be pronounced to lurk. To frame compact systems, with much apparent plausibility, is no very difficult matter; and we may amuse ourselves with observing the fruitless efforts of an adversary to invalidate any particular proposition, without at the same time invalidating the mother text whence that proposition is regularly and scientifically deduced: but the only mode in which we can attain to the truth, is to resort directly to Scripture; the only mode, in which we can hope to *hold fast that which is good*, is to bring every distinct proposition and conclusion to the unerring test of God's word. By such a process, our religious system may lose much of its metaphysical concinnity: but, what it loses in concinnity and rotundity, it will gain in truth and solidity. Man has ever delighted in systematic compactness: and this passion, which springs in reality from an overweening opinion of his own reasoning powers, holy Scripture is admirably calculated to mortify.

I. In every controversy much useless altercation might be avoided, were all extraneous matter carefully separated from those points, concerning which the controversy is agitated.

Thus, in the dispute between the Calvinists and the Armenians, no doctrines ought to be

termed *Calvinistic*, but those which belong *exclusively* to Calvinism. The orthodox tenets of *Original Sin, Human Insufficiency, Justification by the sole merits of Christ*, and certain others which might easily be mentioned, are no more *peculiar* to that system, than the doctrine of *the Trinity*: and yet many Calvinists are wont to claim them as entirely their own;\* and some Arminians have shewn themselves either very ignorant or very unguarded, in styling all men who hold them *Calvinists*. As for the Church of England, she has explicitly declared her assent to them: but it does not therefore follow, as the more intemperate among the Calvinists would persuade us, either that she requires us to subscribe to every peculiarity of Calvinism properly so called; or that all those, who hold with the Church the doctrines of *Original Sin, Human Insufficiency*, and *Justification by the sole merits of Christ*, must, by a necessary consequence, hold likewise the tenets of *Particular Redemption*,

\* This is strongly implied in the title of a very useful work by Mr. Fuller; *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and compared*; and it more or less appears in the conducting of the whole argument. The title would seem to insinuate, that *Calvinism* stood specially opposed to Socinianism; an implied claim, which I need scarcely observe can by no means be allowed.



*Reprobation*, and *Election* according to the Calvinistic interpretation of the word.\*

II. In justification of their respective opinions, both Calvinists and Arminians of course appeal to Scripture : but it is one thing to cite a text, and another to give a consistent exposition of it. In all ages of the Church, nothing has so much injured the cause of truth, as an extravagant and bigoted adherence to system and party, combined with the pride of never giving up an opinion which has once been advanced. Prejudice in favour of any particular system blinds the eyes of the understanding : party-spirit produces at once extreme rashness and determined pertinacity : and the stubborn pride of human nature has afterwards no inconsiderable share in perpetuating those controversies, to which a love of system originally gave birth. What a man has once asserted, he is ashamed and unwilling to retract : he fears the laugh of the world and the reproaches of his own party : and he will often

\* Our articles affirm certain things, which we hold *in common* with the Calvinists, says the late Bp. Horsley : so they affirm certain things, which we hold *in common* with the Lutherans ; and some things, which we hold *in common* with the Romanists. It cannot well be otherwise : for, as there are certain principles which are *common* to all Protestants, so the essential articles of faith are *common* to all Christians. Bp. Horsley's Remarks on Priestley's second Letter. p. 73.

have recourse to the most disingenuous sophisms, rather than honestly confess himself to have been mistaken. These sophisms, being very easily detected, are sometimes exposed with rather too much sarcastic triumph: whence a certain irritation of mind is produced, which usually vents itself in seizing the earliest opportunity of making reprisals. The more severely each party is treated, the more it becomes wedded to its own peculiarities: and, instead of endeavouring to heal the breaches in the Church, it strives to recede as far as possible from the ground occupied by its adversary.

With regard to the Calvinistic controversy, a sober inquirer may possibly be disposed to think, that the fault of the violent (I speak *only* of the violent) on each side of the question is this: they are alike unwilling to take the Bible as they find it; and they are alike anxious to deduce a chain of *their own* conclusions from premises, which *themselves* are undoubtedly *scriptural*. These two different sets of conclusions, when worked up into two opposite systems, are respectively adopted as the creeds of the two parties: and each is resolutely defended by its favourers, as the unadulterated Gospel of Christ, and as the most infallible test of true churchmanship. The consequence is, the violent of one party run away with one half of the Bible, and the violent

of the other party with the other half; both equally striving either to bend or to break those texts, which do not agree with their preconceived opinions.

Thus the system-loving Calvinist will very logically prove, or at least he will *seem* to prove, that man is entirely passive in the work of salvation; in other words, that he is a mere machine in the hands of that God, who imparts his grace only to those whom he has purposed to save: while the similarly system-loving Arminian, if he push his principles to their utmost extent, after he has, to all appearance, no less logically demonstrated from Scripture, that man is perfectly a free agent; will not easily avoid demonstrating also, that he is able by his own unassisted strength to perform the commandments of God. Each of these diametrically opposite positions may, with a great shew of fairness and impartiality, be easily maintained by arguments drawn from *insulated* texts; and it may perhaps be a difficult matter to point out the precise link in the chain of reasoning, where the fallacy lies: yet, if Scripture be attended to *as a whole*, we shall find something true and something false in each of them. *Work out*, says an inspired teacher, *your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God, which worketh in you both*

*to will and to do, of his good pleasure.\** Here a part is evidently assigned to man, and a part to God. When our Lord commanded the person with a withered arm to stretch it forth, he might have refused on the plea of physical inability : but he made the effort with faith ; and, in making it, he received that strength which he did not possess before. The command of God is absolute to all men : *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* If we obey the command, as the cripple did the injunction of Christ, God assuredly will not be deficient on his part, in *working in us both to will and to do* : but, if we disobey it, then, in the same manner as our Lord on one occasion was not able (that is, consistently with the plan laid down by Divine Wisdom) to work many miracles because of men's unbelief ; † so neither can God, consistently with his scheme of moral government, reduce us to a state of mere machines, and compel us by an act of irresistible violence to enter into the kingdom of heaven. ‡

\* Philip. ii. 12, 13.

† Mark vi. 5, 6.

‡ Much confusion and much controversial anger seems to me to have not unfrequently arisen from a want of accurately distinguishing between *moral free-will* and *natural free-will*. We certainly have it not in our power, without special assistance from above, to obey a commandment, which enjoins us to *love* what our corrupt hearts from the very circumstance of

III. As this single instance may not be deemed sufficient to point out the fallaciousness and danger of constructing systems and of imposing them as necessary articles of doctrine ; I shall exhibit the two chains of reasoning, by which high Calvinism and high Arminianism may alike, to all *appearance* at least, be respectively demonstrated from holy Scripture itself.

1. Let us begin with the former of these contending theories.

God is an absolute sovereign, and has an undoubted right to deal with his creatures in whatsoever manner seems best to his regal will and pleasure : while every man, born into this world, is, by reason of that original corruption which he derives from his first parents, in a state of spiritual death or moral inability. These two positions are clearly established by the following texts. In proof the first, we may adduce this explicit declaration of St. Paul. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God*

their corruption bitterly *hate* : here then we have a defect in *moral free-will*, which can only be remedied by divine grace, and which *without* divine grace never *will* be remedied. But we assuredly have it in our own direct power to obey a commandment, which either enjoins us to ask assistance from God, or which forbids us to commit murder ; for it is mere contemptible quibbling to go about to prove, that obedience is not in our own power in *these* particulars : here then we labour under no defect of *natural free-will*.

*that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault ; for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?\** In proof of the second, we have another equally explicit declaration of the same apostle. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.†*

From these leading texts and from others of a similar description, which represent God as an absolute sovereign and man as being spiritually dead, the Calvinists with much seeming cogency deduce their system.

(1.) If any man be dead in trespasses and sins ; then his *condition after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by*

\* Rom. ix. 16, 18—23.

† Ephes. ii. 1.

*his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God :\** and, if God be an absolute sovereign ; he has both the right and the power to quicken those whom he thinks fit, and to leave those whom he thinks fit in a state of spiritual death.

(2.) But, if man be unable to turn *himself* to faith and calling upon God, his turning must depend upon some *extrinsic* force ; without which he would no more move in the spiritual world, than a dead body would move in the natural world. Now this extrinsic moving force is God : for it is written, *You hath HE quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins ; and It is GOD, which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*†

(3.) But, if extrinsic force be necessary to turn a spiritually dead soul to holiness, and if that extrinsic force be God : then every person, who is so turned to holiness, must have been so turned by God ; and, if any person be *not* so turned, the reason must be, that the extrinsic force of God has not been applied to him. For, as no spiritually dead soul can turn *without* that extrinsic dead force ; and as every spiritually dead soul to which it *is* applied inevitably *must* turn (because the very first operation of that

\* Art. x.

† Ephes. ii. 1. Philip. ii. 13.

force is to incline the WILL ; and to say, that a man REFUSES to turn, when he WILLS to turn, is a self-evident contradiction) : all, that do *not* turn, can never have experienced the application of that extrinsic force ; and all, that *do* turn, must, from the very circumstance of their turning, *have* experienced its application.

(4.) Now, so far as matter of fact is concerned, we find some men turned to holiness, and others not turned to holiness. But no man can turn *himself* ; and every man, who is acted upon by the extrinsic force of God must turn. Therefore every holy man *has* been acted upon by the extrinsic force of God : and every unholy man *has not* been so acted upon.

(5.) But, if the extrinsic force of God has acted upon *some*, while it has not acted upon *others* : then God must have chosen *some* as the subjects of his extrinsic operation, while *others* he has *not* chosen as the subjects of the same operation.

(6.) His choice however of these *some* manifestly *preceded* their turning to holiness : because they turned to holiness *in consequence* of God's extrinsic operation upon them extrinsically *in consequence* of his having chosen them as subjects of such operation while others he did *not* similarly choose. Hence it follows, that their holiness was the consequence of God's choice of them ; not God's choice of them, the conse-



quence of their holiness : in other words, God's choice was the first operating cause of their holiness ; not their holiness, the first operating cause of God's choice.

(7.) Such being the case, there was no moving cause in the subjects themselves, why some *should* be chosen to experience God's extrinsic force, and why others should *not* be chosen to experience it : for by nature they were all equally *dead in trespasses and sins*, and therefore no one of them could have a better claim than another to the beneficial operation of God's extrinsic force.

(8.) But, if there was no moving cause in the subjects themselves : then all, who were chosen, must have been chosen from God's mere will and from the sole arbitrary exercise of his sovereign pleasure ; and all, who were not chosen, must have been passed over exactly on the same ground.

(9.) If however this be the case, all the holy are holy in consequence of God's sovereign election ; and all the unholy remain unholy in consequence of God's sovereign preterition. For, had God been pleased to operate upon the latter in the same manner as he has operated upon the former, the consequence must necessarily have been the same. But the unholy remain unholy ; and it is an established point, that

they cannot turn *themselves* to holiness. Therefore the very circumstance of their remaining unholy is a proof, that God's extrinsic force has never been applied to them : because, *had* it been so applied, they would have ceased to be unholy.

(10.) But, if the holy are holy in consequence of God's sovereign election, and if the unholy remain unholy in consequence of God's sovereign preterition : then all those, who have been quickened out of the mass of the spiritually dead, have been arbitrarily elected or chosen out of that mass ; and all those who have *not* been thus quickened and who therefore have not been thus elected, must necessarily have been passed over or reprobated.\* Hence, though holiness and unholiness are to *us* the only decisive marks of election and reprobation ; yet holiness is neither the *cause* of election, nor is unholiness the *cause* of reprobation ; for permanent holiness and permanent unholiness are severally the *consequences* of election and reprobation, while election and reprobation themselves depend not upon the merit or demerit of

\* I say *passed over*, or *reprobated* ; for, however modern Calvinists may labour to distinguish between the two terms, Calvin himself could see no real difference. *Quos Deus præterit, reprobat.*

the subjects but upon the mere unrestrained exercise of God's absolute sovereignty.

(11.) If then a certain number out of the mass of the spiritually dead have been elected to holiness, and if a certain number out of the same mass have been reprobatively left in necessary unholiness : they must have been so elected and so left for some determinate ends and purposes, because God never acts in vain.

(12.) But we know, that holiness is the necessary requisite for eternal happiness, and that unholiness is a sure preparation for eternal misery. Hence the determinate purposes of election and reprobation must be eternal happiness and eternal unhappiness.

(13.) If these, however, be their determined purposes ; then the elect must persevere in holiness to the end, and the reprobate in unholiness likewise to the end ; otherwise, the elect would not be the elect, and the reprobate would not be the reprobate.

(14.) From the doctrine therefore of *election and reprobation*, necessarily flows the doctrine of *the final perseverance of the elect in holiness* notwithstanding their occasional lapses, and of *the final perseverance of the reprobate in unholiness* notwithstanding their occasional purposes of amendment.

(15.) But, if God, by leaving a certain number of persons in unavoidable unholiness, has thus predestined them to everlasting damnation; then Christ, who is God as well as man and who consequently shares in all the divine purposes, can have died only to redeem the elect: inasmuch as God does nothing in vain, and inasmuch as it were nugatory in Christ to have shed his blood for those who were already condemned by an eternal and irreversible decree. The doctrine therefore of *particular redemption*, like that of *final perseverance*, is inevitably deduced from the doctrine of *election and reprobation*.

2. Thus reasons the Calvinist from premises, which are doubtless incontrovertible: let us next hear the Arminian.

Persons of his school commonly argue from some such text as the following. *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?\**

From these premises the ensuing train of conclusions is, with much apparent fairness, very logically deduced.

\* Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

(1.) If all men in general, without any exception of certain reprobated particulars, be exhorted to turn themselves from their transgressions and to make them a new heart and a new spirit : the necessary inference is, that all men are able to do this ; for it were plainly nugatory to exhort them to that, which they are physically incapable of performing.

(2.) But, if all men are able to do this : then all men are placed by the Divinity upon an exactly equal footing, so far as respects the moral possibility of their final salvation. Nor is the cogency of the argument in the least affected by the subordinate question, whether every man be created with an inherent power of turning himself to righteousness, or whether every man receive this power by a subsequent communication. For the real jut of the matter depends, not upon *the time when* such power was received, but upon *the universality* of its reception. Now a *general* exhortation, without any specification of excluded *particulars*, necessarily implies that the reception of this power has been *universal*.

(3.) If however the power has been *universally* received, and if *all* men consequently have been placed by the Divinity on an equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation : then no such transactions can ever have taken place, as

those, which, in their own sense of the words, the Calvinists style *election* and *reprobation*. For it is plain, that, upon the predestinarian scheme, all men are *not* placed on an equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation: some, through the medium of holiness, being elected to it from all eternity; and others, through the medium of unholiness which they are left without power of correcting, being alike from all eternity necessarily shut out from the attainment of it.

(4.) But, if no such transactions as election and reprobation ever took place; then neither can there be any truth in the doctrines of *final perseverance* and *particular redemption*.

(5.) The result therefore of the whole is, that, all men being placed exactly upon the same footing as to the power of turning to righteousness and thence as to the moral possibility of salvation; all men, as necessarily implied by the very terms of a *general* exhortation, enjoy a perfect freedom of will. Hence, when life and death, blessing and cursing, are set before them; they are completely at liberty to choose either the one or the other. So that their final happiness or misery depends not upon any arbitrary election or preterition in the divine counsels, but solely upon their own voluntary choice and the line of conduct adopted in consequence of such a choice.

IV. I have now exhibited a Calvinist and an Arminian, each arguing from indisputable scriptural premises in favour of their respective systems: and I have exhibited them, as reasoning fairly so far as regards their mutual theories.

The vulgar abuse and grossly ignorant misrepresentations of Calvinism, which have disgraced some controversial writings, are absolutely beneath criticism. Hence I represent a *candid* Arminian, as disdaining to resort to such unseemly and dishonest practices; and a *well-informed* Arminian, as distinctly perceiving the perfectly hopeless inutility of this expedient. He does not therefore charge his adversary with aiding and abetting *immorality*; on the stale plea, that, according to the Calvinistic system, it matters not how men live: for, let the elect be ever so wicked, they must inevitably be saved; and, let the reprobate be ever so pious, they must inevitably be damned. With this, the *honest* Arminian charges not his adversary: because he knows full well, that his adversary teaches no such monstrous impiety; because he knows full well, that genuine Calvinism maintains, all God's people to be elected to salvation *only* through the medium of holiness, and all the children of the evil one to be predestined to damnation *only* through the medium of unholiness. Neither does he harangue upon an im-

aginary ascription of *injustice* to God by the leading principles of the Calvinistic theory : because he is perfectly aware, that no case of *injustice* can possibly be made out even on the most completely developed principles of that theory, except by the previous denegation of man's original sinfulness ; because he perceives, that, if *all* men be acknowledged to *deserve* punishment from their very birth, no act of *injustice* could be ascribed to God, on the ground of his extending to *some* rebels by an exertion of his sovereign pleasure that mercy which he denies to *others*.\*

\* Precisely such, as it is well remarked by Bp. Horsley, is the hypothetical reasoning of the great apostle of the Gentiles. *St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, represents the degeneracy of mankind as so great in consequence of the fall ; that, if God had been pleased to make an arbitrary selection of certain persons to be admitted to mercy upon their repentance, and had consigned the rest of the race to the natural punishment of their guilt, the proceeding could not have been taxed either with cruelty or injustice.* Bp. Horsley's Serm. vol. iv. p. 291, 292. I see not, how any one can deny the conclusions of this argument, unless he first deny the premises ; namely, that the degeneracy of mankind in consequence of the fall is such as to *DESERVE* punishment. But, if he deny this, he will alike contradict Holy Scripture and the ninth Article of our Church, which from Scripture expressly teaches the doctrine. *Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk : but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far (quam longissi-*



With such arguments as these, if arguments they can be called, the wise and sober Arminian meddles not : neither does the judicious and temperate Calvinist ever dream of charging his opponent with a Pelagian denegation of the need of divine grace, because he contends for the *universal* communication of that grace. On the contrary, they each seek to establish their own system by what they esteem legitimate deductions from holy Scripture itself.

V. How then, with their respective theories before us, are we to determine upon the truth or falsehood of either ? How are we to make our selection between the jarring systems ; since each is so regularly derived step by step from incontrovertible premises, that it may perhaps be impossible to point out a single unfair deduction ?

That there is a fallacy *somewhere*, is perfectly evident from the complete difference of the results : for, even setting Scripture out of the

*me, as the Latin original is more strongly expressed) gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil ; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. And therefore, in EVERY person born into this world, it DESERVETH God's WRATH and DAMNATION. If then it DESERVE God's wrath and damnation, where is the injustice of INFLICTING such a punishment ? We plainly cannot maintain THE INJUSTICE, without previously denying THE DESERT,*

question, it is manifest that *both* these claims of abstract reasoning cannot lead to the truth ; because they lead to diametrically opposite conclusions. We may reasonably therefore suspect them *both* : and our suspicion, that we can build very little upon the most plausible abstract reasoning for the purpose of establishing around theological system, will probably be much heightened, if we push each train to its utmost limits and observe the conclusions at which we shall ultimately arrive. I am perfectly aware, that to these conclusions neither Calvinists nor Arminians will subscribe. But what then ? If we *must* have our faith settled by abstract reasoning, who is to point out the *precise* place beyond which that reasoning is not to be extended ? What right has the systematic Calvinist to stop at any *particular* link in the *one* chain : and what right has the systematic Arminian to stop at any *particular* link in the *other* chain ? If systems *must* be constructed, it is hard to say, why the conclusions *after* these links are not respectively as valid as the conclusions *before* them.

1. Let us begin with observing the conclusions, to which Calvinism brings us, when that system is pushed to its utmost limits.

We have seen it regularly conduct us to the theory, that, out of the spiritually dead mass of

the human species, God elects a certain number to holiness and thence consecutively to eternal happiness ; while he reprobates or passes over another certain number, who thence by the defect of their nature inevitably remain in their sins, and so are at length necessarily consigned to eternal misery. Let us now consider, whether this theory will lead us : for, as I have just observed, a metaphysical Calvinist has no right to demand, that we should stop at that precise link in the chain of abstract reasoning, which may best suit his own favourite system.

(1.) If God elects some to holiness, while he suffers others to remain under an invincible necessity of sinning : then, by a circle of consequences, God is effectively made the author of sin.

(2.) For, if men are impelled to sin by a fatal tendency of their nature which they themselves are wholly unable to correct, and if God be equally able to correct that tendency in *all* as well as in *some* ; his correction of it in *some* only and not in *all* must be the result either of his own sovereign will or of the merit and demerit of the parties concerned.

(3.) It is not however the result of the merit and demerit of the parties concerned ; for both the elect and the reprobate are by nature *equally* dead in sin, and therefore *equally* unwor-

thy of God's distinguishing favour : hence it can only be the result of God's own sovereign will.

(4.) But, if the leaving certain men under an invincible necessity of sinning be the result of God's own sovereign will : then it must be the will of God, that they *should* sin. For, if by a single act of his almighty power he could remove the fatal tendency to sin in the reprobate just as easily as in the elect, if however he do *not* remove it, and if the sole moving cause of his making such a difference between the parties be his own sovereign will : it is impossible to avoid the inference, that, as he wills holiness in the elect, so he wills unholiness in the reprobate.

(5.) If then he wills unholiness in the reprobate ; he becomes, by a circle of consequences, the author of evil.

Such is the first conclusion, to which we are step by step conducted : let us next mark the second.

(1.) All men being by nature alike dead in trespasses and sins, and no one being able by any inherent strength of his own to raise himself up from this spiritual death ; the reprobate, whom God by his sovereign will suffers to remain dead in their sins, cannot avoid thus remaining dead in them : that is to say, it is out of their power to cease committing sin.

(2.) But, if it be out of their power to cease committing sin ; then a tendency to commit sin is just as essential a part of their nature, as gravitation is of the nature of material substance, heat of the nature of fire, and moisture of the nature of water.

(3.) If however a tendency to commit sin be thus an essential part of their nature ; they are no more deserving of blame on that account, than material substance is for gravitating, fire for burning, or water for wetting : because they can no more divest themselves of this tendency, than material substance, fire, or water, can respectively divest themselves of *their* several tendencies.

(4.) But, if they be no way deserving of blame on account of their tendency to sin, then neither are the elect deserving of praise on account of their tendency to virtue : for a tendency to the one has been made as essentially natural to the latter, as a tendency to the other is by birth essentially natural to the former.

(5.) If then, finally, this be the case ; virtue and vice are mere names, and ought really to be considered in no other light than that of certain irresistible tendencies to particular objects.

I of course mean not to say, that any pious Calvinist would advocate such a farrago of absurd impieties : I am perfectly aware, that he would

reject it with as much abhorrence as the most zealous Arminian. I would only ask, if his system in all its rotundity is to be established by a train of abstract reasoning, what right has he to demand, that another person should not push that train to a greater length than he finds it expedient to do. I will readily confess, that I can detect no fallacy in *his* train of reasoning so far as he carries it: let him try, if *he* can detect any fallacy in that train of supplemental reasoning, which I have deduced from some of his own most prominent conclusions. If therefore I be required to adopt the Calvinistic system, because I am confessedly unable to confute metaphysically the train of abstract reasoning upon which it is built: let the Calvinist, if he be unable to confute metaphysically my supplemental train of reasoning, shew cause, why he should not be equally required to adopt all the conclusions to which it has conducted him.

2. Let us now similarly observe the conclusions, to which Arminianism will bring us, when that system is pushed to its utmost limits.

Its grand conclusion is, that all men are placed upon the same footing with regard to a future life: for all have equally received a sufficiency of power from God to turn from their transgressions and to make them a new heart and a new spirit; and all are equally endowed with that

freedom of will, by which they may choose moral good and reject moral evil, or conversely by which they may choose moral evil and reject moral good.

This seems very specious, when viewed superficially : yet it is hampered with difficulties of no ordinary magnitude. We are apt to talk with much complacency respecting *freedom of will* : but it may be suspected, that we do not always form very clear ideas of what we mean by the term. According to Scripture, whatever will we have towards good is derived immediately from God, our own natural wills tending only towards evil : and this inspired adjudication of the matter has been wisely adopted by the Anglican Church into one of her articles.\* If then a man receive from God *a will towards good*, he of course must *will good* : for to say, that he has received *a will towards good* and yet *wills evil*, is a direct contradiction in terms. And, on the other hand, if a man has *not* received from God a will towards good ; his own will, being naturally inclined only to evil, must doubtless will evil continually. Hence it appears, that, if *all* men are placed upon an exactly equal footing, and if *all* men have alike received from

\* 2 Corinth. iii. 5. Philip. ii. 13. Gen. vi. 5. viii. 21. Psalm li. 5. Prov. xxi. 10. Art. x.

God a will towards good: then *all* men must equally will good; for they cannot have *alike* received a will towards good, and then *some* will good and *others* will evil. So far from this being the case, it is evident, that they, who continually will evil, cannot have received from God a will towards good: because, if they had received such a will towards good, they would necessarily cease to will evil; for it is plainly impossible, that they should will both evil and good at the same time. The Arminian, therefore, is reduced to the following dilemma. He must either acknowledge, that a will towards good is not equally given to all; in which case he at once breaks in upon the compact rotundity of his system: or he must maintain, that all men have a *self-determining* power towards good or evil, according to their own free unbiassed choice. To say any thing respecting the first proposition is manifestly superfluous; for, if it be adopted, the characteristic difference between the Calvinistic and Arminian theories is immediately at an end: let us observe, therefore, whither the second will lead us.

(4.) If all men have a *self-determining* power towards good or evil, so that they can freely by an act of their own volition choose the one and reject the other: then they are able to turn *themselves* from all their transgressions, and to



make for *themselves* a new heart and a new spirit.

(2.) But, if they can do all this *in their own strength* ; then they have no need of any *extrinsic* assistance : for men require assistance in matters wherein they are deficient, not wherein they are sufficient.

(3.) If however they do not require *any* extrinsic assistance ; then neither do they require the assistance of the Holy Spirit, either to turn them from their transgressions or to create in them new hearts. For every man is either *unable* to turn himself by his own natural strength, or else he is *able* to do it. If he be *unable* ; then he does not possess that *self-determining* power towards good or evil which is contended for : because, in *that* case, he *would* be able. If, on the other hand, he be *able* ; then assuredly he has no need of any assistance from the Holy Spirit : for, with reverence be it spoken, even God himself cannot make a man more than able.

(4.) But, if the assistance of the Holy Spirit be thus plainly superfluous ; we cannot reasonably expect to find in Scripture any intimations, that he *will* assist us : for the all-wise God would not offer to his creatures that which is superfluous to them, but that which is necessary.

I no more mean to say, that such are the tenets of a pious Arminian, than that the conclusions which were previously drawn exhibit the sentiments of a pious Calvinist. In each case I have merely wished to shew the opinions, to which the two systems necessarily conduct us if they be pushed to their utmost limits. At least; so far as regular argumentative Arminianism is concerned, if we *must* build our faith upon abstract reasoning, I have brought the matter to a dilemma, which offers only a choice of evils. Hence, on the whole, it seems to me abundantly evident, that mere abstract reasoning from certain undeniable premises, whether employed on the side of Calvinism or Arminianism, however plausible it may appear on the first point of view, is not the method appointed of God for the establishment of solid articles of belief.

VI. It has been asserted, that Calvinism is a machine so constructed, that, a single peg being drawn out, the whole falls to pieces. If this assertion rest upon any solid foundation, it is applicable to *systematic* Arminianism or indeed to any other *system* founded upon only a *partial* survey of Scripture, no less than to *systematic* Calvinism. At the same time I much doubt the safety of applying such a method of arguing to confute the errors of *any* scheme of belief. It is a dangerous instrument; and, while employed,

as it has been, in tearing away the tags and tassels of Calvinism (for the Genevan reformer, as well as the lordly successor of St. Peter, has contributed but too largely to the embellishment of the Christian garment), it may perchance injure the coat itself. One of the pegs of Calvinism, the peg indeed upon which all the others depend, is a text of Scripture: and the same remark may be applied to Arminianism. Now, if the dislocation of *one* peg involve the dislocation of *another*, and if *all* must be thrown aside because *some* have been extracted as manifestly faulty; it will plainly appear by *inverting* the two preceding trains of argument, that the two *last* unsound pegs in each are even two texts of Scripture. So that if *all* must be rejected because *some* prove to be faulty, the inevitable consequence will be, that one half of the Bible must be discarded, because it *apparently* gives countenance to the errors which necessarily flow from high Calvinism; and that the other half must experience the same fate, because *it* in like manner *apparently* gives countenance to the errors which necessarily flow from overstrained Arminianism. Some other method therefore of confuting falsehood must be discovered: and I am acquainted with none more safe and more simple, than that which is built upon the following plain canon:

ADMIT NO CONCLUSION IN ANY SYSTEM TO BE VALID, UNLESS THE CONCLUSION ITSELF, AS WELL AS THE THESIS, FROM WHICH IT IS DEDUCED, BE EXPLICITLY SET FORTH IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

This rule comprizes the substance of the apostolic injunction to *prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.* It is also equivalent to two very wise declarations of the Anglican Church: that, *whatsoever is not read in Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith or be thought necessary to salvation; and that we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be GENERALLY set forth to us in Holy Scripture.\**

In order that the use of our canon may the more evidently appear, let us compare the two preceding chains of abstract reasoning with the Bible: and I trust, that the vanity of building compact theological systems, and the folly of bitterly contending for such mere creatures of fallacious argumentation, will thence be sufficiently manifest.

I. I shall begin with noticing certain links in the Calvinistic chain.

\* Art. vi. and xyiii.

(1.) It is argued, that God imparts to some the power of turning to holiness and of thence attaining to eternal life, while he withholds this power from others and thence necessarily destines them to eternal misery.\*

Now it is impossible to deny, that this conclusion is equivalent to asserting, that God wills the salvation of some and the damnation of others.

But what says the Supreme Being of himself, as if thinking foul scorn of a specious conclusion drawn by erring man? *I have NO PLEASURE in the death of him that dieth.† As I live, I have NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked : but that the wicked should turn from his way, and live.‡* And what does an inspired writer declare respecting the Omnipotent? *The Lord is long-suffering to us ward, NOT WILLING that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance.§*

(2.) If then God has NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked, and if he be NOT WILLING that ANY should perish but that ALL should come to repentance ; how is it possible, that the Calvinistic doctrine of *Election and Reprobation* should be well founded ?||

\* Conclusions (2.), (3.), and (4.) † Ezek. xviii. 32.

‡ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

§ 2 Peter iii. 9.

|| Conclusions (5.)—(12.)

The question, be it observed, does not at all regard *the matter of fact* that some will hereafter be saved and that others will perish: it solely regards *the will or pleasure or mental disposition* of God towards his rational creatures. Now, on the Calvinistic scheme, the Election or Reprobation of these or those rests entirely on the sovereign WILL of God. If therefore such be the case; with what truth can it be said, that God has NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked, and that he WILLETH NOT that ANY should perish but that ALL should come to repentance? The Calvinistic theory exhibits God, as leaving a certain number of men in unavoidable unholiness and thence under the necessary doom of everlasting misery, simply BECAUSE HE WILLS IT OR BECAUSE HE HAS PLEASURE IN THIS ARRANGEMENT: Scripture declares, that he DOES NOT WILL the death of any, and that he has NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked. But these two propositions manifestly stand in direct opposition to each other. Hence it is impossible, that they should BOTH be true.

I am fully aware that a Calvinist will urge, that God indeed has *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked, neither does he *will* that any should perish; but that the bad suffer merely by the immutable laws of a just government, and that God however reluctant (to speak after the man-

ner of men) lies under a moral necessity of inflicting merited punishment.

This is the only answer that can be given: and it is evidently quite wide of the mark. It applies exclusively to a supposed case, that *all may be holy if they choose*, and that *no advantages are given to one rather than to another*. Thus a king may find himself morally compelled to punish a traitorous friend, though he neither wills his death nor has any pleasure in it. But, if that king knew that his friend had a physical propensity to treason, if he possessed the power of completely altering such a propensity, and if merely from his sovereign will and pleasure he did *not* alter it though he foresaw that the uncorrected propensity would inevitably lead to the man's death: in that case, how could it be said with truth, that the king indeed neither willed nor had pleasure in the man's death, but that with much reluctance and heart-felt grief he found himself morally compelled to suffer the laws to take their course? Now it is precisely under such an aspect, that the Calvinistic doctrine of *Reprobation or Preterition* represents the Supreme Being. Any one therefore may perceive at a single glance, that the attempted answer is perfectly irrelevant to a case of this description. If God from all eternity has doomed a person to destruction by the mere act of his

sovereign WILL: it is a palpable contradiction to say, that he DOES NOT WILL his destruction neither has any pleasure in it, but that he lies with whatever reluctance under a moral necessity of inflicting punishment. The answer in no respect meets the alleged case.

With regard to the much agitated doctrine of *Election*, it is far more easy to cite texts wherein the term is contained, than to ascertain the precise import of that term: yet, till this be done, no opinion, either Calvinistic or Arminian, can be reasonably and decisively established as truth. It is perhaps impossible, with such limited faculties as ours, exactly to draw the line between *Divine Prescience* and *Divine Decrees*. We find it difficult to conceive, how God *foresees* a matter, unless that matter *necessarily* come to pass: yet there are various instances, in which he can scarcely be said to have *fated* the actors, though he *foresaw* the act. The conduct of the Roman soldiers, during the crucifixion, is a case in point: and indeed every instance of an accomplished prophecy might be similarly adduced. I doubt, whether it be safe to define *the elect* or *the predestinate* in any other manner, than *the really or apparently pious*. Thus St. Peter addresses the Church at large as a congregation of *elect* persons, though contain-



ing many unworthy members:\* and thus, on the other hand, St. Paul shews us the primary and (if I may use the expression) *esoterical* meaning of the word *predestinate*, by confining it to the *really* pious, whether Jews or Gentiles; because he describes the persons, whom he terms *predestinate*, as loving God here and as being finally glorified hereafter.† The Church of England, not daring to be wise above what is written, has closely copied Scripture in the use which she makes of the terms *elect* and *predestinate*. Thus *every* catechumen is taught to believe *in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth him and all the elect people of God*; and thus the officiating minister is directed to pray, that *every* child about to be baptized *may remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children*: while, on the other hand, the seventeenth Article describes indeed none but the truly pious; yet, however, it may *appear* to lean to the predestinarian theory, on a more close examination it will be found to describe them so reverently and cautiously in almost the very words of Scripture, guarding against all abuse and misapprehension of the doctrine, and anxiously warning us to receive God's promises and to perform God's will *only* as declared in his word, that no

\* 1 Peter v. 13.

† Rom. viii. 28—30.

person, whether Calvinist or Arminian, can refuse subscription to it, unless he at the same time refuse subscription to the Bible itself.\*

*Why* the pious are termed *elect* or *predestinate*, it becomes not us too curiously to inquire. I fear to admit the strict Calvinistic definition of *Election*; not merely however because it may happen to militate against my own notions, but because I doubt whether it accords with the promises of God as they are *generally* set forth in Scripture. The following is the manner, in which I would bring my objections into something of a regular form.

\* Let any person compare the seventeenth Article with Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. Ephes. i. 4. and 1 Peter i. 2; and he will find the description, which our reformers give of the predestinate, couched pretty nearly in the same terms as those which the apostles use. If a Calvinist then will confine his definition of *Election* to scriptural language, I can readily subscribe to it; though possibly he and I may not annex precisely the same meaning to that language. For, be it observed, it is *one* thing to submit myself to a declaration of Scripture, which declaration I at the same time very imperfectly understand; and quite *another* thing to subscribe implicitly to the *explanation* of such a declaration, whether provided by a Calvinist or an Arminian. Could it be once indisputably shewn, that Calvinism is the unadulterated doctrine of the Bible; I should hold myself obliged to embrace it, however contrary it might be to my own preconceived opinions, because the Bible is the word of God: but, until that can be done, I think it more safe to admit no conclusion whatsoever, unless I have the express warrant of Scripture for so doing.

In the first place then, I find, that St. Peter directs us to *give all diligence to MAKE our calling and election sure.*\* But, upon the Calvinistic scheme, it is sure already. Consequently, no man can make a *Calvinistic Election* in the least degree either more sure or less sure, than it was long before he was born.†

In the second place, I cannot find in Scripture any definite mention of Reprobation, which is the *necessary* correlative of *Calvinistic Election*.

I allow indeed, that there are a few texts, which on a superficial view appear to lean towards that doctrine. Such, for instance, are the following.

*There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ORDAINED TO THIS CONDEMNATION.*‡

\* 2 Peter i. 10.

† I am aware, that a Calvinist would say, that the means are predestined, as well as the end; and that St. Peter's exhortation was written only with a view to make us more diligent in using those means. But the difficulty still remains, or is rather indeed increased. For, if the means be predestined, it is superfluous to recommend diligence in the use of those means: because it is already out of our power to refrain from diligence in the use of them. Should it be answered, that exhortation itself is one of the predestined means of holiness; I can only reply, that we may run on *ad infinitum* through a series of such predestined means as those. An infinite series of predestined means differs only in name from absolute fatalism.

‡ Jude 4.

*God endureth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath* FITTED TO DESTRUCTION.\*

*The stone, which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient : WHEREUNTO ALSO THEY WERE APPOINTED.*†

With regard however to the first of these passages, it is capable of a different translation: *There are certain men, who were long since prophetically described,‡ as meet for this condemnation.*

With regard to the second, the past participle used in it  $\delta$  is capable of a reflex, no less than of a passive, signification. Whence it may be rendered *fitted by themselves* or *meet for destruction*.

And, with regard to the third, the expression, *whereunto also they were appointed*, refers, not to *their being disobedient*, but to *the punishment which they were about to incur* in consequence of their disobedience. The Apostle had observed, that Christ was precious to those who believed; but that he was a stone of stumbling to the disobedient. The reason, *why* he was a stone of stumbling to them, was their *disobedience*, not surely a *decree of Reprobation*; precise-

\* Rom. ix. 22.

† 1 Peter ii. 7, 8.

‡ Gr. *πρωγουραμένοι.*

§ Gr. *κατηρισμένοι.*

ly in the same manner as a knowledge of Christ's doctrine is promised to obedience.\* In consequence therefore of their disobedience, *they were appointed* to convert even the Saviour himself into a rock of offence. *Their disobedience* then was the fault: *their making Christ a stumbling stone* was the punishment, to which they were appointed. Should this mode of interpretation be deemed less admissible, the words, even with a Calvinistic reference, may easily be explained on the principle of a well known Hebraism: namely, God is frequently said to *do*, what he either *foresees will be done*, or what he *permits a wicked man to do* after the Divine Spirit has long striven with him in vain. Thus, when the Lord is said to have *hardened Pharaoh's heart*,† we might be apt to think that the Egyptian prince was reprobated by a divine decree, did we not find that he is also described as *hardening his own heart*.‡ The fact seems to be this. The incorrigible spirit of Pharaoh provoked the Lord to withdraw himself from him, as in after time he did from Saul: the consequence of which was, that his heart became more and more hard. To compare natural things with spiritual, as we are taught to do

\* John vii. 17.

† Exod. vii. 13.

‡ Exod. viii. 15. 1 Sam. vi. 6.

throughout the whole of Scripture, when the Sun withdraws its heat from water, water hardens into ice : but, although the Sun be in one sense the occasion of winter, yet it cannot literally be deemed the cause of frost. *The consequential cause* it may indeed be termed, but surely not *the efficient cause*. In a similar manner, when God commands his prophet to *make the heart of the Israelites fat, and to make their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed* :\* we cannot reasonably infer, either that the prophet possessed any power of hardening their hearts, or that God designed to make him *his* instrument for that purpose : on the contrary, the passage is obviously nothing more than a prediction. Accordingly, since St. Paul, when quoting this very text, does not confine himself to the precise words of the original, he must be understood to give us, upon inspired authority, the true interpretation of it. *The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have THEY closed* (they THEMSELVES, even as Pharaoh hardened his own heart :) *lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with*

\* Isaiah vi. 10.

*their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.\**

To these remarks may be added, what equally applies to all the three texts, that, if they be understood as inculcating a Calvinistic Reprobation, they do not accord with God's promises as they are *generally* set forth to us in Holy Scripture.

(3.) From the doctrine of *Election*, as understood by the Predestinarians, necessarily flows, as they rightly argue, the doctrine of *Final Perseverance*.† Let us see however, apart from abstract reasoning, what the Bible teaches on this point.

*When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them ; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. And again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right ; he shall save his soul alive.‡*

These words speak so plainly, that the only answer which a Calvinist can give, and which I believe he commonly does give, is this : that *the righteous man*, here mentioned, is not a *truly* righteous man, but one who for a season ap-

\* Acts xviii. 27.

† Conclusions (13.) and (14.)

‡ Ezek. xviii. 26, 27.

pears before his neighbours to be righteous ; so that in fact his falling away is no *real* apostacy.

Now I will be bold to say, that such a reply not only violates every principle of legitimate criticism, but also bids defiance to the whole context of the passage itself.

When in the same sentence two words are manifestly used *antithetically*, genuine criticism imperiously requires us to understand them *homogeneously*. In the present sentence then *a righteous man* is plainly mentioned in studious opposition to *a wicked man* ; and *the turning of the former from righteousness* is no less plainly contrasted with *the turning of the latter from wickedness*. Hence, if *the righteous man* be only an *apparently* righteous man, then *the wicked man* must be only an *apparently* wicked man : and, if *the righteousness* from which the former turns be only an *apparent* righteousness, then *the wickedness* from which the latter turns must be only an *apparent* wickedness. For, unless this be allowed, we have no antithesis whatsoever : the *pretended* righteous man having been all the while a wicked man, while the *really* wicked man has become a truly righteous man. In short, according to the Calvinistic gloss, the argument of the Lord (for the words are the words of Jehovah himself) will run as follows :



*When a wicked man, who has played the hypocrite by an outward simulation of righteousness, ceases to play the hypocrite ; for the iniquity, which he has done in thus ceasing to play the hypocrite, shall he die : and again, when a wicked man really turns away from his wickedness and becomes a genuine spiritual servant of God ; he shall save his soul alive.* Who does not at once perceive, that this is any thing rather than the true meaning of the passage ? Yet it is only by ascribing to it an import so strangely incongruous, that the advocate for Final Perseverance can elude its force. *The wicked man*, I need scarcely say, is a *really* wicked man. But, if this be the case, then *the righteous man* must be a *truly* righteous man. Yet are we taught by Jehovah himself, in direct opposition to the Calvinistic inference, that this *truly* righteous man may deflect from his righteousness, and may consequently perish in his sins.

But the reply before us equally bids defiance to the whole context of the passage. *The righteous man* mentioned in the passage is evidently a character of the very same description, as *the just man* respecting whom the Lord had recently been speaking. Now this *just man* is delineated, as a person who *does that which is lawful and right*, and who in consequence *shall surely*

*live.\** The *just man* therefore is a *really* just man : for, were he a mere hypocrite, eternal life could not possibly be his final lot. This *just man* however is a character of the same description as *the righteous man* afterwards mentioned. Therefore that *righteous man* is for a season *truly* righteous, though he at length unhappily falls away from his righteousness and becomes a *truly* wicked man.

(4.) The doctrine of *reprobation* inevitably produces the doctrine of *particular redemption*; or the tenet, that Christ died solely for the elect, and that the reprobate were never included in the contemplation of the divine mercy.†

But to this conclusion what says the Bible? *There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for ALL.‡* We thus judge, that, if one died for ALL, then were ALL dead; and that he died for ALL, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.§

Here it is positively set forth, that Christ died, not for the elect EXCLUSIVELY, but for ALL. If then Christ died for ALL and gave himself a ran-

\* Ezek. xviii. 5, 9.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6.

† Conclusion (15.)

§ 2 Corin. v. 14, 15.

som for ALL ; it certainly cannot be said with truth, that he died SOLELY for the ELECT.

I know, that the Calvinists attempt to get rid of those texts, which assert the universality of the atonement, by maintaining, that the words ALL and WORLD are to be understood, not in a general, but in a restrictive, sense : the term ALL denoting, not *all men*, but *all the elect* ; and the term WORLD denoting, not *the whole world of mankind*, but *the whole world of the elect*.

Now here we perceive men, however strong they may be as metaphysical reasoners, labouring under difficulties from which they vainly attempt to extricate themselves ; difficulties brought upon them by the mere corrective interposition of Scripture. Who for one moment can tolerate such palpable legerdemain as this ? By a similar process, the Bible may be made to speak, not what any man of plain sound understanding would conceive it to speak, but just what the contriver of a system would have it : and, if we concede to the Calvinist, that, when Christ is said to die for ALL, the apostle meant to teach the esoteric doctrine of his dying only for ALL THE ELECT ; I see not how we can fairly object to the most unnatural glosses of the pre-judging and system-loving Socinian, for it is hard to say whether the gloss of the one or of the other

be the furthest removed from the obvious meaning of Scripture.

Granting however for a moment all that the Calvinist would have us grant, acknowledging for the sake of argument the propriety of one of the most purpose-serving glosses that was exco-  
gitated; we may still without difficulty produce texts, which cannot thus be explained away.

*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours ONLY, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD.\**

*God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.†*

In both these passages, *the world at large* is placed in evident contradistinction to *believing Christians* or (in the Calvinistic phraseology) *the elect*. *Christ*, says St. John, *is the propitiation, not only for OUR sins, for the sins of US BELIEVERS; but likewise for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD at large*. Read this passage however with the Calvinistic gloss, and it will exhibit the following extraordinary declaration. *Christ is the propitiation, not only for the sins of THE ELECT, but likewise additionally for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD OF THE ELECT*. So again: *God*, says the

\* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

† John iii. 16.

same apostle, so loved THE WORLD in general, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever OUT OF that world BELIEVETH in him should not perish. But read this passage with a Calvinistic comment, and its language will be no less extraordinary than that of the last. God so loved THE WORLD OF THE ELECT, that he gave his Son, that whosoever OUT OF that elect world BELIEVETH in him should not perish; those only being doomed to perish, who OUT OF that same elect world shall NOT BELIEVE in him : in other words, God loved indeed THE WHOLE WORLD OF THE ELECT ; but none of THOSE ELECT, will be finally saved, except SUCH OF THE ELECT AS BELIEVE, all ELECT UNBELIEVERS being doomed to utter ruin.

Thus we see, that, in spite of the abstract reasoning of the metaphysical predestinarians, Scripture declares, that God mercifully loved the whole world of mankind, and that Christ has made propitiation for the sins of the same universal world. Such being the case, if God and his Christ so loved the universal world; it is a contradiction in terms to say, that many individuals of that world have been left by the sovereign divine will under a fatal necessity of perishing, when the same sovereign divine will might have freely elected them to eternal life : for, according to this theory, as the Calvinists indeed themselves acknowledge, God assured-

ly loves *only* the elect, and does *not* love the reprobate.

Every scriptural expostulation speaks exactly to the same purpose. When God remonstrates with mankind on the ground that they refuse to turn from the evil of their ways; such a remonstrance necessarily implies, that he is ready to give them all due assistance; for (to speak with reverence) it were surely altogether nugatory to ask them, *why* they still persist in wickedness and *why* they are determined not to relinquish it; when the Almighty himself by his sovereign decree has passed them over, and has thus left them under a fatal necessity of sinning and under an unconquerable moral inability of repenting. What should we think of the conduct of a prince, who threw indeed the doors of a prison wide open, and who vehemently expostulated with those confined in it on the score of their madly refusing to come forth and accept of proffered liberty; if all the while he knew them to be attached with heavy chains to the floor of their dungeon, which they themselves were utterly unable to break, and which he refused to break for them? Should we not say, that this expostulation served only to accumulate mockery upon punishment? And would not the mockery be heightened, if the prince broke the chains of some, and then remonstrated

with those who were still bound for not following the example of their companions, and like them leaving their prison-house? Now in what manner does every general scriptural expostulation differ from this, when viewed agreeably to the Calvinistic system? God is represented as acting in a manner, which we should think most extraordinary even in a fellow-mortal: for he is exhibited, as vehemently remonstrating with persons for not turning to righteousness; when he himself by his own sovereign decree has passed them over, and has left them in that state of moral inability wherein we are all equally born by nature.\*

Thus do we seem to be beaten away from the Calvinistic theory, and to be thence compelled to view the Arminian system as more agreeable to Holy Scripture.

\* I have been informed, with what truth I pretend not to say, that some modern Calvinistic divines object to the employing of *any* remonstrances or expostulations from the pulpit, on the express ground, that they are superfluous to the elect and useless to the reprobate. On the predestinarian theory, no flaw can possibly be found in such *reasoning*: how far the *practice*, which it involves, be agreeable to the practice of Christ and his apostles, is quite another question. If I have been accurately informed, I should suspect, that these divines are much more accomplished logicians than scriptural evangelists.

2. But let us not too hastily imagine, that this latter hypothesis presents no faulty points. Let us in equity subject *it* also to the same examination, as that to which the former has been subjected.

(1.) The principal conclusion of Arminianism is, that all men are placed upon an exactly equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation.\*

This sounds very plausible: and we feel ourselves inclined to give high credit to a system, which contends so strenuously for an apparently clear point of absolute equity. But does such a conclusion accord either with matter of fact or with the declarations of Scripture?

As to matter of fact, without entering into the very difficult question of the final state of the Heathens or the Mohammedans, will any sober person gravely contend that *they* are placed upon just as advantageous a footing as Christians with respect to the means of insuring their eternal happiness? If this be the case, why should the apostles have been so anxious, even at the expense of their own lives, that all men should be converted to the faith of Christ: and why need *we* pay the slightest regard to any modern missionary attempts? If this be *not* the case,

\* Conclusion (2.)



then it is indisputable, that all men are *not* placed upon an exactly equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation. Nor will the matter be much mended, if we exclaim, that we have no concern with Heathens and Mohammedans, and that the question ought to be limited to the pale of the Christian Church. Let it then be so limited : and where will be the emolument ? Will any one pretend to say, that the person, who has been virtuously brought up by truly religious parents, and who has been carefully instructed in the principles and practice of the Gospel, is placed by God's Providence on a perfectly equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation with a person, who has been trained up to evil by vicious parents from his earliest youth, who has beheld nothing but bad examples, and who has been left in a state of most deplorable ignorance as to the doctrines and duties of Christianity ? Matter of fact then decidedly shews, that God has *not* made all men theologically equal, but that to some he has given religious advantages which he has not given to others.

And with matter of fact the declarations of Scripture will be found perfectly to accord. Let us first hear what it says respecting Faith. St. Paul asserts, that *all men have not faith*.\* and we

\* 2 Thess. iii. 2.

need but cast our eyes around us to be fully satisfied as to the truth of his assertion. *Why* then have not all men Faith? The Bible assures us, that Faith is the GIFT of God; that Christ is the AUTHOR of our Faith; and that, if we believe at all, the reason is, because it is GIVEN us to believe.\* Faith therefore being a GIFT, it necessarily follows, that to those who possess it, it has been GIVEN, while to those who possess it not it has not been GIVEN. Such being the case, all men are not placed on the same footing as to the grace of Faith. Let us next hear what Scripture says respecting the Will. Our Lord observes to the unbelieving Jews, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life* :† and in the present day we may behold numbers in the very same unhappy predicament. But *why* will they not come to Christ? The Bible teaches, that *it is God which WORKETH in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; that the Son QUICKENETH whom he will; and that it is specially *in the day of God's POWER*, that *his people shall be willing*.‡ The will to do good there-

\* Ephes. ii. 8. Heb. xii. 2. Philip. i. 29.

† John v. 40.

‡ Philip ii. 13. John v. 21. Psalm cx. 3. On such texts as these is built the tenth Article of the English Church, which rightly maintains, that *we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by*

fore proceeding solely from God, it follows, that they who have any such will have RECEIVED it from God, while they who have it not have NOT RECEIVED it from God. Here again we find, that all men are not placed on the same footing as to the Will to good. Let us next attend to the Scripture doctrine of Repentance. It need scarcely be remarked, that but too many descend to the grave without any *sincere* Repentance for their sins. Fear of punishment may indeed cause them bitterly to *regret* their past conduct; but this is not the scriptural idea of Repentance; for in the Bible the word denotes such a hearty sorrow on account of iniquity, as involves both the *hatred* and the *dere- liction* of it. But why have not all men this Repentance? Is it, because every man might thus repent if he would; but that, all having it equally in their power, some choose to repent, while others do not choose? The scriptural statement of the matter is as different as possible. We are there explicitly taught, that God and his Christ GIVE Repentance.\* If then Repentance be a GIFT, we must necessarily draw from such a declaration the very same inference as we have

*Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.*

\* Acts v. 31. xi. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25.

already drawn from the similar declaration respecting Faith. All men therefore are not placed on the same footing as to Repentance. But even this is not the whole that may be gathered from Scripture. Hitherto we have dealt only in *particulars*: let us now attend to a *general* proposition. That there is a very great Difference between the religious and moral condition of this man and that man, no one, I presume, will venture to deny. The *fact* therefore of a Difference exists: the only question is, how we are to *account* for this fact. Do men differ then, because some have more inherent virtue than others, or because some use their free-will to better purpose than others, or because some possess a degree of resolute fortitude which others do not possess? Truly Scripture gives no such account of the matter: and indeed, if it did, it would contradict itself: for we are expressly taught, that *no man hath any thing whereof to glory*; but, in *this* state of the case, one man has ample reason to glory above another.\* The scriptural account of the affair is thrown into an interrogatory form, which is quite as strong and decisive as any affirmative one could have been. *Who MAKETH thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not RECEIVE? Now,*

1 Rom. iv. 2. 1 Corin. i. 29, 31.

*if thou didst RECEIVE it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst NOT RECEIVED it ?\** It appears then, that, whatever difference there may be between man and man, God MAKETH this difference by certain communications, which some RECEIVE, and which others do NOT RECEIVE. How then can all be placed upon an exactly equal footing as to the moral possibility of salvation? The ancient *national* difference between Jew and Gentile indeed is now done away, and the Gospel is undistinguishingly offered to *every* people: † but both matter of fact and Scripture likewise determine, that, for whatever reason, a great *individual* difference still exists.

(2.) Now, if this grand conclusion of Arminianism be invalid; then whatever is deduced from it must of course rest upon a foundation of sand. But the falsehood of the Calvinistic doctrine of *Election and Reprobation* is deduced from it. ‡ Therefore such a deduction rests not upon any solid basis.

In making this necessary inference, I would by no means be understood to *vindicate* that characteristic tenet of Calvinism. As for the theory of Election and Reprobation, *as expound-*

\* 1 Corin. iv. 7.

† Acts xv. 7, 8, 9. Rom. iii. 22. x. 12.

‡ Conclusions (3.) and (4.)

*ed by the doctors of the predestinarian school*, I no more believe it to be agreeable to the general declarations of Scripture than the most systematic Arminian himself. But this I *must* say, that such a theory will never be confuted by a train of abstract reasoning like that which has just been brought under discussion. For let an argument be managed ever so logically from false premises ; the premises themselves being false, the argument must needs be inconclusive.

Thus, to a certain extent at least, we now find ourselves beaten away from the Arminian hypothesis, and thence seem compelled to view the Calvinistic system as more agreeable to Scripture.

VII. Tossed alternately from one theory to the other, and alike dissatisfied with both, in what manner are we henceforth to establish the principles of our belief? We must even be content to relinquish the empty glory of fabricating compact, but fallacious, systems of theology: we must learn to submit our weak understandings to the various positive declarations of the Bible, though we may not always be able, in the way of abstract reasoning, to point out their exact mutual connexion and coherence.

Such was the plan adopted by the venerable reformers of our English Church: and, when we recollect the numerous contending sects

which flourished contemporaneously with them, we can never sufficiently admire their wisdom and temperance in steadily refusing to become the partizans of any body of men, however loud might be their pretensions to superior light and purity. Hence, while the pious Calvinist and the pious Arminian may each with a perfectly safe conscience subscribe our Anglican Articles ; if either expect to find his own party decidedly condemned, he will soon perceive himself to be grievously mistaken. For what, in her several offices, does the English Church set forth ? If the Calvinist prematurely exult in the imagined partiality of the seventeenth Article to his own favourite opinions ; she cuts him short in the midst of his triumph, by unequivocally declaring the doctrine of *universal redemption*, and by guardedly stating that *we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be GENERALLY set forth to us in Holy Scripture*.\* If, on the other hand, the Arminian infer from the doctrine of *universal redemption* that all men are placed on an exactly equal footing ; she teaches him, quite regardless of the consequences so fatal to his theory which might seem necessarily to flow from such a doctrine, that we can do no works pleasing to God without a good will, and that

\* Art. xv, xvii, and Catechism Answer 6.

we can have no good will unless God think fit to give it us.\* In a similar manner equally regardless of the consequences, she teaches that we can do no good works previous to the reception of Faith by the inspiration of God's Blessed Spirit; notwithstanding the production of good works is thus made to depend ultimately upon an *extrinsic* cause, over which *we* can have no controul whatsoever.† And again, in point of practice, however irreconcilable it may metaphysically seem with the doctrine of our own inability, our natural want of good will, and the entire dependence of our virtuous deeds upon a plainly extrinsic cause: in point of practice, fearless of being charged with self-contradictoriness, she scruples not to exhort us, just as if such matters were entirely in our own power, to *repent us truly for our sins past, to have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, to amend our lives, and to be in perfect charity with all men.*‡

This, I will be bold to say, is the sole mode in which we can ever arrive at certainty in matters of religion. We must prove all things by Scripture; and hold fast that which is good: regardless of the even opposite conclusions, which

\* Art. x.

† Art. xii, xiii.

‡ Exhort. in Commun. Service.



might seem by a train of abstract reasoning to be legitimately deduced from our several articles of belief. By adopting such a plan, we *may* forfeit the honour and glory of a proud systematic concinnity; and, what has not unfrequently been the case with our venerable mother the Church of England, in the mortal tug of theologic war we *may* very possibly be deemed Calvinistic by Arminians and Arminian by Calvinists: but, rejecting *each* theory as a whole, and determining to call no man *master* save Christ alone, we shall have the comfort of knowing, that we believe nothing, but what the Bible unequivocally teaches us to believe. It may not perhaps be the most philosophical, but it is probably the wisest, opinion which we can adopt, that the truth lies somewhere between the two rival systems of Calvin and Arminius; though I believe it to exceed the wit of man to point out the *exact* place, where it *does* lie. We distinctly perceive the two extremities of the vast chain, which stretches across the whole expanse of the theological heavens; but its central links are enveloped in impenetrable clouds and thick darkness. After all, whatever metaphysical difficulties there may be in the matter, these difficulties are no way *peculiar* to Christianity: they are, if I may so speak, inherent in the very nature of things themselves. As mere deists, we should

be equally perplexed, if we were determined to excogitate a compact moral system, with the jarring points of fate and free-will, divine prescience and human contingency. This was felt long before the promulgation of the Gospel: and, if men continue to dispute and draw out fine trains of metaphysical reasoning even to the very end of the world, it requires not the gift of prophecy to foretell, that they will be just as wise at the close as they were at the commencement.

VIII. Yet a discussion of this kind is not without its high practical utility: much that is good may obviously be derived from it.

1. In the first place, we may learn to entertain very humble views of our own powers; and thence willingly to submit ourselves to the deep things of God, however incomprehensible they may be to *our* finite understandings.

2. And, in the next place, we may learn to abhor that detestable spirit of dogmatical bigotry, which would presumptuously cast out from among the people of God all who cannot receive this peculiarity or that peculiarity which is advocated by this party or that party. Far be it from the biblical Christian to doubt, that, *in the day when the Lord of hosts shall make up his jewels*, many, both Calvinists and Arminians, will be the ornaments of his spiritual diadem. Will he then view those as heretical enemies in

this world, with whom he hopes eternally to associate in the world to come? That be far from him. Yet, to say nothing of the mischievous consequences of fabricating systems so far as respects soundness of doctrine, what are the effects, which have too often sprung from the intemperate agitation of the quinquarticular controversy? Violent contentions for favourite opinions are frequently the harbingers of that bane of Christian meekness and charity, open schism. Obscure matters of doubtful disputation acquire in the eyes of a party-man an importance, which they by no means deserve. By long brooding over them in private, by associating with none but those who hold the same sentiments, and by reading no works but those which are written on one side of the question, his passions become inflamed in proportion as his judgment is unexercised: and he can esteem none orthodox, save those, who think precisely like himself, and who admit all the peculiarities of *his* system. Hence we find, that a high Calvinist views an Arminian with a sort of undefinable prejudice and dislike: while a high Arminian amply repays this uncharitableness with jealousy, distrust, and affected contempt. According to the one, Calvinism, unmixed Calvinism, is the undoubted doctrine of the English Church: according to the other, every Calvin-

istic divine, however exact in his submission to ecclesiastical discipline, is to be considered only in the light of a concealed foe, who, were it in his power, would infallibly overturn our national hierarchy.\* The first terms his opponent *a doctrinal dissenter*, because he cannot subscribe to all the dogmata of Calvin; and proclaims his own party to be the only true members of the Anglican Church: the second returns the compliment by styling his adversary *a dissenter within the Church*, and by diligently representing him as a reviver of long-forgotten heresies or as an enthusiastic admirer of all the whimsical extravagances of *Arminian Methodism*; an allegation scarcely less whimsical than the extravagances themselves, for it appears somewhat paradoxical to maintain that a professedly *Arminian* sect should have completely won the heart of an obstinate *Calvinist*.†

\* I speak of the *regular* Calvinistic clergy, and of them only. Many such divines I believe to be truly pious men, and heartily attached to our excellent constitution both in Church and State. Indeed I never yet could discover, what necessary connexion there is between speculative Calvinism and practical Dissent. Some of our most determined episcopalians have been high doctrinal Calvinists.

† I have somewhere, in a modern work, seen it gravely maintained, and stoutly argued upon, through several successive pages, that the only reason, why the Methodists affect to charge the clergy of the establishment with not preaching the

Such are the unhappy disputes of the present day: disputes, which serve only to irritate the minds of the contending parties, to grieve all moderate men, and to delight the advocates for Schism and Infidelity.\*

Gospel, is, *because they cannot conscientiously inculcate high Calvinism.* Now, whatever may be the frequency with which the Methodists are wont to urge such an allegation, *the reason assigned* most assuredly cannot be the true one. The Methodists are as decided Arminians, as the most resolute high-churchman can be. Hence it is an absurd contradiction in terms to assert, that the *Arminian* followers of Mr. Wesley charge the regular clergy with not preaching the Gospel, BECAUSE they refuse to inculcate the doctrines of the *Calvinists*. We might just as rationally say, that they make this charge against the clergy, because we will not preach *Socinianism*. In the true spirit of this most unaccountable mistake, I have likewise, in some other modern publication, seen the Calvinists charged with holding the preposterous doctrine of *sinless perfection in the elect*. Never surely were the terms *sinless perfection* and *the elect* so strangely wedded together! The doctrine of *sinless perfection* is an abortion of the Methodistic *Arminian* school, which shudders at the very name of *Election*: while the philosophic Calvinist, who by a train of metaphysical reasoning has been led to the doctrine of *Election*, can only smile at the gross ignorance, which would exhibit him as ascribing to his *elect* in this world a condition of *immaculate purity*. They, who volunteer to enter the lists against the Methodists on the one hand or the Calvinists on the other, ought at least to learn what these clashing religionists *do* maintain. The odd *amalgamation* of these *direct opposites*, which it sometimes is our fortune to witness, is a project much about as hopeful as the diligent commixture of oil and water.

\* These miserable disputes, with the same vile misrepre-

*If upon any branch of Christian duty, they are the words of a late deservedly lamented prelate, and would that the generous and manly sentiment were adopted both by Calvinists and Arminians ! If upon any branch of Christian duty my conscience be at perfect ease ; the precept, Judge not, is that, which I trust I have not transgressed. The motives by which one man is impelled, are for the most part so imperfectly known to any other ; that,—from my youth up, I have been averse to censorious judgment.\**

sensation on *both* sides, prevailed with equal acrimony before the breaking out of the great rebellion. The matter is excellently stated by Lord Clarendon. History of Rebell. b. i. p. 144. Oxon.

\* Bp. Horsley's Remarks on Priestley's second Letters. p. 86.

