never dies out of him, but lasts into the heavenly glory. And he was sure that he had himself received the Divine life. But he believed—a belief which would have bordered on blasphemy if he had been sane—that the Eternal Will, in his solitary case, was pleased to be inconsistent with itself; his second and spiritual life had been Divinely given, but now it was Divinely killed. Never was there a more unmistakable instance of the most awful type of mania; and never was mania more true to its lamentable law in its refusal to be removed by reason, however cogent, however imploring. At times the symptoms were visibly terrible; once he literally fled, as from fiends, to Newton's house out of his own, and remained there for many weeks, refusing to move, in a state infinitely distressing to himself and to others. Then, in a certain sense, the acute horror passed away; he could garden again, he could carpenter, he could read, he could write his charming letters, and at last he could produce his poems, steadily, collectedly, and with the highest aim in view. But always, or very nearly always, when the immediate activity, mental or muscular, was intermitted, the awful consciousness as of an eternal desertion awoke at once again. And sometimes it was accentuated by supposed voices from the air. Cowper was what is called, I believe, a *clair-audient;* and what he heard seemed almost always eloquent of a destiny of destruction.

(*To be continued.*)

The Baptismal Controversy.—I.

A PLEA FOR CAREFUL DEFINITION.

By the Rev. N. Dimock, M.A.

IF there is any truth at all in the Bible, it can hardly be questioned that the tendency of what we now call human nature is to deprave religion and to corrupt the truth of revelation. It seems strange that scientific criticism should so often seem to ignore this significant fact. Is it not a fact attested by

history and confirmed by observation ?[1] But if this is so, have we not here that which should help to clear the atmosphere when we would examine some of the questions which are exercising the minds of many in the present day ? Take, for example, the relation one to another of the Babylonian and the Hebrew records of the Creation and the Flood. Do we ask, Is the Hebrew account derived from the Babylonian, with its childish mythology carefully expunged ? Or is the Hebrew record an original (or derived from an original), which has been added to by human fabulous accretions ? It is surely idle to maintain that our answer should not in reason be influenced by what we know of the nature of fallen man.

But the principle is one of very wide application, and it has an important bearing on many of the doctrinal controversies of the present day.

Once let us recognise the fact that, whenever we are in the atmosphere of human thoughts—thoughts of the natural heart of man—we are surrounded by what may be called parasites of error, which have a tendency to fasten themselves upon that which is true, and grow upon that which is revealed, and then we can hardly fail to acknowledge the importance of insisting (as our post-Reformation theologians were wont to do) on having a clear view of the true *status controversiæ* when we would gird ourselves to contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.

Otherwise the very *earnestness* of our contention may lead to lamentable results.

In a land of heat a man finds in his garden his fig-tree showing signs of disease. He looks, and finds one branch with the leaves withering, and on the underside covered with blight. In his zeal for his tree he hastily orders the branch to be cut off. But then other branches are found to be somewhat similarly

[1] See the Duke of Argyll's "Unity of Nature," pp. 365, 366, especially pp. 500, 501, 505, 519; see also Canon Cook's "Origins of Religion and Language," pp. 37, 80, 81, and Preface, p. vi; and Fuller's *Excursus* on Dan. xii. in "Speaker's Commentary," p. 396. See also Professor Orr's "Problem of O. T.," pp. 406 *et seq.*, 530, 531.

affected—they also must go. At length, in his concern for the tree which he loves, he finds it reduced to a stump; and now he has lost the only shade which his garden afforded. And why is it so? He knew not how to separate the evil from the good.

So a man studying the history of Christianity, and observing novelties of corruption adhering to some of its doctrines—novelties which he is quite sure were no part of the original faith as delivered to the saints of old time—is tempted hastily to regard the novelties as inseparable from the teachings to which he finds them adhering, and he determines that they must all go together—the branch must be cut off. Zeal for God's truth requires this. And then the same process has to be repeated. Other superstitious novelties must be got rid of. On every side there must be a "root and branch" clearing away, till at last the man hardly knows what remains of the faith. And sometimes it comes to this: that he cannot tell whether there is any truth in the Christian religion at all. And all this must be set down to want of discriminating between the living branch—the living Divine truth of revelation—and the adherent parasites of human error: in one word, to the want of marking clearly the true *status controversiæ* in the contention for the truth.

But this is not the only deplorable result which may be expected to follow the forming of hasty conclusions in view of the adherence of what is human and erroneous to that which is true and Divine. Where there is little or no care given to discriminate between the branch and its parasites, it is, of course, not to be wondered at that the branch itself is condemned because of the mistakes which have corrupted it, and revealed truth is rejected because superstition has been fastened upon it. But what then? Does the danger end here? By no means. It sometimes comes to pass that those who have satisfied themselves that the doctrinal branch is true and Divine are driven even to uphold the errors which, by a grievous mistake, they have been taught to regard as inseparable from it.

Thus it comes about that an uncontrolled zeal for the pure

revelation of God will often have a tendency to cast out what is true along with what is false; and then the return of the pendulum too often brings back the false together with the true. It is part of the work of the enemy so to represent the truth and the error in combination that the error may appear inseparable from the truth. It is the office of true theology to distinguish clearly the one from the other.

It is important that this danger should be seen and should be guarded against. The history of the Reformation is not without examples which should be to us as signposts of warning. And the word of caution is all the more needed because, to a hasty or superficial view, the line of demarcation between the false and the true is not always by any means obvious. Indeed, it is sometimes no very simple process to clear away the parasites from the leaves which are growing on the branches of truth, and there is need sometimes for what may be called somewhat nice distinctions. But a hasty judgment too often yields to an impetuous feeling which will brook no plea for further investigation, and immediately pronounces as an infallible *dictum*, "the two must stand or fall together." And thus the two—the true and the false—are both condemned, and condemned with a condemnation which will be found to light heavily on some teachings of the Divine word—teachings which will ultimately avenge themselves by lifting up their heads and truly and rightly claiming to be recognised as belonging to the true faith of the Christian Church. And so the parasites—the adherent errors—will be brought back again, unless some greater care be taken to distinguish between the human and the Divine, and to set forth clearly the true *status controversiæ* in the matter on hand.

It may help us to view this matter in connection with the doctrine of regeneration. The tendency[1] of modern theology

[1] This is, in truth, a following of the error of the Scholastics, which made the term "regeneration" signify far more than its original force implied, while its root-meaning was neglected or buried out of sight. And this led Zuingle and others "to deny that regeneration took place in baptism at all, and to assign it to a different, and generally subsequent, period of life." See Bishop Harold Browne "On Articles," p. 634, eighth edition: see also Beveridge "On Articles," pp. 456-458; Oxford, 1846; and Bishop Bethell

has been to connect the idea of new birth—or, rather, the idea of being begotten of God—exclusively with the fulness of meaning which has ripened, and is fully developed, in the teaching of the New Testament—the blessed teaching—which sets clearly and prominently before the enlightened eyes of faith the Divine inward transformation, the new life, and the new creation, which are, strictly speaking, the result of regeneration. And who can wonder at this who has noted the prominence given to this view in the teaching of our blessed Lord and His Apostles? Study carefully such texts as these with their contexts—1 John ii. 29, iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 1, 5, 10, 18, 20; John iii. 14-16—and then say, Can anything short of the very life of God in the soul of man satisfy the requirements of a faithful exposition of such teachings as these? And let it further be noted how this new creation is constantly connected with the faith of Christ—the faith of the Divine record concerning the Son of God—the true faith of the Gospel of Christ. Let me refer the reader to a few of the texts which might be appealed to in support of this truth: 1 John iii. 23, v. 11, 13; John i. 12, 13, iii. 14-18, v. 24, 25, 40, vi. 29, 37, 40, 47.

Shall we wonder, then, that Christian men, whose souls have been convinced of sin and righteousness and judgment by the power of the Spirit of God, and have indeed known the power of God in the Gospel of Christ whereby they have passed from death unto life, should be found very jealous indeed for the upholding and maintaining and strongly insisting upon the true connection of this Divine power with the truth of the Gospel and the faith of the believing heart? Shall we not admire the zeal which many times inflames such souls to utter words—it may be sometimes hasty words—against any teaching which may even seem for a moment to connect regeneration with the administration of an ordinance? In view of the natural tendency of the fallen heart of man, it is vain to argue that

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on "Regeneration in Baptism," pp. 26-28, 47, 222, fifth edition, and especially Preface, pp. xxix-xxxii.

there is no danger of a sacramental system practically ousting the religion of faith, even the faith taught by the Holy Spirit of God. Why, then, should it be matter of wonder if a modern theology, in view of these dangers, should have been led to encourage a kind of sacred horror of all doctrine of baptismal regeneration, fearing a tendency to lead to a debased view of Christianity—a view which knows no need of any real conversion, no need of any personal knowledge of a Personal Saviour, no need of any passing from darkness to light, no need of a new creation, no call to the soul to hear the voice which cries, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"? There is, indeed, nothing here to be wondered at. Yet there assuredly is here that which should call for a faithful and loving word of caution—a caution to remember that the soul-destroying parasites of error may be found clinging fast to living branches of the truth.

It ought in fairness never to be forgotten that, as the spirit of prophecy—pointing our eyes beyond the teaching of Jewish ceremonial ordinances to the blessings of the new covenant—had set before us the washing away of sins as the result (in some sort) of the sprinkling of clean water that we may be clean,[1] so in our blessed Lord's own words, the new birth—the begetting again of perishing souls—is connected (in a subsidiary sense, no doubt) with the sacred use of the element of water.[2] Moreover, we all recognise that a very solemn Apostolic word (Eph. v. 26) has taught us that the very purpose of Christ's giving Himself in love for the Church was this: that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word (ἐν ῥήματι[3]), a saying which may well be set beside another

[1] See a valuable note by Dr. Currey in "Speaker's Commentary" on Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

[2] John iii. 5. See Hooker, "E. P.," Book V., chap. lix., § 3; and Bishop Bethell on "Regeneration in Baptism," Preface, p. xvi, fifth edition; also Wall "On Infant Baptism," vol. ii., pp. 180 *et seq.*, second edition.

Of "the order or decree made by the elders for washing ofttimes," our Homily says that "our Saviour Christ altered and changed the same in His Church, into a profitable sacrament, the sacrament of our regeneration, or new birth" ("Homilies," p. 258; Oxford, 1844).

[3] "Detrahe verbum, et quid est aqua nisi aqua?" (Augustin, "In Johan," Cap. XV., Tract. lxxx. 3. See Jewel's Works, "Apol. and Defence,"

important *dictum* in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. x., vers. 22, 23) which teaches us to connect the full assurance of faith with having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, even as our bodies washed with pure water,[1] which *dictum* again may well be set beside the teaching of another Apostle, who bids us know that like as the saving through the waters of the Flood, so (in the antitype) doth "baptism now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (ἐπερώτημα[2]) of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21).[3] And the teaching of all these testimonies may be said to be summed up in the memorable language of St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus, where we are taught that not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration (διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας) and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace, we might be

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P.S., p. 463). "Unde ista tanta virtus aquæ, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo? Non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur" (*ibid.* p. 462). "Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum" (*ibid.*).

The ancients generally appear to understand by ῥῆμα here the baptismal formula, which may be understood in a very sound sense (see Bishop Moule, "Ephesian Studies," p. 292). It should be observed, however, that ῥῆμα, as used by St. Paul, commonly refers to words *proceeding from God*—τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως (see Bishop Ellicott "On Ephes.," p. 130). The same may be said also of its habitual use in the Gospel of St. John (see especially xvii. 8), and generally of its use in the New Testament, the chief exceptions being Matt. xii. 36, xviii. 16, xxvii. 14. The word can hardly signify the "verbum consecratorium" of Romanist Divines (see my "Doctrine of the Sacraments," pp. 84-87; see also "Eadie's Commentary," p. 430, second edition.)

[1] See Waterland's Works, vol. vi., p. 14; Oxford, 1843; and CHURCHMAN, January, 1904, p. 207.

[2] See Archbishop Leighton's "Commentary," vol. ii., pp. 246, 247; S.P.C.K. There may be an allusion to baptismal interrogations and responses. So the ancients very generally understood the word (see Bishop Harold Browne "On Articles," p. 625, eighth edition; see also Ball's "St. Paul and Roman Law," p. 41). But the meaning cannot be confined to this (see Canon Cook in "Speaker's Commentary," p. 208).

[3] "It is not the water, but the faith; '*not the putting away the filth of the flesh*,' saith St. Peter, '*but the stipulation of a good conscience*'; for, 'Who takes baptism without a full faith,' saith Jerome, 'takes the water, takes not the Spirit.' . . . Baptism, therefore, without faith, cannot save a man; and by faith doth save him" (Bishop Hall's Works, vol. vii., p. 237; edit. Pratt, 1808).

made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (chap. iii., vers. 5-7; see my "Doctrine of the Sacraments," pp. 57, 58).

It is perhaps superfluous to add to these testimonies the words of exhortation to the convicted multitudes, pricked to the heart, on the great day of Pentecost, bidding them "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38); or to mention the call made to the persecutor Saul to "arise and be baptized,[1] and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). But we should not omit to notice the important connection of baptism with the faith of the Gospel as set before us in the great evangelical commission (Matt. xxviii. 19; and —words spoken on another occasion—Mark xvi. 15, 16). Moreover, all these testimonies should be read and studied *together*, and all in combination with the witness of the Christian Church from the beginning—the witness to the doctrine of the "one baptism for the remission of sins."

Those who in zeal for God's truth allow themselves sometimes to use hasty and unguarded language in denouncing what they regard as sacramental superstitions, condemning sometimes the teaching of our Prayer-Book as not sufficiently purged from the *remanets* of Papal error, may be asked to pause and consider whether they would themselves have ever used the language of the New Testament concerning the water of baptism. They may plead the example of Hezekiah when he brake in pieces the serpent of brass and called it Nehushtan. But Hezekiah was bringing to naught the very idol of vain superstition which the thoughts of men's erring hearts had made an object of worship, and not in any way making light of an ordinance of the Lord. They should be moved to remember that there is Sacramental and Scriptural truth to which unscriptural sacramental errors are clinging, and that in this matter the true

[1] More accurately, "have thyself baptized" (*βάπτισαι*). See Jacobson *in loc.* ("Speaker's Commentary," p. 500); and Alford on 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Baptism was at length his grand *absolution*, his patent of pardon . . . neither was he *justified* till he *received that Divine seal*" (Waterland's Works, vol. vi., p. 12; Oxford, 1843).

status controversiæ should be carefully examined before the order goes forth to cut down the bough on which the dreaded parasites of error are fastening.[1]

It may be playing into the hands of Romish or Romanizing error to deny or ignore the Divinely-appointed connection of a true doctrine of baptismal regeneration with the true view of faith's office in the economy of salvation, and with the true doctrine of that Divine evangel which is the grand central object of all true Christian teaching, the very cardinal doctrine of all true Christian religion.

[1] "We must confess that very early some doctrines arose upon baptism that we cannot be determined by. One of these was the mixing of the outward and inward effects of baptism, it being believed that every person who was born of the water was *also* born of the Spirit, and that the renewing of the Holy Ghost did *always* accompany the washing of regeneration. But baptism is a federal admission into Christianity, in which on God's part all the blessings of the Gospel are made over to the baptized" (Bishop Burnet "On Articles," Art. XXVII.).

It should be added, however, that the doctrine that sanctifying grace was always conferred upon infants in baptism did not become a ruled doctrine in the Church of Rome till the Council of Vienne in 1311, and was then only laid down as the *more probable* opinion (see "Doctrine of Sacraments," p. 149).

And it should be observed that even Aquinas acknowledges "Quod quidam antiqui posuerunt, quod pueris in baptismo non dantur gratia et virtutes, sed imprimatur eis Character Christi, cujus virtute cum ad perfectum ætatem venerint, consequuntur gratiam et virtutes" ("Summa," Par. iii., vol. ii., Qu. lxix., Art. VI.). It has been said, "The most conclusive proof we can give of the word [regeneration], carrying with it in early times no necessary moral change, is found in that passage of Clemens Alexandrinus in which he predicates it of our Lord Himself" (Boyd on "Baptism and Regeneration," pp. 152, 153; see "Doctrine of Sacraments," p. 144; see also Faber, p. 298-393; and Maskell's "Holy Baptism," p. 359, second edition).

See some valuable observations of Canon Meyrick in "Scriptural and Catholic Truth and Worship," pp. 268, 276, who truly says, "The Church holds a doctrine of regeneration in baptism, but she does not hold what by many persons is supposed to be meant by regeneration in baptism" (p. 276).

(*To be continued.*)