

only available recreation. I attribute my good health in China to the active life I led. I travelled a great deal, both in summer and winter. Some European residents think it impossible to travel in the heat of summer, but in this they are quite mistaken." He was asked: "From your experience do you consider China a hopeful field for mission work?" and said: "The most hopeful of all, I think. There are no caste prejudices, none of the secret hostility which is so formidable a barrier to Christian progress in India. The Chinaman is an open enemy or an open friend. He does not belong, like the Hindoo, to a subject race, obliged to cringe to the conqueror, while all the time he nurses a hidden enmity. The Chinese hates all foreigners, and is not afraid to say so. When he is gained to Christianity he makes a staunch and loyal convert. The rate of progress in China within the last twenty years has been amazing."

#### TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We have received permission from the Post Office authorities to enclose the printed envelopes as usual, and we trust the gentle reminder this week will be a sufficient hint for all to promptly pay arrears, as well as their subscription in advance.

#### REGENERATION.

BY REV. VERNON STALEY.

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There is much confusion in many minds concerning Conversion and Regeneration. This confusion arises in a great measure from a misapprehension of our Lord's words to Nicodemus, as to the necessity of the New Birth, recorded in St. John iii. 1-14. Regeneration is the being born again, "of Water and of the Spirit." It is the act of God the Holy Ghost upon the soul in Baptism, a single, definite act, which can never be repeated. In Baptism God gives the soul the New Birth, or, in other words, regenerates it. In Regeneration we receive a new nature, and pass out from the natural into the supernatural order of things. This new nature is as a seed planted within the soul, and it is intended to grow and bear fruit. Conversion, as we shall see in the next section, consists in the conscious turning of the will to God. It is the act of man, through grace, as he accepts the mercy and love offered by Jesus Christ. Thus we see that Regeneration and Conversion are quite distinct, since a converted man is not, necessarily, a regenerated man. From a comparison of Acts ix. 9 with Acts xxii. 13, 16, we learn that St. Paul was not baptized until three days after his conversion. In his case conversion preceded the New Birth. St. John does not, in his Gospel, tell of the institution of the sacrament of Holy Baptism, but he records a very full explanation of its meaning in the words of our Lord to Nicodemus. In this passage our Lord declares that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God"; and He explains this statement by adding, "Except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Thus, "to be born of Water and of the Spirit" is the same as "to be born again." Now the joining together of "Water" and "the Spirit" can only refer to Baptism. To be "born of Water and of the Spirit" cannot mean "to be converted," for the use of water has no part in conversion. If our Lord had said, "Except a man be born of the Spirit,"

only, we might have been in doubt whether He meant conversion or not; but since he said "of Water and of the Spirit," there can be no doubt as to His meaning. Hooker writes:—"Of all the ancients (writers) there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise expound or allege the place" (i. e., St. John iii. 5), "than as implying external Baptism." St. Paul uses an expression which confirms this interpretation. In his epistle to Titus, he writes, "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The word used for "washing" means a "bath," which implies the use of water. So here again Regeneration or the New Birth is associated with the use of water—the bath of the font.

The first words that the priest is directed to say, after baptizing a child and receiving it into the Church, are these—"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is Regenerate." Therefore, every person who has been rightly baptized, has, through the Spirit, been born again. We must not think that because a person has been born again, he will necessarily be saved. Regeneration is not final salvation, but it places a soul in such a relation to God as to make salvation possible. The germ of the new life, implanted in the soul at Baptism, needs to be cared for and developed. The new life in Christ is as a seed within the soul, which needs to be watered and tended, that it may live and grow until sin is destroyed, and the new life is perfected. There are thus two forces at work in the soul of the regenerate man; good and evil meet in the baptized, and one or the other in the end must prevail. The issue of the conflict depends upon the will, working with or against grace.

#### CONFIRMATION.

The apostolic rite of Confirmation is the natural and necessary complement of infant baptism; though by apostolic usage and the rule of the Church everywhere and always, until modern times, it is applied to adults also. The fact that the vows in Holy Baptism, when administered in infancy, are made by proxy, implies a future occasion when their responsibility may be voluntarily assumed. And this is done in connection with the laying on of hands and the precatory benediction of the Bishop, together with the invocation of the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost. It has constant reference to the baptismal vow, to the promises then made, and the system of Christian instruction then prescribed; and it looks forward to the admission of the candidate to his full privilege, as a member of Christ, in the Holy Communion. A twofold preparation is needful to obtain fully the blessing it conveys: There must be a preparation of mind, which implies an intelligent perception of the principles of faith and duty; and there must be a preparation of heart, by which the spiritual nature shall be made ready to receive the manifold gifts of grace. Both of these processes are presumed to continue from the first intelligent days of childhood to the hour when the catechumen becomes a communicant. The intellectual preparation is that which is prescribed in holy baptism,—the knowledge of the great truths of our holy religion as embodied in the three great symbols of faith, devotion, and duty, together with such other instructions as are in the short catechism contained. And the preparation of heart implies that devout and prayerful habit of thought which is cultivated through all the years of a Christian childhood, and which is, in its truest sense, that scriptural conversion which is the pro-

cess of our whole mortal life. While this general preparation is the work of all the early years of a human life, there is a special interest connected with the administration of the apostolic rite, and it is customary for the parish priest to meet the class of candidates, in anticipation of the visitation of the Bishop, for instruction in regard to the Christian life, and especially with reference to their first communion. The "Order of Confirmation" states very distinctly the outline of truth and duty which the Church prescribes. It includes three distinct and yet closely related particulars: (1) The knowledge of the creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism; (2) The ratification of the promises made by sponsors in baptism; and (3) The promise of obedience in the future and the "endeavour to observe such things as by their confession they have assented unto." The rubric at the close of the office defines the relation which the rite of Confirmation bears to the Holy Communion. The service throughout is simple and almost interprets itself. The occasion of its use is always an interesting one in the parish, as the gathered harvest of the parochial year. It is the form by which those who have to come to years of discretion are enabled to make their good confession of Christ before the world, and to be enrolled among the number of His acknowledged disciples, by the personal ratification of their baptismal vow. The verses which follow this ratification recognize the truth that all our spiritual strength must come from God; and the prayer which is then used refers alike to the blessings conferred in holy baptism and the manifold gifts of grace needful in the subsequent warfare of the Christian life. The "laying on of hands" is accompanied by a benediction which states both the irrevocable character of the Christian vow and the progressive nature of the Christian life. It asks that the person confirmed may continue to be the Lord's forever, by the defence of his heavenly grace; and that he may daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more through all the disciplines of this life until he come to the everlasting kingdom. The idea of a progressive sanctification of heart and life here expressed is almost the echo of the apostolic injunction, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And it conceives of our earthly probation as a constant advance in holiness and duty until its consummation is reached in the diviner life to come. The succeeding prayers imply the same conception of the Christian life, and the service concludes with the blessing of the Holy Trinity upon the person confirmed. The use of the word "Confirmation" in two different senses, in connection with this office, has created some confusion of thought concerning the nature of the rite. The candidate does "ratify and confirm" his baptismal vow; but also he is confirmed and strengthened in his religious life. It is this latter sense which gives the name to the rite. "The laying on of hands" is a significant and essential act. It corresponds to the manual act in the ordination of the clergy to their sacred office; and its significance here as applied to the laity implies an ordination to the universal priesthood of believers, in which we are to offer not only the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving to God, in the ritual worship of His Church, but also the more comprehensive and permanent sacrifice of a consecrated life.

Last week the Rev. W. Lowe, of Glencoe, was presented by the young people of St. John's Church with a handsome pocket communion service, accompanied by an affectionate address.