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BEING

PLAIN STATEMENTS

ON DISPUTED POINTS IN RELIGION,
FROM THE
STANDPOINT OF AN EVANGELICAL CHURCHMAN.

BY THE LATE BISHOP

JOHN CHARLES RYLE, D.D.

Author of "Expository Thoughts on the Gospels," etc.,

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CHAPTER VII.

PRAYER-BOOK STATEMENTS ABOUT REGENERATION.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

—JOHN iii. 3.

“This child is regenerate.”—Baptismal Service of the Church of England.

IN this paper I have one simple object in view. I wish to throw light on certain expressions about “Regeneration” in the Baptismal Service of the Church of England.

The subject is one of no slight importance. The minds of many true Christians in the Church of England are troubled about it. They do not see the real meaning of our excellent Reformers in putting such language in a Prayer-book Service. They are perplexed and confounded by the bold and reckless assertions made by opponents of Evangelical Religion within the Church, and of Dissenters outside the Church, and, though not convinced, they find nothing to reply.

I propose in this paper to supply an answer to the common arguments in favour of “Baptismal Regeneration,” which are based on the Baptismal Service of the Prayer-book. I wish to show that in this, as in many other questions, the truth is not so entirely on one side, as many seem to suppose. Above all, I wish to show that it is possible to be a consistent, honest, thoughtful member of the Church of England, and yet not to hold the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

In considering this subject, I shall strictly confine myself to the one point at issue. I purposely avoid entering into the general question of the nature of Regeneration and the Scriptural warrant for infant baptism. I shall only make a few preliminary remarks by way of explanation, and to prevent mistakes about the meaning of words.

(1) My first remark is this: I believe that, according to Scripture, Regeneration is that great change of heart and character which is absolutely needful to man’s salvation. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.) Sometimes it is called conversion,—sometimes being made alive from the dead,—sometimes putting off the old man, and putting on the new,—sometimes a new creation,—sometimes being renewed,—sometimes being made partaker of the Divine nature. All these expressions of the Bible come to the same thing. They are all the same truth, only viewed from different points. They all describe that mighty, radical change of nature, which it is the special office of the Holy Ghost to give,—and without which no one can be saved.

I am aware that many do not allow “Regeneration” to be what I have here described it. They regard it as nothing more than an admission to Church privileges,—a change of state, and not a change of heart. But what plain text of Scripture can they show us in support of this view? I answer boldly,—“Not one.”¹

(2) My second remark is this. I believe there is only one sure evidence, according to Scripture, of anyone being a regenerate person. That evidence is the fruit that he brings forth in his heart and in his life. “Every tree is known by his own

fruit.” Those fruits are laid down clearly and plainly in the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount, and the latter part of most of St. Paul’s Epistles, contain unmistakable descriptions of the man who is born of the Spirit. But nowhere shall we find the marks of Regeneration so fully given as in the first Epistle of St. John: “Whosoever is born of God sinneth not.”² “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.” “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself.” “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” (1 John v. 18; 1 John v. 1; 1 John ii. 29; 1 John v. 4; 1 John v. 18; 1 John iii. 10.)

Of course I am aware that many divines maintain that we may call people “regenerate,” in whom none of the marks just described are seen, or ever were seen since they were born. They tell us, in short, that people may possess the gift of the Spirit, and the grace of Regeneration, when neither the gift nor the grace can be seen. Such a doctrine appears to me dangerous in the highest degree. It seems to my mind little better than Antinomianism.

(3) My third remark is this. I believe that Regeneration and baptism, according to Scripture, do not necessarily go together. I see that people may be filled with the Holy Ghost, and have new hearts, without baptism, like John the Baptist and the penitent thief. I see also that people may be baptized, and yet remain in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, like Simon Magus. Above all, I find St. Peter telling us expressly, that the baptism which “saves,” and whereby we are buried with Christ, and put on Christ, is not water-baptism only, whether infant or adult. It is “not “the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the “answer of a good conscience.” (1 Peter iii. 21.)

It is well known that many people hold that baptism and Regeneration are inseparable; but there is a fatal absence of texts in support of this view. Sixteen times, at least, the new birth is mentioned in the New Testament.³ “Regeneration” is a word used twice, but only once in the sense of a change of heart. “Born again,”—“born of God,”—“born of the Spirit,”—“begotten of God,” are expressions used frequently. Once the word “water” is joined with the words “born of the Spirit;” once the word “washing” is joined with the word “Regeneration;” twice believers are said to be born of the “Word of God,” the “Word of truth.” But it is a striking fact that there is not one text in Scripture which says distinctly and expressly that we are born again in baptism, and that every baptized person is necessarily regenerate.

(4) My fourth and last remark is this. I believe that according to Scripture, baptism has no more power to confer Regeneration on infants, *ex opere operato*, than it has upon grown-up people. That infants ought to be solemnly and formally admitted into the Church under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, I make no question. The promise to the children of believers, and the behaviour of our Lord Jesus Christ to children, ought to encourage all believing parents to expect the greatest blessings in bringing their infants to be baptized. But beyond this I cannot go.

I am aware that many people think that infants must be regenerated in baptism,

as a matter of course, because they put no bar in the way of grace, and must therefore receive the sacrament worthily. Once more I am obliged to say, there is a fatal absence of Scripture in defence of this view. The right of Christian infants to baptism is only through their parents. The precise effect of baptism on infants is never once stated in the New Testament. There is no description of a child's baptism: and to say that children, born in sin, as all are, are in themselves *worthy* to receive grace, appears to me a near approach to the old heresy of Pelagianism.⁴

I now come to the point which forms the chief subject of this paper. That point is the true interpretation of some expressions in the Baptismal Service of the Church of England, which appear *at first sight* to contradict the view which I have been endeavouring to set forth on the subject of Regeneration.

It is asserted that the Prayer-book decidedly teaches the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration in the Baptismal Service.—It is said that the words of that service, “Seeing now that this child is regenerate,”—“We yield Thee hearty thanks, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this child with Thy Holy Spirit,” admit of only one meaning.—They are used, it is said, over every child that is baptized.—They prove, it is said, beyond all question, that the Church of England maintains the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.—They settle the point, it is said, and leave no room to doubt. These are the statements I now propose to examine. Can they be proved, or can they not? I say unhesitatingly that they *cannot*, and I will proceed to give my reasons for saying so, if the reader will give me his patient attention.

I desire to approach the whole subject in dispute with a sorrowful recollection of the sad difference of opinion which has long prevailed in my own Church upon the subject which it involves. I am quite aware of the positive assertions so frequently made, that the views of Regeneration I have tried to set forth are not “*Church views*,” and so forth. Such assertions go for very little with me. I have read Bishop Jewel's *Apology*, and I do not forget what he says there about those “who impose upon silly men by vain and useless shows, and seek to overwhelm us with the mere name of the *Church*.” I am thoroughly persuaded that the views of Regeneration I maintain are the views of the Prayer-book, Articles, and Homilies of the Church of England, and I will endeavour to satisfy the reader that I have good reasons for saying so. The more I have searched into the subject, the more thoroughly convinced have I felt in my own mind that these who say the views I advocate are not *Church views*,” are asserting what they cannot prove.

And now let me proceed to reply to the objection that the invariable Regeneration of all infants in baptism is proved to be the doctrine of the Church of England by the language of her Baptismal Service.

I. I answer then, first of all, that the *mere quotation of two isolated expressions in one particular service in our Liturgy is not of itself sufficient*. It must be proved that the sense in which the objector takes these expressions is the correct one.

It must also be shown that this sense will bear comparison with the other Services and formularies of the Church, and does not involve any contradiction. If this last point cannot be shown and proved, it is clear that the objector has put a wrong interpretation on the Baptismal Service, and does not understand the great

principle on which all the Services of our Church are drawn up.

It is a most unsound method of reasoning to take one or two expressions out of a book which has been written as one great whole, to place a certain meaning on these expressions, and then refuse to inquire whether that meaning can be reconciled with the general spirit of the rest of the book. The beginning of every heresy and erroneous tenet in religion may be traced up to this kind of reasoning, and to unfair and partial quotations.

This is precisely the *Roman Catholic's argument* when he wants to prove the doctrine of transubstantiation. "I read," he says, "these plain words, 'This is My body, this is My blood.' I want no more, I have nothing to do with your explanations and quotations from other parts of the Bible. Here is quite enough for me. The Lord Jesus Christ says, 'This is My body.' This settles the question."

This again is precisely *the Arian's argument*, when he wants to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father. "I read," he says, "these plain words, 'My Father is greater than I.'" It is in vain you tell him that there are other texts which show the Son to be equal with the Father, and give a different meaning to the one he has quoted. It matters not. He rests on the one single text that he has chosen to rest on, and he will hear nothing further.

This also is precisely *the Socinian's argument*, when he wants to prove that Jesus Christ is only a man, and not God. "I read," he tells us, "these plain words, 'The man, Christ Jesus.'—Do not talk to me about other passages which contradict my view. All I know is, here are words which cannot be mistaken, 'The man, Christ Jesus.'"

Now, without desiring to give offence, I must frankly say that I observe this kind of argument continually used in discussing the Church of England's doctrine about Regeneration. People quote the words of our Baptismal Service, "Seeing now that this child is regenerate," etc., as an unanswerable proof that the Church considers all baptized infants to be born again. They will not listen to anything else that is brought forward from other Services and formularies of the Church. They tell you they take their stand on the simple expression, "This child is regenerate." The words are plain, they inform us! They settle the question incontrovertibly! They seem to doubt your honesty and good sense, if you are not at once convinced. And all this time they do not see that they are taking their stand on very dangerous ground, and putting a sword into the hand of the next Socinian, Arian, or Roman Catholic who happens to dispute with them.

I warn such people, if this paper falls in their hands, that this favourite argument will not do. A single quotation dragged out of a Service will not suffice. They must prove that the meaning they attach to it is consistent with the rest of the Prayer-book, and with the Articles and Homilies. They must not expound one place of the Prayer-book, any more than of the Bible, so as to make it repugnant to another. And this, whether they mean it or not, I firmly believe they are doing.

II. I answer, in the next place, that to say all baptized infants are regenerate, because of the expressions in the Baptismal Service, is to *contradict the great principle on which the whole Prayer-book is drawn up*.

The principle of the Prayer-book is to suppose all members of the Church to be

in *reality* what they are in *profession*,—to be true believers in Christ, to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The Prayer-book takes the highest standard of what a Christian ought to be, and is all through worded accordingly. The minister addresses those who assemble together for public worship *as believers*. The people who use the words the Liturgy puts into their mouths, are supposed to be *believers*. But those who drew up the Prayer-book never meant to assert that all who were members of the Church of England were actually and really true Christians. On the contrary, they tell us expressly in the Articles, that “in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good.” But they held that if forms of devotion were drawn up at all, they must be drawn up on the supposition that those who used them were real Christians, and not false ones. And in so doing I think they were quite right. A Liturgy for unbelievers and unconverted men would be absurd, and practically useless! The part of the congregation for whom it was meant would care little or nothing for *any* Liturgy at all. The holy and believing part of the congregation would find its language entirely unsuited to them.

Now this general principle of the Prayer-book is the principle on which the Baptismal Service is drawn up. It supposes those who bring their children to be baptized, to bring them as *believers*. As the seed of godly parents and children of believers, their infants are baptized. As believers, the sponsors and parents are exhorted to pray that the child may be born again, and encouraged to lay hold on the promises. And *as the child of believers* the infant when baptized is pronounced “regenerate,” and thanks are given for it.

The principle which the Church lays down *as an abstract principle* is this,—that baptism *when rightly and worthily received*, is a means whereby we may receive inward and spiritual grace, even a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.⁵ That an infant may receive baptism “rightly” the Church of England unquestionably holds, though the way and manner of it may be a hidden thing to us; for as good Archbishop Usher beautifully remarks, “He that hath said of infants, to them belongs the kingdom of God, knows how to settle upon them the kingdom of heaven.” Her ministers cannot see the book of God’s election. They cannot see the hidden workings of the Holy Ghost. They cannot read the hearts of parents and sponsors. They can never say of any individual child, “This child is certainly receiving baptism unworthily.” And this being the case, the Church most wisely leans to the side of *charity*, assumes hopefully of each child that it receives baptism worthily, and uses language accordingly.

The men who drew up our Baptismal Service, held that there was a connection between baptism and spiritual Regeneration, and they were right.⁶ They knew that there was nothing too high in the way of blessing to expect for the child of a believer. They knew that God might of His sovereign mercy give grace to any child before, or in, or at, or by the act of baptism. At all events they dared not undertake the responsibility of denying it in the case of any particular infant, and they therefore took the safer course, to express a *charitable hope of all*.—They could not draw up two Services of baptism, one of a high standard of privilege, the other of a low one. They could not leave it to the option of a minister to decide when one should be used, and when the other. It would have made a minister’s position at the baptismal font a most invidious one;—it would have exposed him to the risk

of making painful mistakes;—it would have required him to decide points which none but God can decide. They leaned to the side of charity. They drew up a form containing the highest standard of privilege and blessing, and required that in every case of infant baptism that form, and that only, should be used. And in so doing they acted in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ's remarkable words to the seventy disciples, "Into *whatsoever* house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again." (Luke x. 5, 6.)

But as for maintaining that the ministerial act of baptizing a child did always necessarily convey Regeneration, and that every infant baptized was invariably born again, I believe it never entered into the thoughts of those who drew up the Prayer-book. In the judgment of charity and hope they supposed all to be regenerated in baptism, and used language accordingly. Whether any particular child was actually and really regenerated they left to be decided by its life and ways when it grew up. To say that the assertions of the Prayer-book Baptismal Service are to be taken for more than a *charitable supposition*, will be found, on close examination, to throw the whole Prayer-book into confusion.⁷

This is the only principle on which many of the *Collects* can be reasonably explained. The Collect for the Epiphany says, "Grant that we who know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious God-head."—Will any one tell us that the compilers of the Prayer-book meant to teach, that all who use the Prayer-book do know God by faith? Surely not.—The Collect for Sexagesima Sunday says, "O, Lord God, Who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do," etc. Will any dare to say that these words could ever be literally true of all members of the Church of England? Are they not manifestly a charitable supposition?—The Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity says, "We, to whom Thou hast given a hearty desire to pray," etc. Who can have a doubt that this is a form of words, which is used by many of whom it could not strictly and truly be said for one minute? 'Who can fail to see in all these instances one uniform principle, the principle of *charitably assuming* that members of a Church are what they profess to be? The Church puts in the mouth of her worshipping people the sentiments and language they ought to use, and if they do not come up to her high standard, the fault is theirs, not hers. But to say that by adopting such expressions she stamps and accredits all her members as real and true Christians in the sight of God, would be manifestly absurd.

This is the only principle on which *the Service for the Churching of Women* can be interpreted. Every woman for whom that Service is used, is spoken of as "the Lord's servant," and is required to answer that she "puts her trust in the Lord." Yet who in his senses can doubt that such words are utterly inapplicable in the case of a great proportion of those who come to be churched? They are not "servants "of the Lord! They do not in any sense "put their trust" in Him! And who would dare to argue that the compilers of the Liturgy considered that all women who were churched did really trust in the Lord, merely because they used this language? The simple explanation is, that they drew up the Service on the same great principle which runs through the whole Prayer-book, the principle of *charitable supposition*.

This is the only principle on which *the Service of Baptism for grown-up people* can be interpreted. In that Service the minister first prays that the person about to be baptized may have the Holy Spirit given to him and be born again. The Church cannot take upon herself to pronounce decidedly that he is born again, until he has witnessed a good confession, and shown his readiness to receive the seal of baptism. Then, after that prayer, he is called upon openly to profess repentance and faith before the minister and congregation, and that being done he is baptized. Then, and not till then, comes the declaration that the person baptized is “regenerate,” and he is born again and made an heir of everlasting salvation. But can these words be strictly and literally true if the person baptized is a hypocrite, and has all along professed that which he does not feel? Are not the words manifestly used on the charitable supposition that he has repented and does believe, and in no other sense at all? And is it not plain to every one that in the absence of this repentance and faith, the words used are a mere form,—used, because the Church cannot draw up two forms, but not for a moment implying that inward and spiritual grace necessarily accompanies the outward sign, or that a “death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness” “is necessarily conveyed to the soul? In short, the person baptized is pronounced regenerate upon the broad principle of the Prayer-book, that, in the Church-services people are *charitably supposed* to be what they profess to be.

This is the only intelligible principle on which *the Burial Service* can be interpreted. In that Service the person buried is spoken of as a “dear brother or sister.” It is said that it hath “pleased God of His great mercy to take to Himself his soul.” It is said, “We give Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.” It is said that “our hope is, this our brother rests in Christ.” Now what does all this mean? Did the compilers of the Prayer-book wish us to believe that all this was strictly and literally applicable to every individual member of the Church over whose body these words were read? Will any one look the Service honestly in the face and dare to say so? I cannot think it. The simple explanation of the Service is, that it was drawn up, like the rest, on the presumption that all members of a Church were what they professed to be. The key to the interpretation of it is the same great principle, the principle of *charitable supposition*.

This is the only principle on which *the Catechism* can be interpreted. In it every child is taught to say, “In baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven” and a little further on, “I learn to believe in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.” Now what does this mean? Did the Prayer-book writers intend to lay it down as an abstract principle that all baptized children are “sanctified” and all “elect”? Will any one in the present day stand forth and tell us that all the children in his parish are actually sanctified by the Holy Ghost? If he can, I can only say, that his parish is an exception, or else Bible words have no meaning. But I cannot yet believe that any one would say so. I believe there is but one explanation of all those expressions in the Catechism. They are the words of *charitable supposition*, and in no other sense can they be taken.

I lay these things before any one who fancies that all children are regenerated in

baptism, because of the expressions in the Prayer-book service, and I ask him to weigh them well. I am not to be moved from my ground by hard names, and bitter epithets, and insinuations that I am not a real Churchman. I am not to be shaken by scraps and sentences torn from their places, and thrust isolated and alone upon our notice. What I say is, that in interpreting the Baptismal Service of the Church we must be consistent.

Men say that the view of the Service I maintain is “non-natural and dishonest.” I deny the charge altogether. I might retort it on many of those who make it. Whose view is most unmanly, I ask? Is it the view of the man who expounds the Baptismal Service on one principle, and the Burial Service on another, or is it my view, which interprets all on one uniform and the same system?

We must be consistent I repeat, I refuse to interpret one part of the Prayer-book on one principle, and another part on another. The expressions to which I have been calling attention are either abstract dogmatic declarations, or charitable assumptions and suppositions. They cannot be both. And I now call upon those who hold all children to be invariably regenerated, because of strong expressions in the Baptismal Service, to carry out their principles honestly, fairly, fully, and consistently, if they can.

If all children are actually regenerated in baptism, because the Service says, “This child is regenerate,” then by parity of reasoning it follows that all people who use the Collect have faith, and a hearty desire to pray!—all women who are churchwomen put their trust in the Lord!—all members of the Church who are buried are dear brethren, and we hope rest in Christ!—and all children who say the Catechism are sanctified by the Holy Ghost and are elect!—Consistency demands it. Fair interpretation of words demands it. There is not a jot of evidence to show that those are not really sanctified and elect who say the Catechism, if you once maintain that those are all actually “regenerated” over whom the words of the Baptismal Service have been used.

But if I am to be told that the children who use the Catechism are not necessarily all elect and sanctified, and that the people buried are not necessarily all resting in Christ, and that the language in both cases is that of *charitable supposition*, then I reply, in common fairness let us be allowed to take the language of the Baptismal Service in the same sense.—I see one uniform principle running through all the Prayer-book, through all the Offices, through all the devotional Formularies of the Church. That principle is the principle of charitable supposition. Following that principle, I can make good sense and good divinity of every Service in the book. Without that principle I cannot. On that principle therefore I take my stand. If I say all baptized children are really, literally, and actually “regenerate,” because of certain words in the Baptismal Service, I contradict that principle. I believe our Service, were meant to be consistent one with another, and not contradictory. I therefore cannot say so.

III. My next answer to those who say all baptized persons are regenerate, because of the Baptismal Service, is this,—that *such a view would not agree with the Thirty-nine Articles*.

Now I am aware that many have a very low opinion of the Articles. Many seem

to know little about them, and to attach little weight to any quotation from them. “The Prayer-book! the Prayer-book! “is the watch-word of these people;---” all we have to do with is, what does the Prayer-book say?”—I disagree with such persons entirely. I look upon the Thirty nine Articles as the Church of England’s Confession of faith. I believe the words of the declaration which prefaces them are strictly true, “That the Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England,” and that any doctrine which does not entirely harmonize with those Articles is not the doctrine of the Church. I honour and love the book of Common Prayer, but I do not call it the Church’s Confession of faith. I delight in it as an incomparable manual of public worship, but if I want to ascertain the deliberate judgment of the Church upon any point of doctrine, I turn first to the Articles. What would a Lutheran or Scotch Presbyterian say of me, if I judged his Church by his minister’s prayers, and did not judge it by the Augsburg or Westminster Confessions? I do not say this in order to disparage the Prayer-book, but to point out calmly what it really is. I want to place the Thirty-nine Articles in their proper position before the reader’s mind, and so to make him see the real value of what they say. It is a circumstance deeply to be regretted that the Articles are not more read and studied by members of the Church of England.

I will now ask the reader of this paper to observe the striking prominence which the Articles everywhere give to the Bible as the only rule of faith. The Sixth Article says, that “Whatsoever is not read in Holy 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 requisite and necessary to salvation.” The Eighth says, that the “Three Creeds ought thoroughly to be believed and received, for they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture.”—The Twentieth says, that “It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.”--The Twenty-first says, that “things ordained by General Councils as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.”—The Twenty-second condemns certain Romish doctrines, because they “are grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but are rather repugnant to the Word of God.”—The Twenty-eighth condemns transubstantiation, because it “cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.”—The Thirty-fourth says, that traditions and ceremonies of the Church may be changed, so long as “nothing be ordained against God’s Word.”

All these quotations make it perfectly certain that the Bible is the sole rule of faith in the Church of England, and that nothing is a doctrine of the Church which cannot be entirely reconciled with the Word of God. And I see here a complete answer to those who say we make an idol of the Bible, and tell us we ought to go first to the Prayer-book, or to the opinion of the primitive Church! I see also that any meaning placed upon any part of the Prayer-book which at all disagrees with the Bible, and cannot be proved by the Bible, must be an incorrect meaning. I am not to listen to *any* interpretation of any Service in the Liturgy, which cannot be thoroughly reconciled with Scripture. It may sound very plausible. It may be defended very speciously. But does it in any way jar with plain texts in the Bible? If

it does, there is a mistake some-where. There is a flaw in the interpretation. On the very face of it, it is incorrect. It is utterly absurd to suppose that the founders of our Church would assert the supremacy of Scripture seven or eight times over, and then draw up a service in the Prayer-book at all inconsistent with Scripture! And unless the doctrine that all children baptized are necessarily regenerated in baptism, can first be shown to be in the Bible, it is a mere waste of time to begin any discussion of the subject by talking of the Prayer-book.

I ask the reader, in the next place, to observe what the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Articles say. The Twenty-fifth speaks generally of sacraments; and it says of them,—both of baptism and of the Lord's Supper,—” In such only as *worthily* receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation.” The Twenty-sixth speaks of the unworthiness of ministers not hindering the effect of the sacraments. It says, “Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, or the grace of God's gifts diminished, from such as *by faith and rightly* do receive the sacraments.” Here we have a broad general principle twice asserted. The benefit of either sacrament is clearly confined to such as *rightly, worthily, and with faith* receive it. The Romish notion of all alike getting good from it, *ex opere operate*, is with equal clearness pointed at and rejected. Now can this be reconciled with the doctrine that all who are baptized are at once invariably regenerated? I say decidedly that it cannot.

I ask the reader, in the next place, to observe the language of the Article about baptism, the Twenty-seventh. It says, “Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that are 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 forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.” Nothing can be more striking than the wise caution of all this language, when contrasted with the statements about baptism with which our ears are continually assailed in this day. There is not a word said which might lead us to suppose that a different principle is to be applied to the baptism of infants, from that which has been already laid down about all sacraments, in the Twenty-fifth Article. We are left to the inevitable conclusion that in all cases *worthy reception* is essential to the full efficacy of the sacrament. There is not a word said about a great inward and spiritual blessing invariably and necessarily attending the baptism of an infant. There is a perfect silence on that head, and a most speaking silence too. Surely a doctrine involving such immense and important consequences as the universal spiritual regeneration of all infants in baptism, would never have been passed over in entire silence, if it had been the doctrine of the Church. The authors of the Articles unquestionably knew the importance of the document they were drawing up. Unquestionably they weighed well every word and every statement they put down on paper. And yet they are perfectly silent on the subject! That silence is like the occasional silence of Scripture, a great fact, and one which can never be got over.

I ask the reader, in the next place, to observe what the Thirteenth Article says.

It tells us that “Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God,” etc. Here we are plainly taught that works may be done by men *before* grace and the Spirit are given to them, and this too by baptized members of the Church, for it is for them that the Articles are drawn up! But how can this be reconciled with the notion that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerated? How can any person be regenerated without having the “grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit”? There is only one view on which the Article can be reasonably explained. That view is the simple one, that many baptized people are not regenerate, have no grace and no indwelling of the Spirit, and that it is their case before they are born again and converted, which is here described.

The last Article I will ask the reader to observe is the Seventeenth. The subject of that Article is Predestination and Election. It is a subject which many people dislike exceedingly, and are ready to stop their ears whenever it is mentioned. I acknowledge freely that it is a deep subject. But there stands the Article! It cannot be denied that it forms part of our Church’s Confession of faith. Whether men like it or not, they must not talk as if it did not exist, in discussing the subject of the Church’s doctrines. The Article begins with laying down the great truth that God “hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation.” It then proceeds to describe the calling of these persons by God’s Spirit, and the consequences of that calling;—“They through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: *they be made sons of God by adoption*: they be made like the image of His only-begotten-Son, Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God’s mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.” Now all I ask the reader to consider is this, did the writers of the Articles mean to say that these persons were a separate and distinct class from those who were “regenerated,” or not? We must think so, if we consider baptism is always accompanied by Regeneration. The things spoken of in this description are things of which multitudes of baptized persons know nothing at all. I do not, however, believe that such an idea ever entered into the minds of those who wrote the Articles. I believe that they looked on Election, Justification, Adoption, and Regeneration, as the peculiar privileges of a certain number, but not of all members of the visible Church; and that just as all baptized people are not elect, justified, and sanctified, so also all baptized people are not regenerated. Very striking is the difference between the language of the Article which treats of baptism, and the Article which treats of election. In the former we find the cautious general statement, that in baptism “the promises of our adoption to be the sons of God *are visibly signed and sealed*.” In the latter we find the broad assertion that the elect “*be made the sons of God by adoption*.”

Such is the doctrine of the Articles. If Regeneration be what the Catechism describes it, “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,” I cannot find the slightest ground in the Articles for the notion that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate. There is an absence of any direct assertion of such a doctrine. There are several passages which appear completely inconsistent with it. I cannot suppose that the Articles and Liturgy were meant to be contrary one to the other.

The men who drew up the Thirty-nine Articles in 1562, were the men who compiled the Prayer-book in 1549. They drew up the Articles with a certain and distinct knowledge of the contents of the Prayer-book. Yet the interpretation of the Baptismal Service I am contending against would make the one formulary contradictory to the other. The conclusion I come to is clear and decided,—such an interpretation cannot be correct.

IV. My last answer to those who say that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerated, because of the wording of the Baptismal Service, is *this,—such a doctrine would make the Prayer-book disagree with the Homilies of the Church of England.*

The Homilies are not liked by some persons any more than the Thirty-nine Articles. No doubt they are human compositions, and therefore not perfect; no doubt they contain words and expressions here and there which might be amended; but, after all, the members of the Church of England are bound to recollect that the Thirty-fifth Article expressly asserts that the Homilies contain “a godly and wholesome doctrine.” Whatever their deficiencies may be, the general tone of *their doctrine is* clear and unmistakable. And any interpretation of the Prayer-book Services which makes those Services inconsistent with the Homilies must, on the very face of it, be an incorrect interpretation.

Let me then call the reader’s attention to the following passages in the Homilies:—

In the Homily of Charity there are the following passages: “What thing can we wish so good for us as the heavenly Father to reckon and take us for *His children*? And this shall we be sure of, saith Christ, if we love every man without exception. And if we do otherwise, saith He, we be no better than the Pharisees, publicans, and heathens, and shall have our reward with them, that is to be shut out from the number of God’s chosen children, and from His everlasting inheritance in heaven.”—And again: “He that beareth a good heart and mind, and useth well his tongue and deeds unto every man, friend or foe, he may know thereby that he hath charity. And then he is sure also that Almighty God taketh him for *His dearly-beloved son*; as Saint John saith, hereby manifestly are known the children of God from the children of the devil; for whosoever doth not love his brother belongeth not unto God.”

In the Homily of Almsdeeds there is this passage: “God of His mercy and special favour towards them whom He hath appointed to everlasting salvation, hath so offered His grace especially, and they have so received it faithfully, that, although by reason of their sinful living outwardly they seemed before to have been the children of wrath and perdition,—yet now, the Spirit of God working mightily in them, unto obedience to God’s will and commandments, they declare by their outward deeds and life, in the showing of mercy and charity—which cannot come but of the Spirit of God and His especial grace—that they are *the ‘undoubted children of God*, appointed to everlasting life. And so, as by their wickedness and ungodly living they showed themselves, according to the judgment of men, which follow the outward appearance, to be reprobates and castaways, so now by their obedience unto God’s holy will, and by their mercifulness and tender pity,—

wherein they show themselves to be like unto God, who is the Fountain and Spring of all mercy,—they declare openly and manifestly unto the sight of men that they are *the sons of God*, and elect of Him unto salvation.”

In the Homily for Whit-Sunday, I read the following passages: “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 flesh, saith Christ, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. As who should say, man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naughty, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly notion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit. the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions,—if he have any at all in him,—they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus. Did not God’s Holy Spirit work in the child David, when from a poor shepherd he became a princely prophet? Did not God’s Holy Spirit miraculously work in Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, when of a proud publican he became a humble and lowly evangelist? And who can choose but marvel to consider that Peter should become, of a simple fisher, a chief and mighty Apostle? Paul of a cruel and bloody persecutor, to teach the Gentiles? Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to *regenerate* men, and, as it were, to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be *nothing like the men that they were before*. Neither doth He think it sufficient inwardly to work the spiritual and new birth of man unless He do also dwell and abide in him.—Oh, what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth within him!”

And then comes the following passage, which I request the reader specially to observe: “How shall I know that the Holy Ghost is within me? some men perchance will say: Forsooth, as the tree is known by his fruit, so is also the Holy Ghost. The fruits of the Holy Ghost, according to the mind of St. Paul, are these: love, joy, peace, long - suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, etc. Contrariwise the deeds of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulation, wrath, contention, sedition, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like. Here is now that glass wherein thou must behold thyself, and discern whether thou have the Holy Ghost within thee or the spirit of the flesh. If thou see that thy works be virtuous and good, consonant to the prescribed 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 but deceive thyself.”—Once more: “To conclude and make an end, ye shall briefly take this short lesson: wheresoever ye find the spirit of arrogance and pride, the spirit of envy, hatred, contention, cruelty, murder, extortion, witchcraft, necromancy, etc., assure yourselves that there is the spirit of the devil, and not of God, albeit they pretend outwardly to the world never so much holiness. For as the Gospel teacheth us, the Spirit of Jesus is a good spirit, an holy spirit, a sweet spirit, a lowly spirit, a merciful spirit, full of charity and love, full of forgiveness and pity, not rendering evil for evil, extremity for extremity, but

overcoming evil with good, and remitting all offence even from the heart. According to which rule, if any man live uprightly, of him it may safely be pronounced that he hath the Holy Ghost within him: *if not, then it is a plain token that he doth usurp the name of .the Holy Ghost in vain.*"

I lay these passages before the reader in their naked simplicity. I will not weary him with long comments upon them. In fact none are needed. Two things, I think, are abundantly evident. One is, that in the judgment of the Homilies, no men are the "undoubted children of God "and "sons of God," and elect unto salvation, unless it is proved by their charity and good works. The other is, that no man has the Holy Ghost within him, in the judgment of the Homilies, except he brings forth the fruits of the Spirit in his life But all this is flatly contradictory to the doctrine of those who say that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate. They tell us that all people are made the children of God by virtue of their baptism, what-ever be their manner of living, and must be addressed as such all their lives,—and that all people have the grace of the Holy Ghost within them by virtue of their baptism, and must be considered "regenerate," whatever fruits they may be bringing forth in their daily habits and conversation. According to this, the Homilies say one thing and the Prayer-book says another! I leave the reader to judge whether it is in the least degree probable this can be the case. These Homilies were put forth by authority, in the year 1562, and appointed to be read in churches in order to supply the deficiency of good preaching, and when they had been once read, they were to be "repeated and read again." And yet according to the interpretation of the Baptismal Service I am contending against, these Homilies contradict the Prayer-book! Surely it is difficult to avoid the conclusion which I most unhesitatingly come to myself, that a system of interpreting the Baptismal Service which sets the Prayer-book at variance with the Homilies, as well as with the Articles, must be incorrect.

I leave the subject of the Church of En^gland's views about Regeneration here. I wish I could have spoken of it more shortly. But I have been anxious to meet the objections drawn from the Baptismal Service fully, openly, and face to face. I have not a doubt in my own mind as to the true doctrine of the Church in the question. But many, I know, have been troubled and perplexed about it, and few appear to me to see the matter as clearly as they might. And it is to supply such persons with information, as well as to meet the arguments of adversaries, that I have gone into the question so fully as I have.

Other points might easily be dwelt upon, which would serve to throw even more light on the subject, and seem still further to bear out the views that I maintain, as to the real doctrine of the Church of England about Regeneration.

Is it not notorious, for instance, that the Article about baptism in our Confession of faith was entirely altered, and brought into its present form, when Edward the Sixth came to the throne? Our Reformers found an Article drawn up in 1536, in which the doctrine of grace always accompanying the baptism of infants was plainly and unmistakably asserted.

The Articles of 1536 say, "By the sacrament of baptism, infants, innocents, and children, do also obtain remission of their sins, the grace and favour of God, and be made thereby the very sons and children of God." The Reformers of our

Church, in drawing up the Articles of 1552, entirely abstained from making any such assertion. They framed our present Article on baptism, in which no such unqualified statement can be found. Now, why did they do so? Why did they not adopt the language of the old Article, if they really believed its doctrine? Let any one answer these questions.—Did it not plainly mean that they did not approve of the doctrine of the invariable Regeneration of infants in baptism?

Again, is it not notorious that the Irish Articles of 1615 have never been repealed or disannulled by the Church of Ireland? Subscription to these Articles is undoubtedly not required at Irish ordinations. Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles only is held sufficient. But it was distinctly understood, when the Thirty-nine Articles were received by the Irish Church, in 1634, that their reception did not imply any slur on the Irish Articles, and only testified the agreement of the Church of Ireland with that of England, both in doctrine and discipline. Now these Irish Articles most plainly declare that the “regenerate” are the elect, the justified, the believers, the true Christians, who persevere unto the end; and no less plainly imply that those who are not true believers are not “regenerate!” There can be no mistake about this. No man, I think, can read these Articles and not see it. And yet there is the closest union between the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, and always has been. How could this be, if the Church of Ireland’s view about the “regenerate” had always been considered false and heretical? Why were the Irish Articles not rejected as unsound, when, for uniformity’s sake, the Irish Articles were received? How was it, that for many years after 1634, the Irish Bishops always required subscription to both Irish and English Articles at their ordinations? Let these questions also be answered. Did it not show plainly that the two Churches were not thought to be at variance upon the subject of Regeneration?⁸

Again, is it not notorious that almost all the Bishops and leading divines who took part in the Reformation of our Church, were men who held opinions which, rightly or wrongly, are called Calvinistic, and in the main were thoroughly agreed with those clergy who are termed Evangelical in the present day. There is no room for doubt on this point. It has been allowed by many who do not approve of Evangelical opinions themselves. They were frequent communication with the leading Swiss Reformers. They procured the help of men like Peter Martyr and Bucer to assist them in carrying on the work of Reformation. And yet we are asked to believe that our Reformers deliberately framed a Baptismal Service containing a doctrine which is inconsistent with their own views. Is it likely, is it reasonable, is it agreeable to common sense, to suppose they would do such a thing? And is it not an acknowledged axiom in interpreting all public documents, such as oaths, articles of faith, and religious formularies, that they are always to be interpreted in the sense of those who drew them up and imposed them?⁹

But I leave all these points, and hasten to a conclusion.

It only remains for me now to wind up all I have said with a few words of solemn appeal to every one into whose hands this paper may happen to fall.

I say “solemn appeal,” and I say it advisedly. I feel strongly the immense importance of sound and Scriptural views of the whole question I have been considering. I feel it especially as respects that part of it which touches the doctrine of

the Church of England. Men sometimes say it makes no difference whether we think all baptized persons are regenerate or not. They tell us it all comes to the same thing in the long run. I cannot say so. To my humble apprehension it seems to make an immense difference. If I tell a man that he has grace in his heart, and only needs to “stir up a gift,” already within him, it is one thing. If I tell him that he is dead in sins, and must be “born again,” it is quite another. The moral effect of the two messages must, on the very face of it, be widely different. The one, I contend, is calculated by God’s blessing to awaken the sinner. The other, I contend, is calculated to lull him to sleep. The one, I maintain, is likely to feed sloth, check self-examination, and encourage an easy self-satisfied state of soul: he has got some grace within him whenever he likes to use it,—why should he be in a hurry, why be afraid?—The other, I maintain, is likely to rouse convictions, drive him to self-inquiry, and frighten him out of his dangerous security: he has nothing within him to rest upon,—he must find a refuge and remedy, he is lost and perishing,—what must he do to be saved?—The one message, I affirm, is likely to keep men natural men, the other to make them spiritual men,—the one to have no effect upon the conscience, the other to lead to Christ. Let men say what they will, I, for one, dare not say I think it all comes to the same thing.

I see fresh reason continually for dreading the doctrine that all baptized persons are regenerate. I hear of laymen who once did run well, losing their first love, and appearing to make ship-wreck of their faith. I hear of ministers, who once bade fair to be pillars in the Church, stumbling at this stumbling-stone, and marring all their usefulness. I see the doctrine leavening and spoiling the religion of many private Christians, and insensibly paving the way for a long train of unscriptural notions. I see it interfering with every leading doctrine of the Gospel,—it encourages men to believe that election, adoption, justification, and the indwelling of the Spirit, are all conferred on them in baptism;—and then, to avoid the difficulties which such a system entails, the fulness of all these mighty truths is pared down, mutilated, and explained away; or else the minds of congregations are bewildered with contradictory and inconsistent statements. I see it ultimately producing in some minds a mere *sacramental Christianity*,—a Christianity in which there is much said about union with Christ, but it is a union begun only by baptism, and kept up only by the Lord’s Supper,—a

Christianity in which the leading doctrines that the Apostle Paul dwells on in almost all his Epistles, have nothing but a subordinate position,—a Christianity in which Christ has not His rightful office, and faith has not its rightful place. I see all this, and mourn over it unfeignedly. I cannot think that the subject I am urging on the reader’s attention is one of secondary importance. And once more I say, I cannot leave him without a solemn appeal to his conscience, whoever he may be, into whose hands this paper may fall.

(a) I appeal then to all men who love the Bible, and make it their standard of truth and error; and in saying this, I address myself especially to all members of the Church of England. I ask you to observe the manner of living of multitudes of baptized persons on every side of you,—I ask you to observe how their hearts are entirely set on this world, and buried in its concerns. And I then ask you, Are they born of God? If you say Yes, I answer, How can that be, when your Bible ex-

pressly says, "He that is born of God doeth righteousness, and doth not commit sin"? (1 John ii. 29; iii. 9.) Are they children of God? If you say Yes, I answer, How can that be, when the Bible says expressly, "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God"? (1 John iii. 10.) Are they sons of God? If you say Yes, I answer, How can that be, when the Bible says expressly, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"? (Rom. viii. 14.) What will you say to these things? Surely you will not turn your back upon the Bible.

(b) I appeal next to all who love the good old rule of the Bible, "Every tree is known by its own fruit." (Luke vi. 44.) I ask you to try the great bulk of professing Christians by the fruits they bring forth, and to say what kind of fruits they are. Is it not perfectly true that many baptized persons know little or nothing of the fruits of the Spirit,—and much, only too much, of the works of the flesh? Is it not certain that they are destitute of those marks of being born of God which the Bible describes? What will you say to these things? Surely if you abide by your old principle you will hardly say that all baptized people have within them the Holy Spirit.

(c) I appeal next to all who love the Church Catechism, and profess to be guided by its statements about the sacraments. You are aware that the inward and spiritual grace of baptism is there said to be "a death unto sin and a new birth into righteousness." I ask you, as in the sight of God, to say whether any evidence whatever of this grace can be seen in the lives of many baptized persons. Where is their deadness to sin? They live in it. It is their element. Where is their new birth unto righteousness? They are habitual "servants of sin, and free from righteousness." (Rom. vi. 20.) Sin reigns and rules in their mortal bodies. They are enemies of all righteousness. What will you say to these things? Surely you will not tell us that the outward and visible sign is always attended by the inward and spiritual grace. If so, grace and no grace are the same thing!

(d) I appeal, lastly, to all who dread Antinomianism and licentious doctrine. You have heard of those wretched persons who profess to glory in Christ and free grace, and yet think it no shame to live immoral lives, and continue in wilful sin. You think such conduct horrible, an insult to the Lord Jesus, and a disgrace to Christianity. And you are right to think so. But what will you say to the doctrine, that a man may have the Holy Spirit, and yet not bring forth the fruits of the Spirit;—may have grace in his heart, and yet show no sign of it in his life? What will you say to these things? Surely, if you are consistent, you will recoil from the idea of dishonouring the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, no less than you do from dishonouring the Lord Himself. Surely you will shrink from saying that all baptized persons have the Holy Ghost.

Once for all, in concluding this paper, I protest against the charge that I am no true Churchman because I hold the opinions that I do. In the matter of true and real attachment to the Church of England, I will not give place by subjection to those who are called High Churchmen, for one moment. Have they signed the Thirty-nine Articles *ex ammo* and *bond fide*? So have I.—Have they declared their full assent to the Liturgy and all things contained in it? So have I.—Have they promised obedience to the Bishops? So have I.—Do they think Episcopacy

the best form of Church government? So do I.—Do they honour the sacraments? So do I.—Do they think them generally necessary to salvation? So do I.—Do they labour for the prosperity of the Church? So do I.—Do they urge on their congregations the privileges of the Church of England? So do I.—Do they deprecate all needless secession and separation from her ranks? So do I.—Do they oppose the enemies of the Church, both Romish and infidel? So do I.—Do they love the Prayer-book of the Church of England? So do I. I repudiate with indignation the unworthy imputation that I interpret any part of that Prayer-book in a dishonest or unnatural sense. I offer no opinion as to the wisdom and prudence of the Reformers in drawing up a Service in such a way as to admit of its language being misunderstood, as it unhappily is. But I believe with all my heart that the view I hold of the meaning of the Prayer-book is the view of the very men by whom it was compiled.

One thing I cannot see to be essential in order to prove myself a true Churchman. I cannot see that I ought to hold doctrines which make the Prayer-book clash and jar with the Articles and Homilies. I cannot see that I must hold that all baptized persons are necessarily and invariably born again. I protest against the system of making the baptismal register, and not our lives, the great evidence of our Regeneration. I recoil from the idea that a man may have grace, and yet nobody see it in his behaviour,—may have a new heart, and yet none discover it in his conduct,—may have the Holy Spirit, and yet no fruit of the Spirit appear in any of his ways. I consider that such a notion affects the honour of the Holy Ghost and the cause of true holiness, and I dare not allow it. I consider it throws confusion over the whole system of Christ's Gospel, and involves the necessity of calling things in religion by wrong names, and I dare not allow it. I think as highly of baptism as any one when rightly received. I count Churchmanship a high privilege; but I think Regeneration a higher privilege still, and one to which, unhappily, many Churchmen never attain.

I deny that I hold any new doctrine about Regeneration in saying this. I appeal to the Bible; I appeal to the Articles; I appeal to the Prayer-book; I appeal to the Homilies. In all of them, I say unhesitatingly, I see the doctrine I maintain. I appeal to the writings of all the principal Reformers of our Church; I appeal to the works of some of the best and worthiest Bishops who have ever adorned the Bench. I assert confidently that it has been preached in Church of England pulpits ever since the time of the Reformation,—in many at some periods, in some at all. There never has been wanting a succession of faithful men, who have constantly said to the mass of their congregation, "Ye must be born again." There never was an attempt to shut the door against a minister for preaching such doctrine, before the case of Mr. Gorham in our own day. In short, if I err, I feel that I err in good company. I err with Bishop Hooper and Bishop Latimer, those faithful martyrs of Christ. I err with Jewel, with Leighton, and Usher, and Hall, and Hopkins, and Carleton, and Davenant, and many others, of whom I have not time to speak particularly. And when I think of this, I am not disturbed by the charge that I do not agree with Archbishop Laud and the Non jurors, or even with others of later date still.

We are all travelling to a place where controversies will be forgotten, and noth-

ing but eternal realities remain. Would we have a real hope in that day? We must see to it that we have a real Regeneration. Nothing else will do. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

The following quotations, bearing on the subject discussed in this paper, are drawn from writers, of whom some are the greatest and most learned divines the world has ever seen. They are specially commended to the attention of members of the Church of England.

"In baptism those that come feignedly, and those that come unfeignedly, both be washed with the sacramental water, but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost, and clothed with Christ."

"All that be washed with water be not washed with the Holy Spirit."—*Archbishop Cranmer* 1553.

"Good and evil, clean and unclean, holy and profane, must needs pass by the sacrament of baptism, except you will indeed in more ample and large measure tie the grace of God unto it than ever did the Papists, and say all that be baptized be also saved."—*Archbishop Whitgift*. 1583.

"Are all they 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. Surely no! Though God hath ordained these outward means for the conveyance of grace to our souls, yet there is no necessity that we should tie the working of God's Spirit to the sacraments more than to the Word."—*Archbishop Usher*. 1624.

"In baptism, as the one part of that holy mystery is Christ's blood, so is the other part the material water. Neither are these parts joined together

in place, but in mystery; and therefore they be oftentimes severed, and the one is received without the other."—*Bishop Jewel*. 1559.

"Christ said, 'Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God, Ye must have a Regeneration: and what is this Regeneration? It is not to be christened in water as these fire-brands (the Roman Catholics) expound it, and nothing else.'"—*Bishop Latimer*. 1540.

"All receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of His grace."—*Richard Hooker*. 1597.

"Not all are regenerated who are washed with the baptismal water."—*Dr. Whittaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge*. 1590.

"Grace sometimes precedes the sacrament, sometimes follows it, and some-times does not even follow it."—*Theodoret*. 450 A.D.

"All did drink the same spiritual drink, but not with all was God well pleased, and when the sacraments were all common, the grace was not common to all, which constitutes the virtue of the sacraments. So also now, when faith is revealed which was then veiled, the laver of Regeneration is common to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but the grace itself of which they are sacraments, and by which the members of the body of Christ are regenerated with their Head, is not common to all."—*Augustine on the 77th Psalm*. 390 A.D.

"Outward baptism may be administered, where inward conversion of the heart is wanting; and, on the other hand, inward conversion of the heart may exist, where outward baptism has never been received."—*Augustine's Treatise on Baptism*. 390 A.D.

"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."—*Archbishop Usher*. 1624.

"We must not glory because we are made partakers of the external sacrament, unless we obtain besides the internal and quickening work of Christ. For if this be wanting, as was said heretofore to Jews, 'O ye uncircumcised in heart,' so it may be justly said to us, 'O ye unbaptized in heart.'"—*Bishop Davenant*. 1627.

"If outward baptism were a cause in itself possessed of that power, either natural or supernatural, without the present operation whereof no such effect could possibly grow, it must then follow that, seeing effects do never precede the necessary causes out of which they spring, no man could ever receive grace before baptism, which is apparently both known and confessed to be otherwise in many particulars."—*Richard Hooker*. 1597.

“The sacrament hath no grace included in it; but to those that receive it well it is turned to grace. After that manner the water in baptism hath grace promised, and by that grace the Holy Spirit is given; not that grace is included in water, but that grace cometh by water.”—*Bishop Ridley*. 1547.

“What is so common as water?—what is so common as bread and wine? Yet Christ promiseth it to be found there, when He is sought with a faithful *heart*.”—*Bishop Latimer*. 1540.

“That baptism hath a power, is clear, in that it is so expressly said, ‘it doth save us.’ What kind of power is equally clear from the way it is here expressed;—not by a natural power of the element;—though adapted and sacramentally used, it only can wash away the filth of the body;—its physical efficacy or power reached no further: but it is in the hand of the spirit of God as other sacraments are, and as the Word itself is, to purify the conscience, and convey grace and salvation to the soul, by the reference it hath to, and union with that which it represents. Sacraments are neither empty signs to them who believe, nor effectual causes of grace to them that believe not. Sacraments do not save all who partake of them, yet they do really and effectually save believers, for whose salvation they are means, as the other external ordinances of God do. Though they have not that grace which is peculiar to the author of them, yet a power they have such as befits their nature, and by reason of which they are truly said to sanctify and justify, and so to save, as the Apostle here avers of *baptism*.”—*Archbishop Leighton*. 1680.

“Is Christ and the cleansing power of His blood only barely signified in the sacrament of baptism? Nay, more. The inward things are really exhibited to the believer as well as the outward. There is that sacramental union between them that the one is conveyed and sealed up by the other. Hanoi) are those phrases of being ‘born again of water and the Holy Ghost,’ etc., etc. The sacraments being rightly received do effect that which they do represent.”—*Archbishop Usher*. 1624.

“What is the advantage or benefit of baptism to the common Christian? The same as was the benefit of circumcision to the Jew, outward. (Rom. ii. ‘28.) There is a general grace of baptism which all the baptized partake of as a common favour; and that is their admission into the visible body of the Church; their matriculation and outward incorporation 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 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 sort of the brethren. 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 is attended upon always by that general grace, but not always by that special.”—*Archbishop Usher*. 1624.

“Let us learn not to confide with Papists in the *opus operatum*, but inquire whether we possess all the other *things*, without which the inward effects of baptism are not secured.”—*Bishop Davenant*. 1627.

“Many ignorant people among us, for want of better teaching, harbour in their minds such Popish conceits, especially that baptism doth confer grace upon all by the work done, for they commonly look no higher: and they conceive a kind of inherent virtue and Christendom, as they call it, necessarily in-fused into children, by having the water cast upon their faces.”—*Archbishop Usher*. 1624.

“It is a pitiful thing to see the ignorance of the most professing Christianity, and partaking of the outward *seals* of it, yet not knowing what they mean; not appreciating the spiritual dignity and virtue of them. A confused fancy they have of some good in them, and this rising to the other extreme to a superstitious confidence in this simple performance and participation of them, as if that carried some inseparable virtue with it, which none could miss of who are sprinkled with the water of baptism and share in the element of bread and wine in the Lord’s *Supper*.”—*Archbishop Leighton*. 1680.

“Wicked is that Popish doctrine, that original sin is forgiven by baptism; and for all actual offences after baptism, partly by Christ’s blood, and partly

by our own satisfaction, we attain and get pardon of *them*.”—*Bishop Babington, Bishop of Exeter*. 1594.

“Let us consider how corruptly the Church of Rome teacheth us touching this sacrament (baptism), and how horribly they have abused it. First, they teach that baptism doth confer grace and

wash away our sins *ex opere operato*; that is, even by the very washing only of the water, though there be no good motion of faith or belief in the heart of him that is baptized.”—*Bishop Cooper*. 1570.

“The Papists maintain that grace is conferred upon little children in the sacrament of the New Testament, without faith or any good motive. This is to attribute a power to sacraments of themselves, and by a virtue of their own, in the case of little children: which we say is false. For we assert that *grace* is not conferred by the sacraments even upon little children from the work wrought, so that all necessarily have grace that receive the sacraments.”—*Dr. Whittaker*. 1580.

“If there be that cure that they speak of in the baptized, how is it that there is so little effect or token thereof? How is it that after baptism there remaineth so great crookedness and perverseness of nature, which we find to be no less than men from the beginning have complained of? How is it that it is so rare and hard a matter to be trained to goodness, and so easy and ready a matter to become nought?”—*Bishop Robert Abbot*. 1615.

“From those who are baptized in infancy subsequent faith is required; which if they exhibit not afterward, they retain only the outward sanctification of baptism, the inward effect of sanctification they have *not*.”—*Bishop-Davenant*. 1627.

“The true way of judging whether the Spirit of God be in us, is to consider our own deeds. Righteousness and holiness are the only certain marks of regeneration.”—*Bishop Sherlock*. 1740.

As for those who are visibly reclaimed from a notorious wicked course, in them we likewise frequently see this change gradually made by strong impressions made upon their minds, most frequently by the Word of God, sometimes by His providence,—till at length, by the grace of God, they come to a fixed purpose and resolution of forsaking their sins and turning to God; and after many strugglings and conflicts with their lusts, and the strong bias of their evil habits, this resolution, assisted by the grace of God, doth effectually prevail, and make a real change both in the temper of their minds, and course of their lives; and when this is done, and not before, they are said to be *regenerate*.”—*Archbishop Tillotson*. 1691.

“The only certain proof of Regeneration is *victory*.”—*Bishop Wilson*, 1697.

1 I willingly concede that this low view of Regeneration is held by many holy and good men, like Bishop Davenant and Bishop Hopkins, whose doctrinal views are in all other respects Scriptural and sound. But I can call no man master. Warrant of Scripture for drawing a distinction between baptismal and spiritual Regeneration, I can nowhere find.

2 “The interpretation of this place that I judge to be the most natural and unforced is this: ‘He that is born of God doth not commit sin;’ that is, he doth not sin in that malignant manner in which the children of the devil do; he doth not make a trade of sin, nor live in the constant and allowed practice of it. There is a great difference betwixt regenerate and unregenerate persons in the very sins that they commit. All indeed sin; but a child of God cannot sin,—that is, though he doth sin, yet he cannot sin after such a manner as wicked and unregenerate men *do*.”—*Bishop Hopkins*. 1670.

3 “John i. 13. John iii. 3. John iii. 5. John iii. 7. John iii. 8. Titus iii. 5. 1 Peter i. 3. 1 Peter i. 23. James i. 18. 1 John ii. 29. 1 John iii. 9. 1 John iv. 7. 1 John v. 1. 1 John v. 4. 1 John v. 18.

4 If infants are in themselves worthy to receive grace, because they put no bar in its way, let this question be answered:—“Why do not missionaries to the heathen baptize all the heathen infants whom they can find, without waiting for the will of their parents?” No Protestant missionary at any rate thinks of doing so.

If the children of believing and unbelieving parents are sure to receive exactly the same amount of grace in baptism, by virtue of the baptismal water, in whatever state of mind their parents bring them to the font, the whole sacrament becomes nothing but a form.

5 It may be well to remark that this is also the doctrine of the Church of Scotland. “The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the *right use* of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred* by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in His appointed *time*.”—*Scotch Confession of Faith*, chap. 28.

6 “There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.”—*Scotch Confession of Faith*, chap. 27,

7 “What say you of infants baptized that are born in the Church? Doth the inward grace in their baptism always attend upon the outward sign? Surely, no. The sacrament of baptism is effectual 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 is it not any judgment of certainty. We may be mistaken.”—Archbishop *Usher*. 1620.

“All that receive baptism are called children of God, regenerate, justified: for to us they must be taken for such *in charity*, until they show themselves other. But the author (Bishop Montague, a friend of Archbishop Laud) affirmeth that this is not left to men’s charity, as you, saith he, do inform the world, because we are taught in the service book of our Church earnestly to believe that Christ hath favourably received these infants that are baptized, that He hath embraced them with the arms of His mercy, that He hath given them the blessing of everlasting life; and out of that belief and persuasion we are to give thanks faithfully and devoutly for it. All this we receive and make no doubt of it: but when we have said all we must come to this,—that all this is *the charity of the Church*, and what more can you make of it? “—*George Carleton, Bishop of Chichester*. 1619

“We are to distinguish between the *judgment of charity* and the judgment of certainty. For although in the general we know that not every one that is baptized is justified or shall be saved, yet when we come to particulars, we are to judge of them that are baptized that they are regenerated and justified, and shall be saved, until they shall discover themselves not to be such. And so our book of Common Prayer speaketh of *them*.”—*George Downname, Bishop of Derry*. 1620.

“The office for baptizing infants carries on the supposition of an internal Regeneration.”—Bishop *Burnet*. 1689.

“There is justification for that prayer in our public liturgy, when the congregation gives thanks to God for the child baptized, that it hath pleased Him to regenerate this infant by His Holy Spirit, etc. For it cannot be denied but that the holy ordinance of baptism, the seal of our sanctification, doth take effect many times immediately in the infusion of present grace into the infant’s soul, though many times also it hath not its effect till many years after. But seeing it is questionably true in many, we may and must *charitably suppose* it in every one, for when we come to particulars whom dare we exclude? And this we may do without tying the grace of Regeneration necessarily to baptism, as some complain that we do.”—*William Pemble, Magdalen Hall, Oxford*. 1635.

“The Apostles always, when they descend to particular men or Churches, PRESUME every Christian to be elect, sanctified, justified, and in the way of being glorified, until he himself shall have proved himself to be wicked, or an apostate.”—*Bishop Davenant*. 1627.

“As to what he says, that no one can be a minister of the Church of England, who is not certainly persuaded of the Regeneration of every infant baptized, neither also is that true. The minister truly gives God thanks after each infant has been baptized, that it has pleased God to regenerate him with His Holy Spirit. But it does not then follow that he ought to be certain of the Regeneration of every infant baptized. For it is sufficient if he is persuaded of the Regeneration of some only,—for instance, of elect infants, or if you like, even of some only of their number, that on that account he may be able, nay ought, to give God thanks for each and all baptized. Since who is elect he knows not: and it is but just that he should *by the judgment of charity presume*, that as many as he baptizes are elect,—and if any are regenerated in baptism (which none but a Socinian or other Catabaptist will deny) regenerated.”—*Dr. Durel, Dean of Windsor, and Chaplain to the King*. 1677.

“Though the work of grace be not perfectly wrought, yet when the means are used, without something appearing to the contrary, we ought *to presume* of the good effect.”—*Bishop Pearson*. 1680.

8 It was Archbishop Usher himself who proposed, in 1634, that the English Articles should be received by the Irish Church. Yet he was the principal author of the Irish Articles of 1615. His biographer says, “He very well understood the Articles of both Churches, and did then know that they were so far from being inconsistent or contradictory to each other, that he thought the Irish Articles did only contain the doctrine of the Church of England more fully.”—*Life of Archbishop Usher, by Dr. Parr, his chaplain*. 1686.

9 “It is a settled rule with casuists, that oaths are always to be taken in the sense of the imposers; the same is the case of solemn leagues or covenants. Without this principle, no faith, trust, or mutual confidence could be kept up amongst men.”—*Waterland on the Arian Subscriptions. Works*, vol. ii, chap. iii.

There is a passage in Bishop Sanderson’s *Prelections, on the Obligation of an Oath*, to the same effect.