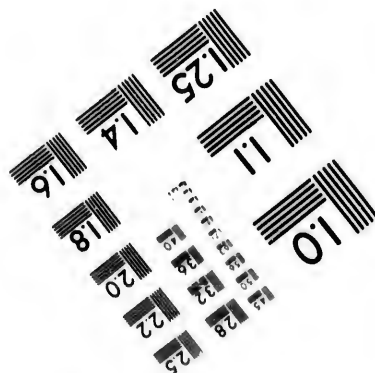
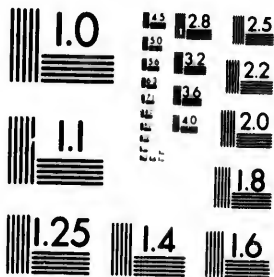


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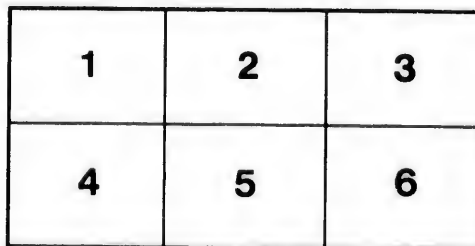
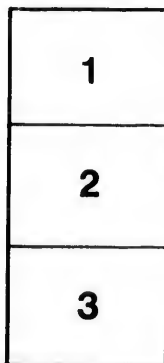
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THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY BAPTISM.

BY

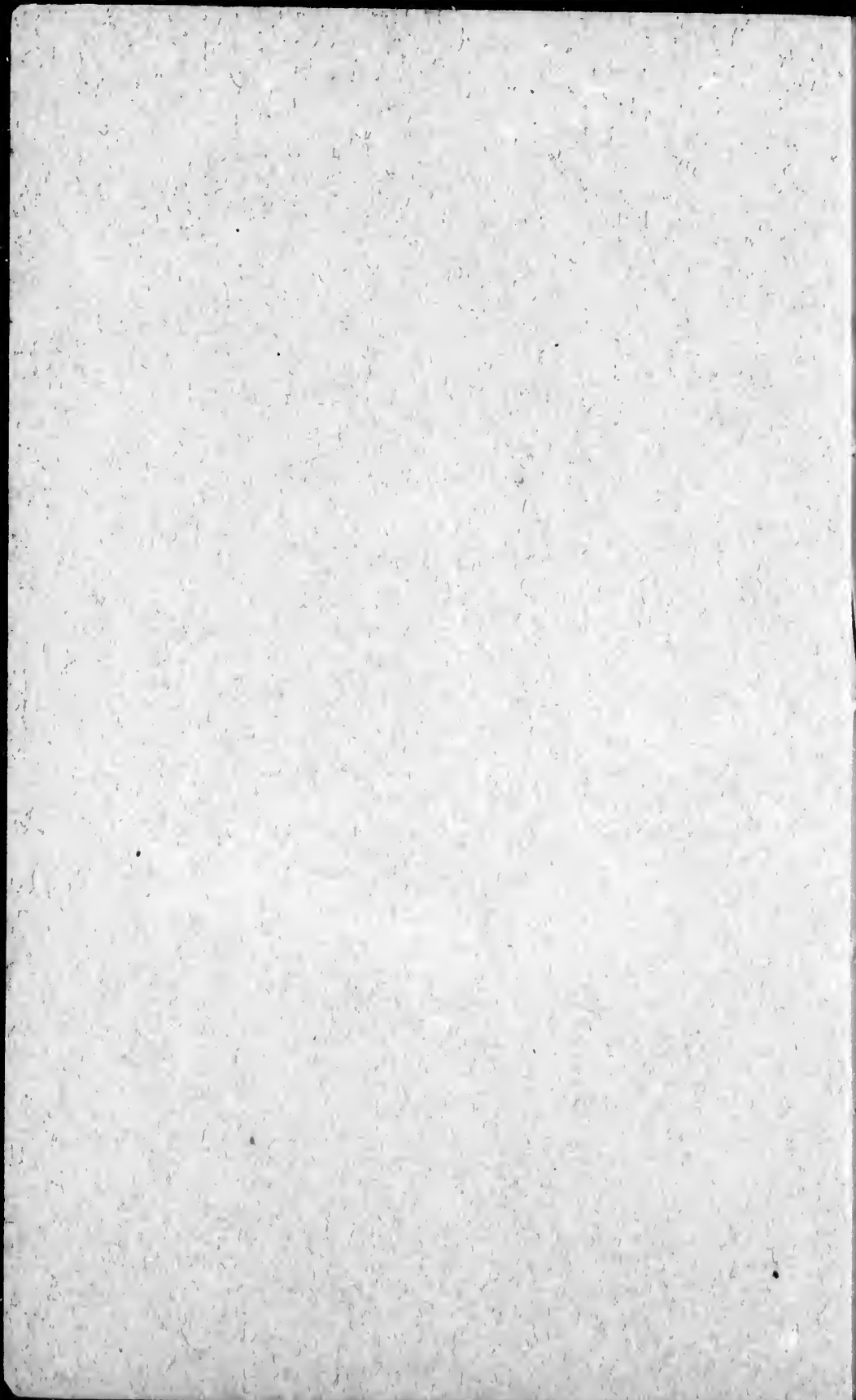
REV. CHARLES FOREST, M. A.,

(Bishop's College, Lennoxville.)

Late Rector of Williamsburgh, and Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Diocese of Ontario, Canada.

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SUPPLEMENT TO THE CHURCH ECLECTIC

THE SACRAMENT OF REGENERATION;

OR,

THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY BAPTISM,

BY THE

REV. CHARLES FOREST, M. A.,

(Bishop's College, Lennoxville.)

Late Rector of Williamsburgh, and Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Diocese of Ontario, Canada.

The Sacrament of Baptism holds confessedly a first place in the Christian System. It is constituted by the Divine Founder Himself an essential to admission into "the Kingdom of Heaven." Holding this place it might reasonably be supposed that all who are of the faith of Christ would be of "one mind" in regard to the office which this sacrament has to fulfil; and on common ground, stand prepared intelligently to uphold its necessity, and to vindicate the grace or benefit which is its proper consequent. Unhappily this is far from being the case. The selfishness, ingenuity and scepticism of men have been exercised on *this* as on other "first principles," and the results have been division, strife and what, if possible, is worse—a mis-apprehension, if not actual negation, of the grace of God as conveyed by this sacrament. It is the duty of every Christian man to labor, so far as his poor ability may serve, for the remedying of this evil; which can be met only by a fair, dispassionate statement of the facts underlying and connected with the doctrine in discussion. To such a statement, therefore, the following pages are dedicated. If the crain of thought and of testimony therein contained shall have, under God, the effect of arousing any to a religious study of this important matter, and to more correct views of this holy Sacrament, he who offers them will be, indeed, amply repaid.

As a starting point, then, we give the clear and emphatic declaration of St. Paul, respecting the *agencies* employed by Christ in the salvation of men.

"According to His mercy He saved us by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" Titus iii: 5.

In which declaration, so far as it sets forth the *medium* through which regeneration is effected, it is difficult to discover a cause

worthy of that bitter dissension which, on this point, prevails to so great an extent amongst professed believers in the doctrine and discipline of Christ. For the expressions of the apostle in themselves, are neither mysterious nor involved. They do not contain anything which can, even in the remotest degree be construed as expository, either of the properties of regenerating grace, or of its mode of operation. He is merely speaking *historically*, *i. e.* of facts known and generally acknowledged, as the basis of Christian experience. He is reminding Titus, and through him the Cretan converts of the evidences of their new birth to God: which new birth, he declares, was effected by "*washing*," and then, as a consequence, made availing unto salvation "by the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*." He ascribes the saving of the soul, first, to the mercy of God, as the moving and efficient cause; secondly, to the *washing of regeneration* as the *means*, sacrament or sign, by which that mercy was conveyed; and thirdly, to the renewing of the Holy Ghost, as the blessing which succeeds and perfects that which in baptism is begun. It becomes necessary, therefore, to inquire into this distinction and to be guided, in so doing, by the order set down by the apostle himself.

§ [1.] With respect to the first, (*i. e.* the moving cause, etc.) there is no difference of opinion. It is admitted by all parties, that the plan of human redemption was devised by and proceeded from God Himself:—that by virtue of His infinite perfections, it was carried out to its consummation,—that He extends the benefits of His mercy to all who, in the appointed way, submit themselves to His will;—and lastly, that these benefits consist in freedom from the power, dominion, and consequences of sin and in the fruition of the favor, protection, and blessing of God. Thus far all are agreed—but

[2] Touching the second point, *i. e.* the *mediate agency*, by which this salvation is effected, opinions are very diverse. The chief of the differences, however, may be resolved into these three classes:—

(*a*) Those who ascribe to the mere visible instrument, or water, an *inherent* power of regeneration.

(*β*) Those who, depreciating the spiritual efficacy of the instrument, limit the baptismal rite to a simple passport to *external* Church privileges; and

(*γ*) Those who hold that, neither in the mere instrument itself, nor in the faith of man, ought the efficacy of baptism to be placed; but solely in the *ordinance* of God; and further, that the blessing consequent on baptism is not simply *external*, such as admission to the ministrations or offices of an organized body, but also *spiritual*, inasmuch as the Church is the organ (Eph. iii:9, 10, etc.) of communication between God and the souls of men.

[3] As to the third point—the agency of the Holy Ghost—the only question agitated is this, Does the "renewing" here spoken of involve the restoring of the faculties of the soul to their proper order, or more than *to wit*, the invigoration and perfecting of those faculties, when *weakened*? One class of disputants includes the latter as well as the former, in the term "renewing;" a second class

sees no necessity for thus extending the term, or indeed for at all assuming, from St. Paul's expressions, its connection with the baptismal blessing. The Apostle, say they, does *not* couple the "renewing" of the Holy Ghost with the idea of "regeneration," but with the ultimate consequence of the Divine mercy, our being "SAVED." He speaks not of the "new birth" as though it were synonymous with spiritual renovation,—but makes them both *i. e.* "regeneration" and "renewing," in their *respective places*, essential to salvation.

From these differences of opinion, therefore, arises a very natural inquiry,—what *definite idea* did the inspired writer design to convey by the phrase "washing of regeneration?" Did he assume that the new birth here linked to baptism, was identical with that work of the Spirit, which in the sentence immediately succeeds it? Or, does the fact of its being mentioned separately from, and subsequently to, regeneration, compel us to preserve a distinction between them? Or as the question may be otherwise given; Is baptism, according to St. Paul's teaching, a *special* means of grace? If so, is the grace which it conveys *spiritual*? And if spiritual (seeing the sinner, in his natural or birth state, has *no life* within himself, or capacity to receive grace, nor can have until he find it in Christ, into whom he is admitted by baptism, (Gal. iii : 27) is not the grace then received actually,—that new life or "new birth," which by the Apostle is styled "regeneration?" The solution of this question can properly be found only, *

First, In the authoritative language of Holy Scripture, of which the passages which are most explicit, are lawfully interpreters of those less clear; and---

Secondly, In a proper understanding of the doctrine of baptism itself: *i. e.* of what is *essential* or *non-essential* to its efficacy, as an ordinance of Christ.

1ST. THE WARRANT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Now taking the words of St. Paul to Titus, in the obvious and grammatical sense, (in which it was natural Titus should receive them) it cannot honestly be inferred that, to his mind, baptism was an office simply *preparatory* *v. s.* *subsequent* act of "regeneration." St. Paul says not by "washing," *in order to* regeneration; or by "washing" *and* regeneration, by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." The contrary seems rather the case, for the connecting particle (*καὶ*) effectually *severs* the office ascribed to the Sacred Spirit in renewing, from that which is spoken of in the preceding clause of the sentence. So that, in effect, St. Paul keeps them *distinct*, not to the exclusion of the Spirit's influence in the work of the "new birth," but to the preservation intact, and as a *separate* office, of that "renewing" which follows in the sentence. As to the effect proper to baptism, this is spoken of in immediate, and, as it were, necessary connection with the means employed—as though, **by**

* I say "only"—because the Church, whether in primitive or modern times, is not the source or foundation,—but the Divinely-appointed keeper and interpreter of truth. Her testimony will appear in another place.

Divine appointment, the blessing was indivisibly united to the act of "washing."

Again,—in the Epistle to the Ephesians (V 25, 26) the same Apostle, speaking generally, and therefore in such manner as all might understand, makes this pointed declaration: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with (by) the washing of water by (in) the word"

(*Τῷ λουτρῷ ἐν ῥήματι.*) Here the object of His love is distinctly stated to be "the Church," and the means of its cleansing "washing of water."

It is true, a construction has been sometimes put upon "the word" which would seem to obviate all necessity of attaching efficacy to baptism. It has been so rendered as to signify Christ Himself, the incarnate WORD. But, not to argue that such a rendering is harsh and unnatural, amounting, in fact, to this—Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might save it . . . by Himself, [an absolute tautology,] it is enough to mention that the Greek term, in this place translated "word," is not *λογος*, the second Person in the Godhead, or—as it sometimes signifies, the gospel or doctrine of Christ, but *ῥήμα*, which properly means a sentence, a command, or appointment, and in this connection, doubtless, that particular appointment or ordinance which naturally associates itself with *τῷ λουτρῷ* or "the washing." Taken in this sense, which properly, is the correct one, the expression *ἐν ῥήματι* clearly sets forth *that* which, through the merits of Christ, gives efficacy to baptism—viz., the divine appointment or authority, by virtue of which baptism becomes a sacrament;—while, at the same time, the particle "with," or more correctly, "by," [*καθαρισας τῷ λουτρῷ*] unequivocally determines the necessary concomitance of "water" to the reception of the spiritual blessing.

But further—the same conclusion is attainable, not simply from other similarly plain texts, e.g. John iii: 3—5. Acts ii 37—39. Col. 2—12. 1 Cor. X: 1—11. but by collation of passages less direct than these. In the Epistle to the Galatians, (iii: 27, 28,) the Apostle writes, "As many of you as have been *baptized into* Christ, have put on Christ . . . ye are all one *in* Christ." In 2 Cor. v: 17, however, he establishes this conclusion, "If any man be *in* Christ, he is a *new creature*; old things are passed away," etc.; which "passing away" and absolute renewal, cannot by any means, apply to the evil propensities and indwelling corruptions of our nature, since these remain, and are afterwards *active*. (Rom. vii, and Art. Ang. Chh. ix.) even in those that are regenerate: but rather to that transition from death unto life, which is characteristic of the "new birth." For if the "new creature," here alluded to, does indeed imply the absence of *all* former lusts and passions and the *exclusive* indwelling of things belonging to the Spirit—then, no one who has not attained to the *highest* stage of *holiness*, (a state of perfection not claimed [Philip iii: 12, 13] even by St. Paul himself,) is properly a "new creature," or regenerate, and the baptismal blessing is made *absolute sanctification*, a conclusion not sustained by Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, we know that being "in

‘Christ,’ together with the instant and necessary effect, new creation, does *not* suppose *complete moral renovation, much less perfection*, as the experience of the Galatians, Corinthians, and some of the Apostles, testifies. The change, therefore, which follows upon baptism must be less than this renewing, yet not less than the passing into a new state of being. It is being in Christ, (Gal. ii: 20.) the being brought into a new covenant relation to God; the possessing within us His “spirit of life” (Rom. viii: 2, 9.) the being quickened to receive and profit by the grace of God, of which in our natural or birth state we are incapable, (1 Cor. ii: 14;) in short, the being in our spiritual capacities, re-born from moral death.

In further support of this position, it may be observed that as there is but “*one body*” and “*one spirit*,” so by baptism, (1 Cor. xii: 13.) we are all admitted into that one body, and made to drink of that spirit. *That*, therefore, which the Apostolic Christians are known to have received, by admission “into Christ,” (Gal. iii: 27.) may be reasonably assumed as the blessing common to all succeeding Christians, viz:—“*the spirit of adoption*,” a new filial relation to God, whereby they (and consequently, we) call Him “*ABBA, FATHER*,”—in other words, “*re generation*.”

Many other passages of Holy writ, corroborative of this view, might be adduced, (for which see ‘Sacrament of Responsibility’ *passim*,) yet we will cite but one more, and that one is taken from the Book of Acts, chap. xxii: 16, in which St. Luke thus gives the command of Ananias to Saul—Ananias, it will be remembered, admitted Saul into the communion of the Church of Christ—“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be *baptized*, and *wash away thy sins*, calling upon the name of the Lord.”

Kindred to this is the instruction of St. Peter to the Pentecostal converts, as given in Acts ii: 37, 39.

In these as in former quotations, an intimate connection is seen to subsist between the external act, and the internal or moral effect of this “washing,”—an effect, in these instances, unquestionably, made a consequence of that ordinance. How far it is a *necessary* consequence will be seen shortly when the doctrine itself of baptism is considered. Suffice it here, that we remark the similarity of expression used by the inspired penmen whenever they touch upon this subject, and their evident agreement of opinion as it regards its *spiritual* effect.

2. THE DOCTRINE.

From the testimony of Holy Scripture—above briefly quoted—the mind is naturally led onwards to an inquiry into the doctrine (or, in other words, the reasonableness, the *basis*, and the *nature*) of sacramental “new birth.”

And here, as a first principle, it may be observed that, in the economy of grace, whether Mosaic or Apostolic, *no mediate ordinance*, or institution, by which man is admitted to communion with God, has, or can have, more than a *relative* necessity of being. It holds its place, and serves its purpose, not because it possesses an

inherent virtue worthy of, or suited to, its office of aiding or saving the soul; but because the Great Head of the Church has seen good to establish and qualify it as a channel or means of grace; and 'tis this establishment alone which makes it availing to its appointed end. This is true, as well of those acts in which the heart is exercised, as in those which are but outward and visible, or even mental. Take e.g., preaching, which speaks to the judgment, or the act of believing that which is preached; neither of these can claim intrinsic power, morally, to impress, or to make impression availing; * neither can accomplish aught by itself. They serve merely as the subservient instruments of a higher power, and that power is of God. All-sufficiency is from Him, whom it pleases, by the foolishness of preaching, to save those that believe. (1 Cor. i: 21.) The same may be said of all *necessaries*, vehicles or agencies of grace, from the Church herself, considered as Christ's organized and visible agent, (Eph. iii: 10 et al.) on earth, to the lowest ordinance which characterizes her. Nothing is possessed of *intrinsic* value; nothing can, *of itself*, benefit or save.

This admitted, an important conclusion follows, which may be of use in this inquiry, *scil.*—that it is *unreasonable* in man to reject any mediate agency which is by authority, declared to be efficacious, and to convey blessing, simply because it has *not of itself*, dignity or power *worthy of its office*. And if this be applied to our argument, the inference must be convincing, that, altho' the mere "washing of water" as such simply, can possibly have no effect upon the soul to change its condition, yet this same washing, when ordained and blessed of God, (in fact, appointed as a means to a special end,) may *readily convey to us grace*, and *accomplish to the full*, that which the Divine "mercy" designed to work by it.

The assumption of a *special grace*, as consequent on baptism, however gratuitous or unwarranted it may seem at first sight, loses nothing from the consideration that every ordinance of God has its *proper office*, and benefits peculiar to itself. Thus, e.g., preaching has its place and purpose; prayer is also single in influence and operation; so also is the Holy Eucharist peculiar and distinctive in its uses and effects. Yet all these may be *OFTEN repeated* because the benefits which they insure, to wit, faith, justification, and spiritual aid, are *often required*. But baptism is more singular than these. *It may not be repeated!* why this negative, unless it be that the grace which it conveys *can and need* be implanted in the soul but once; that its object can only once be attained? And, if the inquiry may be pressed further,—what grace is there, (if we except faith, justification, and spiritual aid,) which, properly suiting the character and time of the baptismal act, can be ascribed to it, unless it be that *life*, that *new being* which prepares and lays a foundation for all subsequent graces? This much, at least, will be evident, viz, that the benefit of baptism is not merely external, or to external privileges, but *spiritual*, affecting the *soul*, and this so peculiarly that it may never be repeated. Were it otherwise, *i.e.*

* "Conviction is of the *head*, conversion is of the *heart*." Paley's Evid.

to mere outward ecclesiastical privileges, or access to means which offer a possibility of attaining to grace,—then, every secession from the Church would demand a repetition of the rite, on the pervert's reinstatement in his former place. A practice never yet observed or permitted in the Christian Church.*

In addition to this it may be noted, that the very element employed, water, in the application here made of it, is significant of the effect which it is designed to work. Its peculiar property is to remove deilements from any body to which, in "washing," it is applied. And in a sacrament it is confessedly "an outward sign" of some "inward and spiritual grace." Now, to appreciate this effect or object of baptism, it should be remembered, that there is no moral impediment (of which the Scriptures make mention) to our being, even by natural birth, children of God, as Adam was, (Luke iii: 38)—and thus heirs of His blessing and protection, but this one, *in*, sin derived from sinful parentage, otherwise called "original." And this sin, or rather *stainfulness*, (Art. ix.) is *not guilt*, but simply a "corruption or taint of nature," an impurity bequeathed to us and inherent in us. This *removed*—we become again admissible to Covenant with God, and by covenant "children," and children of grace, inasmuch as it is by the mercy of God, we possess this privilege of re-instatement to the Divine favor.

If therefore, there be any congruity between the type and its anti-type, between the "outward sign" and the inward benefit should there not also be a suitable correspondence in their respective workings and effects? And if, *prior* to baptism, it be admitted that the rite is significant of "spiritual washing," *why*, afterwards, should it be denied that such washing has taken place?

To admit the logical sequence, in this place, is to admit the doctrine of baptismal, or sacramental, "*new birth*."†

A farther proof is to be found in the *working* (or basis), of the *apostolical commission*, "Go ye . . . disciple all nations, baptising them . . . teaching them." In which commission, (in the words *μαθητευειν, βαπτιζειν, διδουσαιν*) three facts are plainly set forth, viz., that men might be discipled (which implies *conversion*) from Judaism, or idolatry, to the faith of Christ, who, nevertheless, required *baptism* ere they could be admitted into Him; and that (thirdly) a full discharge of Christian duty did not immediately follow, inasmuch as the baptised yet needed instruction. Baptism, evidently, served to initiate into Christ those who were already converts. If, therefore, the being initiated "into Christ" implies no more than admission to outward Church fellowship, then baptism, being void of "spiritual benefits," ceases to be a symbol or sacrament. It becomes merely a viaticum to communion with man, *not with Christ*. But if to be "in Christ" is to be a "*new creature*;" if the being a Christian involves a *new relation to God*, a possession of the Spirit,

* The practice of the Novatians is not in point, since they, in re-baptizing, assumed the *invalidity* of the baptism, as by the Catholics administered.

† If such cleansing be at all admitted, it must be a cleansing from original sin, since infants who are eligible candidates for, and subjects of, baptism, have no "*actual sin*."

(Rom. viii: 9.) and, therefore, heirship with Christ, (Rom. viii: 17, then this change, and these benefits, must be inwrought, ere a legitimate claim can be instituted to the title Christian—a title certainly conferred and secured by the ordinance of baptism. "For as many of you as have been *baptised into Christ*, have *put on Christ*. . . . ye are all *one* in Christ Jesus." [Gal iii: 27, 28, comp. I Cor. xii: 13, on the word "one."—Eph. 1: 22, 23.]

But, not only the *wording* of this commission—the *authority*, also, from which it emanated argues the spirituality of the baptismal effect. For, in whatever way we hold the will of the Triune God to influence man, whether collectively, or only as individuals, by baptism, incorporated into His Church, the influence and effect of this *will* must operate *agreeably with the character and offices of each person* in the adorable Trinity. The Father, e.g., does not render satisfaction to Himself, the Son does not mediate or intercede to Himself, the Holy Spirit neither satisfies nor mediates, but only vivifies, sanctifies and perfects those for whom atonement has already been made, and to whom God on His part, is reconciled. Thus each Person has a separate office, and exercises a particular grace. Now, this commission to baptize, being given in the conjoint Name *associates*, in the effect of baptism, the influence and acts which are *proper to each Person* in the Trinity, in the effecting of human salvation. And since baptism, to man, is admission to the covenant, by which that salvation is insured, and therefore a strictly religious act; we can hardly suppose that the benefit consequent on the *co-interest* and *co-action* of the Godhead, in the ordinance, can be otherwise than spiritual; and if spiritual—then such as, harmonizing with the plan of salvation, involves the action of the whole Trinity.

The mere admission to *external* communion, or to the possibility of receiving grace at some after-time, is not consistent with the importance and dignity here imparted to this rite. The former is "*body without spirit*," and therefore *dead*;—the latter privilege all men may claim, even those who are most remote from baptism.

But in "*regeneration*" reasonable place is found for all that has been here assumed. In effecting it the whole Trinity is engaged—the Son making atonement, and propitiating God;—the Father, through the Son, receiving the sinner back to favor;—and the Holy Ghost, in consequence of this reconciliation, certified and sealed by an ordinance of the Divine appointment, *re-inspiring with life* the hitherto deadened faculties of the soul, and rendering them capable of growth in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God. *Man therefore*, is "*alive from the dead*," or, as St. Paul expresses it "*a new creature*."

But supposing—for argument's sake—it were admitted that baptism is solely an introduction to the visible Church of Christ, does this, in any way, detract from the doctrine in question? Quite the contrary—that admission only puts the subject in a clearer light; since there are not *two Churches* of Christ upon earth, (one preparatory to the other,) but only one Church. "As the body is *one*, and hath many members, and all the members being many, are *one body*,

so ALSO IS CHRIST." And again, by *one Spirit* we are all *baptised* into *one body* [Rom. xii—, 1 Cor. xii : 12, 13.] Neither are Christ and the Church twain, but *one*,* the several members of the Church, by Spiritual bands being united to Him as "the Head," and themselves constituting, so far as the body is concerned. [Eph. 1, latter part of 22, and vs. 23] "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

It follows, therefore, that whatever qualification is necessary in order to admission into this Christian Church—or what is *equivalent to it*, "into Christ," must be imparted either *previously to*, or *at the time of*, such admission. Such qualification *prior* to communion with Christ, consistently with Holy Scripture, or the Articles of the Church, (Art. xiii.) we cannot recognize. We are, therefore, driven to the other conclusion, viz. :—that, however high or peculiar it may be, it *is* infused into his soul at the *moment*, and *by the rite of admission*† *into Christ*

In view, then, of the fact that there is but *one Church*, the opinions of those who oppose the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, when duly weighed, instead of weakening add strength to its claims. They believe the "initiatory rite" to be of Divine appointment, and necessary to the continuance of a visible Church; in other words, there can be no Church without baptism; and they further assert the *necessity* of "regeneration," in order to communion in Christ's *mystical Church*. Their theories, on the ground of fact, contradict each other; and admit of reconciliation only on the ground of "one Catholic and Apostolic Church," in which spiritual communion—whether exercised or not—is the equal privilege of all. Here their two-fold admission is abundantly realized, in the *two-fold privilege of baptism*, *i. e.* external fellowship with believers, and communion with Christ. And the synchronism involved in the idea, that "regeneration" supposes spiritual communion tallies exactly with the truth of the doctrine now at issue.

By the former of their conceits, however, they concede a point of no small importance in the elucidation of the argument. They say that men, by baptism, are admitted to the *possibility of being saved*, but not to the salvation itself; and thus, unconsciously, they admit the *independence* of baptism on *faith*; for faith, say they, saves.

* Holy Scriptures set forth but one body, the Church, which in the Apostolical age, was unquestionably *visible*. There might be unworthy members in it, but these were to be admonished, (Titus iii : 10,) and, if incorrigible, rejected, *utterly cast out*, like the useless branch, (John xv : 6,) from the parent vine. And these were no longer of the Church. But *until* thus formally and judicially ejected, they were. To other Church is ever spoken of or hinted at.

† The objection, founded on the subsequent (*apparent*) *lifelessness* of Christians, does not militate against the above conclusion. For although it speaks a just censure,—in its general application it goes beyond all warrant of truth. It is right to conclude that fruits of holiness *should* characterize those in whom dwells the "life of God." But it is also right to remember, that God *compels* no man to use "his talent;" and a talent it still is, *though it lie buried in the earth*. So soon, therefore, as men presume to fix upon any degree of profiting in Divine things as the test of man's having grace "in trust," they run counter to the Word of God. For, so long as the principle of life be in a man, however feeble may be the degree, he cannot be said to be destitute of Christian grace. Nor have we authority for supposing that this grace, once given, is ever wholly withdrawn, save in the case of those who openly apostatize, or are wilfully reprobate.

On the other hand, they assert that faith, in adults, is absolutely essential, since there follows in them "an inward and spiritual grace," *i. e.* a beginning of that very salvation which, just before, they had altogether dissociated from this ordinance. Being unable to deny the effect, in this latter case, they ascribe it to a further cause, *faith*. It will be necessary, therefore, to ascertain whether faith does possess, *inherently*, (for in a distinction drawn between "means" and "acts," the whole question *must* turn upon this,) any power capable of producing this effect.

Is faith, then, an *essential pre-requisite* to baptism?

Answer:—To the inducing in the heart of an adult a sense of its necessity, (*i. e.* the ordinance) and to the subduing of that carnal enmity which would keep him from Christ—it *is* essential; but to the *efficacy of any means* which God has appointed, strictly speaking, it is *not essential*.* These means cannot receive anything from *man*. Their qualifications or fitness are from a higher, and unfailing source. To establish this, no further argument is necessary, than some clear and pointed example, occurring under the immediate appointment and direction of God Himself, and such an example we have in Acts, chap. xxiii.

Saul of Tarsus, on his way to Demaseus, to persecute the Christians, is arrested in his course, and *converted* to the faith of JESUS. This conversion he himself ascribes to the miraculous testimony borne to the truth of Christianity by our Lord Himself. And that his conversion was sincere and real is sufficiently attested by the wonderful change and Christian devotedness, ever after observable in his life and labors. From the moment when Jesus revealed Himself to him, and those mysterious communications—unheard (*i. e.* not understood) by his affrighted companions—found entrance to his soul, he assumed a new character. He no longer contemned or breathed out threatenings against the followers of the Crucified; but, submissively, he bends to the direction of Heaven, and being instructed, he willingly acknowledges, and submits to, the sovereignty of the once dead, but now living and exalted, Saviour.

Here, then is the exercise of an *undoubted faith*, faith founded on the most unquestionable and convincing testimony; a faith, which amounted to an admission of the truth, and to an humble obedience to its power. Yet to this faith *no answer* is returned. It asserted no connection with the "new birth" of the believer. He was convicted, subdued, contrite! yea, more, for three days did he (the *converted* Saul,) in faith and prayer address himself to God, (Acts ix: 11.) *without experiencing* the longed-for blessing. That blessing came at last;—but when it did come, it was made consequent—not *on faith*, but on the Divine "mercy" in *baptism*.† "And now, why tarriest thou?"

* In asserting this, I do not, nor would I, depreciate faith, God forbid! "For without faith it is impossible to please Him, &c." But viewing the subject as an abstract one, I am led to ascribe other offices to faith—offices of *apprehending* and *retaining*, not of *communicating*, grace. And this view the non-exercise of faith in infants, very much supports.

† Chapter ix (of the Acts,) which states the purpose of Ananias's visit, viz— "That Saul might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," says

Arise, and be *baptised*, and *wash away thy sins.*" Acts xxii: 16.

But, setting aside this example, it may fairly be asked—upon *what ground* can faith claim this necessary connection with the Divine gift in baptism? Or, what do the objectors gain by advancing for it such a claim?

What is faith? Can it, by any reasoning, be otherwise considered, than as either an *act* or a *means*, vehicle or instrument, of grace?

Suppose it to be an act; then, in order to give it any necessary advantage over "means," in the insuring of spiritual gifts, we must allow it to be either a *self-sufficient* or a *meritorious* act—one which, inherently, of its own proper nature, possesses something (be that what it will) which, as distinguished from "washing" may challenge "regeneration" as ITS legitimate issue; all which suppositions are directly counter to the tenor of Christianity. And, besides this, they involve the (to them) unfortunate contradiction, that faith is, at one and the same time, a good work, and an essential *pre-requisite* to all good works; *i. e.*, that it is, to itself, both cause and effect. For which reasons, it is rejected by the xiii Art. of the Anglican Church.

If, on the other hand, faith is taken as a "*means*," the enquiry suggests itself—Is it, as such, availing to spiritual ends, otherwise than by the *will* and *ordinance* of God? And if its (assumed) efficacy is founded *solely* on this ordination, and the good pleasure of Deity may and *does*, impart a saving power to acts or elements, which, in their *own nature*, have it *not*; then, seeing there is not more congruity between faith and regeneration, than there is between baptism and regeneration, why is it more reasonable to condemn the act of "*washing*" than the act of "*believing*?" Or, why may not baptismal regeneration be both *possible* and *true*?

It is objected here, that faith is sometimes, in Holy Scripture, mentioned as *preceding* baptism.

Allowing that it is, what then? Does this affect the argument? It merely proves that, in certain cases, e.g., of adults, a persuasion of the necessity of a moral change, must predispose men to apply for it. It by no means touches the *agency* by which regeneration is effected. The dispute is not as to whether faith may not, under certain conditions, be necessary to baptism, *i. e.*, to bring one to it; but whether that faith has anything to do in the effecting of regeneration when men are once *brought* to it. So that, although it be

nothing of the necessity of baptism. Nor does it fix or determine the time, at which the Divine gift was actually received. To be guided by the clearer and more explicit text, in this case, is the duty of every reader. To act otherwise, were to give up that which is *expressly* stated, on account of a (supposed) something which is *not stated*.

Rasselas, chap. 48:—"He who will determine against what he knows because there may be something which he knows not is not to be admitted among reasonable beings."

Objectors are very fond of pleading the case mentioned in Acts x: 44, 47, in opposition to the doctrine of baptism, as given in the Church Baptismal office. We will most readily submit to their arguments, so soon as they can furnish us, in any candidate for this holy ordinance, with such miraculous proofs of the indwelling of the Divine Spirit as were manifested in Cornelius and his company. "They heard them speak with *tongues*, and magnify God."

said, without mention of this ordinance, "whosoever believeth shall be saved," still the position now assumed remains unshaken, for this truth is elsewhere *more amply* stated, and the *additional matter* points directly to baptism; in fact, expressly assures us that the agency to which that faith has reference, is "by *water* and the *Holy Ghost*;" by water, as the appointed visible medium,—by the Holy Ghost, as the active, efficient cause.

It is to be seriously lamented that men are not of "one mind" on this deeply important subject—this radical doctrine in the Christian system. Their differences of opinion, however, are not chargeable against the doctrine itself. They spring rather from a mis-apprehension and misuse of theological terms on the part of those who differ from us. The plan of salvation is *definite and distinct* in all its parts. The Church would preserve that distinctness, by carefully attaching to each act of grace, that peculiar character and consequence which rightly belongs to it—not confusing the effect of the Divine working, by mis-receiving regeneration for conversion, or either for justification. That they have been thus mis-received and confounded cannot be denied; for such, unhappily, is the case still.

One man, e.g., believes that the term implies no more than a mere "change of station"—although very *little* examination might have satisfied him that, in this interpretation there is nothing found of the essence, (or, essential meaning,) of the word. For, as a compound, the idea conveyed in its simple, must—in some kindred sense—be iterated in its duplex form. The above interpretation conveys no such impression.

Another man construes it in such a way as to include within it, not only a change of station, but a *moral* change; and not content with this, holds it to express, also, the *rectification and stablishment* of the heart in *all* godliness and truth. Here, the meaning of the figure has been carried out in a moral change—the equivalent to new life—but instead of resting satisfied with this, other consequences of grace, not embodied in the term "regeneration," have been super-added to the figure, and this addition to the truth, by destroying the exquisiteness of its outline and character, serves but to mislead the mind, and make it conceive wrongly of an *All-wise God*.

The one interpretation falls *short* of the scriptural doctrine;—the other goes *far beyond* it. The first admits that only which may be styled an "accidental" of regeneration; the second, couples with it the subsequent acts of "renewing" and "sanctifying." Against the one, the words of our Lord, "born of *water* and of the Spirit," may be urged as a sufficient correction;—the other carries its own refutation with it, if it be only remembered that the work of salvation is a *three-fold* act, or rather a process divided into *three* markedly distinct acts:—

- (1.) That of vivifying or restoring to life.
- (2.) That of rectifying the powers and faculties thus revived; and
- (3.) That of strengthening and purifying them *after* they have been reduced to order:

And further, that these three acts, in their very nature, are essentially and necessarily separate, one from the other—the one following the other, in regular and appointed order.

That, e.g., cannot be rectified which is not in being; nor can the impress of beauty—the beauty of holiness—be affixed to that which is all confusion and mis-shape. To expect, therefore, of the second, that which should characterize the third, must be inconsistent; and equally inconsistent is it to require from the *first* (regeneration) that which belongs to the others.* Now, *conversion*, justification and sanctification, are workings (or, if you please, effects) easily distinguished from “regeneration,” by the fact, that they are the privilege *only* of man's *mature years*; whereas the baptismal benefit is the privilege of infants; who, being incapable of actual sin, can have no guilt from which to be *justified*; and for the same reason, no need of *conversion*. In infants, therefore, this benefit must be a Divine grace, taking *precedence*, in point of time, of all other effects of God's Sacred Spirit.

It is the *first*, even as sanctification is the *last*.

Before concluding this (the 1st Part) of the subject, it may be but fair to anticipate, and put out of the field, another somewhat popular error, viz.:—that Spiritual life and religious action, by the system of Christ, are co-instant in the regenerate. This is not the fact. Holy Scripture gives no warrant for such a belief. On the contrary, it teaches us that a “talent” may be fully given and received, and yet prove *utterly unproductive*. (Luke xix: 20.) Its being implanted, infused, or inwrought in the soul, is *no guarantee* that it will, or must needs, be ripened into holiness of life on earth, or perfected into life eternal.

As the principle of life in an infant (newly born) argues not, necessarily, the exertion of either physical or moral strength, although, if there be no fatal hinderance, both will follow in their proper season; so the mere possession of Spiritual life requires not necessarily, the outward manifestation of it, although, in this case, too, proofs of its indwelling will show themselves in due time. And as, in the case of the infant, an hundred ills may impede the development of this hidden principle, and cause even death to follow; so may the young Christian—the new born—be hindered in his moral growth by sin, and even despoiled of the principle of life itself. *Yet the germ may exist where the growth has not taken place*; for growth, strength, and activity are only *accidents* of birth. And as these result from concurrence with, and obedience to, natural laws and can only in this way be attained; so are good works dependent on conformity to a *spiritual law*—the law of Christ; *nor can* they be exhibited save in proportion to this conformity. Hence it follows, that the *evidences* of Christian growth and strength (whether we take the buddings of promise or the fruits of faith) are not, nor

* “By regeneration we understand a spiritual change; by conversion, a spiritual movement. In regeneration there is a *power conferred*; conversion is the *exercise* of that power. In regeneration there is given to us a *principle* to turn; conversion is our *actual turning*. Regeneration is the *act of God*; conversion, the *act of man*,” (prompted by grace).—R. C. Dillon's Sermon, Jan. 4th, 1824, Pulpit No. 38.

can be, coeval with the "new birth"—and if not coeval, they must be *consequences*, and *its such, distinct* from the baptismal grace.

This then is the argument from Holy Scripture, and from reason, in support of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. More than any other it suits the weakness of man, and magnifies the "mercy" of our God. It empties man of all vain conceit, deprives him of merit even in believing, gives him no room for glorying, save in those "infirmities," which constituted him fit to be the subject of such grace;—while to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, even the Triune God, who in this sacrament of His mercy, deigns once more to breathe into man the "breath of life"—unto Him is ascribed all glory in the Church, by CHRIST JESUS, throughout all ages.

And may that Church, while over the regenerate of Her Heavenly Lord, she offers prayer and holy supplication, that their good beginning may be prospered from above, and that they may be strengthened by His spirit in the inner man;—may she, commending them to His grace, have ever cause to rejoice that, by the indulgence of that God, it has been permitted to her to *believe*, and through believing to be *saved* by, "one baptism, for the remission of sins."

SECOND PART.

The argument from Holy Scripture, and that also which founds itself upon honest criticism and reason, have (so far) been advanced. But, perchance, the proofs adduced, however satisfactory in their character to impartial minds, may still prove inconclusive to those who come to the enquiry with pre-conceived views, or who receive the teachings of inspiration through a party-colored medium.

Men, in this age of *self-sufficiency*, differ in their views respecting the doctrine before us. Every man has his *own* "private interpretation," (2 Peter i: 20,) his *own* view of "mysteries," his *own* system of deciding upon the "*weightier matters*" of Christian faith and obedience—for both are involved. They forget that "evangelical truth" is not the peculiar or exclusive property of the last three centuries. It is the common heritage of Christianity. It has been transmitted to us—handed down by members of the Christian Body, who, in point of time, stood nearer to the Head than we do.

Can we then act more wisely than to refer our difficulty to the judgment of those who "were before us," and equally with us, "members of Christ," and compare with each other, and with ourselves, the testimonies which have been recorded by them, on this now controverted point. Surely an Arbiter, which speaks from a general and comprehensive experience, and which embraces every age, from the Apostolic to the present, may—without injustice—be deemed safe, and well qualified to pass sentence. And if, beyond this, that arbiter's unvarying testimony relative to baptism, through all ages, harmonizes, both with the analogy and text of the Sacred Scriptures, and can be traced, continuously, up to those days in which the *taught* of the Apostles were themselves teachers in the Church, then, to such testimony, it were vain to oppose one man's judgment, or the mere dicta of one party. Coming, too, from times in

which this question (baptismal regeneration) was not agitated, such testimony must act *without partiality*, and render equal justice to disputants in this.

Such an Arbitrator is the Church, in her character of "witness" for the truth—of whose evidence, however, it must be premised, that it is not necessary it should come to us in words of *comment* on the Apostolical writings:—it is enough if they are professedly based upon the *acknowledged practice* and *received doctrine* of Christians, at the times, respectively, when such evidence was given. For it should be remembered that the doctrine and practice were not the result, but the *causè* and *foundation* of the New Testament Epistles.

What, then, is the judgment of the Church?

Her evidence—for convenience sake—may be divided into

(a.) The testimony of the primitive and Apostolical ages;

(b.) That of the early champions of the Reformed Anglican Church; and

(c.) That contained in the "Book of Common Prayer," Articles, etc., which, from its present obligation, may be called the testimony of to-day.

And as the truth is *one* and *immutable*, these several ages of the Church should profess one and the same doctrine. They should agree with one another, and with the written word of Christ. Do they thus agree? Is there this harmony among them? *We let them speak for themselves.*

(a.) The testimony of the primitive and Apostolic ages. Did they recognize—and (much more) *believe in* the "new birth" as consequent on baptism, or—as opposed to their teaching—is it one of the *novelties*, which disturb our peace?

First, then, we have before us *Justin Martyr*, who wrote A. D. 140, *only forty years after the time of the Apostle St. John*. In his second Apology, presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, he thus speaks of the ordinance now under review:

"We will relate in what manner we dedicate ourselves to God, being renewed in Christ, lest by omitting this, we should appear to act unfairly in this account. *Whoever are persuaded,* and believe, that those things are true, which are taught and said by us, and promise to live agreeably to them, are instructed to pray, and ask God with fasting* the remission of their former sins. . . . then they are led down by us to a place where there is *water, and they are regenerated in the same manner as we ourselves were regenerated*; for they are washed in the name of the Father, and Lord of all, and of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and of the Holy Ghost." [Justin Martyr, Apol. 2, p. 93]

What importance he attached to this washing, and in what sense he received it is sufficiently apparent from a sentence which immediately follows—"for *Christ said*, if ye be not regenerated, ye shall not enter," etc., etc.

* Those who prefer the original to the translation—or have not Justin's work at command—may satisfy their curiosity, as to the italicized portion of the extract, by referring to a note at the bottom of page 656, Vol. I, Hooker Ecc. Pol. Oxford Edit. 1843.

Now Justin, we know, was removed from the Apostle by only *one link*, so that his testimony may almost be called Apostolical. In it however, we find *two* important admissions—1st. That, in his day, the effect consequent on baptism was deemed strictly *spiritual*; and secondly, That this opinion was not confined to a few, but was the commonly received belief. [See, also, Theophilus of Antioch, to Autolyceus.]

Next in succession comes *Ireneus*, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 178, the disciple of the venerable Polycarp, who was contemporary with St. John. His evidence, in substance, is the same as that of Justin. His words are these: “—— τῷ βαπτισματὸς τῆς εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀναγενέσεως κ. τ. λ.” [the baptism of *regeneration toward God*.] The Spiritual efficacy of the ordinance is here plainly marked, the phrase being—not εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, toward the Church, but εἰς θεὸν, toward God.

After him speaks *Tertullian*, Presbyter of Carthage, A. D. 200.

“The waters,” says he, “are made the sacrament of sanctification, invocato Deo,” etc. And again, “Caro abluitur *ut unīma* emasculetur.” [“The flesh is washed *that the soul* may be uncaralyzed.] Tertul. de Carn. Resurrec. cap. 8.

Then follows *Origen*, of Alexandria, A. D. 230, declaring that even “parvuli baptizantur *in remissione peccatorum*.” [“little children are baptized unto the remission of sins.”]

Cyprian next, the celebrated Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 248, to the same purpose:

“A baptismo atque a gratia nemo prohibetur: quanto magis prohiberi non debet *infans* ad *remissionem peccatorum* accipiendam hoc ipso facilius accedit, quod illi remittuntur non propria sed *aliena peccata*.” [From baptism and from grace no one should be withheld; much less should an infant be kept back from receiving the *remission of sins*, which accrues to it the more readily, since to it are remitted, not personal, but *foreign* (*i. e.* *original* or derived) *sins*.] Epis. lxiv: p. 158.

Nor is Cyprian without due support, for we find it asserted by all *the fathers* of the Council of Carthage, held A. D. 249.

“Aqua sanctificata *abluit peccata*,” [“water sanctified (*i. e.* consecrated) washes away sins] and again in their sixth canon: *

“Placuit de infantibus, quoties non inveniuntur certissime testes, qui eos baptizatos esse, sine dubitatione testentur, neque ipsi sunt per aetatem idonei de traditis sibi sacramentis respondere absque ullo scrupulo eos esse baptizandos, ne ista trepidatio eos faciat *sacramentorum purgatione* privari. [“It pleases us, as it regards infants—that so often as witnesses are not to be found who can, without

*) A. D. 251 They assumed the name *katharoi*, (pure,) and obliged such as came over to them from the general body of Christians, to submit to be baptized a *second time*. For such deep root had their favorite opinion concerning the irrevocable rejection of heinous offenders taken in their minds . . . that they considered baptism, administered in those Churches which received the lapsed to their communion, even after the most sincere and undoubted repentance, as absolutely divested of the power of imparting the “*remission of sins*.” There was *no difference* in point of *doctrine* between the Novatians and other Christians.” Mosheim, Ecc. Hist, Cent. iii, chap. iv, sec. 18.

doubtfulness, certify that they have been baptized, seeing they themselves (*i.e.* the infants) are not competent, because of their age, to give assurance of their reception of the sacraments,—that without any scruple, they be baptized, lest this very uncertainty (*trepidatio*) cause them to be deprived of the *cleansing* of the sacrament. Con. Carth. Can. 6.

In the next generation, *Eusebius*, Bishop of Cesarea, sets forth the doctrine of his day, (A. D. 315.) and his testimony is to us the more valuable, as it constitutes part of a solemn protest, against what was then deemed a heresy by the Church.

"Homo per aquam baptismi licet a foris idem esse videatur, *intus* tamen *alius efficitur*: cum peccato natus, *sine peccato renascitur*; * prioribus perit, succedentibus proficit; deterioribus exiit, in meliora innovatur; persona tingitur et *natura mutatur*." ["although a man (who has passed) through the water of baptism may seem outwardly the same man, *inwardly*, however, he has become another; born with sin, *he is regenerated without sin*. To his former state, he dies: in that which succeeds, he thrives;—he is stripped of the lower and the worse: he is clothed upon with the new and the better; his person is bathed, his nature is changed."] Euseb. Emis. de Epiphan., Homil. 3.

A few years later, (A. D. 348,) *Cyril*, of Jerusalem, denominates this ordinance, as "*πάλληγγενεσία Ψυχης*," ["The regeneration of the soul."]

Optatus, Bishop of Milevi, in Numidia, (A. D. 370,) is still more explicit,—"*Renascuntur spiritualiter Deo. Sic fit hominum pater Deus, sancta fit Ecclesia mater*." ["They are *spiritually* re-born to God. Thus God becomes the Father of men, and the Holy Church their mother.] Opt. cont. Don.

Doubtless, by this passage, he believed that this two-fold relation to God and to the Church, was secured by the one act of baptism; and that the grace which constituted him a son of the Church, made him, at the same time, a son of God. He expressly says, "he was born again to God, through the agency, *i.e.* as a mother—of the Church."

Contemporary with this last witness wrote the celebrated *Gregory* of Nazianzen:—

"— *τρισην γεννησιν ἡμῖν οἶδεν ὁ λογος, την εκ σώματος, την εκ βαπτισματος, την ἐξ ἀναστασεως. Ἐτι μὲν ἡ τοῦ βαπτισματος χάρον καὶ δύναμιν, ου κοσμου κατακλυσμῶν ὡς πάλαι, τῆς δὲ τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτον ἀμαρτίας κάθαρσιν, ἐχουσα.*"

["The word recognizes in us *three* generations, (or births,) that of the body, that *by baptism*, and that of the resurrection. That which is *by baptism* has (or exercises) *grace and power*,—not, in the deluging of a world, as of old; but, in this case, in the *purging away* of individual sin."]—*De Sanc. Bap. Grat. 40 ad init.*

* Compare Hooker, Ecc. Pol. lib. v. c. lx, passages beginning, respectively, "Baptism is a sacrament which God has instituted," down to "newness of life"—and, a little further on, "For, as we are not naturally men"—to — "maketh us Christians."

About the same time, *Basil* the Great, of *Cæsarea*, adjoins this testimony:—“*Ἀρχὴ μοι ζωῆς τὸ βάπτισμα.*” [‘The beginning to me of life is baptism.’]—*De Spirit. Sanc. Cap. 10.*

A few years later, (A. D. 374.) *Ambrose*, of *Milan*, propounds the same doctrine:—“*Nemo,*—says this celebrated Bishop—“*ascendit in regnum celorum, nisi per sacramentum baptismatis.*” [‘No one ascends to the Kingdom of Heaven, save by the Sacrament of Baptism.’]

After him comes *Augustine*, of *Hippo*, (A. D. 398 :) “*Baptismum vero quod est sacramentum remissionis peccatorum, etc.*” And further: “*Nos pisciculi secundum ἔθλον nostrum Jesum Christum, in aqua nascimur.*” [‘Truly, baptism which is the sacrament of the remission of sins, etc.—“We little fishes, according to *ΙΧΘΥΝ* our Lord Jesus Christ, are born in water.’]—*Bap. lib. vi: 21.* And again, still more expressly;—

“*Baptismum quod contra originale peccatum donatum est, et quod generatione attractum est, regeneratione detrahatur.**” [‘Baptism is that which is given against (or to meet) original sin,—so that that which is derived to us by generation may be removed by regeneration.’]

From these words, there surely can be no doubt but that *Augustine*, (and before him the Christians of A. D. 374.) held the essential spirituality of the baptismal benefit, since that rite was regarded as the sacrament for the remission of sins—(sacramentum remissionis peccatorum)—and the sign and seal of the “new birth”—“in aqua nascimur.”

The testimony of *Chrysostom*, successively Bishop of *Antioch* and *Constantinople*, is of the same date as that of *Augustine*;—the one expressing the doctrine of the East, the other, that of the Western Church. Here again, the spirituality of the baptismal grace is unequivocally maintained.

“*ὄντω καὶ μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ἐκκαθαίρεται ἁμαρτήματα μετὰ πόνου πολλοῦ καὶ καμπτῶν.*”

And, if we advance a little further—in the middle of the fifth century, we find *Prosper*, of *Aquitain*, inculcating the same belief.

“*Neque credi fas est, eos qui regenerationis non adepti sunt sacramentum ad illum beatorum pertinere consortium, etc.*” [‘Nor is it lawful to believe that those who have not received the sacrament of regeneration belong to the society of the blest, etc.’]

And in another place:—

“*Una est nativitas de terra, alia de cælo; una de carne, alia de Spiritu; una de aeternitate, alia de mortalitate; una de masculo et femina, alia de Deo et Ecclesia. Sed ipsæ duæ singulares sunt; quo modo enim utero non potest repeti, sic nec *baptismus iterari.*”*

[‘There is one nativity of the earth, another of heaven; one of the flesh, another of the spirit; one of eternity, the other of mortality;

* Compare *Ambrose* and *Augustine* with *Hooker Ecc. Pol. lib. v., sec. 60.* beginning at “If Christ Himself, which giveth salvation,” down to “means for their baptism;” also, with “*Quoniam in potestate Dei est præter ista hominem salvare, sed in potestate hominis non est sine istis ad salutem pervenire.*” (*Hugo de Sacramen. lib. 1. cap. 5.*)

one of male and female, the other of God and the Church. And these are singular in this respect—that as man cannot be born again in the womb, so neither can baptism be repeated.]—*Prop. Senten., 331.*

We now come to *Gregory the Great*, Bishop of Rome, (A. D. 660.) from whose time, down to the "Reformation," the doctrine of baptism remained unchanged. He consequently will be our last personal witness. In perfect harmony with the evidence already adduced, he gives his judgment:

"Sacramentum est per quod sub tegimento rerum visibilium divina ritus salutem secretius operatur."

[A sacrament is that by which, under a covering of visible things, a Divine ordinance the more secretly works salvation.]

We have thus traced the testimony of the Church from A. D. 140, down to the days of Gregory of Rome. We have seen that, in all its parts it has a decided bearing on, and in behalf of "*baptismal regeneration*." Revert we now to that period, which connects Justin Martyr, our first witness, to the Apostles themselves. The chain is unbroken and perfect, so far as we have examined it; let us add the one link which must make it complete, and unite in one bond and one spirit, all the witnesses on this point, from St. Paul to the "Reformation."

That link is furnished us by the Epistle of *Barnabas*, the fellow worker of St. Paul, and himself an Apostle [vide Acts, xiii: 2, 4, comp. xiv: 2, 14] in the Church of Christ. In section 15, of that Epistle, we have this passage:

"We are led down to the water, full of sin and pollution, but come up again bearing forth fruit—having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Christ Jesus, by the Holy Ghost."—[Apos. Fathers, Wake's translation.]

In this passage, (tis worthy of remark,) the Apostle does not regard it as an initiatory rite or passport to external privileges, but *strictly* as a means of *grace to the soul*—as the appointed agency for transmitting to that soul the seed of a "new life." He makes no mention of any prior efficacy of faith, but simply declares, that the candidates went down into the water "full of sin," and as simply asserts the change which, by this sacrament, had passed upon them. "We come up again bringing forth fruit etc., etc." Thus the *change* was inwrought, *not before*, nor *after*, but at the *time of washing*. *

*The baptism of Constantine the Great. The Emperor deferred this rite till, what he believed to be, the hour of his death,—in the belief that "baptism would save him." He erred—not in his appreciation of that ordinance, as designed to convey "inward grace,"—but in his heart forgetfulness of what should characterize faith. Had he possessed a true faith, he would never have deferred obedience to a command of Christ. If, therefore, he was not regenerated, it was not because God's institution failed, or was imperfect, but because, as an adult, he was *disqualified* to be benefited by it.

The case of Theodosius, [Sozomen, lib. vii, c: 4] of whom Gibbon says, sneeringly, that he "ascended from the font, glowing with the warm feelings of regener-

After they "went down," and before they "came up," even while they were *in* the water.

Here, this portion of the evidence might safely be closed, for, if the *numerous quotations* which have been adduced are not sufficient to remove the imputation that regeneration by baptism is a *novelty*, no multiplication of testimonies would have that effect. It may be permitted, however, to advance *one further proof*, in corroboration of this argument, to which it would be hard, for *even prejudice*, to object. "*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*" The honesty of the Church is doubted, even where She simply declares her own doctrine. A Bishop, or Priest, or Historian, is set aside—accounted incompetent to give evidence, even on a question familiarized to him by the habits and duties of his very office—simply *because* he happens to be a Bishop or a Priest.

Well—what will the objectors say to that which to the same point, proceeds "ab hoste?" From one who was a determined foe, not only to Bishops and Presbyters, but to *Christianity itself!* from one who was interested in thwarting all the plans, purposes, and teachings of the Church; will the "*fas est doceri,*" from such a quarter be admitted?

Allow me, then, to introduce the Apostate Julian! (A. D. 380.) whose policy, and hatred toward the faith, would induce him to attack such doctrines *only* as he knew more *generally* confessed, and confessed as *essentials of the religion*. But, (asks the objector) was Julian indeed conversant with the principles of the Christian faith? He *was*, most *thoroughly* so! * It is known (from Zozomen, Ecc. His., lib. v. c. 2) that he was *baptized* into, and brought up in, that faith, [See also Socrates, lib. iii. c. 1] and, therefore, in conformity with established discipline, must have attended the catechetical lectures, which were invariably delivered to all candidates for baptism, even as the mystagogical lectures were to the aspirants to the Holy Eucharist. And of these lectures, (in which he was required to be proficient, the first *three* related expressly to the nature of the baptismal ordinance, and its consequent duties.

Now, armed with this knowledge, common to all the baptized, Julian *attacks Christianity*, . . . and *ridicules*, as one, among the peculiar tenets of Christians, the doctrine of being *born anew*, by the mere element of water in baptism. [Faber, Difficulties Rom. vi, p. 114.]

The testimony from the primitive ages must here close. It speaks for itself. It is of a character not to be lightly despised; and pro-

ation—while it further asserts the general belief of that day, in baptismal new-birth, may also be treated like that of Constantine.

In his Decline and Fall, vol. ii cap. xx, p. 271, Gibbon, speaking of the notoriety of this doctrine, A. D. 338, says "The Sacrament of Baptism was supposed to contain a full and absolute expiation of sin, and the soul was instantly restored to its original purity, and entitled to the promise of eternal salvation. Gibbon employs a wrong term—'expiation,'—which the Church never ascribed to any but Christ Himself—as 'man's atonement'—yet the doctrine of a spiritual benefit is strongly declared."

* Julian himself, [Epis. 51, p. 454.] tells the Alexandrians that he was a Christian till he was 21 years of age.

ceeds from men—the last excepted—of integrity, and illustrious for their thorough acquaintance with the truth. It is, moreover, handed down to us by a continuous chain of testimony, the several parts of which are linked most surely and harmoniously together, from the times of the Apostles. “All speak the same thing, all are perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in same judgment.”

The next step brings us to

[B] The testimony of the early Champions of the Reformed Anglican Church—whose doctrines, it is but reasonable to expect, should agree with that held by the primitive Christians—for the *restoration* of the Church to her original purity, was the *professed* object of these Reformers.

In the accomplishment, however, of this great purpose, they ventured not to act without a proper and sufficient guidance. They reverted to the earliest and purest ages of the faith, and, from the doctrine and discipline then revered, took their standard of reformation. By studious research, they familiarized themselves with the writings of those from the inspiration of the Apostolic age had scarcely passed away. And these writings, with the additional safeguard of Holy Scripture, supplied them with a model of pure, perfect and Apostolical Christianity.

As then, the faith of the Reformers is, professedly, none other than that “once delivered to the saints;”—we are, in every way, justified in requiring that it should harmonize with the doctrine of the first ages of the Church.

Before, however, their evidence is adduced, and to guard against any imputation of singularity, or *undue attachment* to Romish error, it may be prudent to bring in other testimony, from quarters to which, even by the most fastidious objectors, no such suspicion has been attached. We call to the bar, then, the Helvetic, Belgic, Bohemian, and other Churches.

1st The Helvetic :

“Baptizari est purgari a sordibus peccatorum et donari veri Dei gratia ad vitam novam et innocentem.” [‘To be baptized is to be purged from the impurities of sins, and—by the grace of the true God—to be given (or dedicated) to a new and innocent life.’]

Confess. Helvet. cap. 20.

“Arcanum rerum symbola non nudis signis, sed *signis simul e rebus constat.*” [‘The secret, or hidden reality, of these things, *i.e.* the symbol, consists not of mere signs, but in the very things themselves together with the signs.] Confess. Helvet. prior. § 20.

“Sacramenta constant verbo, signis et rebus significatis.” [‘Sacraments consist in word, signs, and in the things signified.’] Confess. Helvet. post., c: 19.

2nd, The Belgic and Bohemian.

“Sacramenta sunt signa et symbola visibilia rerum internarum et invisibilium, per quae cœu per media, *Deus virtute Spiritus Sancti in nobis agit,*” [‘Sacraments are signs and visible symbols of things

internal and invisible, through which, as it were by instruments, God works in us, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.] Confess. Belg., Art. 33., et item Bohem. Confess., cap. 11.

For the following extracts, the writer of this article is indebted to the research of that scholarly and most amiable of men, George Jehoshaphat Mountain, late Lord Bishop of Quebec. With others of similar character and conclusiveness, they may be found in the notes appended to his "Charge, delivered to the clergy," A. D. 1848.

"De Baptismate itaque confitemur, id quod passim scriptura de illo praedicat eo sepeliri nos in mortem Christi, coagmentari in unum corpus, Christum induere; *esse lavacrum regenerationis, peccata ablucere, nos salvare.*" [Therefore we confess concerning baptism that which the scripture everywhere predicates of it,—that we are buried into the death of Christ, are glued (or cemented) into one body,—put on Christ; it is the *laver of regeneration*, to wash away our sins, to save us.] Confession. Strasburg, etc., A. D. 1530.

"Et dari Spiritum Sanctum in baptismo, affirmat ad Titum cum ait:—*Per lavacrum regenerationis et renovationis per Spiritum Sanctum; et in Joanne dicitur, nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu, non potest intrare in regnum caelorum.*" And that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism is affirmed when he says to Titus; "by the *laver of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" And it is said in John, "Unless a man be reborn of *water* and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Conf. Sax. A. D. 1551.

"De virtute et efficacia sacri Baptismi credo et confiteor, liberos nostros cruentae mortis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, *omnium ejus bonorum quae Ille morte sua acquisivit, participes fieri*, idque hoc modo, quod quemadmodum externum sigillum sacrosanctum sacramentum, nempe elementarem aquam a ministro verbi Divini, extrinsecus in corpore recipiunt, ita quoque *simul a Christo ipso, effuso illius sanguine*, in animabus suis, *hoc est interne baptizantur et per S. Sanctum de integro, seu, in novis creaturas regenerantur.*" [Touching the virtue and efficacy of baptism, I believe and I confess that our children become participators in the bloody death of our Lord Jesus Christ,—of all the benefits which by His death He purchased; and this after the following manner—that like as they receive the outward sign, the Holy Sacrament, to wit, the elemental *water*, from the Minister of the Divine Word, outwardly on their bodies, so they, *at the same time receive from Christ Himself*, the virtue of His out-poured blood, in their souls, *i. e.*, they are inwardly baptized, and by the Holy Spirit *regenerated afresh*, or—into new creatures.] Conf. Fred. iii, Count. Palat., published A. D. 1577.

"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, *not only* for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the *visible Church*, but, also, to be unto him a *sign and seal* of the Covenant of grace, of his *ingrafting* into Christ, of *regeneration*, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life." Westminster Confess. Faith, chap. xxviii, § 1.

"God of eternal truth and love,
Vouch safe the promised aid we claim,
Thine own great ordinance approve,
The *child* baptized into Thy name,
Partaker of Thy nature make,
And give him all Thine image back."

Father, if such Thy sovereign will
If Jesus did the rite enjoin,
Annex Thy hallowing Spirit's seal,
And let the *grace* attend the *sign;*
The seed of endless life impart
Take for *Thine own* this *Infant's* heart."

WESLEY'S Hymns.—Hymn 740:

Comment is unnecessary! It could add nothing to the significance or force of the language quoted. Nor could we easily, in the whole compass of the early writings on this subject, find the truth more tersely, or with more clearness, expressed, as setting forth a *spiritual benefit*, than we find it in the "Baptizari est purgari etc." of the above Confessions.

The disciples of Jerome, of Carl, and Zuingle, do not *now*, it is true, subscribe the articles! The march of "free inquiry" has placed a wide and unretraceable gap between the "liberti" of the present age and those venerable men, who—distrustful of self—dared to regulate their faith by a higher wisdom than that of man; and the gap, alas! is widening! The present age boasts itself free. It approves or condemns what it will. It owns no rule but self! It is strictly in things DIVINE, as in things human.

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri."
[To no man's word disposed its faith to bow.]"

It acknowledges no King! Be it so! only let the consequence of a like assumption, "no King—but Cæsar," [*i.e.* nought but what *we* choose to hold as King.] speak some word of *warning*, lest—as was then the case—and as it has happened since, even to the descendants of the Helvetic Church,—they proceed, even to the "denying of the Lord which bought them." We return to

[B] The testimony of the early Champions of the Reformed Anglican Church.

I. We begin with Tindal, whose translation of the Scriptures, into the English tongue, has embalmed his memory in the best affections of the Christian heart. In his *prologue* to the Book of *Leviticus*, (printed with his translation of the Pentateuch, A. D. 1530,) treating of the Sacraments, as distinguished from the "opus operatum" of the Romish Church, he thus writes:

"Though God make a promise, yet it saves none finally, but them that long for it, and pray God, with a strong faith, to fulfil it for His mercy and truth only, and acknowledge their unworthiness. And even so our sacraments, if they be truly ministered, preach Christ unto us, and lead our faith to Christ; by which faith our sins are done away, and not by the deed or work of the sacrament. For, as it is impossible that the blood of calves should put away sin, even so is it impossible that the *water* of a river should cleanse our hearts. Nevertheless, the sacraments *cleanse* and *absolve* us from

our sins, as the priests do, in preaching repentance and faith, for *which cause either of them were ordained.*"

Now, it must be borne in mind, that Tindal is combatting the doctrine, then almost universally held, in the West, of "Salvation by works." He denies spiritual efficacy to the "opus operatum." He admits of no inherent merit in the *act* of the communicant; nor does he allow of any intrinsic virtue in the mere *elements*, or matter of the sacraments. All their efficacy he ascribes to the special grace and merits of Christ, which are, to the *adult* the immediate object of faith:—to the adult, for in the case of infants, who are admissible to baptism, it is otherwise. *They*, (*i. e.* infants) are incapable of faith, and if, in that sacrament fit subjects of Divine grace, must be so altogether independently of any act of their own.

Moreover, Tindal is speaking of the doctrine of the sacraments generally,—to the second of which, the Lord's supper, none but the intelligent believer should approach. Yet, even in this place, he recognizes the *precedence of sacramental* grace, before any personal communion with Christ. "They preach Christ to us—and lead us to Christ." While, further on, he asserts the singular influence of these "outward and visible signs," "in cleansing us, and absolving us from sin"—"for *which cause*," he continues, either of them, (not the Lord's Supper only,) was ordained."

It is very evident, therefore, from the extract, that Tindal entertained higher views of sacraments than consist with the vague notions which some, at this day, both cherish and defend. His views are undisguisedly *positive*—not negative. He gives us plainly to understand, that in their design and effects, he recognized nothing that was not strictly *spiritual*; that, in short, their object was (not the external discipline of the Church, but) the eternal interest and well-being of the soul. And that we are right in thus speaking of Tindal, is abundantly certified by another passage in the same prologue:

"As circumcision was a token certifying them (*i. e.* the Jews) that *they were received* into the favor of God, and their sins *forgiven* them; *even so* baptism *certified* to us that *we are washed* in the Blood of Christ, and *received* into favor, for His sake."

Children but eight days old were eligible candidates for circumcision,—infants as young were fit subjects for baptism, at the time the above-given words were penned. Such infants could neither exercise faith, nor perform intelligent acts of repentance or of spon- sion. On the ground, therefore—the alone ground of God's sovereign "mercy" in baptism can Tindal's language be understood or applied in the cases specified.

Cranmer, in his Catechism—published A. D., 1548, states the doctrine in these words:

"Without the word of God water is water, and not baptism; but when the word of the living God is joined to the water, then it is baptism, and water of *wonderful wholesomeness*, and the *bath of regeneration.*" p. 191.

And again, on page 182.

"The second birth is by the water of baptism, which Paul calls

the bath of regeneration, because *our sins be forgiven us in baptism*, and the Holy Ghost is poured into us as God's beloved children."

"Through baptism in this world the body is washed *and the soul is washed*; the body outwardly, the soul inwardly; the work is one..." Vol. iv, p. 39.

"That doctrine is not to be suffered in the Church, which teacheth that we are not *joined to Christ* by baptism." Ibid. p. 41.

Contemporary with Cranmer was *Ridley*, the most learned of the English Reformers. From a discourse of his on the Eucharist, written in prison, A. D., 1555, immediately before his martyrdom, we take the following extract:

"For the change of use, office, and dignity, of the *bread*—the bread is indeed sacramentally changed into the Body of Christ, as the *water in baptism* is sacramentally changed into the *fountain of regeneration*, and yet the natural substance remains as it was before."

Ridley's works, Park Soc. p. 12.

"The water in baptism bath grace promised, and by that grace the Holy Spirit is given; not that grace is included in water, but that grace cometh by water." Ibid. p. 240.

In the former of these passages, both in the expression "fountain of regeneration," and in the first clause—we have another evidence in favor of our general assertion. For, by the very words, as well as by the spirit of the argument, both sacraments are placed on the same grounds, and their effects are declared to be wrought by supernatural grace, and through similar (*i. e.*, material) agency. If, therefore, the blessing attendant on the Lord's Supper be *spiritual*, [and Ridley says, the partaking of Christ's body, and of His Blood, unto the faithful and godly, is the partaking or fellowship of *life and immortality*,] how much more so must be the effect of *baptism*, from the certain spirituality of which the Reformer argues in behalf of the Eucharist. For, in this discourse, the first sacrament, in its institution and matter, is made the premise or key to his conclusion respecting the second.

Leaving the age of Martyrs, pass we over to the reign of Elizabeth, and from a "cloud of witnessess," select the judicious *Hooker*.

"Baptism," writes he, [Ecc. Pol lib. v., cap. 60 §2] "is a sacrament, which God has instituted in His church, to the end that they who receive the same, might thereby be *incorporated into Christ*, and so, through His most precious merit obtain, as well that saving grace of imputation, which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused Divine virtue, which giveth to the powers of the soul their *first disposition towards future newness of life*."

Again, 'Unless as the spirit is a necessary inward cause, so water were a *necessary outward mean* to our regeneration, what construction should we give to those words, wherein we are said to be new born, and that $\xi\tilde{\nu}$ *ὕδατος*, even of water? Why are we taught—Eph. v : 26—that with *water* God doth purify and cleanse His Church? Wherefore doth the Apostle—Titus iii : 5—term baptism a bath of regeneration? What purpose had they in giving men advice to receive outward baptism, and in persuading them it did avail to remission of sins?"

And still more plainly.—“As we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men, in the eye of the Church of God, but by new birth, nor according to the manifest ordinary course of Divine dispensation new born, but *by baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians.*” “In which respect, we justly hold it to be the door of our *actual* entrance into God’s house, the first apparent *beginning of life*—a seal, perhaps to the grace of election before received; but to our sanctification here, a step *that hath not any before it.*”

Of necessity—so far as the ordinance itself is concerned—“a step that hath not any before it;” no, not even faith; although the absence of faith, in the adult candidate, pre determines his *unfitness* to be a recipient of grace. For, where there is a capacity to appreciate the Divine mercy in Christ, or the *importance of the means* by which that mercy is conveyed, there God exacts all those dispositions which are involved in such appreciation—zeal, gratitude, reliance, repentance. These acts, however, on man’s part, *add nothing* to the efficacy of God’s ordinance. Its place, purpose, and working, are complete *in themselves*. Faith may be exercised, and repentance may justify that faith, yet, standing at the font—before baptism received—so far as *its blessing is concerned*, the repentant believing candidate, stands as wanting as he was before. He is still “without” the covenant, still an “alien” to the Christian commonwealth, albeit an alien appreciating its privileges, and studying conformity to its laws.

Christ has appointed *one*, and only one door of admission to His covenant. He has left but one rule, by which, in this behalf, to judge of our own, or of others’ initiation into His Church. And by this rule we are, in obedience, bound. Our principles, our acts, yea, our very charity, must be conformable to His requirement.

But, although *we* are confined within pre-fixed limits, and must—in everything—be exercised *within them*; God Himself is *not*, of necessity, so bound. It is possible He may, in cases of peculiar difficulty, or of ignorance, save *without* baptism; or, it may be that of His sovereign will, He can save, under any circumstances, independently of the laws and precepts to us given; but, for this belief *we have no sanction* in His revealed word; and, therefore, cherish such belief, still more to act upon it, cannot be other than most dangerous *presumption*. Deut. xxix: 29

Hooker, it is true, has been cited by many as holding views opposed to the doctrine of necessary spiritual grace in baptism. His admission of lay baptism, of baptism by women, and even by heretics, has been construed into an argument, on his part, adverse to the dogma of baptismal regeneration—inasmuch as, by lowering the dignity, he *seemed* to lessen the efficacy, of this sacred rite. That which *everybody* can achieve, say they, can surely not be the giving of new life to the soul, but rather a mere admission to the visible Church. And again, children dying unbaptised, Hooker deems eligible for everlasting life, fit candidates for heavenly joys; baptism, therefore, cannot be the impartation of that grace of new-birth, without which none can enter the Kingdom of God.

The latter objection is sufficiently answered by our Lord's own express words (twice repeated) John iii:3, 5, and by the preceding remarks concerning the "secret things of God." (Deut. xxix: 29.) Unbaptised infants may, or may not be saved. We have no direct authority, in God's word, authorizing us, in such a case, to say yea or nay. We leave them to the All-wise, All-merciful! If salvation *be possible* to such, most assuredly will they enjoy it, for God "willeth not that any should perish." More than this no man has warrant to assert with respect to the other objection—a careful distinction must be observed between the *sacrament itself* and the persons who have the ministering of it. The ministrations is not here the question. Taking even the laxest view, the ordinance itself remains the same. The sacrament is a thing, per se. Men do but minister it. And what it is *in itself*, that must it remain, even though it were [which, in our poor judgment, it is not] lawful to receive it at the hands of laics or women.

One point, however, is clear, viz.—that Hooker *does recognize the doctrine of new birth in baptism*,—and baptism as the Divinely appointed means of attaining to the new birth. Beyond this it is not necessary to press his argument, since this admission involves everything essential to the truth at issue.

Arch-Bishop *Leighton*, may be next cited. He thus give his "witness:—"

"—That baptism has a power is clear, in that it is so expressly said, "it doth save us," which kind of power is as clear, in the way of it, here expressed; not by a *natural* force of the element, though adapted and sacramentally used, *it* can only wash away the filth of the body: its physical power or efficiency reaches no further; but it is in the hands of the Spirit of God, as other sacraments, to *purify the conscience*, to convey *grace and salvation* to the soul, by the reference it hath to, and *union with that which it represents* Thus, then, we have a true account of this, and so of other sacraments, signs they are, but *more than signs*, merely representing, they are *means exhibiting*, and seals *confirming*, grace to the faithful" [Comment 1 Peter iii: 21.]

After *Leighton* comes *Barrow*, (the celebrated Isaac,) A. D. 1652—70.

In his tractate on the doctrine of the sacraments, treating of the blessing consequent on baptism, he speaks as follows:

"The benefits which God then signifies, and—upon due terms—engageth to confer upon us, are these:

1st. The purgation or absolution of us from the guilt of past offences, by a *free and full remission of them* (the which, washing by water, cleansing away all stains, doth most appositely represent,) and, consequently, God's being reconciled to us, His receiving us into a *state of grace and favor*, His freely justifying us that these benefits *are* conferred in baptism, many places in Holy Scriptures most plainly show. Acts xxii: 16; ii: 38; Eph. v: 26; 1 Cor. vi: 11.

"It may be demanded how children, by reason of their innocent age, are capable of these benefits; how *they* can be pardoned, who

never offended; how *they* can be justified, who never were capable of being unjust? I briefly answer, that because they came from that race, which, by sin, had forfeited God's favor, and had alienated itself from Him; because, also, they have in them those sins of pravity from which afterwards, certainly, life continuing, (without God's restraining grace,) will sprout forth innumerable evil actions; therefore God, overlooking all the defects of their nature, both relative and absolute, or personal, doth assume them into His especial favor, is no small benefit to them, answerable to the remission of actual sin, and restitution from the state consequent thereon in others.

2. *In baptism*, the gift of God's Holy Spirit is conferred, *qualifying us* for the state into which we then come, and enabling us to perform the duties we then undertake, etc., etc.

3. With these gifts is connected the benefit of *regeneration*, implying our entrance into a *new state* and course of life; being endowed with *new faculties*, dispositions, and capacities of soul, becoming *new creatures* and new men, as it were renewed after the likeness of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

“. Whence baptism is, by St. Paul, called the 'laver of regeneration'; and our Lord saith that, 'if a man be not born again of *water* and the *spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'; *i. e.*, every one becoming a Christian is by baptism *regenerated*, or put into a new state of life, etc.—“ye are all (says St. Paul,) the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus;” *i. e.*, by embracing His doctrine, and submitting to His law professedly, in *baptism*.

Thus clearly and forcibly speaks the learned Dr. Barrow, a writer, from whose judgment on points of faith, few—if any—would turn carelessly away.

It is due, however, to this argument, to state, that an admission of *all the points*, mentioned in this extract, as “benefits” connected with baptism, is not necessary to the conclusion aimed at by this treatise. For, whether all or but few, of these benefits connect themselves with this ordinance of Christ is not so much the question, as whether—in the opinion of the divines of the Reformation—“an inward and spiritual grace” accompanies the outward sign in baptism.

Next follows Pearson, from whose Exposition of the Creed, the subjoined extract is taken:

“It is certain that baptism, as it was instituted by Christ. wheresoever it was received with all qualifications necessary in the person accepting, and conferred with all the things necessary to be performed by the persons administering, was *most infallibly efficacious*, as to this particular, *i. e.* to the remission of all sins committed before the administration of this sacrament.” [Article, Forgiveness of sins.]

Here—as in former cases—a distinction must be drawn between the adult and infant subject of this sacred ordinance.

In the one, certain dispositions of mind and heart are, doubtless, required ere he can be a fit candidate for Divine mercy. The habits of sin and unbelief must give place to faith, and a desire after holi-

ness of life. And as God accepteth only according to that which a man hath, the adult being capable of understanding what is required of him, must so believe as to do justice to the claims of Christ, and so desire holiness as to submit himself wholly to the law of Christ.

The infant candidate, on the other hand, has neither the disqualification consequent on practical sin, nor the capacity to perform acts of piety or faith.

The words of Pearson, therefore, so far as "qualifications" are concerned, must be understood of adults, inasmuch as they only can have need of such qualifications, or in any way so exercise themselves as to attain them.

Many other authorities might be cited, but these should suffice. The years intervening between A. D. 1530 and the reign of Charles II—to any reasonable man—should be amply sufficient to determine what was the doctrine of the Reformation.

Such then, is the testimony of the Reformers, the early champions of the Anglican Church—testimony possessing every essential requisite to insure it a cordial reception at our hands. It is clear and explicit, and raised on the imperishable monuments of primitive zeal, *scilicet*, the records of *Catholic antiquity*. And that the doctrine, which is thus transmitted to us, is the doctrine of the Apostolic and purest ages, is evident from the *strict and undeviating harmony* which subsists between them. Moreover, it is asserted by these Reformers, in the same connection, to the same end, and almost in the same words, as it is set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Where inspiration draws a line between the *relative* influences of this Divine ordinance, and its properly essential efficacy, as baptism, there the Reformers are studiously cautious. They retain the same distinctions. But where, in the Holy Scriptures, the *intimate connection between the ordinance and its spiritual grace* is declared, there, on the other hand, they choose rather to renounce the vain conceits of human wisdom, and to follow, with humility, the sure direction of their All-wise Lord.

This section of the subject may be fitly closed by the following remarks, quoted from Bishop Jolly's address on Baptismal regeneration :

"Our restoration from death to life, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, which is called a new creation of us, we could no more effect, than we could make ourselves at first. To impress this humbling conviction upon our mind, that *in this, nature has nothing to do*, as being perfectly unable to do anything, our Lord bestows our *new life*, or second birth, or regeneration, *by a Divinely instituted ordinance*, which has no natural virtue to produce such an effect; but which He renders effectual by His *grace*, that He may be all in all. . . . It is not, then, by merit in ourselves, but by means of God's appointment, that we first receive our right and title, and constantly keep up our claim, to this high felicity."

Vide, also, Bp. Jewel's Apology, part 2.

The preceding pages set forth the strong and nervous language of the Apostolical and primitive Fathers, as well as those of the Reformation, in support of baptismal regeneration. It remains to be ascertained [C] whether the Church of England—as a Church—and authoritatively, as such—does, or does not, teach that the “new birth” is effected and insured by baptism.

Our business, therefore, is exclusively, with the *evidence* which, from the acknowledged standards and offices of the Church, may be adducible on this point. Which evidence, in justice to the compilers, and to the Convocations, which set forth these standards and offices, it is simply just to interpret by the rule which applies equally in all matters of written testimony, whether ancient or modern, to wit, by the *plain and grammatical* sense of the words which they employ.

Or, should there in any case be a difficulty, or possible application of two interpretations, the one diverse from the other; then—as these compilers avowedly took for their models, the venerable formularies of the primitive Church, we are bound to receive that sense of their words which best tallies with, and breathes the spirit, of the primitive age.

What then is the teaching of the Church, in her Common Prayer, her Articles, her Catechism, etc.

1st. Then, in the introductory address of the baptismal service, we have a declaration, not only of the necessity of baptism to salvation, (John iii : 5) but also of the benefit or end especially designed to be wrought by it. This benefit is expressly stated to be *such*, that man in his *natural state cannot attain* to or possess it, “*which thing by nature he cannot have*,”—words whereby is meant for more than mere *external* communion or *outward* privileges, since *all these*, man, by nature, can have, and thousands have had, who from ignorance or neglect, or other circumstance, have yet never been baptised. It is, moreover, designated as a *particular* benefit, “that thing,” as if to mark the absolute *oneness* of the grace conferred. It is mentioned, too, as a benefit which ensures membership in the Church of Christ,—not in what some are pleased to call the visible, as distinguished from the invisible Church,—(which last to them is the mystical and sacred “body” of the Lord,) but into the Holy Church itself; and, therefore, into Christ;—and in Christ, not merely by outward profession, but as “*lively members*” lively or living—which certainly none, who are naturally dead in sin, can be, until they are quickened into life, or are *new born* by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Evidently, therefore, in all these particulars, the Church sets forth the highest and most sacred view of the baptismal ordinance, —yet, were these particulars not so many, or so marked,—still the very fact of her holding as no unfit preface to the act of baptism, that solemn declaration of our Lord, (John iii : 3, 5) which all allow to be significant only of the *new birth*, in its *spiritual* acceptation, would constrain us to admit that the blessing-sought was, not of man, nor by the will of man, but—of God; was, in fact, something without which the soul could hold no covenant relationship to

Christ, or rightful hope of acceptance and salvation. But, we are not left to one presumptive argument, however strong. The particulars above stated are express, and their significance becomes still more conclusive when we reflect, that, placing the doctrine of new birth by water, at the very opening of her address, the Church, now on the point of employing *water* as the sacrament of man's admission into Christ, seeks the blessing proper to such admission from that "*mercy*" of God, according to which, says St. Paul, we are saved by the *washing of water*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

In the prayer which immediately follows, we find the same views which are propounded in the preface.

1st. The *Salvation* of Noah and his family, and the *safe passage* of the Red Sea by Israel, (to neither of which does an admission to the *mere possibility of grace* stand a parallel) are set before us as types of our "holy baptism." Now, in the case of Noah, the change *effected* was evidently one from a world condemned to a world restored; and in that of Israel, it was from the bondage of oppression to the glorious freedom of a chosen and favored people.

Yet these were types of better things to come (Cor. x : 3; 1 Peter iii : 20, 21). If then the type reveals itself in the anti-type, and the shadowy foreshowing in the full and perfect reality, when come, surely we may expect, *in that reality*, a blessing correspondent to, only higher and more spiritual in character, than that which in the type is made the basis of Christian hope.

The figures speak of a work *complete*,—"old things passed away and all things become new." Have we, in the "substance" to which they point, a blessing—a present, perfect and abiding grace to the soul, at all correspondent to the grace shown to Noah and to Jacob?

In the ordinary, but low, view of the baptismal benefit no such correspondence can be traced. It recognizes no salvation, no deliverance, no translation to a new covenant, no actual and abiding moral change, no ground for the assurance (1 Peter iii : 20, 21) that the like figure whereunto—*i. e., the Church by baptism*, doth even now *save us*—much less confer upon us the grace of freedom, and the dignity of sons of God. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, on the contrary, meets fully the deep significance of the figures used, since, in baptism, it professes to give us life from the dead; (Rom. viii : 2; 1 Cor. xii : 13,) makes us heirs of the new covenant, and brings us into the liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii : 15, 16, 17; 1 Cor. xii : 12, 13).

But more than this—the Church unequivocally maintains that the intent of baptism is "*the mystical washing away of sin*," and further teaches us how, by the baptism of our Great Representative, the second Adam, in the river Jordan, water became, by Divine appointment, an element consecrated to this important end. Words so express can hardly be construed to mean only a change of station, as opposed to a change of state. But if any *will so wrest them*, what think they of the declaration in the next prayer (beginning "Almighty and Immortal God") that regeneration is not the consequence of remission of sins, but remission of sins, in baptism, the conse-

quence of regeneration? "We call upon Thee for this infant, that he, coming to Thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins *by spiritual regeneration.*"

That, certainly, which is "*by*" another, must be dependent, either absolutely or relatively, on that other. And although both, in their respective places, may be of equal importance as it regards man's salvation, yet must one, in the order of its operations, stand toward the other, as cause toward effect. In the judgment of the Church, therefore, it is evident that a spiritual blessing, given in baptism, precedes or lays the foundation for the "remission of sins." The judgment of the dissenting world would reverse the order, and propound, as true doctrine, that "remission of sins" is the *cause* of regeneration.

Passing by the expression "heavenly washing"—although it, by itself, points at once to the high spiritual significance of the act—we note the strong confidence of the Church, that the burden of her prayer will be realized in the baptised. She makes it no hypothetical case. Far from it. After joining in the prayers of her children that the "Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive" the candidate, now at the font, "to release him of his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life;" [not one word as to outward privileges, or mere access to some *future possibility* of attaining to grace.]—she proceeds to assure them that all these things, for which they have prayed, *will*, since they have been promised by Christ, *most assuredly be performed*; only she forewarns them that the "beginning" of new life, now entered upon, must be faithfully followed up; thus plainly implying that, in the event of unfaithfulness to the grace or life received, even the regenerate must fail to keep the privilege of their new-birth.

In the third prayer, the words "Give *Thy Holy Spirit* to this infant, that he may be *born again*, and made an heir of everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord," are too definite and emphatic, as to the grace contemplated and sought, to require, or even justify, explanation or enforcement.

Next comes the prayer of Consecration. "Almighty Everlasting God whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood. *Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin*, and grant that this child, now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain, etc., etc.

It must be admitted that, sometimes, human language is so framed that meaning other than its literal import may be deduced from it; but surely, in a solemn address to the most High God, we have reason to expect, if ever such expectation can be justified, an *honest* expression of purpose and desire. True, even here, man's purpose may be a wrong one, and his desire ill-founded. His petitions may involve matters adverse to the truth of Christ. But it can hardly be that, in so awful an exercise as prayer, a man (much less a Church) can deliberately and intentionally approach the Almighty, in the use of words of double or contradictory signification. When, there-

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fore, the Church here prays that the water may be sanctified, or consecrated, qualified "to the mystical washing away of sin," it is but reasonable to believe she has confidence that such remission will and does actually, follow upon this washing; and that she uses the water solely with reference to that end.—Else, why "sanctify the water?" or, why no mention of any other, even adjectitious benefit, beside that which is spiritual?

But were the solemnity of the occasion not a sufficient guarantee for the sincerity of the language employed in this prayer, it might still be proved—even to the satisfaction of the objector—that she strictly meant that which, honestly taken, her words import.

The Compilers of the "Common Prayer" professedly wrought their work after the model of the primitive liturgies. And one of the baptismal prayers at their command, was that found in the Apostolic Constitutions; a work which, though not so old as the Apostles, was certainly of the earliest and most venerable date—of a date when no question obtained in the Church as to the end and offices of baptism. It was (century second and third) universally allowed to be regeneration.

We subjoin the prayer:

"Look down from heaven and sanctify this water, give it grace and power, that he who is baptised therein, according to the command of Christ, may be crucified with Him that dying to sin he may live to righteousness."

Now bearing in mind the fact that when these Constitutions were written, the Church held the doctrine of the new-birth in baptism, we pass to notice two or three points in the prayer, which (if collateral evidence were wanting, which it is not,) would, of themselves, convince us that a change of heart, not of station, was the end which the Church had in view.

1st. The water, heretofore common, is solemnly set apart and consecrated to a religious work.

2d. The character of that work is set forth as unequivocally *Divine*, since it is wrought solely by the virtue of God's grace and power,—auxiliaries these, and especially the latter, scarcely necessary, unless a moral change was intended to be wrought. For, whatever place may be found for "grace" in man's mere change of station, there can be none for "power," the very mention of which involves, not only a *permission* that man may be saved, but some *operation or work*, on the part of God, whereby he is saved. That work is very plainly indicated in the extract from the Constitutions, to wit:—"a dying unto sin and a life unto righteousness," blessing equivalent to "regeneration."

This prayer the Compilers of our baptismal office had at command, and that they approved its teaching is very evident from the similarity—might it not be said *identity*—of the language in the Common Prayer and in these Constitutions.

The last clause, however, in the consecration prayer, as found in our office, seems to determine the question, if question there can be. It assumes the fact that the baptized is no longer a child of wrath, an heir of condemnation, but one of God's faithful and elect children. For it prays that he may "ever remain" in this state of grace

—a word wholly out of place, as well as a thing impossible, unless it be allowed that that position had been attained, in which it was his privilege to “remain.” Men cannot “*remain*” where they never were, and to suppose the attainment of that blessing is to admit the doctrine of “baptismal regeneration.”

Lastly, comes the *plainly expressed* judgment of the Church on the state of the individual *immediately after* baptism. And that her language may not, by any, be deemed the mere product of an hour, or even of one confessional session, it may be allowed to give, in conjunction with it, a form of words which obtained in the baptismal service *down to the time* of Edward VI,—a form, be it observed, which was set aside solely and confessedly because the *unction*, which till then was practised was not found warranted by the word of God. We say, solely, (as they also themselves professed) because the only other doctrine involved in that form, was scrupulously retained—to wit, the doctrine of regeneration by baptism, as now set forth in our Common Prayer.

These are the words of the prayer as it stood in the reign of Ed. VI: “Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath regenerated* thee by *water* and the Holy Ghost and *hath given thee* remission of thy sins;—vouchsafe to anoint thee with the unction of His Holy Spirit, and bring thee to the inheritance of everlasting life. AMEN.”

Now so far as it respects the doctrine of the new-birth, the language of our present service, (a service in force since Ed. VI.) is equally express.

“Seeing now,” *i. e.*, immediately after baptism—“that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church let us give thanks unto God.”

And then, after the Lord’s prayer, follows the thanksgiving:—

“We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it *hath pleased* Thee to *regenerate* this infant by Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child grant that he *being dead unto sin*, and *living unto righteousness*. . . . may crucify the old man and *utterly* abolish the whole body of sin, etc., etc.

Than these, surely no words can be more express, or more emphatically set forth, that man is new-born to God in baptism. We refrain, therefore, from comment.

For the same reason, to wit:—the clear, undisguised and telling significance of the language—it is enough that the Church Catechism speak for itself:—

Q.—“What is the *outward, visible* sign or form in baptism?”

Ans.—*Water*, wherein the person is baptised In the name, etc.”

Q.—“What is the *inward and spiritual* grace?”

Ans.—‘A death unto sin and a *new life* unto righteousness, for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are *hereby* made the *children of grace*.”

The xxvii Article (on baptism,) when read in the light of the xxvth, is equally explicit and conclusive—Baptism is the first, of the two great fundamental sacraments of the Christian system. And “sacraments,” says the xxv Art., “be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession,” *i. e.*, not only inlets to outward or

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“visible fellowship, but rather they be certain *sure* witnesses, and *effectual* signs of GRACE by the which *He doth work invisibly* in us, and doth *quicken* etc.”

The xxvii Art. iterates the negative of the xxvth and, as its affirmative, asserts that baptism is a sign of regeneration or new-birth It further adds intensity to that assertion by imparting to it a legal character or force, “whereby, as *by an instrument*, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promise of the *forgiveness of sins*, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, are *visibly signed and sealed*.” The language is positive. No room is left for contingency or speculation. Christ’s promise and work (“He for His part will most *surely keep and perform*”) are assumed to have been fully and unquestionably realized. The *spiritual benefit* is unequivocally declared. It is needless, therefore, to multiply words by way of elucidating that which is already clear. If any seek a more extended treatment of the article, it may be found in Browne on the Articles, Art. xxvii. § iv.

The whole subject may be concluded, and not unaptly, by a quotation from Bishop Jolly’s “Friendly Address?”—

“That spiritual regeneration is there understood (*i. e.* in the Catechism) and taught to be the result of baptism, cannot be doubted; baptism as a sacrament, is declared to be a means of grace, and a pledge to assure us of it, by an outward and visible sign. And the inward grace of this holy sacrament is declared to be “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are *hereby made* the children of grace.” In consequence of which every child is taught to say, *without any qualifying reserve*, that in baptism he was made “a member of Christ, a child of God etc.”

“The office of baptism itself makes all this as clear as day Indeed, in all the liturgical forms for the administration of baptism, East and West, Latin and Greek; from that in the ancient collections, called the Apostolical Constitutions, down to the excellent office in the Book of Common Prayer, *regeneration is inseparably connected* with the reception of baptism, in the act of which the recipient is *passive*, for he could no more have activity in giving life to himself, more than a nonentity, a mere nothing, could create or produce itself into being, which is the work of the Almighty Creator alone.

“We must receive life before we can live, and be born before we can breathe, and so it is in our new-birth.

“In the Ancient Church, long time was spent, and much pains used, in the instruction of the Catechumens, especially when they became competent, or Candidates for baptism Now, we here find, that all this long and careful preparation, with the holy dispositions, resolutions, and views, in consequence of it, had *nothing to do*, as of efficacy, toward their regeneration. Their utmost attainments in this respect did not, and could not, regenerate them, could not give them life, that supernatural life of grace, and hope of glory, which we lost in Adam but have regained in Christ. He, of His unspeakable love and kindness, saves us, by the washing of regeneration, giving us new life and birth, a mere gratuity, in at-

taining which, our best dispositions have no desert ; and conferred, therefore, that we might be the more deeply impressed with such a sense by a sacramental mean, that has *no natural* virtue toward the effect, which is the work of *God alone*. The best disposed Candidate was still understood to come to the font in his *unregenerate* state.

“St. Cyril, accordingly, in his second mystagogic catechism, instructs the Candidate, in terms altogether similar to our own primitive-speaking Church, that in the very act of baptism, in the water, he in the same moment died, and began to live by new birth, by the Divine efficacy of the Sacrament.

“Greatly, therefore, do they misunderstand, and mis-represent the design and virtue of regeneration, who would separate it from baptism, either in old or young, and make it the result of any sanctity in man.

Indeed, the words of the Church in her homily of justification or salvation, to which reference is made in the eleventh article of religion, are equally applicable to the doctrine of regeneration ; “although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread, and fear of God within us ; yet must we renounce all our said virtues, etc., and trust only in God’s mercy.” In persons of riper years, all these good dispositions are necessarily requisite as preparatory to baptism ; and the Church, accordingly, in her Office, provides and orders that due examination and exhortation may give good presumption of their attainments, and exercise by prayer and fasting.

“But still she regards them as *unregenerate*, regarding none of these virtues as their new birth, . . . and therefore, . . . in repeated supplication, she begs that they may obtain spiritual regeneration, “may be born again, —and not till they are baptized asserts their regeneration, but *then* points it out as a manifest truth ; “Seeing now that these persons *are regenerate* ;” and gives thanks, for that they are *now born again*, and made heirs of everlasting salvation. Most evident, thence, it is that the Church considers *baptism and regeneration* the *same* in design and institution.”

Thus stands the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. Through every period of its history, it has preserved its original characteristics, without addition or diminution. In the writings of the Fathers, in the works of the Reformers, in the Offices of the Church at the present day, it retains the fulness and simplicity which distinguished it in the records of inspiration. *What it then was, such it now is*, “the wisdom and the power of God ;” and as then, so now, the Christian, in his own behalf, and in that of the Church Catholic, may exceedingly rejoice in admission to the love of Christ, “*by the washing* of regeneration and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost.” Only let him as an individual, and the Church, as a body, remember the obligations consequent on that sacred ordinance. And let all who have partaken of its blessing, seek that “Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height ; and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ; and be filled with the fulness of God.”

This is their privilege—their birthright ! Let them give diligence that they “receive not the grace of God in vain.”

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