

MR. SPURGEON ON BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.—Fresh attention has been called to the Baptismal service of the Church of England, by a characteristically bold and severe sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, on the subject, in which he not only tears the service itself to rags, but says some very strong things concerning the evangelical men who use it. For example :—

“I am told that many in the Church of England preach against her own teaching. I know they do, and herein I rejoice in their enlightenment, but I question, I gravely question, their morality. To take oath that I sincerely assent and consent to a doctrine which I do not believe, would to my conscience appear little short of perjury, if not absolute downright perjury ; but those who do so must be judged by their own Lord. For me to take money for defending what I do not believe—for me to take the money of a church, and then to preach against what most evidently are its doctrines,—I say *for me* to do this (I will not judge the peculiar views of other men) *for me* or for any other simple, honest man to do so, were an atrocity so great, that if I had perpetrated the deed, I should consider myself out of the pale of truthfulness, honesty, and common morality.” “We have been cultivating friendship with those who are either unscriptural in creed, or else dishonest, who either believe baptismal regeneration, or profess that they do, and swear before God that they do when they do not. The time is come when there shall be no more truce or parley between God’s servants and time servers.”

Of this sermon, 100,000 copies have been sold. The newspapers and reviews have noticed it, and over a score of replies have been published. The Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel has addressed a remonstrance to Mr. Spurgeon, citing the names of Simeon, Newton, Cecil and others, as examples of men who used these services, but whom it would be monstrous to condemn as dishonest. Rev. Octavius Winslow says, in a sermon, “My firm conviction is, that not one of the 9000 Evangelical clergy of this land really believes that the Church of England teaches that doctrine.” On the other hand, the High Church writers declare that Mr. Spurgeon is right, and that the office for Baptism can have no other meaning. Rev. W. Landels (Baptist), in defence of Mr. Spurgeon, says, “Can any one wonder at our perplexity, when we find Evangelical clergymen, who do not believe in Baptismal Regeneration, declaring their unfeigned assent and consent to such language, and regularly using it, moreover on the most solemn occasions—even giving thanks to the Almighty for having done what, according to their own belief, He has not done? We do not say *there is no explanation*, but we confess *our inability to find one*. We do not condemn, but they must excuse us if we say, *we cannot understand them*.”

In consequence of some remonstrance on this subject, Mr. Spurgeon has withdrawn from the Evangelical Alliance.

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CATHOLIC CONGRESS IN BELGIUM.—The politics of Belgium, for many years past, have had such a constant connection with ecclesiastical questions, that the two parties in the State have been the Priest party and the Liberal party. Of late they have been evenly balanced in the Legislature, and the Priest party, not being able to carry out their own measures, absented themselves, so that no quorum could be made up, and all legislation was brought to a stand still. The Parliament was dissolved, and now the Liberal party have a large majority. Thereupon, a Congress of Catholic laymen has been called at Malines. Their first act was to send by telegraph, a message of submission and devotion to the Pope.