

the grace of God, by which they were saved from the effects of such crushing and awful powers.

It is hoped that even these slight sketches of the vast and profound subjects, with which the theology of the sixteenth century was occupied, may have served to illustrate the intense human interest by which that theology was prompted and animated. Whatever the cause may be, something in that century stirred human nature to its very depths, threw up to the surface all its struggling forces, and challenged the theologians of the day to interpret them and to bring them into order. To some thoughtful readers¹ Shakespeare, at the end of the sixteenth century, has seemed an isolated phenomenon, concerned only with the passions and affections of human nature, and standing calmly aloof from the controversies of his day. But it may be, on the other hand, that he is but the final illustration of the whole character of the century—a century in which human nature, too long confined in the swathing-bands of medieval discipline and philosophy, cast them aside, burst into the realities of the great world of man and nature, asked itself what they meant, what nature meant, what God meant, what Christ was, not to theologians, but to common men and women; not to theological virtues and vices, but to common struggles, common passions, common experiences. The theologies of the sixteenth century are the record of this experience and of its interpretation. They are marked by errors and exaggerations, like the human beings who threw them up to the surface of their hearts and minds in that battle of giants. But considered from the point of view here suggested, they cast an intense light upon the needs of the human heart and upon the Divine answer to them; and it may be added, in conclusion, that their best results, and the truest record of the experience they have won for us, are embodied in our own Thirty-nine Articles, which are, as it were, the aphorisms of the *Novum Organum* of a new religious world.

HENRY WACE.

ART. II.—BAPTISMAL REGENERATION IN CHURCH HISTORY.

“SEEING now that this child is regenerate.” Few will deny that these words are one of the chief stumbling-blocks that the Prayer-Book presents to devout and thoughtful minds. We have all felt their difficulty. Probably every clergyman

¹ Brewer's "English Studies," p. 271.

has had one or other of his people coming to him for their explanation, and explanation has not been always easy to give. Does the truth lie with the High Churchman, who takes them as literally and invariably true in the case of every baptized infant, or with the Low Churchman, who believes them to be nothing more than the language of faith and hope in view of Christ's Sacrament? We feel our need of a clue, and a clue is not at once apparent. The Canons do not help us. The Fifty-seventh Canon declares that "the doctrine, both of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is so sufficiently set down in the Book of Common Prayer to be used at the administration of the said Sacraments, as nothing can be added unto it that is material and necessary." Wherein we must for once humbly beg to differ from the Canons! The Articles say, "It is not in us"; and this is true, for the Articles, so far as they deal immediately with the doctrine of Baptism, are constructed with an inclusive purpose, and carefully avoid any statement to which one or other party in the Church could not assent. The Prayer-Book, then, alone is left to us, but if the Articles avoid dogmatism on this question we may be certain the Prayer-Book avoids it too. If anything is sure to us it is that the Prayer-Book and Articles are at one. They issued from the same hands, and for all practical purposes at the same time. The saying that "we have a Popish Liturgy and Calvinistic Articles" is as smart as it is absurd. The Prayer-Book had no stouter defenders against the Puritans than the Calvinists.

There is but one way left to us of determining the meaning of the words of the Baptismal Office, and that is in the *history of the doctrine of Baptism*. The result is so satisfactory, and so surely establishes their Protestant sense, that no better service can be done to Churchmen than by asking them to look at that language from such standpoint.¹

Regeneration Defined.—Before doing so, however, it is essential to define what we mean by regeneration. Nothing has confused this controversy more than the fact that the disputants have meant different things in their use of the same terms. To-day theological opinion is in the main divided over two definitions of regeneration, viz.: a state of pardon and actual goodness; and a state of pardon and a new capacity for goodness. Eliminating for clearness' sake that which is common to both, we find that one party declares

¹ I follow throughout this paper the great authority and often the words of Dr. Mozley in his "Baptismal Controversy," and of Dean Goode in his "Effects of Infant Baptism." Both works are masterpieces of close and scholarly investigation, and have never been answered.

regeneration to be a state of actual goodness, the other that it is a new capacity for goodness. This difference is not by any means verbal only; its importance becomes apparent as the history is studied.

Turning to the Scripture, a Churchman's one court of appeal in such an issue, we find that the word "regeneration" is only used four times in the New Testament, but its meaning is perfectly clear from its synonyms and equivalents, such as "born of God," "child of God." Now these terms obviously mean an actual goodness, and not merely a capacity for it. In like manner a "child of the devil" indicates not merely one who has the power to be wicked, in which case the reader of this paper could hardly claim exemption from the title, but one who is actually a wicked person. Regeneration signifies, then, an actual goodness, and its connexion with baptism does not alter its meaning; indeed, it is because it has this meaning that it is connected with baptism. We do not get the meaning of regeneration from baptism, but our idea of the baptismal blessing from regeneration.

Baptism to be Studied in the Adult.—Again, it is essential to this controversy to remember that baptism must be studied in the adult. Infant baptism, agreeable as we believe it to be to the mind of Christ, is no essential part of the original institution of the Sacrament. Wall, in his great treatise, insists that infant baptism is not *de fide*, and should not separate members of the same Church; it is simply the shape baptism has taken in actual working. It is clear that the omission of infant baptism in the New Testament carries with it the omission of the regeneration of infants in baptism, and the subject therefore can only be studied in the adult.

Now it is a doctrine both of Scripture and of the Catholic Church, held universally and without contradiction, that no adult is regenerate in baptism without faith and repentance. In other words, a good disposition is the condition of baptismal grace, but, if so, it cannot be the effect of it. Even Peter Lombard, the typical medievalist of the twelfth century, taught that baptism does not impart faith and repentance in the adult, but that faith and repentance together constitute his title to baptism. Our (Twenty-second) Article on baptism in like manner has the adult in view, for it assumes the existence of faith¹ in the catechumen. So also the Catechism is speaking of the adult when it declares that faith and repentance is the condition of this Sacrament.

¹ "They that receive baptism rightly (*recte*—*i.e.*, under right conditions) are grafted into the Church . . . faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

(i.) With these points clear at the outset, we are in a position to trace the course of the doctrine of Baptism, to note its gradual evolution, and to observe how by sheer force of moral principle the Protestant position of our Liturgy on the subject was slowly and irresistibly arrived at.

Faith and repentance, then, being universally recognised as the conditions of the baptismal regeneration of the adult, what of the man who came to the font unworthily, avowing what he did not really possess, and who, on the strength of such avowal, was declared to be born anew? It is clear that such cases must have early occurred. Simon Magus was but the first of a long line of descendants, and the Church was soon compelled to pass judgment upon cases of the kind. What was her doctrine on the subject? It was laid down with the utmost precision. This was the well-known case of the *fictus*, or feigned applicant for baptism, and it was held universally and without dispute that, while he received the Sacrament, he had not received the *thing* of the Sacrament;¹ and, further, that the grace not received at the time was received afterwards upon his change of heart. It is noteworthy that when this change came he was not then bidden to submit to a so-called "believer's baptism." That would have been nothing less than a denial of his "baptismal character," as it was called, by which from the moment of baptism he removed from the position of a heathen and was admitted to the outward fellowship of the Church.² The Early Church knew nothing of second baptism; if it had it might fairly be questioned whether our Baptismal Office would ever have gained its present Protestant character. On the contrary, it was held from the first in such cases that, while title to regeneration was given, the grace itself—the *res sacramenti*—was deferred. In other words, the Church drew a sharp distinction between the grace of baptism, and a title to grace conferred by baptism.

It is needless to point out the importance of this concession. It had far-reaching consequences at the time, and long after, when the Reformation divines drew up the Office of Infant Baptism. The matter could not stop here. The further question was inevitable. Presuming the existence of the Divine grace of faith and repentance before baptism, what special grace and benefit was derived from the Sacrament? This controversy was not so easily settled as the last. The Fathers were puzzled. Tertullian says: "Baptism is a seal of faith;

¹ "Ficte accedens recipit Sacramentum, at non rem" (Bonaventure).

² "Multi habent characterem qui nec habent nec habuerunt nec habebunt gratiam" (*Ibid.*).

which faith starts with, and is proved by, repentance. We are not therefore washed that we may cease from sin, inasmuch as we are already washed in heart, *corde loti*." Augustine is clearly perplexed how to define the benefit of the Sacrament in such a case. "What it does in the man, it is difficult to say;" and, indeed, he does not say at all.

With the coming of the Schoolmen, however, the Church's doctrine on this knotty point was assured of definition. Nothing in heaven or earth was beyond their analysis. In their own methodical way they gave the answer—nay, it was extorted from them. They accepted the true definition of regeneration as a habit of goodness, and it was this very definition that compelled them to one Scriptural concession after another. Of course such concession was gradual. First there was the case of unbaptized martyrs: was it possible that a catechumen who had laid down his life for Christ could be denied the title of a member of Christ? That could not be maintained, and hence it was that martyrdom became known as "the baptism of blood."

But this led to a further concession. There might be the spirit of the martyr without martyrdom. Was not such a one a member of Christ if he died before baptism? The answer could only be yes; and so it was assumed that in the case of the believing catechumen faith of itself supplied the place of the Sacrament. Men's minds were opening to the fact that *the* important thing before God is faith and holiness, and that where these are no defect in ritual can be assumed to stay God's acceptance.

Yet one step more. The faithful unbaptized needed something more than an *assumption* on so vital a point. And so gradually the doctrine of the Church as to the effect of baptism was modified, and the believing adult was declared to have the *thing* of baptism (*illuminatio* the Fathers called it, *justificatio* the Schoolmen) even before the Sacrament. "Do not wonder," says Lombard, "that the thing sometimes precedes the Sacrament when sometimes it follows long after." Such was the position arrived at by sheer force of logic, and it was accepted by Aquinas, Durandus, Bradwardine, Bellarmine, and by the most distinguished divines of the medieval Church.

It is clear that Lombard's doctrine cannot be distinguished from that of the Reformation divines, who laid down that the faithful adult is regenerate before baptism, while at the same time they were perfectly willing to admit the increase of Divine gifts in the Sacrament, as our Article XXVII. proves.

The ancient Baptismal Offices *in form* imply, like our own, that the person baptized is unregenerate up to the moment of

baptism, and regenerate immediately upon it; yet the history of the *doctrine* of Baptism proves conclusively that the *form* of the Office does not represent any actual doctrine to this effect. Upon the point of *time* our adult service is not doctrinal, and the declaration of the fact of regeneration upon baptism allows for its existence either before baptism or not till after baptism. In other words, that declaration is *hypothetical* in the case of the adult.

(ii.) Turning now to the baptism of infants, the question arises whether the term "regeneration" in its full Scriptural sense can be applied to all baptized infants. Allowing that actual goodness admits of degrees, are we debarred from applying the term to such infants in some way corresponding with their infantine condition? If this is conceded we must be careful not to alter the character of the gift. We do alter it if we make regeneration anything short of pardon of sin and actual goodness. This is important. In their desire to reconcile the language of the Office with the obvious facts of human experience, men have interpreted regeneration in senses other than the true one, little knowing that in its true meaning lies the secret of the Protestant position of our Office. A brief survey of the history will make this clear.

The Fathers were in the habit of speaking of the whole Church as regenerate, and in so doing they simply followed the method of language used in the Old Testament of the Jews and in the New Testament of all baptized Christians. It lay to their hand, and they used it.

Coming to their doctrine of Baptism, we find that they distinguished between the adult and the infant; the latter presented no *obex* to the grace of God, his infantine state was equivalent to faith and repentance, and they therefore declared that all infants were necessarily regenerated in baptism. It has been usual to identify all the exalted language of the Fathers with *infant* baptism, and to say that this cannot be denied without overthrowing the *whole* baptismal language of antiquity. As a fact, however, exalted as that language is, it is almost entirely general, and Mozley holds that it is not too much to say that the main body of language in exaltation of baptism which the first three centuries produced was composed with adult baptism specially in view. The statement of the regeneration of *all* infants in baptism has not the absorbing position some attribute to it; it is merely one particular assertion of the virtue of the Sacrament embodied in a vast amount of general assertion. The Fathers did, however, clearly hold that regeneration meant actual goodness, wherein they were right, and as clearly they predicated it of all baptized infants,

wherein they were wrong, as subsequent history shows. It is enough here to remark that in so saying they went beyond Scripture, and their language cannot therefore be binding upon us; and, further, that it has never been synodically adopted by the Church, either in General Council or in any Creed or formula. This is noteworthy, for, whenever the Church has wished to impose a truth she has always—as, e.g., the Deity of Christ—clearly expressed it.

The Schoolmen, basing their baptismal doctrine upon the Fathers, confidently advance, as is their wont, from general statement to particular assertion, and interpret the formula that all baptized infants are regenerate to mean that all infants have actual goodness implanted in baptism. The infant left the font endowed not merely with the faculties, but with the “habits” of all Christian goodness already miraculously formed in him. It was true that infants are incapable of expressing these habits in action, but they were there in a seminal state.

Their view landed them in difficulties. A “habit,” in the scholastic theology, is “a quality of the mind which acts easily and pleasantly,” but somehow in the vast number of baptized infants reaching maturity it did not act at all! This was an awkward fact; but the scholastic mind never allows awkward fact to interfere with approved theory. If this chasm could not be filled up, at least it could be bridged. A second theory came to their rescue. “Habits,” it was said, “do not move of themselves, but require the free will of the agent to set them in motion.” For this a Divine impulse was needed, and hence arose the medieval distinction between *habitual* and *special* grace. Thus scholastic ingenuity triumphed, but with infinite dishonour to the grace of God. It is evident that the universal infusion of the habits of goodness in infant baptism might never produce one single righteous act on the part of all the baptized, just for lack of special grace to set the habitual grace in motion! Such an explanation is self-condemned as fallacious.

The reign of the Schoolmen lasted from the close of the eleventh century to the Reformation. They had attempted to demonstrate Christianity as rational, and the rational as Christian; to combine science with faith, philosophy with theology, and to press the whole into a rigid unity. They had failed. The principles of their theology, not less than the principles of their philosophy, were fatal to them. Their appeal to the authority and tradition of the Church availed only so long as the character of that authority was not critically examined.

Historically we now pass on to the Calvinists, a school of

divines partial and unyielding in their views, but as eminent in their theological learning as in their controversial acuteness. No just estimate of the Prayer-Book is possible until their doctrine of Baptism has been weighed. Their definition of regeneration was substantially identical with that of the Fathers and the Schoolmen, but instead of linking the Divine gift with the moment of baptism, they taught that it was bestowed at the moment of God's *effectual call* to sonship. To this they added the further doctrine that sonship, once possessed, could never be lost; once a son of God, always a son.

This doctrine of the indefectibility of grace, pushed to its logical extreme, landed the Calvinist in obvious difficulties. For men fall, and from a good life sometimes change to a bad one, and how was it possible to speak of one wallowing in the mire of sin as a child of God? The Calvinist's answer was this: that even a profligate might be to the Divine knowledge a son of God. God could see what man could not; the root of the matter was there, for the work of the Holy Spirit had begun, but its evidence and its completion were delayed. While, then, the Schoolman and Calvinist agreed as to their definition of regeneration at the outset, they parted company at this point, and from an actual *habit* of goodness it became to the Calvinist a *process of the formation* of goodness, all the earlier stages of which might be secret.

While their view of regeneration got the Calvinists into one difficulty, it got them out of another. For it was impossible for them to hold that *all* infants are regenerated in baptism, not merely because it was opposed to experience, but because it was wholly inconsistent with the doctrine of election. They held the connexion of regeneration with baptism, but they confined it to *the elect*.

We see, then, that while the true sense of regeneration has been maintained, the difficulty of holding it together with the view that all infants are regenerate in baptism has been met in different ways.

The Fathers do not explain the difficulty.

The Schoolmen give a fallacious explanation.

The Calvinists retain the true sense of regeneration at the cost of limiting the number of those regenerated.

But now a new and incorrect sense meets us. The Anglican divines knew well enough what regeneration meant, and Hammond, Jeremy Taylor, Bull, South, Beveridge, and Bishop Wilson all constantly use it in its legitimate sense. But how, then, could it be applied to all baptized infants? The Anglican School had more respect for facts than the Schoolmen, more regard for history than the Calvinists. They therefore con-

structed a new and special sense of regeneration, as used in connexion with baptism, to denote only an implanted faculty of goodness, a capacity to be improved, a power to be cultivated, an assisting grace to be used. Bishop Bethell, a representative Anglican, sums up the ordinary language of the School when he defines regeneration as "the *potential* principle of a new life together with forgiveness of sins." This is certainly a new sense of regeneration. "The Anglican School," says Dr. Mozley, "with all its sagacity and knowledge, has not been without its failings, one of which has been to invent new meanings of words in Scripture when they were wanted for theological convenience. Some important Scripture terms thus change sense in Anglican use: 'Salvation' becomes power to obtain salvation. 'Death to sin,' power to forsake sin. 'Election,' the admission to Church privileges. The older School of Anglicans used this incorrect sense of regeneration with hesitation as being the true one; the later School unhesitatingly adopts it." The definition of terms, therefore, in this discussion is of peculiar importance. The Anglican sense of regeneration is admissible in argument so long only as we do not forget that it is incorrect.

Turning, then, to the Prayer-Book itself, we find our Church has constructed her doctrine in full view of antiquity and in agreement with primitive doctrine. Her Reformers were men of great learning and thoroughly equipped for their task. They knew well the history of the controversy, and this knowledge settled their own position. They held:

1. That regeneration means actual goodness.
2. That faith must be implanted by grace in the infant equally with the adult as the condition of his regeneration.
3. That this faith, though seminal, actually constitutes his regeneration, so that before baptism he has the new nature in that very gift of faith which makes him the worthy recipient of baptism.

It will be remembered that this last condition was identical with what the Schools had taught as to the adult. Assuming the infant's seminal faith, the Reformation divines had as much right to antedate the infant's regeneration before baptism as the Schoolmen had to antedate that of the adult. An antecedent inward grace being supposed in both, both stood upon the same ground. In a word, instead of saying, with the Fathers and Schoolmen, that the infantine state was equivalent to faith and repentance, they held that the grace of baptism was *always* conditional, and infant and adult were dealt with in one and the same way. The baptismal formula, "seeing that this person is regenerate," had already contracted a latitude of construction as to the *time* of regeneration, and

the Reformation divines merely copied and extended a precedent they found ready to hand.

But what of the infant baptized without such seminal grace? Again the Reformers turned to history, and found the key they wanted in the case of the *fictus*. The doctrine of the *fictus* was, as we recollect, that, though he secured the baptismal character, he missed the *thing* of the Sacrament—viz., its full and justifying effect. He had the title-deeds, but not actual possession. He could get it afterwards, not without reference to his baptism, on his faith and repentance. The compilers of the Office of Infant Baptism said exactly the same of the unregenerate infant. Their view is summed up by that theological giant, Archbishop Ussher, thus: "All the promises of God were in my Baptism estated upon me, and sealed up unto me, on God's part; but *then* I come to have the profit and benefit of them when I come to understand what grant God, in Baptism, hath sealed unto me, and actually to lay hold on it by faith." In a word, they only applied to the infant the same law and rule of baptism which the Fathers had applied to the unqualified adult.

Regeneration, then, though linked with infant baptism, is not necessarily tied to it. Such regeneration is always conditional, and in point of time the fulfilment of that condition may precede or follow the Sacrament. *But this is the hypothetical view.* It is, and that view rests on the solid foundations of history; and, moreover, nothing short of a full and complete recognition of the hypothetical interpretation of the words of the Infant Baptismal Service can effect the inclusion of the Calvinist, for outside he is compelled to stand so long as the literal sense is enforced. If not all Calvinists themselves, the Reformation divines were on intimate terms with the leading Continental Calvinists, admitted them to their counsels, and invited their criticism. It is significant that the words "Seeing now that this child is regenerate" are not found in the First Prayer-Book, but in the Second, when the Reformation "was full blown." Bucer and Peter Martyr passed no note of disapprobation of the Office, and in his new Cologne Service Book, in 1543, Bucer actually inserted the very statement we are considering—viz., "Seeing that this child is regenerate." For more than a century after the Reformation the Church was Calvinistic. Calvinism had possession of the Episcopacy, Universities, and Theological Faculties; it was supreme; its interpretation of the Baptismal Office was dominant and authoritative, and it was the hypothetical interpretation. The Puritans, keen-sighted and jealous, never objected to this statement of the Office, though objecting to much else that it contained. The "Ecclesiastical Polity" of

Hooker was written to answer Puritan objections; we find sponsors, the sign of the Cross, etc., complained of, but not this seemingly literal statement. Hooker himself held the doctrine of the indefectibility of grace, which is obviously inconsistent with the literal interpretation. When the Laudian party assumed the reins they never thought of interfering with the hypothetical interpretation even in the plenitude of their power, nor was that interpretation ever seriously called in question until our own day in the Gorham case, and then it was triumphantly vindicated. The judgment was in keeping with the tradition and history of the Church.

Let me earnestly plead, then, with doubting Churchmen for a full and hearty acceptance of the terms of the Baptismal Office as they stand. It is not the words, but their interpretation of the words, that is at fault. They have confounded the general doctrine of baptismal regeneration with the particular assertion that all infants are regenerated in baptism. They have conceived that a literal *statement* must needs bear a literal *meaning*, forgetting that were such meaning the doctrine of the Church she would have defined it dogmatically in her Articles of Religion. Above all, they have neglected the clear daylight of history which puts distorted things in their true perspective, and proves conclusively that in actual usage the literal form is consonant with the hypothetical interpretation. There is nothing strange in such usage; it is simply the counterpart of the Apostolic rule of presumption by which they address the whole body of the baptized as "saints." Such Churchmen may rest assured that a service compiled by those great divines to whom chiefly we owe the blessings of the Reformation has no taint of Popery in it, but is Scriptural and Protestant throughout. If these be the words of faith that our Prayer-Book teaches us to employ, let us see to it that we use them in faith. Above all, let us mark well the element of thanksgiving which permeates the whole. This Office was constructed of old material, but in the new light and liberty of a rediscovered Gospel. The truths of the Fatherhood of God, the completed atonement of Jesus Christ, and the constraining love of the Spirit filled the compilers' hearts. It is when we take our stand beside them that we shall best interpret their meaning and employ their words.

A. E. BARNES-LAWRENCE.
