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Charles Simeon

Evangelical or Churchman?

Simeon's Contribution to the Baptismal Controversy in the Early Nineteenth Century

by **Barbara Becht**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of M.Theol.
at the
University of Durham
March 1995

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1 MAY 1996

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A Thesis submitted for the degree of M.Theol. at the University of Durham, by
Barbara Becht, March 1995.

This paper attempts to trace the thought of an outstanding leader of the Anglican Evangelicals, Charles Simeon, concerning baptism. What makes Simeon's life and thought an interesting topic is the fact that his characteristic Evangelical manner is tempered by a strong allegiance to the Church of England and her creeds. Thus, the title of this book is justified: Could Simeon in actual fact reconcile his Evangelical beliefs with his reverence for the Church, a way of life thought by many contemporaries to be on the brink of hereticism with a clear confession to the Church?

In order to ascertain the contribution of his thought, it is necessary to examine the Baptismal Controversy which raged at the time. As the Orthodox contended that the Evangelicals were basically Calvinistic, we especially need to take a closer look at the Calvinistic Controversy preceding the Controversy under discussion in order to ascertain the theological roots of the Evangelicals (Part A, chapter 1). A second chapter examines the Baptismal Controversy and important contributions of Orthodox and Evangelical proponents. Part B then sketches the life of Charles Simeon prior to analyzing Simeon's thought concerning baptism and regeneration in greater detail.

It is found that Simeon belongs to the main group of Evangelicals. Like these, he propagates that regeneration may or may not be conveyed at baptism; further common points are the notion of "judgment of charity" (=charitable supposition) and of baptism as a change of state, a title to blessings, the entrance into the covenant, an initiation rite into the Church, an appointed means of grace. Simeon however rejects both the Calvinistic and the Arminian doctrinal systems. A further point which distinguishes him is his absolute loyalty to the Church and her liturgy. Thus, Simeon unites both his Evangelical nature and his churchmanship in a unique manner.



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Introduction

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were a restive and uneasy time marked by political and economical revolutions, changes at home and abroad. The rise of the Evangelical movement within the Church of England may be called the most remarkable spiritual development at this time. The emphasis on individual conversion and commitment, holiness of life and witness at home and abroad held a strong appeal for many Christians.

A major issue of the time was a direct consequence of the rise of Evangelicalism within the Church, namely regeneration and its relationship to baptism: if regeneration as defined by Evangelicals is linked to conversion, can a person receive regeneration at baptism? Is baptism at all necessary for regeneration, or does it merely play a marginal role? Does regeneration occur at conversion, and if so, can regeneration be lost? These were some of the questions asked and fiercely disputed in these decades.

The following pages attempt to trace the thought of an outstanding leader of the Anglican Evangelicals, Charles Simeon, concerning baptism. Little has been written on this subject, and indeed, comparatively little original research has been done on the Evangelicals of this time, leaving aside the multitude of biographies of a devotional nature.

What makes Simeon's life and thought an interesting topic is the fact that his characteristic Evangelical manner is tempered by a strong allegiance to the Church of England and her creeds. Thus, the title of this book is justified: Could Simeon in actual fact reconcile his Evangelical beliefs with his reverence for the Church, a way of life thought by many to be on the brink of hereticism with a clear confession to the Church?

In order to ascertain the contribution of his thought, it is necessary to examine the Baptismal Controversy which raged at the time. As the Orthodox contended that the Evangelicals were basically Calvinistic, a view corroborated by the historian Overton among others, we especially need to take a closer look at the

Calvinistic Controversy preceding the Controversy under discussion in order to ascertain the theological roots of the Evangelicals (Part A, chapter 1). A second chapter examines the Baptismal Controversy and important contributions of Orthodox and Evangelical proponents. Part B then sketches the life of Charles Simeon prior to analyzing Simeon's thought concerning baptism and regeneration in greater detail.

Part A : The Baptismal Controversy

The Baptismal Controversy has been called the "most celebrated issue" of the beginning decades of the nineteenth century.¹

The question of baptismal regeneration is generally said to have arisen in 1812,² when Richard Mant criticised the Evangelical clergy in his Bampton Lectures,³ delivered in Oxford.⁴ In his view, the latter rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as laid down in the prayerbook.⁵ Nevertheless, Mant's Bampton Lectures did not provoke much debate.⁶ The great outcry came in 1815,⁷ when the SPCK published the sixth and seventh tracts of Mant's lectures as popular tracts and circulated them along with the annual report. The actual Controversy is supposed to have begun in this year, in which the Evangelicals vehemently and vociferously rejected Mant's views and protested against the publication of his tracts by the SPCK. The uproar naturally led to firm rebuttals from the ranks of proponents of High-Church views.

The following study will deal only with the Evangelicals within the Church of England (see below, pp. 16-17).⁸

¹ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p. 9.

² J.H. Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (1800-1833)* (London, 1884), p. 190. J.H. Overton erroneously writes 1811.

³ R. Mant, *An Appeal to the Gospel, or An Inquiry Into the Justice of the Charge, Alleged by Methodists and Other Objectors, That the Gospel is not Preached by the National Clergy: In a Series of Discourses Delivered Before the University of Oxford in the Year 1812* (Oxford, 1813). Cf. especially Discourse vi, "Regeneration the Spiritual Grace of Baptism" and Discourse vii, "A Special and Instantaneous Conversion not necessary for Christians."

⁴ Cf. D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 9; J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 190.

⁵ J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 191.

⁶ We find one reaction to R. Mant's view in *The Eclectic Review* 8 (1812) (see below, p. 40).

⁷ W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy: Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797 to 1837* (Cambridge, 1979) [unpubl. Ph.D.], p. 60.

⁸ Cf. D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 27ff.

1 "Calvinism" and the Baptismal Controversy

In the early 19th century, the Calvinistic Controversy of the seventeen-seventies had died down and was a relic of the past. Nevertheless, the Baptismal Controversy, which Bebbington calls "the chief theological controversy of the early and mid-nineteenth century,"¹ is seen by Overton to be a part of the Calvinistic Controversy.²

This theory merits careful consideration, as the Orthodox similarly stoutly maintained that the underlying Calvinistic sentiments of the Evangelicals caused them to question the Orthodox stance towards baptismal regeneration; a Calvinistic background would shed light on the mechanism at work behind the diversity of Evangelical positions. Conversely, an erroneous assumption of the Calvinistic nature of Evangelicals could lead to erroneous results.

It is therefore imperative to take a closer look at the Calvinistic Controversy and its results. We will also have to sketch a rough outline of the Orthodox and Evangelical Parties and deal with the question: where do these groups stand within the Anglican Church, and what kind of views do they represent? Did the Evangelicals propagate Calvinistic sentiments or not? If so, did they adhere to all of the tenets of the "Calvinists?" Finally, we will attempt to answer the question, if the Baptismal Controversy within the Church of England at the beginning of the 19th century can truly be said to be a part of the Calvinistic Controversy.

¹ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 9.

² Cf. J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 190.

1.1 The Calvinistic Controversy

1.1.1 The Historical Components of the Calvinistic Controversy

The Calvinistic Controversy (1770-1777) is actually part of the domestic history of Methodism, but several Evangelical clergymen were also involved.¹

At the beginning of the revival, theological and denominational differences did not play a very large role.² However, after 1740, the differing views of the Arminian Wesley and the Calvinist Whitefield began to create an ever-increasing rift. In 1741, this led to the emergence of two groups within the Methodist movement: Wesley's faction taught free will and free salvation for all men, whilst Whitefield's faction believed in the doctrine of predestination and a "Methodism [. . .] in [. . .] Calvinistic forms."³ Step by step, the convictions of each party hardened and tended to become increasingly fanatical.⁴

John Wesley on the Arminian side was supported by his brother Charles and by John Fletcher of Madeley amongst others.⁵ The leader of the Calvinists, Whitefield, found refuge among distinguished members of society such as August Toplady and the Countess of Huntingdon, who formed the "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion."⁶

At the beginning, Wesley did not wish to provoke any controversy on delicate matters such as the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and the Arminian doc-

¹ L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals. A Religious and Social Study* (London, 1953), p. 196.

² Cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United. Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795-1830* (London, 1983), p. 4.

³ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Britain*, p. 29.

⁴ J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church of England* (London, 1953), p. 305. Cf. also D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 29. On the debates dealing with free will and predestination see especially A.P.F. Sell, *The Great Debate. Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation* (Worthing, 1982), pp. 67ff.

⁵ Cf. J.R.H. Moorman, *History of the Church of England*, p. 305.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

trine of Christian perfection. He astutely avoided these subjects in the dispute leading up to his attempts to unite the Evangelical clergy under his leadership in 1764.

After failing to achieve this unity,¹ he even endeavoured to reach a certain consensus with George Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon, in spite of their "Calvinistic" views.² Nevertheless, the "fundamental doctrines," which all of them shared, could somehow not overcome their different opinions.³

The "Calvinists" feared that the doctrine of free will detracted from the glory and sovereignty of God and underestimated the total depravity of man.⁴ Thus, especially Lady Huntingdon and her connexion accused the Wesleyan Methodists of teaching salvation by works,⁵ and Walker of Truro rejected Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection.⁶

On the other side, the "Arminians" opposed Calvinism on the ground that firstly it would lead to a neglect of the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel, as the elect ones would be saved in any case. Secondly, they objected to Calvinism, because it seemed to lead to antinomianism.

¹ Only three clergymen replied to a circular of Wesley's urging ministers to unite. Those ministers who did not reply saw themselves foremost as ordained clergy of the Church of England; besides, they were more Calvinist-minded in their theology; cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, p. 6; G. Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford, 1986), p. 472.

² Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, pp. 197f: "although the controversy is associated with the name of Calvin, not many of those engaged in it had any adequate knowledge of his system" (p. 197).

³ Cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, p. 6: "The distinction between mere 'opinions' which should be tolerated as non-essentials, and the 'fundamental doctrines' shared by all children of light was not easily maintained in practice." For example, the Arminians as well as the "Calvinists" ascribed salvation to the free grace of God. But in the case of the Arminian Wesley, "free grace" meant grace freely available to all, whereas "to Whitefield and the Calvinists free grace is given or withheld freely by God" (A.P.F. Sell, *The Great Debate*, pp. 69f).

⁴ R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, pp. 5f.

⁵ J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation. Studies in Methodism and Ecumenism in England 1740-1982* (London, 1985), p. 92.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The leader of the Calvinist side, Whitefield, died in 1770. In the same year, Wesley pointed out the dangers of Calvinism at a conference in London, which antagonized the Calvinist camp, especially Lady Huntingdon. This meeting was the real starting point of the "Calvinistic Controversy."¹ A steady stream of accusations began to pass to and fro between the protagonists, and although there were occasional attempts to reconcile both parties, these did not lead to fruition. At the same time, a lot of energy was wasted, whilst the common interests held by all were neglected because of frequent quarrelling and infighting.² The Controversy did not manage to settle any of the disputed points. On the contrary, the only real result it produced was the final separation of Arminians and Calvinists.³

The Calvinist Controversy not only led to a secession within the revivalist camp, but also caused rifts between a number of Evangelical clergy. The first group of Methodists to break away from the Church consisted of the followers of Lady Huntingdon, the patroness of George Whitefield.⁴ As a result of outward circumstances, the disciples of Wesley soon followed and seceded from the Church. After Wesley's death, divisions arose within Wesleyan Methodism itself, and new connexions were formed.⁵

On the whole, the problems so fiercely discussed remained unsolved, but the Controversy taught the Evangelicals of the 19th century to avoid extreme doctrines.⁶

¹ L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Early Evangelicals*, p. 200; cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, p. 6.

² Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, p. 204.

³ K. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen, 1981), pp. 414f (§ 109 g). The tensions between Methodists and other evangelicals were enhanced through misunderstandings; cf. D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 28.

⁴ Cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, pp. 10f; Sykes, *Church and State in England*, p. 397.

⁵ A.R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, p. 41.

⁶ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century. 1800-1860* (London [et. al.], p. 73.

1.1.2 The Theological Components of the Calvinistic Controversy

Generally speaking, the Evangelicals professed their allegiance to the doctrines of the Church of England. Especially the Evangelical clergy hastened to claim that they "taught nothing and desired nothing but the plain doctrine of the Church of England."¹

Generally speaking, the evangelical camp was firmly convinced of the total depravity of human nature. It held that the image of God in the soul of man was completely effaced by the Fall. Only a complete renewal could redeem man and bring him to God.

Thus, the doctrine of new birth, "the absolute need of a conscious conversion," was central to evangelical thought.² True conversion was understood to be a change of nature, which was wrought by God and made habitual devotion and hearty faith possible. At conversion, a new active principle was implanted into the soul of man.³

As Walsh aptly sums it up:

From the first, Methodists and Evangelicals protested vehemently against the coldness and formality of contemporary religion, and the cult of 'mere morality' which seemed to have replaced the Gospel [. . .] Evangelicals sought to replace self-righteousness by a vital religion resting on faith in the atoning work of Christ, faith defined not in cognitive terms [. . .] as assent to certain fundamental dogmas, but as something intuitive, based on a personal relationship between Redeemer and redeemed.⁴

¹ Cf. J.H. Overton, *The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1886), p. 186; see also p. 182.

² D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 6.

³ Cf. H. Wilmer, *Evangelicalism 1785-1835. An Essay submitted for the Hulsean Prize in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1962) [unpubl.], pp. 70-71.

⁴ J.D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," *Essays in Modern English Church History. In Memory of Norman Sykes*, ed. by G.V. Bennett/J.D. Walsh (London, 1966), pp. 148f.

In the light of these common denominators, what then were the stakes at issue? What caused the bitter disputes between "Calvinists" and "Arminians," both of whom belonged to the evangelical fold?

It has already become clear that the main bone of contention between these two groups centred around the question of predestination and free will: can man of himself choose to become a child of God and live a godly life, or is he incapable of doing so and thus totally dependent on God's mercy and grace?¹

The "Calvinists" accused the "Arminians" of teaching salvation not by faith, but by works:² they feared that the element of free will in the Arminian teaching would on the one hand detract from the sovereignty and glory of God; on the other hand, they felt that the Arminians did not take the doctrine of man's total depravity seriously enough.³ In their eyes, this necessarily made the latter blind to the impossibility of man coming to God by himself. Wesley's teaching concerning Christian perfection added fuel to this critique, as the latter seemed to imply a flat denial of the doctrine of predestination.⁴

The "Arminians," on the other hand, feared that a strict interpretation of the doctrine of election could easily lead to antinomianism⁵ as well as detract from the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel.⁶

Unfortunately, the Calvinistic Controversy itself was not very edifying. An anonymous author sums it up in the following fictional correspondence between Whitefield and Wesley:

Dear George, - I have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me that you are wrong, and that I am right. Yours affectionately. J. Wesley. And the reply: Dear John, - I

¹ Cf. C.J. Abbey/J.H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1878), vol. ii, p. 146.

² L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, p. 202.

³ Cf. R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, pp. 5f.

⁴ J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, p. 92.

⁵ Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, p. 202.

⁶ *Ibid.*

have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me that I am right and you are wrong. Yours affectionately, G. Whitefield.¹

1.2 The Baptismal Controversy

The Calvinistic Controversy had been a dispute mainly amongst members of the evangelical camp. The Baptismal Controversy was, however, largely fought out between the Orthodox and Evangelicals within the Church of England. We need now to turn our attention to the views of these two groups.

1.2.1 The Orthodox Party

Similarly to the Evangelicals, the 'Orthodox,' sometimes also called 'the High-Churchmen,' were a minority in the Church. They ascribed to the Church a divine origin, and they were the theological and religious successors of the Carolines.² Daubeny, for example, based the authority of the Church on the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. Connected with this view was the emphasis on the proper administration of the sacraments³ and on Christ's incarnation, rather than on his atoning death.⁴ John Walsh describes them as a group, which at the time under discussion lost "most of its interior, emotional intensity, and concentrated unduly on outward forms and observances."⁵ Although this would seem to be a crude generalization, it certainly reflects Evangelical sentiments towards the Orthodox. In the eyes of the Evangelicals, the Orthodox upheld a "stern, objective, moralistic piety," which tended to be legalistic and to ignore the way in which true piety could

¹ Quoted in C.J. Abbey/J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, vol. ii, pp. 149f.

² Cf. Y. Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival. Studies in the Oxford Movement. With a Preface by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (London, 1925), p. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ A.R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, p. 39.

⁵ J.D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," p. 139.

be achieved.¹ Contrary to the Evangelicals, there were prominent bishops in the ranks of the Orthodox Churchmen.² In line with this, learning and theology was valued by them. Nevertheless, their influence in the Church appears to have been weaker at this time than one would assume. Storr attributes this to two factors: firstly, many Orthodox clergymen were worldly and indifferent; secondly, although they believed that the Church should be independent of the state,³ they were in actual fact fairly dependent on it.⁴

Within the Church, the Orthodox were very conservative and may be seen as the successors of the Caroline divines, whose traditions they staunchly preserved.⁵ In accordance with this, they revered the Greek and Latin Fathers. In their theology, they were more systematic and broader-minded than the Evangelicals, but the latter felt that this did not make an impression on the heart.

Due to the great stress laid on the episcopacy, the Orthodox disliked every form of Nonconformity and dissent, including the Evangelical views.⁶ Thus, the Evangelicals were often derided as being Methodists by Orthodox leaders.⁷ Southey, for example, remarks:

¹ J.D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," pp. 142f. Venn consequently criticises works such as *The Serious Call* by William Law with the following words: "to press the necessity of moral practice without first giving plain and full directions how to master the grand impediment to well-doing, is no better than reading our sentence of condemnation. What we all want is power to surmount [...] difficulties and [...] assurance of its vouchsafement" (ibid., p. 143).

² Van Mildert of Durham, Herbert Marsh of Peterborough and Horsley of Rochester were outstanding Orthodox bishops; cf. V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 82.

³ They generally "ascribed to the Church a divine existence independent of the secular society" (J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, p. 111).

⁴ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 81.

⁵ Ibid., 79f.

⁶ Ibid., p. 80.

⁷ Cf. J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, p. 90: "The word 'Methodist' was often used as an all-embracing term including Wesleyans, Calvinistic Methodists and Anglican evangelicals, particularly by the opponents of all three groups."

the Wesleyans, the Orthodox dissenters of every description, and the Evangelical churchmen may all be comprehended under the generic name of Methodists.¹

Archdeacon Daubeny was the sharpest representative of the Orthodox camp. Other outstanding men included Bishop Van Mildert, Bishop Herbert Marsh, Bishop Samuel Horsley and Thomas Sikes. Several laymen also played a significant role, as for example Joshua Watson and William Stevens. The former was the central figure² of the Orthodox group later known as the Clapton Sect or Hackney Phalanx.³

There were nevertheless able Orthodox churchmen, who do not completely fit into this pattern. Alexander Knox is an outstanding example of an Orthodox churchman who could appreciate the Evangelicals and even share some of the views of Wesley.⁴

1.2.2 The Evangelicals⁵

In the past, the term "Evangelicalism" has been used in a very loose sense to describe different groups within a diffuse movement sharing certain theological views. The core of these views is generally seen to firstly centre in the belief that the message of the gospel primarily proclaims salvation by faith through Christ's redeeming death; secondly, in the conviction that conversion as a change of heart and

¹ Southey quoted in E. Jay, *The Religion of the Heart. Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford, 1979), p. 21.

² Cf. A.R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, p. 38.

³ Cf. J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, pp. 111f.; V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 82.

⁴ Cf. J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, p. 112. V.F. Storr calls Knox a "man of broader, and at the same time far more delicate, spiritual sympathies than any of his Orthodox contemporaries [. . .] He values the Evangelicals, not for their doctrine, but because they had, more than any others, kept experimental religion alive in the Church" (V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, pp. 85f).

⁵ G.R. Balleine offers a useful introduction to the Evangelicals in *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London, 1951).

life is a prerequisite of salvation.¹ Through this generalization, the actual differences between Methodists, dissenters, the Evangelical party within the Church of England, Arminians and Calvinists have tended to become obscured.²

Many controversies in the 19th century not only touched questions relating to the form and authority of the Church, and the Evangelical-minded members of the Anglican Church increasingly emphasized the necessity of church order. Elisabeth Jay among others suggests the use of

the capitalized adjective 'Evangelical' (and its cognate substantives) in a narrowly defined, but historically justifiable, sense to mean those members of the Anglican Church who assented to a group of doctrines [. . .] commonly denominated evangelical.³

The views of the Evangelicals were diverse and manifold. It is therefore difficult to determine their roots. Some would like to trace the origins of the Evangelicals back to Wesley or Whitefield. However, there is undoubtedly a certain amount of truth in Henry Venn's assumption that

the men of note among them received the treasure not from hand to hand, but by the independent study of God's word, often after years of struggle against the force of truth.⁴

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Evangelicals were only a small party within the Church of England and mainly restricted to certain areas. However, later

¹ Cf. K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action. An Appraisal of their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London, 1962), p. 15.

² E. Jay. *The Religion of the Heart*, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16f. K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, p. 16, disagrees with this view and claims that although "some writers have confined this term 'evangelical' to those members of the Church of England who [. . .] introduced a spirit of enthusiasm into the worship of the Established Church," there would be "little difference between what they believed and the outlook of the different Nonconformist denominations." In this matter she ignores the fact that Evangelicals increasingly came to terms with questions relating to church order, loyalty towards their own church and the liturgy of the church, a fact which demands a narrower definition of the term "Evangelical" as propounded by E. Jay.

⁴ Henry Venn quoted by J.D. Walsh, "Origins of the Evangelical Revival," p. 136. Cf. C.J. Abbey/J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, vol. ii, pp. 167ff.

their influence and strength in society expanded, and soon they had increased in number and were distributed in many regions.¹

Laymen as well as clergy played a role in the Evangelical movement; notably the laity gave the Evangelical party its strength. People such as Hannah More, William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury had great influence and as much authority in their teaching as the clergy.² In the beginning, the other churchmen regarded their Evangelical brethren with unfeigned hostility.³ It is no wonder that it was difficult for Evangelical ministers to obtain livings or curacies, for they were unable to obtain patronage, and most of the bishops were not willing to tolerate Evangelical clergymen. Therefore the successful foundation of Simeon's trust as a means of securing livings and curacies for Evangelical clergymen signified a great step forward for Evangelicals.⁴

The Evangelicals' great concern for practical Christianity⁵ is demonstrated by their successful struggle against the slave trade, in which especially William Wilberforce, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and the members of the Clapham-Sect played a large role. Also characteristic for the Evangelicals was their passion for missionary work at home and abroad. The establishment of the CMS in 1799, of which Simeon was co-founder, was greeted with much excitement in Evangelical circles. In the

¹ Cf. K. Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 68; E. Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*, pp. 32f.

² Cf. E. Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*, p. 43.

³ Cf. J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, p. 315; P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence. Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform, 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 21.

⁴ Cf. E. Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*, pp. 40f.

⁵ Aspects of this practical Christianity included a high morality and the opposition to every form of worldliness; see G.W.E. Russell, *The Household of Faith. Portraits and Essays* (London, 1902), p. 233; S.C. Carpenter, *Church and People, 1789-1889. A History of the Church of England from William Wilberforce to "Lux Mundi," Part 1* (London, 1959), p. 28; M. Hennell, "Evangelicalism and Worldliness, 1770-1870," *Popular Belief and Practice. Papers Read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. by G.J. Cuming / D. Baker (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 229-236.

same year the Religious Tract Society was founded to support the poor masses with cheap religious literature.¹ Not much later, in 1802, the moderately Evangelical monthly *The Christian Observer* was founded by members of the Clapham Sect.²

All of these activities and institutions manifest the increasing popularity and influence of Evangelicals in society.³

1.2.2.1 The Views of the Evangelicals

In order to ascertain if the Evangelicals held Calvinistic views, we must now endeavour to define the nature of Evangelicalism.

In a book entitled *Knots Untied*, Bishop Ryle describes what he understands Evangelicalism to be: firstly, a steadfast belief in the supreme authority of the Bible and a deep sense of the sinfulness and corruption of human nature. Secondly, Evangelical religion attaches high importance to the work and office of Jesus Christ, which can only be grasped by child-like faith on the part of the sinner. Thirdly, it emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart as well as in the outward life of the individual. Then Bishop Ryle states what Evangelical religion does not mean: It

does not undervalue the Church, but it refuses to exalt it above Christ; [. . .] it does not undervalue the sacraments [. . .], but steadily refuses to admit that they convey grace *ex opere operato*.

Further, it

¹ Cf. J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church of England*, pp. 319-322. This Evangelical interest in mission in England as well as abroad and their great concern for the poor can only be seen on the background of their individualistic outlook; K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, p. 20; R.H. Martin, "English Evangelicals and the Golden Age of Private Philanthropy, 1730-1850," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 4 (1983), pp. 187-195.

² Cf. D.S. Allister, "Anglican Evangelicalism in the Nineteenth Century," *The Evangelical Succession in the Church of England*, ed. by D.N. Samuel (Cambridge, 1979), p. 77.

³ The societies of the Evangelicals helped them to further their aims in England; see G.W.E. Russell, *A Short History of the Evangelical Movement* (London, 1915), p. 59.

believes Episcopacy to be the best known form of the church government that exists, but it declines to believe that bishops are infallible.¹

This brief description needs to be explicated a bit more:

1.2.2.1.1 Religion

For the Evangelicals religion was of a decidedly and personal nature, depending on the right relationship between the individual soul and God.² The emphasis lay on the practical application of the Gospel and not so much on any elaborate doctrinal system.³ Their religion was founded upon a personal apprehension of God, and the idea of any purely human mediator between God and man was scorned. The nature of the Evangelical faith was consequently resolutely individualistic,⁴ as it declared individual repentance and acceptance of justification to be the centrepiece of Christian existence.⁵

1.2.2.1.2 The Bible

The Bible was for the Evangelicals the highest authority and the declared basis for their theology. The results of higher criticism were rejected and the literal meaning of the Bible in its entirety unconditionally accepted. Every doctrine had to be underlaid by biblical proof-texts, as these were generally held to be verbally inspired. Of course, wiser Evangelicals were open enough to recognize the dangers of "proving" a view by appealing to a single text.⁶

¹ E.J. Poole-Connor, *Evangelicalism in England* (Worthing, 1966), pp. 207f.

² Cf. V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 67.

³ Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Early Evangelicals*, p. 383.

⁴ E. Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*, p. 51.

⁵ Cf. J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, p. 319.

⁶ Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, pp. 385ff, V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 69. D.S. Allister notes that Evangelicals were "unable to apply their beliefs satisfactorily to specific problems and questions. They were unprepared and unqualified to deal with the growing scientific disciplines and the innovations in the philosophy of science [. . .] and [they] also failed to produce any apologetics against those views which became common among thinking people [. . .]" ("Anglican Evangelicalism," p. 80).

1.2.2.1.3 Anthropology

The Evangelicals believed in the total depravity and corruption of humanity due to the fall.¹

An important distinction was usually made between "nominal" and "real" Christians, agreeing with a distinction made between the *ecclesia visibilis* and *invisibilis*: The "real" Christians lived according to the Gospel and not necessarily according to the precepts of a particular church.² For example, Wilberforce claims that

Christianity [. . .] is not the being a native of a Christian country: it is a *condition*, a *state*, the possession of a *peculiar nature*, with the *qualities and properties* that belong to it [. . .] it is a state into which we are not *born by natural generation*, but into which we must be translated; it is a nature which we do not *inherit*, but into which we must be *created anew*.³

1.2.2.1.4 Soteriology

Justification by faith played a central role in Evangelical thought,⁴ whereby faith was characteristically understood as the personal acceptance of the redeeming and saving power of Jesus Christ's death on the cross. In line with this, the reformational *pro me* played an important role.⁵ Further stress was laid upon the *sola fide*: nobody could earn his salvation by good works. Nevertheless good works were understood as the sign of a truly living faith.⁶

1.2.2.1.5 Ecclesiology

The Evangelicals were loyal to the Church of England. As young men some of them practised itinerancy, but generally speaking, they came to emphasize

¹ Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Early Evangelicals*, p. 386.

² Cf. H. Wilmer, *Evangelicalism*, p. 22.

³ Wilberforce in his work entitled *A Practical View*, quoted in E.J. Poole-Connor, *Evangelicalism in England*, p. 211.

⁴ A.E. McGrath, "Justification in Earlier Evangelicalism", *Churchman* 98 (1984), pp. 217-228.

⁵ Cf. V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 69.

⁶ *Ibid.*

regularity and church order more and more. On the whole, they accepted the Church formularies,¹ and no other than Simeon showed a deep reverence for the Book of Common Prayer.

In general, the Evangelicals upheld the doctrines of the Church of England as they were contained in the Homilies, the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. Most of them even showed enthusiasm for the Prayer-Book and the 39 Articles.² In order to deflect Orthodox criticism of their views, they endeavoured to expose the "true," Evangelical nature of these basic documents of the Anglican Church.³ Although they were loyal to the Church formularies, the early Evangelicals especially rarely limited themselves to the Book of Common Prayer: they used it for public services, family prayers, informal worship and their own worship, but they also frequently prayed extempore.⁴

Accordingly, the Evangelicals held Holy Communion in high estimation. Together with the Tractarians, it was they who were responsible for the restoration of the Lord's Supper to its place in the life of the Church. They celebrated the Lord's Supper more often than was common at the time, and often the attendance increased.⁵ Most of the Evangelicals thought of the Lord's Supper as a memorial different from any other memorial,⁶ and they even revered it as a means of grace.⁷

Although they propagated the "bond of doctrine," they did not care so much for the "bond of fellowship in a visible, ordered, historical society"⁸ as for the in-

¹ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 67.

² Cf. C.G. Brown, "Divided Loyalties? The Evangelicals, the Prayer Book and the Articles," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 44 (1975), p. 189.

³ *Ibid.*; L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, p. 21.

⁴ Cf. C.G. Brown, "Divided Loyalties," p. 190.

⁵ W.H. MacKean, *The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Oxford Movement. A Critical Survey* (London/New York, 1933), pp. 28f.

⁶ Cf. C.G. Brown, "Divided Loyalties," pp. 194ff.

⁷ Cf. J.M. Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, p. 106.

⁸ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 67.

visible, spiritual Church of Christ.¹ Therefore they could have fellowship with evangelically-minded people and groups outside the Church of England.² Concerning the later Evangelicals, Storr points out that although they had relations with Nonconformist Protestants, they did not enter into alliance with dissenters, for they thought that loyalty to their own Church was their duty.³

This view of the Church goes hand in hand with their individualism in religion as shown above. Samuel Wilberforce, a "high" churchman, accused the Evangelicals of only believing "in separate spiritual influences on single souls," and he remarked that "our struggle with such men [. . .] is for our existence as a *Church*."⁴ Cragg puts it more positively, when he points out that "in their intense preoccupation with the salvation of the individual, they minimized the corporate life of the Church."⁵ In his rather critical article, Allister even goes so far as to name the attitude of the Evangelicals "anti-clericalism." Citing Shaftesbury's belief in the priesthood of all believers, he accuses the Evangelicals of having radically rejected the distinctiveness of ordained ministry: "apart from a few solid Churchmen like Simeon they were temperamentally dissenters with little time for bishops."⁶ This may be true of a certain undercurrent within the Evangelical movement, but Allister seems to be somewhat exaggerating with such a sweeping and undifferentiating verdict.

After this brief look at the views and presuppositions of the Evangelicals, we can now turn our attention to the question formulated earlier: was the Baptismal Controversy a part of the Calvinistic Controversy or not?

¹ K. Runia, "Evangelicals and the Doctrine of the Church in European Church History," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 8 (1984), p. 47.

² G.F.A. Best, "The Evangelicals and the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of Theological Studies* 10 (1959), p. 71; V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 67.

³ V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 65.

⁴ Samuel Wilberforce, quoted in D.S. Allister, "Anglican Evangelicalism," p. 78.

⁵ G.R. Cragg, *The Church in and the Age of Reason*, (Middlesex, 1960), p. 154.

⁶ D.S. Allister, "Anglican Evangelicalism," pp. 78f.

1.2.3 The "Calvinism" of the Evangelicals

In 1806, Alexander Knox sarcastically remarks: "Is it not wonderful, that the strongest Calvinists now in England should be the serious clergy?"¹ Laurence,² Tomline,³ Pearson⁴ and Daubeny⁵ similarly objected to the apparent Calvinism of their Evangelical brethren.

An outstanding example of this attitude among the Orthodox is Herbert Marsh, who in his *Reply to the Strictures of the Rev. Isaac Milner* vociferously rejected what he regarded to be Calvinistic views:

¹ Alexander Knox quoted in J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, pp. 186-7. During a Wesleyan Methodist conference early in 1786, it was said that "nearly all the converted clergymen in the kingdom were Calvinists" (quoted by I.H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope. A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* [London, 1971], p. 136).

² In 1804, Richard Laurence dealt with the question of the Calvinism of the 39 Articles in his Bampton Lectures: He could not find any "trace of the Calvinistic doctrine of the general imputation of Adam's guilt to posterity" in these Articles. Laurence also attacked the view that man couldn't have a good thought or do a good act until God had enabled him to do so (V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 77). Here he appears to be attacking the Evangelicals in particular for holding Calvinistic views.

³ Cf. George Tomline, *A Refutation of Calvinism* (1811): "There is not in any part of our Book of Common Prayer, or in our Articles, a single expression, which can fairly be interpreted as asserting or recognising any one of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism" (quoted by V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 77). He also attacks the Evangelicals for being Calvinists due to their teaching concerning the total corruptness of the human nature and their suspicion regarding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration (cf. V.F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology*, p. 78).

⁴ E. Pearson expresses the same sentiments as Tomline. He accuses C. Simeon "of supporting the unfounded notions, entertained by *Evangelical* or *Calvinistic* divines, of the total corruption of human nature, and of justification or salvation by *faith only* as opposed to *obedience* [. . .]" E. Pearson, *Cautions to the Hearers and Readers of the Reverend Mr. Simeon's Sermon, entitled, "Evangelical & Pharisaical Righteousness compared" [. . .] Second Edition. To which is now added, A Letter, addressed to the Editor of the Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, Containing Remarks on Mr. Simeon's Sermon, Entitled, "The Churchman's Confession,"* (Broxbourn, 1810), p. 18.

⁵ See J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 188. C. Daubeny especially criticizes John Overton, who in 1801 published *The True Churchman Ascertained; or, An Apology for Those of the Regular Clergy of the Establishment, Who Are Sometimes called Evangelical Ministers: Occasioned by the Publications of Drs. Paley, Hey, Croft; Messrs. Daubeny, Ludlam, Polwhele, Fellowes, the Reviewers, etc.* Overton had asserted that "We [. . .] are the *true Churchmen*, and, in a very fundamental and important sense, Mr. Daubeny and his associates are *Dissenters*."

On the subject of Predestination [. . .] we can have no such thing as half a Calvinist, or a moderate Calvinist. If a man agrees with Calvin on that point, he is altogether a Calvinist on that point. If he does not agree with Calvin on that point, he is not at all a Calvinist on that point.¹

Marsh even goes so far as to categorically state that "a man, who adopts the doctrines of Calvin, cannot be zealously attached to our English Liturgy."²

His dislike for Calvinists led to radical measures including the publication of a list of questions in 1820, which had to be signed by candidates for Holy Orders in his diocese of Peterborough and aimed at filtering out "Calvinists."³

If we compare a letter concerning the depravity of human nature written to Simeon (as a representative of the "Calvinists")⁴ with the latter's actual views concerning this subject, we catch a glimpse of the way in which Marsh did Simeon an injustice in labelling him a "Calvinist:" Marsh attacks

the too common practice of dwelling on the *depravity of man*, under the pretence of giving *glory to God*, [. . . which] produces the most mischievous effects [. . .] For whatever part we *ourselves* may take in the work of our salvation, our ability to perform that part must have come *originally* from God. But if man is taught to consider himself as nothing but a vile, degraded, worthless animal, he will gradually lose that sense of *per-*

¹ H. Marsh, *A Reply to the Strictures of the Rev. Isaac Milner, D.D. Dean of Carlisle, &c.* [. . .] (Cambridge, 1813), p. 84.

² H. Marsh, *An Inquiry into the Consequences of Neglecting to Give the Prayer Book With the Bible* [. . .] (London, 1812), p. 48. Cf. *ibid.*: "A Calvinist may in *many respects* have a great regard for it [i.e. the Anglican Liturgy]: but he cannot have *much pain* in parting with it, as it abounds with passages so decisive of *conditional* salvation, that no ingenuity can torture them into the language of *absolute* decrees."

³ H. Marsh's questions may be found in the anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Legality of the Questions. Proposed by Dr. Herbert Marsh, The Bishop of Peterborough, to Candidates for Holy Orders Within that Diocese, Considered, as Usurping the Place of an Established Test* (London, 1820), pp. 6-16.

⁴ H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A: in Answer to his Pretended Congratulatory Address, in Confutation of his various Mis-Statements, and in Vindication of the Efficacy Ascribed by our Church to the Sacrament of Baptism* [. . .] (Cambridge, 1813).

sonal worth, which is the great security against mean and grovelling actions.¹

Turning to Simeon, however, we find that this critique misses the mark, indeed that in this matter Marsh's view does not differ from Simeon's view as much as he would have us believe. For example, in Simeon's sermon "On the Corruption of Human Nature,"² it becomes evident that Simeon does not deny that man can be morally good or that his nature is totally depraved. What he does deny however is the possibility of man doing the will of God without the help of God:

We say then, that no man by nature is *spiritually* good, or good *towards* God. No man by nature loves God, or delights himself in God.³

The views of Marsh and Simeon demonstrate an important point to which people involved in the debates of the time paid too little attention: the central terms of the Controversy were often used rather ambiguously. It would have been helpful had the Orthodox and Evangelicals at this time defined exactly what they meant by such terms as "total depravity of human nature," "predestination" *etc.* Their discussions would have been more fruitful, had they narrowly defined these expressions.

¹ H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, pp. 33-34. Cf. Anonymous, *The Legality of the Questions*, Chapter I Question 1 and Chapter II, Questions 1-6 (pp. 6-7).

² C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae: or Discourses (Principally in the Form of Skeletons) now First Digested Into one Continued Series, and Forming a Commentary Upon Every Book of the Old and New Testament; to Which is Annexed an Improved Edition of a Translation of Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* (London, 1932-33). sermon 1974, vol. xvi, pp. 239-250.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 241. Cf. also pp. 240f, 244: "the views and sentiments of those who maintain the depravity of our fallen nature are frequently and greatly misrepresented. Injudicious persons, it is true, may speak unguardedly and unadvisedly on this subject, as they may well be expected to do on every subject; [. . .] it were to be wished, indeed, that our opponents would content themselves with statements that may be found: but they far exceed the wildest reveries that have ever issued from any ignorant enthusiast, and represent those who maintain the total depravity of our nature as reducing men to the condition of stocks and stones [. . .] We do not mean to say that men may not be *comparatively* good by nature [. . .] we concede that persons may be *morally* good, not merely in comparison of others, but to a certain degree really and substantially so [. . .] We say then, that no man by nature is *spiritually* good, or good *towards* God. No man by nature loves God, or delights himself in God [. . .] At the same time, whatever be the state of a man's will and affections, he has not in himself the power to do the will of God; for that end he must be strengthened by the spirit of God."

Unfortunately, it often seems that the same terms acquired widely differing meanings depending on the whims and fancies of the writer. Further, it was not often recognized that the Anglican Evangelicals had to overcome a "barrier of psychological association" (Overton): Although the Evangelicals were generally loyal to the Church and at home in it, the Orthodox churchmen did not feel very comfortable with them, due to their prejudice:

The 'Anglican Tradition' had come to be conceived as a tradition which did not include Calvinism [. . .] To them, Calvinism seemed by its history to have sacrificed any right which it might once have possessed, to be counted an authentic portion of tradition.¹

At first, Calvinism was largely the domain of the Presbyterians and the Congregationalist Nonconformists. However, it did not remain outside the Church: through the evangelical revival it became more and more influential within the Church of England.² Through the Evangelicals, the number of "Calvinistic" clergy increased at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century,³ of whom many became prominent within the Anglican Church.⁴ Evangelicals like Thomas Scott and Henry Venn held "Calvinistic" views.

In spite of this, the "Calvinistic" views of these Evangelicals were generally less aggressive and more moderate than the earlier form of "Calvinism." Overton rightly remarks that the leading Evangelical clergy "either held Calvinistic views in a very modified form, or so guarded them that they were not liable to abuse."⁵ Notably mild "Calvinists" of the ilk of Charles Simeon exercised a mitigating and moderating influence on the Evangelicals of the time. Simeon declared himself to

¹ *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*, ed. and intro. by O. Chadwick (London, 1960), p. 20.

² J.T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York, 1954), pp. 371f.

³ Cf. D.S. Allister, "Anglican Evangelicalism," p. 77.

⁴ J.T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, pp. 371f.

⁵ J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 187. According to Overton, the great mass of the party expressed Calvinist views in a much more unguarded way (*ibid.*).

be free of "all the trammels of human systems,"¹ although he confessed to be "strongly Calvinistic in some respects, as I am strongly Arminian in others."² But not only Simeon followed a *via media*; other groups such as the influential and respected *Christian Observer* founded in 1802 by members of the Clapham Sect manifested similar tendencies.³

Rupp aptly sums up the situation in the following words: "[. . .] as the [Evangelical] movement drew away from the Methodists, Calvinism ceased to be the differential."⁴ The "Calvinist" clergy were less interested in the question of predestination and eternal condemnation; rather they turned their attention mainly to

the depravity of man by sin, and his redemption by the grace of Christ. This was combined with acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, and, rejecting any Socinian notions, of the inseparable connection between the person and the work of Christ, the sufficiency of his atonement, and the imputation of his merits to believers. And this was not a straitened rationalist scheme, but religion known and experienced in faith, in conversion, and the continuing experience of forgiveness and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.⁵

Before attempting to define the "Calvinism" of the Evangelicals, we must try to understand why the Orthodox accused the Evangelicals of being Calvinists.

¹ H. Wilmer points out that Evangelicals such as C. Simeon and Watson rejected systems, because systems in their eyes tended to distort the truth, lead to controversies and speculative thinking, thus causing divisions on secondary points (*Evangelicalism 1785-1835*, pp. 38-40).

² C. Simeon in a letter to T. Thomason (1822) quoted by W. Carus, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A. With a Selection from his Writings and Correspondence* (London, ²1847), p. 563. G. Rupp, *Religion in England*, pp. 482f., indicates that C. Simeon saw "behind and beyond the differences between evangelicals and Methodists about Calvinist points, to a deeper and more compelling unity in Christ. Carus was incidentally the successor of Simeon at Holy Trinity (*cf.* D. Johnson, *Contending for the Faith. A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges* [Leicester, 1979], p. 34).

³ *Cf.* D.S. Allister, "Anglican Evangelicalism," pp. 79f.

⁴ G. Rupp, *Religion in England*, p. 483.

⁵ *Ibid.* *Cf.* C. Simeon's somewhat polemical remark in a letter to T. Thomason (1822): "the bugbear in their [= Orthodox] minds is Calvinism; by which term they designate all vital religion" (W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 563).

The Orthodox did not teach a doctrine of assurance of salvation. For them, regeneration and salvation were automatically given at baptism, although this could be lost thereafter. Most of the Evangelicals however believed that with a post-baptismal conversion-experience came an assurance of salvation. This could lead to a doctrine of simple or double predestination. However, it could just as easily lead to Arminianism, as the case of Wesley proves.

The Evangelicals accused the Orthodox of denying the *sola fide* of the reformation, because the latter emphasized the necessity of good works, whilst rejecting the need for a post-baptismal experience of conversion and regeneration. The Orthodox in their turn did not hide their suspicion that the Evangelicals separated baptism and regeneration because of the doctrine of predestination, *i.e.* because of their belief that assurance of salvation can only be had through an experience of conversion and regeneration.

Generally speaking, no careful distinction was made between a simple and double predestination, both sorts of predestination often being described as "Calvinism." Thus, we find Simeon explicitly rejecting the doctrine of predestination, although he in fact teaches simple predestination (see below, Part B, 2.2.3)

1.3 The "Calvinism" of the Baptismal Controversy

At this point, we can deal with Overton's assertion that the Baptismal Controversy was a part of the Calvinistic Controversy. In his own words,

The controversy about Baptismal Regeneration, which produced a certain amount of literature, such as it was, is really a part of the Calvinistic controversy. For the Calvinists held that no man was in a justified state until he had a conscious sense of pardon and peace with God. The 'Orthodox,' on the other hand, held that all baptized Christians were in a justified state, and that there was no such thing as a second birth after that which took place in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism; they made, of course, a marked distinction between regeneration and conversion, and

laid stress upon the daily renewal by God's Holy Spirit which most Christians in their present imperfect state required.¹

This sweeping generalization is questionable, as the parties to the Baptismal Controversy, the "Orthodox" and the "Evangelicals," did not in the main deal with the questions of the Calvinistic Controversy: the latter can roughly be said to have been a discussion between evangelical Calvinists and evangelical Arminians concerning predestination and free will, whereas the former was a controversy between Evangelicals and Orthodox concerning baptismal regeneration.

As pointed out above, the question of the separability of baptism and regeneration certainly had a connexion to the doctrine of election. To equate every doctrine of election with Calvinism is, however, unfair. Only few of the Evangelicals were true adherents of the Ultra-calvinist doctrine of double predestination, *i.e.* the doctrine of election and reprobation, and simple predestination is no characteristic of moderate Calvinism alone.

The judgment of several historians that the Evangelicals of the time were Calvinists of a moderate stamp² only shows that they have not differentiated enough between them. The "moderate Calvinism" of most Evangelicals is more likely than not no real Calvinism at all. Characteristic for the attitude of these so-called "moderate Calvinists" is a discourse between Simeon and Wesley, in which both sides parted amicably and without the rancour so typical for the Calvinistic Controversy.³

Strictly speaking therefore, the Baptismal Controversy cannot be said to be a part of the Calvinistic Controversy.⁴

¹ J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 190.

² Cf. J.H. Overton, *The Evangelical Revival*, pp. 195ff. and R.H. Martin, *Evangelicals United*, pp. 16-18.

³ Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, pp. 206-207.

⁴ Overton himself does not offer any proofs for his assertion that the Baptismal Controversy is part of the Calvinistic Controversy; cf. C.J. Abbey/J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, vol. ii, pp. 144ff.; J.H. Overton, *The Evangelical Revival*, pp. 187-194.

In this matter, Overton displays an outlook common to many contemporaries: all Evangelicals tended to be classified as Calvinists, regardless of whether they in actual fact held Calvinist views or not. This classification tended to obscure the very real differences between different Evangelical groups.

2 Baptism and Regeneration: the Baptismal Controversy

The expression "Baptismal Controversy" is somewhat misleading, as it gives the impression that we are here dealing with a debate possessing a clear-cut beginning and end. Popularly it is held that the controversy began with the publication of Richard Mant's Tracts by the SPCK in the year 1815.¹ Inasmuch as this is the beginning of the time in which public attention was drawn upon the subject of baptismal regeneration, this is undoubtedly true. Important contributions were however already made in the time leading up to the publication of Mant's tracts.

2.1 Controversy Prior to the Controversy

In a letter to a friend written early in 1767, the Evangelical John Berridge made following remark:

I do not much prize our Church Catechism, it begins so very ill, calling baptism our new birth, and making us thereby members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven [. . .] all carnal churchmen fancy they are new born, because baptized, and quote the Catechism as a proof of it, and the carnal clergy preach accordingly, and quote the same authority. The acting as sponsors is now a mere farce, and a gossiping business; and the promising for infants, what they cannot engage for themselves, may suit a covenant of works, but not a covenant of grace.²

Berridge's words reflect the most negative Evangelical attitude towards baptism and the Church formularies.³ Although Berridge does not clearly advocate the separability of baptism and regeneration, the sentiment at the root of the latter view becomes apparent, namely a fierce critique of the popular belief that baptism auto-

¹ Cf. W.J.C. Irvine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, pp. 60-61.

² Berridge to John Thornton, quoted by C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order. A Study of the Origins of the Evangelical Revival in Cambridge in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1949), p. 258.

³ Cf. D.M. Thompson, "The Theology of Adult Initiation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Adult Initiation. Papers delivered at the Conference of the Society for Liturgical Study 1988*, ed. by D.A. Withey (Bromcote/Nottingham, 1989), p. 7; C.G. Brown, "Divided Loyalties," p. 199.

matically opened the gateway to heaven, regardless of the manner in which one lived.

In 1801, John Overton published an apology of the Evangelical position called *The True Churchman Ascertained*. Overton feels

that a feeling and practical conviction of human depravity is essential in Christianity. This conviction, we think, may justly excite unfeigned sorrow and deep anxiety in the soul. And it is our opinion that, in order to salvation, a change of mind, of views and disposition, must be effected in every person, wherever born, however educated, or of whatever external conduct. Is it said, this change is effected at baptism? We answer: Have you then indeed kept your baptismal vow? [. . .] Neither let it be insinuated that, when we speak of this conversion, repentance, or whatever else it is called, we are ranting about some instantaneous operation, which finishes the whole business of religion at once. We mean by it the serious commencement of a work which requires the vigorous exertions of the whole life to complete.¹

It appears that Overton rejects the efficacy of baptism without a change of disposition and external conduct. Again, we see that the separation of baptism and regeneration is not clearly expressed, as the actual issue lies not so much in a theoretical locus, but rather in the Evangelical conviction that a change of mind and disposition is required, if baptism is to have any meaning at all. On the other hand, Overton does not openly attack the baptismal service of the Church.

Stung by attacks explicitly aimed at him, Charles Daubeny issued a swift reply in a book entitled *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae*,² in which he charged that Over-

¹ J.H. Overton, *The True Churchman Ascertained, or an Apology for Those of the Regular Clergy of the Establishment, who are Sometimes Called Evangelical Ministers*, pp. 110f; quoted by F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696-1845* (St. Leonards on Sea, 1959), p. 256.

² *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae: in Which Some of the False Reasonings, Incorrect Statements, and Palpable Misrepresentations, in a Publication Entitled, 'The True Churchman Ascertained' [. . .] are Pointed Out*. Daubeny is expressly named by John Overton; cf. the historian J.H. Overton, who cites John Overton's provocative assertion in *The True Churchman Ascertained* that "We then [. . .] are the true Churchmen, and, in a very fundamental and important sense, Mr. Daubeny and his associates are Dissenters" (J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 188). Others such as Dr. Tomkin also wrote replies to Overton's charges (*ibid.*, p. 199).

ton had a defective doctrine of baptism. He himself believed the sacrament to be a mysterious rite immediately conveying a spiritual benefit, the benefit of regeneration. On the other hand, he conceded that when the person baptized comes of age, the ultimate effect of his baptism is lastly dependent on his spiritual condition.¹

In 1803, an article was placed in *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, which approvingly reported a Discourse by Daniel Waterland concerning the question, if baptized persons should generally be addressed as regenerated or unregenerated by the ministers of the Church. A quotation of this article shows how *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* regards the matter. The Church

assures every parent whose child her ministers have baptised, that it is by this sacrament 'regenerated,' and solemnly returns thanks to God, 'for that it hath pleased him to regenerate the infant with his holy Spirit, and to make him his own child by adoption:' they, on the contrary, continually address these infants, after they are come to years of maturity, as *unregenerate*, and teach them to expect from their preaching the benefit of *regeneration*. Thus they rob the sacrament of its 'inward and spiritual grace,' reducing it to a beggarly element, communicative of no benefit whatever, and charge the Church with imposing upon her ministers the fearful impiety both of *deceiving the people*, and of *lying unto God*, and all this that they may attract to *their own persons exclusive admiration*, and may *draw away disciples after them*.²

The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine clearly considers regeneration as the inseparable inward and spiritual grace of the sacrament of baptism and mercilessly exposes the sore spot of many an Evangelical, namely the reduction of baptism to a meaningless rite.

In the same year, the Evangelical members of the Eclectic Society discussed the question of baptismal regeneration and connected topics in several of their meetings: In one of these meetings on "The Scripture Account of the New Covenant,"³ Basil Woodd distinguishes between the covenant of grace and baptism

¹ F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 256. Cf. also W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 57.

² *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* (1803), p. 237

³ Held April 11, 1803.

and the covenant of redemption. The former is merely "the offer of mercy made to all man, upon condition of faith and repentance," whereas the latter "includes the promise of faith and repentance" for the elect.¹ William Goode in contrast completely rejects the term "covenant of baptism" and everything it implies as being unscriptural.² Later in the same year they discussed the question "Is There any Ground for the Distinction Between Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration?"³ Basil Woodd holds that due to the covenant relationship of the Christian parent, the child may be said to be regenerate by baptism. Henry Foster on the contrary declares: "Baptismal regeneration is nothing; spiritual regeneration is all in all." He considers baptism merely to be an act of obedience towards God. Consequently, Foster would like to see several expressions in the formularies changed. A third position is forwarded by William Fry: he does not see any objection in "connecting spiritual regeneration with baptism - that is, that God connects them as he pleases, not necessarily."

In 1804, Richard Laurence used his Bampton Lectures⁴ in Cambridge as a platform for his conviction that the baptismal service of the Church of England taught

the benignity of our gracious Creator towards us all, without distinction, His election of us as Christians, and His subsequent rejection only of those, who, polluted by vice, divest themselves of that sacred character.⁵

His aim was to prove that the Church formularies supported Orthodox claims.

The contributions of the Orthodox side by Daubeny, Laurence and others forced the Evangelicals to formulate their objections and convictions more precise-

¹ J.H. Pratt [ed.], *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders. Notes of Discussions of the Eclectic Society, London During the Years 1798-1814*, (London, 1978), p. 287.

² Ibid.

³ Held July 4, 1803 (ibid., p. 297).

⁴ As the subtitle already suggests, Laurence's Bampton Lectures were especially directed against the Evangelical camp; *An Attempt to Illustrate Those Articles of the Church of England Which the Calvinists Improperly Consider Calvinistical*. (DNB, vol. xxxii, p. 206)

⁵ Laurence, quoted by F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 256.

ly; the somewhat ambiguous way in which they attacked the Orthodox view of baptism and regeneration needed to find conciser theological expression.¹

Thus, it is not surprising that in 1805, members of the Eclectic Society discussed the following question: "What Efficacy may be Expected to Attend Baptism, and Whereon Does it Depend?"² William Fry would like to hold on to the importance of baptism.³ He understands spiritual regeneration in baptism to be "the commencement of a new and holy principle." However, he rejects the notion that regeneration always takes place at baptism, although baptism is "the USUAL way" of beginning this spiritual life.⁴ Interestingly enough, he does not equate "inward change" with regeneration, but rather with renewal by the Holy Spirit! Richard Lloyd views baptism as "a grand and especial means of regeneration." He cautions the sponsors to greater care and to expect more of baptism: "If more were made of it by us, more efficacy might be expected." Basil Woodd calls baptism "an investing ordinance on God's part," "an outward figure of the covenant of grace." In the case of adults, the efficacy of baptism consists in confirming faith and increasing grace. In the case of infants, the child is entered into the covenant of his parents with God.⁵ If the children later depart from God, the blessings are forfeited. William Goode sees baptism as a means of grace, although God communicates this grace sovereignly. Henry Foster expresses his discontent concerning the baptismal service. In contrast, Josiah Pratt⁶ is decidedly "Orthodox" in outlook. He is convinced that baptism is the external sign and seal of the act which occurs at baptism; it is

¹ Cf. W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 57.

² Held Dec. 16, 1805; J.H. Pratt [ed.], *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*, pp. 368-372.

³ "If Baptism be only an external rite, how can it be a covenant ordinance?" (ibid., p. 369)

⁴ "Objections chiefly arise from matters of fact. Many baptised are evidently not regenerated - even children of believers: but the ordinances of God bring blessings or not, as they are used. The prayer of faith, it is promised, shall prevail. Promises are made to believers" (ibid.).

⁵ Cf. William Goode: "It is a strange doctrine that a child's interest in the covenant depends on parents!" (ibid., p. 370)

⁶ Ibid., pp. 370-372.

the sign of the incorporation into the Church, the cleansing of sin and regeneration. Both external sign and internal act are necessary prerequisites for salvation.¹

A cursory glance at the views expressed in the Eclectic Society could easily convey the impression that the members consisted of Evangelical *and* Orthodox proponents. It is all the more surprising to discover that on the contrary, the members without exception belonged to the Evangelical camp. *In other words, at this time a wide spectrum of opinions can be found amongst the Evangelicals, reaching from Henry Foster's extremely critical and anti-sacramental view concerning Church formularies to the seemingly "Orthodox" position of Pratt.*

Another contribution was given in 1808 by James Bean's² anonymously written *Zeal Without Innovation*, in which he attempts to deflect charges that the Evangelicals insist on an instantaneous conversion and underestimate the importance of baptism.³ He struggles valiantly to demonstrate that for him, baptism is more than a mere rite, without therefore implying an automatic conversion at baptism. He

¹ "There are means, both EXTERNAL and INTERNAL, by which we are brought into a way of salvation. Baptism is the EXTERNAL SIGN and SEAL of the new covenant, whereby we are admitted into the Church of Christ, and entitled to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which is represented and sealed to us by baptism." Baptism saves us, "as it brings us into a state of salvation [. . .] As it is a sign of the cleansing of our souls from the pollution of sin, of the renewing of them by the Holy Spirit [. . .] As it is the seal of the covenant [. . .] As it is a means of obtaining the blessings which it represents. [. . .] the baptised are incorporated into the visible Church of Christ, and thereby entitled to the pardon of sins [. . .] They are born again or regenerated into a new state." This state Pratt calls baptismal regeneration. It "will be attended with the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, where there is no obstruction to his sacred influence" (J.H. Pratt, *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*, pp. 370-372). Pratt further points out that the Church of England treats her members as true Christians.

² James Bean was vicar of Olney.

³ J. Bean, *Zeal Without Innovation: or the Present State of Religion and Morals considered; With a View to the Dispositions and Measures Required for its Improvement. To Which is Subjoined, an Address to Young Clergymen; Intended to Guard Them Against Some Prevalent Errors* (London, 1808). Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 257.

cannot, however, accept the proposition that invisible grace always accompanies the outward sign, that baptized persons are not in need of conversion.¹

When Richard Mant² became rector of Coggeshall/Exeter in 1810, he found many parishioners who hadn't been baptized, although they professed to be members of the Church. In an endeavour to counter this malpractice, he wrote a tract in dialogue form:³ *Two Dialogues on Baptism, Between a Minister of the Church of England, and One of his Parishioners*. The first dialogue deals with the importance of baptism. Mant views baptism as the commandment of Christ⁴ and as generally necessary for salvation.⁵ As a sacrament, baptism consists of an outward visible sign and an inward spiritual grace also called regeneration.⁶ Further, he views baptism as a covenant: the baptized person promises God that he will fulfil the vows made at baptism.⁷ In the second dialogue, Mant considers the baptism of infants⁸ as a Christian rite corresponding to the Israelite rite of circumcision, whereby the child is brought into the covenant with God, even though he is not capable of making a profession of faith and repentance. Instruction and

¹ W.J.C. Irvine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 57. Similarly to James Bean, Thomas Scott made a distinction between being baptised and being born again, without denying that "some special gracious effect attends the due administration of infant-baptism [sic!]" (Thomas Scott, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 57-58).

² Richard Mant (1776-1848) studied at Oxford. After spells as curate and vicar in several churches, he became Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenoragh in 1820, before transferring to Down and Connor. In 1812, he delivered the Bampton Lectures, choosing the title *Appeal to the Gospel*. R. Mant was a prodigious writer with works such as the *History of the Church of Ireland* to his credit (*DNB*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 96-98).

³ Cf. D.M. Thompson, *Baptism, Church and Society in Britain Since 1800. The Hulsean Lectures for 1983-1984* [. . .] (Cambridge, 1984) [unpubl.], p. 13.

⁴ R. Mant, *Two Dialogues on Baptism, between a Minister of the Church of England, and One of his Parishioners* [. . .] (London, 1810), pp. 5-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24ff.

confirmation are therefore necessary, and the child must grow up to live a holy and godly life.¹

The diversity of Evangelical opinion and the critical attitude towards the Church formularies (especially concerning the liturgy of the baptismal service) led to the emergence of Evangelical leaders who endeavoured to pacify critics and proponents of the Church baptismal service alike by demonstrating that the Evangelical emphasis on conversion and holy life might be brought into concordance with the Church formularies²

An outstanding example of this type of leader is Charles Simeon, who dealt with "The Excellency of the Liturgy" in four sermons on Deuteronomy 5.28,29 held at the University of Cambridge in 1811.³

In spite of Simeon's apologetic and mediating efforts, Richard Mant delivered a blistering attack against Evangelicals in his Bampton Lectures a year later, in which he charged that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.⁴

is virtually at least, if not actually, denied by some ministers of our Church; and it is denied in terms which charge the maintainers of it with blindness and ignorance; with innovating on evangelical truth; with being opposers of the doctrines of the gospel, and patrons of a heathenish superstition.⁵

Mant's Bampton Lectures attracted much attention in the form of positive as well as negative reactions, but this was nothing compared to the uproar which arose, when the sixth and seventh lectures were published by the SPCK as popular tracts in 1815 (see below, pp. 41ff). This and the ensuing debates have been rightly called the starting-point of the actual Baptismal Controversy.

¹ R. Mant, *Two Dialogues*, pp. 34-37.

² Cf. W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 58.

³ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, vol. i, sermons 191-194, pp. 232ff. Concerning baptism, see *ibid.*, pp. 256-259.

⁴ R. Mant, *An Appeal to the Gospel, or An Inquiry Into the Justice of the Charge, Alleged by Methodists and Other Objectors, That the Gospel is not Preached by the National Clergy: In a Series of Discourses Delivered Before the University of Oxford in the Year 1812* (Oxford, 1813).

⁵ R. Mant, quoted by J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 191.

A foretaste of the Baptismal Controversy was given shortly after Mant's Lectures in an article published in the *Eclectic Review*, in which the anonymous author rejects the inseparability of baptism and regeneration maintained by Mant. In his eyes, Mant seems to be implying that a carnal person automatically becomes spiritual through baptism, something proven wrong by history, as the baptism of Simon Magus and "thousands of idolaters regularly baptised by the Romish missionaries" demonstrate.¹ The author also flatly denies the charge that Evangelicals require a special and instantaneous conversion.²

An event with a more public character was a repartee between Charles Simeon and Herbert Marsh³ in 1813 pertaining to the establishment of an auxiliary Bible society in Cambridge, in which baptism and its effects were also discussed. Simeon's main point of criticism was the identification of baptism and sanctification constituted by Marsh. Marsh's contribution shall be discussed below (see pp. 48ff), as his detailed study of baptismal regeneration actually belongs to the Baptismal Controversy proper.

¹ *The Eclectic Review* 8 (1812), p. 1046.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1047.

³ Herbert Marsh (1757-1839) studied in Cambridge and Leipzig and took his degrees in Cambridge. A period in Leipzig was devoted especially to theological studies and critical research, which later bore fruit in a number of critical publications in England, such as for example *The Origin and Composition of the Three First Gospels*. These met with a hail of protests from theologians of the conservative school in England. Marsh held the Lady Margaret professorship in Cambridge from 1807 onwards, whereby he introduced to Cambridge a more scientific and liberal form of biblical criticism.

In 1805, he delivered his strongly anti-Calvinistic Bampton Lectures, aimed particularly at Evangelical leaders. They were never published, in spite of the demands of Simeon, Milner and other leading Evangelicals. C. Simeon responded to Marsh's Lectures in several university sermons. In 1811, the dispute mentioned above took place, this time in connection with the establishment of the Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society, which Marsh vehemently opposed. In the following years Marsh wrote several books and pamphlets concerning the Bible, Prayer Book, Bible Society etc., whereby his especial foes were Simeon and Milner. In 1816, he became Bishop of Llandaff. In 1819, he was translated to Peterborough. He regarded the Evangelical clergy with suspicion, and in order to hold them away from his diocese, all clergy had to answer 87 questions, known as "a trap to catch Calvinists" (*DNB*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 211-215; J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 187).

In conclusion, we may safely say that the Orthodox position remained relatively stable and unchanging, although the Evangelical critique that the Orthodox were rehashing the Roman Catholic doctrine of *ex opere operato* seems to have generally led to an emphatic denial of the notion that a baptized person is automatically saved and to the assertion that a godly heart and life are prerequisites for final salvation.

The Evangelical camp, on the other hand, seems to be grasping and searching for adequate theological tools and paradigms to express the event of baptism and regeneration so as to conform with their insistence on the necessity for conversion and a change of heart and life. Towards the end of this phase, certain positions seem to have been consolidating.

Only this can explain the great diversity of views offered amongst Evangelicals before the Baptismal Controversy: we find people extremely critical of Church formularies such as Henry Foster standing side by side with positively 'Orthodox' divines such as Pratt. Then again, there were leaders such as Simeon, who fully supported the Evangelical cause but equally fervently believed in the legitimacy of the Church formularies. This led to interesting efforts to harmonize Evangelical thought and Church doctrine. The wide spectrum of opinions amongst Evangelicals significantly narrowed down after the Baptismal Controversy; a position such as Pratt's was thereafter practically unthinkable for Evangelicals.

2.2 The Baptismal Controversy Proper

Mant's Bampton Lectures were greeted with much interest (see above p. 39). It was not however until the Salop Committee of the SPCK resolved to print the

sixth and seventh tract of Mant's *Appeal to the Gospel* as serving "the interest of genuine religion and of the Church of England" that a real sensation was created.¹

The Evangelicals were alarmed by Mant's *Two Tracts*, as they seemed to breathe the spirit of the Roman Catholic doctrine of *ex opere operato*. Especially Mant's statement that regeneration is inseparably connected with baptism "rightly administered" struck a raw nerve of the Evangelical camp.²

2.2.1 The Historical Setting

When Mant's *Two Tracts* were added to the growing list of SPCK-publications,³ the Evangelical Daniel Wilson anonymously published a tract entitled *A Respectful Address*,⁴ in which he castigates the SPCK and asserts that

the previous language of the Society, from its institution, is inconsistent with the language which it has lately adopted; and that it is actually circulating at this very moment the most contradictory instruction on a fundamental doctrine of religion.⁵

¹ R. Mant, *Two Tracts, Intended to Convey Correct Sermons of Regeneration & Conversion, According to the Sense of Holy Scripture & the Church of England* [. . .] *Extracted from the Bampton Lecture of 1812* (London, 1815). These *Two Tracts* (Tract I: "Regeneration - the Spiritual Grace of Baptism;" Tract II: "A Special and Instantaneous Conversion not Necessary for Christians") were circulated together with the annual report of the SPCK (J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 191).

² Cf. C. Hole, *A Manual of English Church History* (London, 1910), p. 390.

³ J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 191.

⁴ D. Wilson, *A Respectful Address to the Most Rev. the Archbishops, the Right Rev. the Bishops, the Rev. the Clergy, and the Other Members of the SPCK, on Certain Inconsistencies and Contradictions Which have Appeared of Late in Some of the Books and Tracts of that Society* (London, 1816), in: D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts. In Two Volumes* (London, 1825), vol. ii, pp. 243-266.

Daniel Wilson, (1778-1858) was curate of Richard Cecil, through whom he became a "strong evangelical preacher." In 1808 he became minister of St. John's Chapel/London, later known as the "headquarters of the evangelical party in London." In 1824 he became vicar of St. Mary's/Islington, and in 1832 he was nominated bishop of Calcutta. "Both as a parish priest and bishop Wilson was distinguished for independence, resolution, and energy, and he accomplished much valuable work both at home and abroad. He was a zealous opponent of the principles maintained in the Oxford tracts, against the tendencies of which he both spoke and preached with vehemence" (*DNB*, vol. biii, pp. 87-89).

⁵ D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. ii, p. 260.

This citation demonstrates the manner in which the Evangelicals immediately felt that the SPCK was being misused to propagate Orthodox views on baptismal regeneration. Wilson accuses the SPCK of deliberately desisting from publishing tracts and books opposing the position of Mant's Tracts or of striking such books off of the list of publications.¹

The author of an article on the same topic in *The British Critic*² vehemently denied the accusation that the SPCK was towing a new party line. Further, he justified the publication and circulation of Mant's Tracts on the grounds that

there is nothing to impeach the Consistency of the Tracts, or involve them in Contradiction with each other on the point of doctrine.³

The words of Wilson and the anonymous article of *The British Critic* demonstrate the fact that right at the beginning, Mant's *Two Tracts* caused a lot of fuss and provoked the dedicated opposition of the Evangelicals.

The Evangelicals saw the doctrine of true Christianity in danger of being perverted and reacted with numerous books and pamphlets. The Orthodox similarly did not spare ink in the ensuing fracas and retorted with a flood of literature. Thus, the Baptismal Controversy shifted into a higher gear at the beginning of the nine-

¹ "It shows that the adoption of his [= R. Mant's] novel doctrines is the effect [. . .] of design (D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. ii, p. 261); Wilson notes that in the *Directions for a Devout Behaviour in Public Worship* the expression "prayer for regeneration" has been changed into "prayer for renovation." Struck from the list of books published by the SPCK was Bishop Bradford's *Discourse Concerning Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration*, which held forth a similar view as Biddulph (cf. *ibid.* 260-261; C. Hole, *A Manual of English Church History*, p. 390).

² *The British Critic* (May, 1816), pp. 539-544. *The British Critic* was the mouthpiece of the Orthodox. Cf P. Butler, "From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day," *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. by S. Sykes/J. Booty (London, 1988), p. 34.

³ *The British Critic* (May, 1816), p. 543. A general meeting was held with the aim of examining the books and tracts of the SPCK and determining whether there were any inconsistencies or contradictions in them or not. The committee for Revision accordingly reported that "[. . .] there is nothing to impeach the Consistency of the Tracts, or involve them in Contradiction with each other on the point of doctrine; although, in some instances, the term Regeneration is used, sometimes strictly and properly, as applied in our Liturgical Offices, to the Grace conveyed in the Sacrament of Baptism; and, at other times, in a larger and laxer sense, by different, and, occasionally by the same authors" (*ibid.*).

teenth century, and an endless altercation occurred between Orthodox and Evangelicals.

John Scott¹ was one of the first Evangelicals to reply to Mant together with George Biddulph. Both of them wrote pamphlets prior to the firm committal of the SPCK to Mant's view.²

Stung by Scott's tract, Charles Daubeny and Richard Laurence³ responded accordingly, whereby Daubeny conceded that grace is not inextricably connected to the sacraments.⁴

An anonymous pamphlet by a member of the Salop committee of the SPCK made another concession: Mant had intended to state that regeneration would accompany baptism *rightly received*, not 'rightly administered.'⁵ The author further admits that there might be cases where baptism is unattainable, but contends that

¹ John Scott (1777-1834) was the eldest son of Thomas Scott. He studied in Cambridge (*DNB*, vol. li, p. 75).

² J.H. Overton, *The English Church*, p. 191.

³ Richard Laurence (1760-1838) studied at Oxford. He held several vicarages as well as professorships in civil law and Hebrew. In 1804, he gave his Bampton Lectures. Laurence was "zealously defending the church from the Calvinists as from the unitarians." (*DNB*, vol. xxxii, pp. 206-207).

⁴ Cf. W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 68.

⁵ Anonymous, *Dr. Mant's Sermon on Regeneration, Vindicated from the Remarks of the Rev. T. T. Biddulph. By a Member of the Salop Disstrict Committee of the SPCK* (Shrewsbury, 1816): "The object of Dr. Mant's sermon was to prove, that in the sense of scripture and of the church of England, regeneration always accompanies baptism rightly received; and therefore that those exhortations to the present generation of baptised Christians, to seek after regeneration, which are so common from certain pulpits, are unscriptural in language" (p. 8). The author further states his conviction "that baptism without faith (*going before*, in the case of adults, *following after* in the case of infants), communicates no inward sanctification." He quotes Austin: "whoever conceives baptism to consist in the fleshly rite, the same is not of the Spirit; whoever thinks himself changed by water, not by faith, can never obtain the gift of grace" (p. 33).

God makes an exception in such cases.¹ In a similar vein, he responds to the rest of Biddulph's attacks step for step. His main argument is that Biddulph has misunderstood Mant.

In spite of these concessions and mediating positions, the Controversy was carried on. Two replies adding fuel to Orthodox distrust of Evangelicalism were the somewhat polemical replies of George Bugg and Nicholson. As Ervine rightly remarks:

Nicholson and Bugg represented a continuing militant Anglican evangelicalism uninterested in the accommodating policy of the party leaders and the *Christian Observer*.²

Further contributions included Cunningham's mediating position written in 1816, George Stanley Faber in 1816³ and Henry Ryder in 1816 and 1819.⁴ The last attempted a moderate approach to Mant.⁵

Several magazines with editors belonging to the Church of England also joined in the fray: in 1816 an article in *The Christian Observer* expresses its views on this subject, in 1816 *The British Critic* and in 1816 *The Quarterly Review*.

Similarly involved were Hector Davies Morgan (1817) and Daniel Wilson (1817).

¹ "A heathen may be converted by a layman on a desert island [. . .] where there is no water. Shall such men be excluded from heaven, because a new birth by water and the spirit is necessary to salvation? God forbid! Whoever is converted, and believes and repents, and is earnestly desirous to be baptised, but dies before he can come to the laver of regeneration [= baptism], is accepted, we are sure, by the Father of Mercies, as one of his regenerate children." (Anonymous, *Dr. Mant's Sermon on Regeneration*, p. 15)

² W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 75.

³ George Stanley Faber (1773-1854) studied at Oxford, thereafter becoming minister in several parishes. "Throughout his career he strenuously advocated the evangelical doctrines of the necessity of conversion, justification by faith, and the sole authority of scripture as the rule of faith." Faber was also a copious writer (*DNB*, vol. xviii, pp. 111-112).

⁴ Henry Ryder (1777-1838) studied at Cambridge and was successively Bishop of Gloucester, Lichfield, and Coventry. "In his early ministerial life Ryder was regarded as a model parish priest [. . .] he stood aloof from the rising evangelical party, of which he afterwards became a distinguished adherent." Charles Simeon spoke warmly of him (*DNB*, vol. I, pp. 45-47).

⁵ Cf. W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 71.

A contribution throwing light on the issue from another angle is the answer of Horne, an Arminian Evangelical nettled by the Orthodox claim that the doctrine of regeneration rested upon their Calvinistic sentiments. As an Arminian, he endeavoured to prove his Evangelical doctrine of Regeneration with the help of scripture references and common sense.¹

When Mant's second edition was published with many alterations in 1817, most of the Evangelicals were satisfied. A significant alteration was the changing of the phrase "to whom baptism was *rightly administered*" into "by whom baptism was *rightly received*" (see above, p. 42 & 44).² Nevertheless, the Controversy simmered on for some time. Later in the century, it erupted once again in the debate leading up to the Gorham-case in 1847-51.³

The Western Schism⁴ also needs to be seen in a close connexion to this Controversy. James Harington Evans, ordained minister in the Church of England, seceded in 1815, the year, in which Mant's tracts were published and circulated. According to his biographer, "the baptism of infants, the union of the Church with the State, and what he considered to be the consequent absence of holy discipline in that Church" drove him to dissent.⁵ Evans was the leader of a line of clergy, who seceded at this time, all of whom received the so-called believers' baptism.⁶ George

¹ M. Horne, *Scripture and Common Sense on the Doctrine of Regeneration and Baptism*, see. W.J.C. Irvine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, pp. 72-3.

² *The Christian Observer* (July, 1817), pp. 429-430, notes all of the changes made.

³ Cf. P. Toon, *Evangelical Theology 1833-1856. A Response to Tractarianism* (London, 1979), esp. pp. 188-195.

⁴ Cf. the critical commentary of *The Christian Observer* (Jan., 1819) concerning the seceders (pp. 31-55). Cf. also C. Hole, *A Manual of English Church History*, pp. 391-392. "In 1815 there commenced in the western counties a small secession from the Church of England [. . .] Their stumbling-block was infant baptism" (p. 391).

⁵ H.H. Rowdon, "Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Vox Evangelica III. Biblical and Historical Essays by Members of the Faculty of the London Bible College*, ed. by R.P. Martin (London, 1964), p. 79.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Baring, a former curate of Biddulph, also belonged to these seceding clergy,¹ who initiated a steady stream of dissatisfied members out of the Established Church.²

2.2.2 A Systematic Evaluation of Selected Works

In order to ascertain the mechanisms at work on both sides of the Baptismal Controversy, we shall now take a closer look at some of the most important contributions.

2.2.2.1 Inseparability of Baptism and Regeneration: the Orthodox Shibboleth

What united the Orthodox in the Baptismal Controversy was the view that baptism is a sacrament consisting of an inward grace and outward sign. According to them, regeneration as the inward grace infused through the Holy Spirit always accompanies the rite of baptism as the outward sign and seal of regeneration. Regeneration and baptism they regarded as being inseparable; regeneration exclusively took place at baptism.

For this reason, they maintained that not only was it impossible to distinguish between regenerate and unregenerate within the Church; in their eyes, it was absurd and unbiblical to hold that a baptized person could not be regenerate. However, they by no means identified regeneration with salvation: regeneration was the commencement of Christian life, eternal salvation the destination. Unless a baptized and thus regenerate person fulfilled the promises made at baptism and lived a holy life, he could not obtain eternal salvation.

¹ C. Hole, *A Manual of English Church History*, pp. 391-392; cf. also H.H. Rowdon, "Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century," p. 79.

² Cf. D.M. Thompson, *Baptism, Church and Society in Britain since 1800*, p. 16.

2.2.2.1.1 Herbert Marsh

Marsh rejects the notion that baptism is merely an external rite; for him, it is an outward sign accompanied by an inward grace. Whilst the outward sign consisting of ablution is a seal of the inward grace,¹ the inward grace may be termed as regeneration, which only takes place at baptism.²

The inseparable unity of ablution and regeneration leads Marsh to the conviction that repentance, justification by faith alone, remission of sins and membership in the Church are jointly effected at baptism.³ The mere rite alone would be of no avail, and the baptized person is not literally washed of his sins; rather, he is washed of his sins "after a spiritual or mystical manner."⁴

Marsh makes a significant distinction between the efficacy of baptism (= regeneration) and salvation: the spiritual grace given at baptism (=regeneration *etc.*) is only the beginning of the general scheme of salvation, of which final salvation is the end; baptism effects the remission of original sin in the case of infants, but this does not guarantee their salvation.⁵ On the contrary, they have to hold the vows made on their part at baptism.⁶ The grace which allows them to do this may be called renovation as the process of daily renewal following regeneration.⁷ If this

¹ H. Marsh, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A. in Confutation of his Various Mis-Statements, and in Vindication of the Efficacy Ascribed by our Church to the Sacrament of Baptism* (Cambridge, 1813), pp. 11, 22; H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, p. 24.

² Anonymous, *The Legality of the Questions*, p. 14, Chapter VI, question 7; H. Marsh, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, pp. 16-17.

³ H. Marsh, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, p. 9: "Again, the spiritual grace, which is a part of that Sacrament, is *inseparable* from Faith and Repentance; for without Faith and Repentance the spiritual grace is *unattainable*. But if Faith and Repentance are necessarily attached to a *part* of that Sacrament, that Sacrament *altogether* includes them." Cf. *A Letter*, p. 24: "this *spiritual grace* is a consequence of the *Repentance* and of that *Faith*, which must *precede* the ablution, and without which the mere *Rite* of ablution would be of no avail;" see also *A Second Letter*, pp. 8, 11, 16.

⁴ H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, p. 24

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶ H. Marsh, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, pp. 23-25.

⁷ Anonymous, *The Legality of the Questions*, p. 15.

daily renewal discontinues and there is no evidence of sanctification in the life of the individual,¹ he will fail in obtaining final salvation.²

2.2.2.1.2 Richard Mant

Quoting Bishop Taylor and Bishop Wilson, Mant defines baptism as "a new birth by which we enter into the new world, the new creation, the blessings and spiritualities of the kingdom;"³ "by that sacrament we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit."⁴ Further, baptism is the rite for admission of disciples into Christ's Church and the vehicle of regeneration and salvation.⁵

Regeneration or the new birth is "that spiritual change, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon any person."⁶ It is the spiritual grace of baptism and cannot be separated from the same.⁷ This notion that baptism and regeneration are intrinsically connected and may not be separated is of utmost importance for Mant's

¹ H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, p. 19: "Sanctification implies an *actual progress* in righteousness and therefore cannot like Justification, which is the remission of past sins, take place at Baptism. Sanctification is necessary to make us remain in that state of Justification, into which we were brought at Baptism."

² H. Marsh, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Charles Simeon*, 17-18, 28. Cf. also p. 29: "I declared that though we cannot be saved by our works, we cannot be saved *without* them."

³ Quotation of Bp. Taylor in R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 5

⁴ Quotation of Bp. Wilson in *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ "[. . .] baptism is the vehicle of regeneration, because it is the vehicle of salvation to which regeneration is necessary" (*ibid.*, p. 33; cf. p. 27).

⁶ Quotation of Bp. Wilson in *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷ E.g. *ibid.*, pp. 23, 25.

theology; only through baptism can one be born again of water *and* of the Spirit.¹ He argues that regeneration is always affected by baptism, for "if the work of regeneration is not effected by baptism, it is almost impossible for any sober man to say when and by what means it is."² Regeneration in his view is "wholly the act of the Spirit"³ and thus complementary to the rite of baptism, which is carried out by man.⁴ This union of water as the instrument and of the Spirit as the efficient principle Mant conceives to be absolutely necessary for the purpose of regeneration.⁵

It is significant for Mant's thought that all baptized persons are indiscriminately regenerated.⁶ Thus, he defines not only those who live a Christian life as regenerate but also those, "to whom baptism is rightly administered, notwithstanding

¹ Mant considers John 3 as a proof for his view derived from Beveridge that "there is no other way of being born again of the water as well as of the Spirit, but only in the sacrament of baptism" (R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 37); "by that sacrament we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit" (ibid., p. 6).

R. Mant warns those, who in his opinion separate baptism and regeneration that "to deny the regenerating effect of baptism is in some sense to do despite unto the Spirit of grace" (ibid., p. 26); it is "to deny its sacramental character; to strip it of that which makes it most valuable; and to reduce it to a [. . .] form without substance, a body without spirit, a sign without signification" (ibid., p. 35). He accuses his opponents of disregarding baptism as the outward form of regeneration, an error deriving from Calvin, who "set the example by contending, that the expressions 'water and the Spirit mean only the Spirit, who cleanses after the manner of water;' and from a consequent confusion between regeneration and renovation or conversion, with which it has often been identified" (ibid., p. 40). He aptly points out that the notion of his opponents that "another greater and better new birth" must follow baptismal regeneration derives from the view that they would propose "an infallible connection between regeneration and salvation," between regeneration and sinless perfection (ibid., pp. 43-46).

² Ibid., 22.

³ Citation from Beveridge's Sermons (vol. i., p. 304) in ibid., p. 24.

⁴ Thus R. Mant approvingly cites a passage from Beveridge's sermons (vol. i, p. 304): "as we cannot be born of water without the Spirit, so neither can we in an ordinary way be born of the Spirit without the water [. . .] Christ hath joined them together, and it is not in our power to part them; he that would be born of the Spirit, must be born of water also" (ibid., p. 24).

⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶ "[. . .] all Christians, all persons who have been baptized, are indiscriminately said to have been regenerated" (ibid., p. 33).

(that) by their future conduct they may forfeit the privileges of their new birth."¹ Due to vociferous protest on the part of Evangelicals, Mant changed the expression "rightly administered" to "rightly received" in later editions of his *Tracts*.² However, his contention remained that regeneration is inseparably bound to baptism and that there cannot therefore be any talk of a post-baptismal experience of regeneration.³

Mant believes the Church of England to be of his opinion: in an exposition of Church formularies concerning baptism (especially the liturgy for the baptismal service) and the formularies relating to confirmation, he concludes that "the Church takes for granted the connection between baptism and the new birth."⁴

Now although he sees baptism as a vehicle of regeneration and salvation, he does not propose that baptism is automatically a ticket to heaven. Rather, he contends that the privilege of salvation remains for those who do not die in infancy only "if they grow up in faith and obedience: if not, it is taken from them, until they repent."⁵

He also somewhat undifferentiatingly accuses the Methodists and the Evangelical clergy of making a special conversion-experience absolutely necessary for the attainment of salvation; for in his opinion, special conversion-experiences are

¹ R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 7.

² *The Christian Observer*, (July, 1817), pp. 429-30. The later expression allowed an evangelical intepretation.

³ In defending his view, R. Mant defines three kinds of life and their correspondent births: the natural life (born of Adam), the spiritual life (born of water and the Spirit) and the life of glory (born of the resurrection of the last day). One can only be born once into the spiritual life, namely at baptism: "for inasmuch as there is but one baptism, so there is but one regeneration in this world; and as we cannot be baptized again, so cannot we be a second time regenerated, or a second time be born again" (R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 48).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15; cf. p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. R. Mant admits that baptized persons may be spiritually ill: "it is indeed in our spiritual, as in our natural, life: as we may be ill in health, and may grow better and recover, but be born again we cannot be; so we may be spiritually ill, and again be renewed or reformed; but in that case we still hope for everlasting salvation upon the ground of the covenant, into which we were originally baptized" (*ibid.*, p. 48).

not the normal fare of Christians.¹ He admits that the Bible describes two kinds of conversions, "the one being rapidly effected by the finger of God; the other being the slow and progressive result of a deliberate attention to the ordinary methods of conviction, and a willing and rational acquiescence in that result."² However, the first kind is in his eyes an exception.³

Mant concedes that "every believer and every sinner, although made by baptism a member of Christ and a child of God, must be, in a certain sense, converted, if he would ultimately succeed to his inheritance of the kingdom of heaven."⁴ What, however, troubles him is the evangelical view commonly held that all are in need of a special conversion-experience.⁵

Citing Randolph, Mant finds the scriptural connotation of the term conversion to be identical with repentance.⁶ He is convinced that conversion/repentance is a reformation of heart and character; not as a conversion-experience made once in a life-time, but rather as a process, in which every Christian stands in this world and which only ceases at death.⁷ The unique conversion-experience is apparently reserved for non-Christians (*i.e.* unbaptized persons).⁸

2.2.2.1.3 Daubeny

Daubeny commences his line of argument with a definition of the sacrament of baptism and the function of the priest admitting it. In his view, baptism consists

¹ Cf. R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵ R. Mant explicitly opposes Wesley (*ibid.*, pp. 60-1) and J. Overton, who wrote that "in order to a state of salvation, a change of mind, of views, of dispositions must be effected in *every person*, wherever born, however educated, or of whatever external conduct" (Quotation of J. Overton's *True Churchman Ascertained* in R. Mant, *Two Tracts*, p. 61).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷ *Ibid.* R. Mant approvingly cites the Evangelical J. Overton to this effect (*ibid.*).

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70.

of an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,¹ conveyed by divine appointment to the receiving party.² Through the sacrament of baptism, the priest executes the "solemn covenant of admission into the privileges of the gospel."³

According to Daubeny, regeneration is the gift of a new life, the act of being born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, justification and sanctification.⁴ Daubeny argues that every child, who is rightly baptized, is regenerated by the sacrament of baptism.⁵ He refutes the notion that the regeneration received at baptism automatically secures salvation,⁶ although he believes that baptism is the commencement of spiritual life conveying an immediate spiritual benefit to the baptized person⁷ and "a good title to eternal life, though not an *indefeasible* one."⁸ If a baptized person does not live a godly life, this person may lose all the blessings given to him at baptism and may therefore be termed unregenerate.⁹

Daubeny concedes that it is possible to use the term regeneration in a more unlimited and comprehensive sense as being applied to the whole process of spiri-

¹ At one point, Daubeny somewhat ambiguously states that "grace is not absolutely tied to sacraments;" C. Daubeny, *Considerations on the Doctrine of Regeneration; in the Sense in Which that Term is Used by the Church of England, in her Public Formularies: Respectfully Addressed to the Clergy* (London, 1816), p. 59. Cf. W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 68.

² C. Daubeny, *Considerations*, p. 10. Cf. also pp. 30-31: "The Church of England considers every infant, in his natural condition, born in a state of wrath, to be born again by Baptism into a state of Grace; the necessary preparatory to his admission into the kingdom of heaven."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 35, 56. Cf. Daubeny's arguments against restricting the use of the term "sanctification" to the time following baptism, pp. 66-69. He views sanctification as commencing at baptism and continuing thereafter. It is however possible to speak of a baptized person living in an "unsanctified condition" (p. 69).

⁵ This phrase shows that Daubeny emphasizes the "rightly baptized" and not the "worthily received."

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 41.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

tual renewal, from the commencement to the end of the Christian life; however, he feels that other words such as renovation are more accurate.¹

2.2.2.1.4 Richard Laurence

Laurence also propagates the inseparability of baptism and regeneration. The former is the seal, the latter the effect of baptism and a new state of being, a spiritual birth.² Regeneration exclusively occurs at baptism together with incorporation into the Church. It is a gift connected with the medium of grace exhibited in baptism.³ All who are baptized are truly regenerate.⁴ The process of renewal and sanctification after baptism Laurence prefers not to call regeneration.⁵

Regeneration is a state, into which "all baptized infants [. . .] and all believing adults are admitted."⁶ In the case of infants, "a *moral* change takes place in them;"⁷ they are incorporated into the Church of Christ and receive the Holy Spirit.⁸

¹ C. Daubeny, *Considerations*, pp. 41-2.

² R. Laurence, *The Doctrine of the Church of England Upon the Efficacy of Baptism Vindicated from Misrepresentation* (Oxford, 1818) II, p. 80; I, pp. 9-10.

³ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 18-19, 117-118; II, p. 24.

⁴ R. Laurence concedes that in the eyes of God, there may be other criteria as well: "whether God may, unknown to us, *secretly* regard penitents with an eye of mercy *before baptism*, I do not inquire: but I contend that they are not considered as his children by adoption and grace in the eye of *the Church*, and ought not to be so considered in *their own* eyes until after baptism. Before baptism he may, but he has not said that he will contemplate them as his children" (*ibid.*, II, p. 29).

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 24. Citing Hooker, Laurence writes: "God by covenant requireth in the elder sort, *faith* and baptism, in children the sacrament of *baptism alone*" (*The Doctrine* II, p. 26).

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, p. 26.

Baptized infants are indiscriminately regenerate, but only conditionally elect; to obtain eternal salvation, the baptized must continue in well-doing and thus remain in a state of grace.¹

2.2.2.1.5 Hector Davies Morgan

In his treatise on baptism, Morgan makes a distinction between the qualifications for baptism and its effects. According to him, the qualifications for baptism are faith, repentance and a good conscience,² whereas the effects of baptism consist in the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the admission to a state of salvation.³ In Morgan's view, both the qualifications for and the effects of baptism can only imply regeneration,⁴ and he cites several passages in the New Testament and the Church Fathers to support his argument.⁵ Circumcision is in his eyes also comparable to baptism, as both are a seal, a title conveying certain privileges of grace; both are of divine institution, efficacious to their appointed purposes and the rite of admission into Israel and the Church.⁶ Morgan finds that circumcision is a sacrament of Israel in exactly the same sense as baptism is a sacrament of the

¹ "It is also asserted in our Baptismal Service, that the infant, who is regenerated and admitted into the number of God's elect at baptism, may not so *continue*, but may fall from the state of salvation, in which he has been placed. This circumstance alone surely should convince us, that our Church regards all infants as absolutely indeed regenerated, but only as conditionally elected in baptism, and that consequently she knows nothing of what constitutes the corner stone of the Calvinistical system, the doctrine of the indefectibility of grace. And without this doctrine the rule of *charitable supposition* altogether fails of its application." (R. Laurence, *The Doctrine* I, pp. 118-119).

² H.D. Morgan, *The Doctrine of Regeneration as Identified with Baptism and Distinct from Renovation Investigated, in an Essay on Baptism as an Ordinance of Christ* [. . .] (Oxford, 1817), p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31f.

⁵ H.D. Morgan, *The Doctrine of Regeneration*, pp. 33-37. Morgan sees baptism described in terms implying regeneration such as "burial and resurrection," a "washing and cleansing" and "sanctification" (pp. 33-34).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Church, as it was similarly not merely an outward sign but also intrinsically accompanied by spiritual grace.¹

Regeneration is thus fully inseparable from baptism: at baptism the child is made regenerate; *i.e.* he is justified by grace, receives the Holy Spirit and is admitted into the kingdom of God.² The only difference between baptism and regeneration lies in the fact that "the one more fully designates the internal and spiritual efficacy, the other the outward and visible sign of this holy Sacrament; but neither is there baptism without regeneration, nor regeneration distinct from baptism."³

Whilst regeneration is inextricably related to baptism, renovation is the process of renewal commencing after regeneration. Regeneration is a completed act incapable of improvement, common to all baptized persons, connected with the use of water and received passively through an external agent. Renovation, on the other hand, on the other hand, is incomplete and so is capable of improvement. Therefore, it may be forfeited and admits different degrees of perfection;⁴ it occurs secretly without a visible sign and requires the active involvement of each individual.⁵

2.2.2.1.6 Variations on a Theme: Orthodox Unity

Although the Orthodox agree on the most points, certain differences become apparent in their interpretation of the effects of baptismal regeneration.

a) Of the persons examined, only Mant seems to propagate the need for the conversion of baptized persons: conversion in some sense is needed as the process of renovation of the heart and mind. This conversion is normally not a special experience, but is comparable to repentance, and therein a requirement for eternal salvation. In other words, Mant's use of the word "conversion" is nearly identical to

¹ H. Morgan, *The Doctrine of Regeneration*, pp. 38f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 39f.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴ *I.e.* renovation may be forfeited.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-44.

the use of the word "renovation" as a process of renewal after regeneration maintained by the other Orthodox positions examined.

b) Marsh believes that faith is effected by baptism. This faith is the commencement of the scheme of salvation and necessary during the whole of life. In Morgan's view, justification is the consequence of regeneration. Laurence is of the opinion that faith without baptism is not effectual. In Daubeny's case, faith is infused by baptism. Mant perhaps purposely does not deal with this aspect in his *Tracts*.

b) The term "sanctification" is usually used to describe the means of obtaining eternal salvation. Marsh and Laurence seem to agree that sanctification is not given at baptism. Daubeny, on the other hand, believes that the infant is brought into a sanctified state through baptism itself, although this sanctification has to continue afterward.

c) The Orthodox agree that the privilege of salvation is conditional. Laurence and Morgan hold baptism to be the admission into a state of salvation, although they have to live a life of well-doing in order to remain therein. In Daubeny's case, continued sanctification secures final salvation. Marsh distinguishes between the privilege of salvation given at baptism and final salvation: final salvation is not guaranteed through baptism; rather, it is necessary to lead a holy life, even though this privilege of salvation is obtained at baptism. Mant rejects this distinction between two sorts of salvation: he does not hold baptism to be sufficient for salvation; rather, the solace of a good conscience is the prerogative for salvation.

2.2.2.2 Baptism Versus Regeneration? The Evangelical Dilemma

Rupp succinctly sums up the Evangelical movement at the time of Simeon in the following words:

[. . .] as the movement drew away from the Methodists, Calvinism ceased to be the differential. Rather was it the stress on the depravity of man by sin, and his redemption by the grace of Christ. This was com-

bined with his acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, and, rejecting any Socinian notions, of the inseparable connection between the person and the work of Christ, the sufficiency of his atonement, and the imputation of his merits to believers. And this was not a straitened rationalist scheme, but religion known and experienced in faith, in conversion and the continuing experience of forgiveness and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.¹

It was this combination of elements which necessarily led the Evangelicals to separate regeneration and baptism:

They themselves had experienced that they had no lively faith after their baptism as infants; there had been no fruits of the Spirit to find in their lives. However, after their conversion-experience - be it as it may - they experienced the Holy Spirit in their lives, they sought for fruits of the Spirit, and they had a deep assurance of salvation. Thus, they saw a deep connexion between conversion, regeneration and assurance of salvation.² As regeneration was held to be the gateway to heaven in connexion with the fruits of the Spirit, they could not agree with the Orthodox that all baptized persons were regenerate.

Therefore, what united the Evangelicals was the view that they regarded baptism and regeneration to be separable: baptism is the sign of regeneration, the inward grace of baptism. To receive regeneration, the baptized person has to fulfil the conditions for it, *i.e.* experience conversion and turn to God. Thus, regeneration is generally acknowledged as taking place after baptism in the case of infants, and baptized persons are divided into two groups, the regenerate and the unregenerate.

Because of their theology, the Evangelicals had to reject the Orthodox view of baptismal regeneration. However, as churchmen they generally tried to harmonize

¹ G. Rupp, *Religion in England*, p. 483.

² Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals*, 387: "Many of the Evangelical clergy who underwent this experience had led blameless and active lives; but they found that their "conversion" gave them an inward peace and assurance which hitherto had been lacking, bringing a greatly increased effectiveness to their work and a sharper edge to their preaching."

their views with the expressions used in the Church formularies; especially, they sought to explain certain terms used in the baptismal service, which seemed to support the Orthodox view of baptismal regeneration. This led to the development of different lines of thought, which need to be examined below.

2.2.2.2.1 John Scott

Baptism is an appointed means offering the grace of regeneration; it is the sign of regeneration. Scott distinguishes regeneration as the thing signified from baptism as the sign; accordingly he holds that the salutary effect of baptism is dependent on the person receiving baptism rightly.¹ Therefore, after baptism a person may be called regenerate on the assumption that he received the sacrament worthily, *i.e.* with faith and repentance.²

In the case of infants, the same professions and vows are required as in the case of adults, the sponsors and sureties acting on his behalf. In order to explain this, Scott uses a term also used by others, namely charitable supposition: the Church charitably hopes and supposes that the baptized infant will perform the baptismal vows, when it comes of age. If this is not the case, the guilt lies not with the Church but rather with the person baptized.³ Scott therefore defines infant baptism as "relative regeneration" into the visible Church, whereas "higher re-

¹ J. Scott, *An Inquiry Into the Effect of Baptism, According to the Sense of the Holy Scripture, and of the Church of England: In Answer to The Rev. Dr. Mant's Two Tracts on Regeneration and Conversion, Circulated with the Last Annual Packet of the SPCK* [. . .] (London, 1815), p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 144f: "The prayers offered are supposed to have been sincerely offered; the promises made, it is presumed, will be performed; and, UPON THESE ASSUMPTIONS, the infant is spoken of as 'regenerated by God's Holy Spirit.' but if these conditions fail; if the prayers have been offered in mere form; if the child, 'when he comes to age,' shews no disposition to keep his vows; then I feel myself warranted to conclude, that the spiritual blessing, dependent upon such conditions is, with regard to him, null and void: and that, although, having been admitted into the visible church by the external sign of baptism with water, he needs not to be baptized again, yet without 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost,' without 'spiritual regeneration,' he never can be a member of the spiritual church of Christ, (consisting of all *true* believers,) or come to the kingdom of heaven." *Cf.* also *ibid.*, pp. 232-3.

generation" (*i.e.* spiritual regeneration) can only be declared hypothetically, that is in the sense of charitable supposition.¹

Regeneration in his view can be described as the state of having a new heart and of being a new creature.² The effect of regeneration is the turning from sin to God, wrought by the Holy Spirit and effected by the word of God. The depravity of human nature makes this change necessary in order to be on God's side.³ In other words, regeneration is part and parcel of conversion.⁴

As seen above, baptism relates to regeneration in the same way as the sign relates to the thing signified: the former is the *sign* of regeneration, the latter its *inward and spiritual grace*.⁵ However, Scott would strongly reject the notion that baptism is superfluous. He approvingly cites a friend who states that the new birth is incomplete without water and even conceives that the ordinance of baptism alone could be blessed.⁶ This blessing may or may not be conveyed through baptism; Scott does not commit himself on this point.⁷

¹ J. Scott, *An Inquiry into the Effect of Baptism*, pp. 232f.

² J. Scott, *The Principles of "An Inquiry into the Effect of Baptism" Defended Against the Animadversions of The Rev. Richard Laurence, LL. D.* (London, 1817), p. 151: "The sacred scriptures [. . .] represent a great and radical change as necessary to take place in fallen man, in order to fit him for the service of a holy God, and the enjoyment of a holy heaven."

³ J. Scott, *An Inquiry into the Effect of Baptism*, pp. 16f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 257: For Scott, conversion is the "commencement of true religion," whereas repentance is the daily task of turning to God and seeking forgiveness.

⁵ J. Scott, *The Principles of "An Inquiry"*, p. 154.

⁶ J. Scott, *The Principles of "An Inquiry"*, p. 167, citing a friend: "[. . .] in believing adults the *substance* of regeneration has actually taken place before baptism; but as the new birth is said to be both of water and of the Spirit, it may be too much to say that it is *complete* without it, that is, without baptism. And this would be true, even if baptism were observed *merely* because it is an ordinance of Christ. But, besides this, the Holy Spirit blesses the due performance of the ordinance, and 'increases grace' in it."

⁷ "Baptism, we consider as 'the sign of regeneration;' 'as a pledge' of it 'to those who receive baptism rightly;' and also as 'a means' by which the blessing *may* be conveyed in answer to the devout prayers of the several parties concerned" (*ibid.*, p. 17; *cf.* pp. 124-5).

2.2.2.2 Daniel Wilson

In Wilson's view baptism in the nature of a covenant is not invariably connected with regeneration as the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, the latter being conditional and dependent on the future character of the recipient.¹ The means to obtain regeneration are not only the sacraments, but faith, prayer *etc.*² The instrument of regeneration is the word of God.³ Thus, baptized persons may be unregenerate, if they fail to fulfil the conditions.

Wilson defines regeneration as a spiritual and radical change of heart, which is indispensable to fallen man if he will be saved.⁴ He admits that other ideas may be included in the term regeneration, but he suggests that regeneration should be defined in the strict sense as above in order to avoid confusion.⁵ Wilson comes to the conclusion that regeneration is independent of baptism and that

this change, under whatever circumstances it apparently take place, whether immediately connected with baptism or not, may, and ought to be called by the scriptural term Regeneration or New birth.⁶

¹ Cf. D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. ii, pp. 258-259.

² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ D. Wilson, *The Doctrine of Regeneration Practically Considered: A Sermon, Preached Before the University of Oxford, [. . .] on Monday, February 24, 1817[. . .]*, in: D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. i, pp. 53-92; see also p. 79: "a radical alteration of heart and life is indispensable to fallen man - the young person, in point of facts, wants this, and must have it in order to be saved."

⁵ D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. i, pp. 79f: "Other ideas, indeed, besides this radical change of heart, may be possibly be included in the ecclesiastical sense of the word Regeneration. [. . .] Still the spiritual transformation of the soul is so much the more important part of the entire work - is so completely that on which all the rest turns, and for which it was instituted; whilst the danger of substituting the outward for the inward part of the sacred transaction is so great, that it may surely seem natural, under the spiritual dispensation of the Gospel and in a Protestant church, to call it, in ordinary doctrine, by the expressive term Regeneration."

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 81f.

Thus, in the case of adults he regards baptism as the confirmation of (the already existing) faith.¹ In the case of infants, Wilson assumes that they do not universally receive a radical change of heart at baptism, as experience clearly shows. The fruits of obedience reveal if such a change has taken place or not. In the negative case, conversion is necessary.²

Through the above, it becomes manifest that Wilson has a rather undogmatical, practical manner of dealing with the problem:³ he is not really interested in proving that infants are made regenerate or not; rather, what interests him is the necessity for every person to attain regeneration, if he be a true Christian. As it cannot be said of all baptized that they are living a godly life, it follows for Wilson that infants may or may not become born again at baptism.

2.2.2.3 Thomas T. Biddulph

In Biddulph's work entitled *Baptism, A Seal of the Christian Covenant*, his views already become evident in the title.

Baptism he conceives to be symbolical and evidential:⁴ as a symbol, baptism represents the "way of salvation;" as an evidence, baptism makes us sure of God's

¹ D. Wilson, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. i, p. 77: "It is acknowledged that adults coming to baptism rightly, come with previous repentance and faith [. . .] on their profession before the church, they receive, in the sacrament of baptism, a confirmation of faith, and increase of grace, and ingrafting into the visible body of Christ, and a sign and seal of the promises of the Gospel."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 77f.

³ Thus also the title of Wilson's sermon: *The Doctrine of Regeneration Practically Considered*.

⁴ Cf. T.T. Biddulph, *Baptism A Seal of the Christian Covenant; or, Remarks on the Former of "Two Tracts Intended to Convey Correct Notions of Regeneration and Conversion, According to the Sense of Holy Scripture, and of the Church of England, by Richard Mant, [. . .]"* (London, 1816), pp. 27-29: "I conceive baptism to be chiefly a *symbol* and *evidence*. It is *symbolical*. 'The mystical water,' on the part of God, who appointed its use, is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace;' and on the part of man, the participation of it is a significative promise, which may or may not be sincere. [. . .] Baptism is designed also to be an *evidence*. On the part of God, it is an evidence to assure us of his favour, if we possess the necessary *prerequisites* to baptism, 'repentance whereby we forsake sin, and faith whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament.'"

favour. However, he emphasizes the conditional character of this sacrament: the symbol remains purely symbolic, unless the baptized show interest in the salvation offered; without repentance and faith, the evidential side of baptism remains hollow. Partly citing the *Homily of Common Prayer and Sacraments*, Biddulph concludes:

"To administer a sacrament is, by the outward word and element, *to preach* to the receiver the inward and spiritual grace of God.' And *preaching* may or may not be effectual to those to whom it is addressed.¹

It is in the definition of regeneration that Biddulph strenuously rejects the position of Mant and the Orthodox. As he puts it,

Rights and privileges accompany the birth of an heir to an estate; but they are not the birth itself.²

In other words, spiritual privileges can never be identified with spiritual existence itself, baptism with being born again. Other than justification as the imputation of Christ's merits, regeneration is the beginning of the life of sanctification initiated and wrought by the Holy Spirit.³ This act of regeneration identical to being born again is obtained at conversion, a happening not necessarily identical with baptism (as in the case of an infant).⁴

¹ T.T. Biddulph, *Baptism A Seal of the Christian Covenant*, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Regeneration is "the inward spiritual grace of which baptism is a sign and seal, [. . .] 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness'" (p. 3); the "work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, whereby the subject of it is made a partaker of a new life which he did not possess before; [. . .] a life derived from God, entirely dependent on communion with him, and tending to his glory" (p. 3); "the first communication of spiritual life, the life of God, to fallen soul of man, before 'dead in trespasses and sins'" (p.4). Further, regeneration according to Biddulph may be described as "a radical change wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, never indeed unaccompanied by remission of sin, but carefully to be distinguished from it" (pp. 3f), and the "inward spiritual grace" corresponding to the "outward visible sign" of baptism (p. 4).

⁴ *Ibid.*: "it will be allowed, that to be *born of God*, and to be *regenerate*, are terms of exactly the same import; so that he who is born of God is regenerate, and who is regenerate is born of God." See also W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 69.

In order to counter the evidence brought forth by the Orthodox that the Church formularies regarding the baptismal service demonstrated the unity of baptism and regeneration, Biddulph distinguishes between "baptismal regeneration" and regeneration proper as the renewing of the Holy Spirit; between an outward and an inward regeneration corresponding to his distinction between an *ecclesia invisibilis* and an *ecclesia visibilis*.¹ Lastly, the reader is left wondering, whether Biddulph really attaches much importance to baptism, as he comes to the conclusion that it is possible to be converted and regenerated without being baptized. An outstanding example for him is St. Paul, who in his eyes was regenerated before baptism.²

The words "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church" used in the baptismal service should not be understood as a proof that infants are necessarily converted/regenerated proper in the sense of being born again. Rather, they should be understood in the sense of being spoken by the Church as words of "charitable hope."³

2.2.2.2.4 George Nicholson

Nicholson rather caustically reacted against Mant's tracts on baptismal regeneration in *Two Letters [. . .] to Convey Correct Notions of Regeneration and Conversion*.⁴

Baptism he holds to primarily be

a sign of introduction into the Christian Church, and an enrolment amongst the spiritual, adopted *sons and daughters of the Lord God*

¹ Cf. T.T. Biddulph, *Baptism A Seal of the Christian Covenant*, p. 112; W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 69.

² T.T. Biddulph, *Baptism A Seal of the Christian Covenant*, pp. 17f; cf. p. 112: "[. . .] so I conceive that a man may be baptised without being regenerated, or regenerated without being baptised."

³ T.T. Biddulph, *Baptism A Seal of the Christian Covenant*, pp. 83-4.

⁴ Cf. G. Nicholson, *Two Letters, to the Reverend Dr. Mant, Chaplain to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, [. . .] upon the Subjects of his Two Tracts, Intended to Convey Correct Notions of Regeneration and Conversion* (London, 1816).

Almighty, the Lord from Heaven. [. . .] Baptism is the chronicle of the candidates for victory, not of the eternal victors.¹

Nicholson makes a strict distinction between baptism as a holy, divine and spiritual ordinance of Christ, and the inward and spiritual grace of it;² between the sign of baptism and regeneration. He has little patience for moderating positions or tradition including the Church formularies,³ an attitude which consequently leads to a position which in actual fact has little use for the rite of baptism. This is evident in his supposition that baptism merely has the educational function of witnessing to the baptized that he will receive faith and salvation, if he becomes regenerate.⁴

Nicholson devotes most of his time and energy to the topic of regeneration, and this is the subject which moves his heart. It is probably this accentuation of regeneration, which leads him to a comparatively low view of baptism; he can hardly disguise his contempt for people who believe otherwise.⁵ He can see no relationship of cause and effect between baptism and regeneration,⁶ and other than many a moderate Evangelical, he rejects the phrase "baptismal regeneration" entirely as being unscriptural.⁷ As a proof he points to the fact that many baptized as infants are no better than unbaptized persons; only conversion and regeneration can

¹ G. Nicholson, *Two Letters*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20: "it is expressly said [Article 27], that baptism is a *sign* of regeneration or new birth, therefore it is not that thing itself." *Cf.* also pp. 47f, where Nicholson attacks R. Mant for not separating regeneration and baptism: "But the beginning is not the end. Neither is the end the beginning. Therefore, there is a *difference* here."

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66. For this reason, Nicholson seems to hold little of the theory of charitable supposition as supported by Evangelicals such as Scott, a theory which tried to relate the wording of the Church formularies to the Evangelical separation of baptism and regeneration.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65: "baptism itself [. . .] giveth neither faith nor salvation, but is a *testimony* to the person baptized, that he may receive faith and salvation if he goes through the divine and all-important process of regeneration."

⁵ *Cf.* for example his retorts to R. Mant in *ibid.*, pp. 23, 65f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

change and better man.¹ Baptism proper is merely the baptism of John, baptism with water, whereas the real and spiritual baptism which counts is the baptism of Jesus with fire, *i.e.* regeneration.²

Regeneration has as its prerequisites repentance and conversion;³ conversion is a change from evil to good by true repentance.⁴ Whereas conversion "signifies *a change*," which "may be total or partial," regeneration always includes a "total change; for Regeneration is a being born again, born of God."⁵ Only regeneration can be regarded as the gateway to heaven and as the way of faith and salvation.

2.2.2.5 George Bugg

In his treatise *Spiritual Regeneration not Necessarily Connected with Baptism*, George Bugg attempts to demonstrate that regeneration and baptism need to be separated.⁶

The picture of a covenant between God and man plays a large role in Bugg's thought. In his eyes, the covenant deed of baptism

is the public and open declaration of that previous *mutual consent*. The parties [. . .] bind themselves to a due fulfilment of all its obligations.⁷

God has instituted this covenant and through it shown his reconciliation with man, but only the open and hearty declaration of consent on the part of each individual can make participation in this covenant possible. Thus, it is necessary to

¹ G. Nicholson, *Two Letters*, pp. 67f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 22f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 190f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁶ G. Bugg, *Spiritual Regeneration, not Necessarily Connected with Baptism. in Answer to a Tract Upon Regeneration, Published by [. . .] Dr. Mant, and Circulated by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge [. . .] in Which are Examined the Doctrine of the Church of England Upon the Above Subject; and the Clergy of the Established Church Justified in Preaching the Doctrine of Regeneration to Persons who Have Been Baptised* (London, 1816), pp. 3f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3.

speak of the twofold privileges of the "baptismal covenant:" firstly the privileges of an external nature and secondly those of an internal nature; those of baptism and those of regeneration.¹

Central for Bugg's line of argument is the concept of mutual agreement integral to the idea of a covenant: mutual agreement implies that the disposition of the person involved is absolutely necessary.² This disposition consists of repentance and faith.³ For this reason, Bugg rejects any meaning for the rite of baptism except as a sign or seal "for the sake of *publicity, confirmation, and evidence* of the state of mind required."⁴

Bugg distinguishes between a general covenant and a particular covenant.⁵ The *general* covenant is merely "a public promulgation of God's good will towards men,"⁶ which only becomes *particular* the moment a person attains the right disposition and through his consent participates in the covenant.⁷ This participation in

¹ "The privileges of this covenant, however, being twofold; *i.e.* of an *external* nature, as the means of grace afforded to the church of God generally: and *internal*, such as sanctification, peace with God, hope of heaven, &c. which are enjoyed by the *real* members of Christ alone; there must be a disposition suitable to the possession and enjoyment of both these classes of privileges, before they can fairly be claimed by any individual" (G. Bugg, *Spiritual Regeneration*, p. 23).

² *Ibid.*, p. 22: "The *mind* is all that is *absolutely* necessary to its formation and possession, and as such, there can be *no covenant* without the mind." *Cf.* also pp. 23f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38f, 97. Concerning infants: "The wills of infants are by the law of nature and notions in their parents, and are transferred by them to their sureties; the sponsions that are made on their behalf are considered as made by *themselves*" (p. 50). In the office of confirmation these former infants have the chance to ratify and confirm what was made in their name at their baptism by their sureties (p. 44).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33: "Before this agreement of the heart of any individual with God, the covenant is not *particular*, but *general*." "But when any one believes with the heart the things spoken, and approves in sincerity the proposal made by God, the covenant consent is obtained; the design is now mutual; the covenant and its blessings become *particular*; the individual is now become a party in it."

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

the covenant is at the same time connected with the new birth, with regeneration.¹ Regeneration implies a change of heart and disposition, a change of a "moral and spiritual nature."²

Within this concept of covenant, baptism plays the role of an initiating rite, an instrument and a public *bond of agreement* between the individual and God;³ baptism is an evidence of regeneration, not the cause of it.⁴ However, the evidential character of baptism is only retained if the profession of the person to be baptized is sincere and he demonstrates "either regeneration or evidence of regeneration."⁵ Baptism is thus "the sign and testimony of regeneration in the person *professing* the 'new birth' in Christ."⁶

This view seems to exclude infant baptism, but Bugg justifies this practice through the idea of charitable supposition, a theory not however limited to infants:

*It is upon the supposition, (and upon that only) that the person to be baptised is rightly disposed in the engagement he makes on receiving baptism, that the Church acknowledges his regeneration.*⁷

2.2.2.2.6 Henry Ryder

Ryder defines baptism as the "*initiatory ordinance*,"⁸ whereby the baptized person receives

¹ G. Bugg, *Spiritual Regeneration*, p. 96: "[. . .] whatever the church requires for *admission* into covenant with God, she requires as evidence of our *being* in covenant with him. And our being truly spiritually in covenant is the same thing as being born again and having a title to everlasting life. This matter requires no deep argumentation. The business is simply this: it cannot *be* an engagement without the heart. Without *this*, there is no covenant.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 95f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 33f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

⁵ G. Bugg, *Spiritual Regeneration*, pp. 127-128.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37. Cf. also pp. 3-4 and especially Chapter II, Section II: "*The Charitable Hope that this Profession made at Baptism is real, the true ground upon which the Church admits of Regeneration in the Baptised.*" (pp. 44ff.)

⁸ H. Ryder, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester, at the Second Visitation of that Diocese, in the Year 1819* (Gloucester, 1819), p. 21.

a covenanted interest of the atoning blood of the saviour, and a federal right to supplicate for its application in every future case of repented sin.¹

He obtains

a title through Christ to the promise of the Holy Spirit, and thus has secured to it in after-life the offer of ability to believe.²

Ryder's view of the relationship of baptism and regeneration is highly interesting, as he is one of the few Evangelicals who do not separate regeneration and baptism; he

would generally wish to restrict the *term* to the baptismal privileges; and considering them as comprehending, not only an external admission into the visible Church - not only a covenanted title to the pardon of and grace of the Gospel - but even a degree of spiritual aid vouchsafed and ready to offer itself to our acceptance or rejection [. . .]³

It is important to have in mind two pictures used by Ryder to understand how he manages to locate regeneration at the time of baptism. The first picture is of talents which must bear interest, the second of seed which springs up and bears fruit.⁴ The seed of regeneration is planted into the infant at baptism.

This seed does not guarantee fruit; it encompasses within itself the future life, but it may perish without yielding fruit. At this point Ryder is a mainline Evangelical: he vociferously protests against

that most serious error [. . .] of contemplating all the individuals of a *baptized* congregation, as *converted* - as *having* all once known the truth, and entered upon the right path, [. . .] as not therefore requiring [. . .] that 'transformation' by the renewing of the mind [. . .] This erroneous view, in my opinion, strikes at the root of all useful and effectual preaching.⁵

Ryder finds that

¹ Henry Ryder, *A Charge Delivered* [. . .] *at the Second Visitation*, pp. 21f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ H. Ryder, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester, at the Primary Visitation of that Diocese, in the Year 1816* (Gloucester, ²1816), p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20; cf. p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20f.

it soothe[s] and delude[s] the people into a false peace; [. . .] they lull to sleep any conscientious misgivings in the man of worldly decency and reputation.¹

2.2.2.2.7 John W. Cunningham

In his treatise on regeneration, J.W. Cunningham points out the main problem of most controversies, which in his view lies in the misapplication of language.² In the case of the controversy on baptismal regeneration the problem seems specifically to lie in the misapplication of the term regeneration.³ Some would use the term exclusively to describe a change of state, or of relation to God. Others would employ it exclusively to describe a change of heart, disposition and character. In order to avoid controversy based on misapplication and misunderstanding, Cunningham suggests

*that each party should consent, not to surrender his own sense of the word, but, to add the sense of his antagonist to his own.*⁴

The involved parties should

carry the controversy to the only remaining ground of dispute between them - viz. *whether such a broad usage of the term Regeneration, as that here pleaded for, is scriptural and legitimate.*⁵

Cunningham then proceeds to discuss this issue, and comes to the conclusion that such a broad usage is in fact legitimate: he justifies this position with the help of four arguments: firstly, the constitution of the term itself allows such a latitude

¹ H. Ryder, *A Charge Delivered* [. . .] *at the Primary Visitation*, p. 21.

² "[. . .] almost all religious controversies bottom up on either the defects or the misapplication of language [. . .] the dispute originates in the obscurity of words, in their wilful misapplication, or in the too narrow or too lax employment of them;" J.W. Cunningham, *Conciliatory Suggestions on the Subject of Regeneration, Founded Upon Recent Occurrence* (London, 1816), p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10f. In order to avoid misunderstandings, "neither party should expect or desire from the other a surrender of the highly important term in dispute" (p. 31).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

of application;¹ secondly, its scriptural usage warrants it;² thirdly, there are many analogous or almost identical expressions likewise demonstrating this fact;³ and fourthly, only this wide scope of meaning explains the seeming contradictions in the writings of many Church leaders.⁴

Cunningham's express intention in promoting a latitude in the use of the term regeneration is to promote concord and to secure the truth.⁵ Thus, in his treatise on regeneration, Cunningham's mediating position becomes clearly evident:

[. . .] *the word Regeneration may be legitimately applied either to a change of state and relation to God; or to a change of heart and character; - either to that change of circumstance which, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, necessarily takes place in Baptism; or to that change of nature, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, which may or may not take place in baptism.*⁶

Consequently, he maintains a twofold definition of regeneration: on the one hand, regeneration is a change of state, which always takes place at baptism. On the other hand regeneration is a change of nature, *i.e.* of heart and character, which does not necessarily take place at baptism.⁷

2.2.2.2.8 George Stanley Faber

Faber endeavours to refute the doctrine of the inseparability of regeneration and baptism in his book *The Doctrine of Regeneration in the Case of Infant-Baptism*.⁸

¹ "[. . .] there is nothing in the constitution or construction of the term Regeneration, which forbids such a latitude of application" (J.W. Cunningham, *Conciliatory Suggestions*, p. 15).

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ G.S. Faber, *The Doctrine of Regeneration in the Case of Infant-Baptism, Stated in Reply to the Dean of Chichester's Apology Addressed to the Rev. G.S. Faber, B.D.* (London, 1818). The author especially strives to refute Bethell, the Dean of Chichester, who accused Faber of misrepresenting the opinion of his colleagues.

Citing R. Laurence, Archdeacon Pott and Article 25 of the Church formularies approvingly,¹ Faber is convinced that these support his rejection of the inseparability of baptism and regeneration.² Whilst Laurence and others, however, maintain that regeneration and baptism are only separable in the case of adult baptism, Faber finds that the only logical consequence lies in the acknowledgment of the fact that these need to be separated in the case of infant baptism.³

The analogy of circumcision plays an important role in Faber's thought: whilst circumcision of the flesh is analogous to baptism as the outward sign of regeneration, circumcision of the heart is analogous to regeneration.⁴

In the light of this analogy,

*regeneration is the commencement of actual sanctification [. . .] [and] a radical change of heart;*⁵ [. . .] the change of heart [. . .] was rendered necessary by the fall of Adam [. . .] Our Lord accordingly speaks of the absolute necessity of what he terms *a regeneration or a new birth*; and, as a symbolical representation of this great inward change, he instituted that outward washing of the flesh which bears the name of *baptism*.⁶

For Faber this analogy resoundingly proves the separability of baptism and regeneration, for similarly to the infants of Israel, an infant baptized today needs re-

¹ "[. . .] *in SUCH ONLY as WORTHILY RECEIVE the sacraments they have a wholesome effect or operation*" (G.S. Faber, *The Doctrine of Regeneration*, p. 24).

² "But then it is easy to see, that by such avowals the doctrine of INSEPARABILITY is rejected. For it is acknowledged, that a person may be baptized WITHOUT being regenerated: whence it will plainly follow, that, if ever such a person be regenerated at all, he must be regenerated AFTER baptism. Consequently, as regeneration is necessary to salvation, and as it will scarcely be denied that this baptized though unregenerated subject may be regenerated AFTER his baptism [. . .]: a Christian pastor may rightly exhort such a person to pray FOR regeneration, notwithstanding he may ALREADY have been canonically baptized" (ibid., pp. 2f).

³ "[. . .] while they [= Dr. Laurence & Bethell] give up the doctrine of INSEPARABILITY in the case of *adults*, they maintain it in the case of *infants*" (ibid., p. 25). Faber refers to Archdeacon Pott, who "[. . .] not only gives up the doctrine of INSEPARABILITY in the case of *adults*, but thinks, that, under some circumstances, even *infants* are not regenerated in baptism however canonically administered" (ibid.).

⁴ Ibid., pp. 49, 54.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 6, 8.

⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

generation as a second step in order to become a real member of the Church of Christ.¹

Regeneration is for Faber so important, that baptism on its own can have no salvatory effect:

baptism is no further salutary, than as it is attended with the answer of a good conscience. If this concomitant be wanting [. . .] the outward rite is but the putting away the filth of the flesh.²

Men can receive regeneration not through baptism, but only through the hearing and taking to heart of God's word, an act which takes place after baptism in the case of infant baptism and before baptism in the case of adult baptism.³ Evidence of regeneration cannot be found in baptism but rather only in the spiritual state of a person, in his leading a godly life.⁴

The words "worthily received" in the 25th Article trouble Faber somewhat:

the only question of **INSEPARABILITY OF SEPARABILITY**, in the case of infant-baptism narrows to this: *whether ALL infants, AS INFANTS, be WORTHY recipients.*⁵

However, he has no difficulty in answering this question: Scripture and experience teach us that not every infant possesses this worthiness, thus demonstrating that not every infant is regenerated in baptism.⁶ Faber does not stop at this result, but

¹ "[. . .] as the outward circumcision of **INFANTS** might subsist **WITHOUT** any concomitant circumcision of the heart, so the baptism of **INFANTS** may subsist **WITHOUT** any concomitant spiritual regeneration: and as outward circumcision was a sacramental sign of circumcision of the heart, so baptism is a sacramental sign of spiritual regeneration" (G.S. Faber *The Doctrine of Regeneration*, pp. 49f); "[. . .] it would be strangely contradictory to suppose, that, while circumcision of the heart was *separable* from **INFANT** - circumcision of the flesh, regeneration was *absolutely tied fast* to the regular administration of **INFANT** - baptism" (pp. 50f).

² Ibid., p. 51.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶ "[. . .] as our Church rightly teaches from Scripture that *we are ALL by NATURE born in sin and are children of wrath*, it is clearly impossible that infants should possess any **NATURAL worthiness**" (ibid., p. 28); "*Nor is the opinion, that EVERY infant is regenerated in baptism, less contradicted by Scripture than by actual experience*" (p. 41).

rather stringently draws the conclusion that all infants are not regenerated in baptism.¹

2.2.2.2.9 *The Christian Observer*

*The Christian Observer*² defines the sacraments as

signs, pictures, emblems of inward purity, strength, and comfort, to be imparted to us in the use of them as enjoyed by Christ.³

They are a "condition of obtaining the blessing,"⁴ which the recipient assuredly obtains, provided the recipient receives them rightly.⁵

Regeneration is similarly defined as elsewhere in Evangelical circles, namely as a radical and spiritual change of heart leading to a holy life.⁶ The author does not however limit the term to the beginning of spiritual existence. Rather, he would like to view regeneration as a continuing process in spiritual existence, as the state of the new-born person itself.⁷

¹ "I have now fully stated the grounds, on which I hold that ALL infants are NOT regenerated in baptism" (G.S. Faber *The Doctrine of Regeneration*, p. 75).

² *The Christian Observer* dealt with the subject of regeneration and baptism in several editions of the year 1816. In March 1816 it analyzed some of the main pamphlets on baptismal regeneration.

³ *The Christian Observer* (April, 1816), p. 229.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "The sacrament, when rightly received, becomes a *pledge* of the grace, of which before it had been in the above sense the condition: and *as far as* it had depended before upon the actual and right reception of the sign, whether or not we should obtain the thing signified, *so far*, we may be certain that, having rightly received it, we are in possession of that which was promised. If we have not been wanting on our part, God will not, we are assured, be wanting on his part" (*ibid.*, p. 229).

⁶ "We say then that regeneration, both in Scripture and in our church formularies, substantially refers to that spiritual and vital change in the heart and life, by which a man may be truly said to be created anew after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness" (*ibid.*, p. 232).

⁷ "[. . .] we believe there is not a moment in which, our Church herself being judge, we might not properly pray for regeneration, even to the very end of our spiritual course. For the exact sense of this term does not appear to us to denote merely the *commencement*, but also the *existence* of the spiritual life in the soul; not merely the act by which we *become* new creatures, but also the state and condition in which we *are* new creatures in Christ Jesus. For this state we ought continually and devoutly to pray" (*ibid.*, p. 232).

The author maintains the separability of baptism and regeneration.¹ He allows that there may be cases in which regeneration takes place without the accompanying sign of baptism, although this cannot be the rule.²

The author believes himself to be fully in accord not only with the Articles of Religion but also with the liturgy of the baptismal service.³ Interesting for the present analysis is his exegesis of the declaration following the baptismal rite that the person baptized be regenerate. Similarly to the notion of charitable supposition found by many Evangelicals, he defines this declaration as "conditional thanksgiving:" it is an "expression of confidence" in the mercy of God that he will do everything to regenerate the child; it is a covenant-seal and token of all the parent expects of the promises of God. In this declaration, he anticipates all that God will do in this child.⁴ The author does not commit himself to any definite point of time at which a baptized person becomes regenerate. Important in his view is the fact that after baptism, the parent and sponsor can expect and anticipate the infant to be regenerate. Even if the divine life does not become evident at once, the parent is not to despair, but rather to hope in the validity of the baptism as an ordinance. Should his child at some point become regenerate, it is to be seen in connexion with the seal previously set. If the rejection of Christ on the part of the child is final, then it is lost and the prayers of the parent return to himself.⁵

¹ "[. . .] we think it perfectly clear, that baptism is not regeneration, nor regeneration baptism; and also that they are not constituent parts the one of the other" (*The Christian Observer* [April, 1816], p. 232). The author cites a passage of Art. 27 to bolster his argument: baptism "is a sign of regeneration or new birth."

² "[. . .] a man cannot [. . .] possess regeneration in the neglect of the appropriate sacrament. But on the other hand [. . .] there may be cases in which through faith and repentance a man may be really regenerate without the sacramental sign" (*ibid.*, p. 233).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 233ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 235f.

In the light of this view, it is not necessary to speak of a hypothetical external regeneration which takes place in all persons at baptism;¹ the author rejects the view that regeneration necessarily takes place in each infant baptized as unbiblical and not in accordance with the Church Fathers.²

2.2.2.2.10 *The Quarterly Review*

In an article dealing with "Tracts on Baptismal Regeneration," *The Quarterly Review*, a High Church Tory magazine, defends the inseparability of regeneration and baptism.³ Regeneration itself the article defines as the "first gift of new life"⁴ or the "change of life to Christian holiness."⁵ In another phrase the writer speaks of regeneration being "communicated in a certain degree to the soul in baptism."⁶ However, this gift of regeneration at baptism is "merely" a seminal form of regeneration, an act of the Holy Spirit which needs to be further increased and advanced.⁷ Therefore every baptized person is responsible to improve this grace of regenera-

¹ *The Christian Observer* (April, 1816), pp. 236f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 238f.

³ The author rejects the adequacy of the analogy often used by Evangelicals to demonstrate the separability of baptism and regeneration, namely circumcision of the heart and of the flesh: "They are corresponding rites; but the two covenants are essentially different; [. . .] One great difference between them, is in the actual promise of the Holy Spirit, in the latter. Moreover, Christians are baptised *in his name*, importing, no doubt, the covenant relation between Him and them" (*The Quarterly Review* [July, 1816], p. 505).

⁴ "The first gift of new life in baptism is most properly called regeneration, because it is the first: setting aside that accident of being the first the reason of man shall never be able to pronounce wherein it differs from any subsequent gift conducing to the furtherance of the same state." (*ibid.*, p. 504).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ "Every act of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the Christian, conducing to form in him the new life, is an act of regenerating power; every advance of the Christian in that new life, is an increase of his regeneration" (*ibid.*, p. 504).

tion given to him at baptism;¹ daily renovation is necessary.² If a person does not improve the grace of regeneration and undertakes no conversion to Christian principles in act, habit, and practice, if he remains in a theoretically regenerated, but practically unreformed state and nature, then this person is comparatively unregenerate; regeneration given at baptism may be resisted and even quenched, if not improved upon.³

The writer attempts to mediate between the Evangelical and Orthodox camps by pointing out a certain conformity of both parties, namely that they

agree in the necessity of urging men to Christian holiness, to a new life, to a new heart. The ones say, it is all to begin; the others say, it was begun already in baptism. Both agree in the need of inculcating it now.⁴

He argues that the important thing is to avoid the pitfalls of both views by stressing this common cause.⁵ What is needed in his eyes is a unity in preaching the necessity of Christian regeneration; of the danger of the unregenerate life, "the fearful condemnation of knowing the Gospel and not living by it."⁶

A strength of the article is the practical manner, in which the author grapples with the problem: he urges the clergy to preach in an appealing way, both for unregenerate and regenerate persons. Although he defines regeneration in a different way than *The Christian Observer*, he advocates the keeping in mind of the practical consequences for the life of the believer.

¹ *The Quarterly Review* (July, 1816), p. 505.

² "If he has once been regenerated, daily renovation is still wanted; and by whatever name that renovation may be called, it is the right object of his prayers, and his endeavours, and must be the theme of his reiterated instruction" (*ibid.*, p. 508).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 505.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 509f.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 507; *cf.* p. 508.

2.2.2.2.11 Diversity and Unity Amongst the Evangelicals

The works analyzed above confirm a categorization proposed by Ervine, which distinguishes between three groups of Evangelicals:¹

1. The position closest to the Orthodox viewed regeneration as being conveyed in seminal form at baptism. It differed from the mainline Orthodox position in preaching conversion and repentance in true Evangelical fashion.

Few Evangelicals held this view. Henry Ryder and an anonymous article in the *Quarterly Review* are outstanding examples.

2. The group furthest away from the Orthodox and at the other extreme of the Evangelical spectrum denied that baptism changed the nature or state of the person baptized and contended that it was merely the external sign of membership in a visible Church. In its extremest forms, this line of thought came close, at least in theory, to rejecting any importance whatsoever for the administration of baptism.

Evangelicals propounding this theory include Nicholson, Bugg, Biddulph and Faber.

3. The group, to which most Evangelicals seem to have belonged to has a position between these two extremes, which conceded that spiritual regeneration may theoretically take place at baptism, but does not necessarily have to.

Scott, an anonymous article in *The Christian Observer*, Wilson and Cunningham may be seen to propagate this view.

A characteristic of the second and third positions resulting from the need to harmonize expressions in the baptismal service stating the infant to be regenerate with their separation of baptism and regeneration, was the idea of charitable supposition: the Church charitably hopes and supposes that the baptized infant will fulfill

¹ W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, 74.

the baptismal promises when it comes of age. If this is not the case, the spiritual grace of baptism and salvation is forfeited.

3 Conclusion

Theologically speaking, the Baptismal Controversy did not produce any satisfactory results. We have seen that it was initiated through Mant's *Two Tracts*. To the Evangelicals, his view as expressed in the *Tracts* as well as the contributions of the other Orthodox came too near to an *ex opere operato* view of baptism; they vociferously protested against "this monstrous dogma, that we are made Christians by baptism."¹ Their emphasis on *sola fide* as a prerequisite for regeneration led to massive difficulties with the Orthodox view. The Orthodox on the other hand attacked the Evangelicals for allegedly holding Calvinistic views: In their eyes, the Evangelicals limited salvation and regeneration to the elect and taught the indefectibility of grace, which must necessarily lead to antinomianism, despite the fact that the Bible requires good works as the evidence of regeneration.

Even though the Baptismal Controversy was not directly a part of the Calvinistic Controversy, many doctrinal questions also belonging to the Calvinistic Controversy were intrinsically connected with the debate concerning baptismal regeneration, such as election and predestination, reprobation, perseverance, indefectibility of grace and assurance of salvation. Unfortunately, these *loci* were not clearly defined, and these connexions did not come to light properly. Thus, many contributions produced a large swamp of terms, which could be understood in very different ways. A clear and cool definition and assessment of these terms would have helped to lead the controversy to a more positive result.

The main problem of the whole controversy was a missing transparency in the definition of the term regeneration. Some of the contributors to the Baptismal Controversy already felt this lack of a clear definition. For example, J.B. Mozley

¹ *The Eclectic Review* (1815), p. 1046, quoted by D.M. Thompson, *Baptism, Church and Society in Britain since 1800*, p. 15.

pointed out this problem in 1856: after a brief description of the Evangelical and Orthodox viewpoints concerning regeneration,¹ he concludes:

Here then we come to what is really the fundamental question in this whole controversy - the meaning of the word "*Regenerate*."²

Mozley furthermore points out that the controversialists did not observe that they used regeneration in different senses: he urges the controversialists to define explicitly the sense of the terms used:

Before persons dispute about regeneration in baptism, they should first ascertain the sense in which they respectively use the term.³

This demonstrates a great weakness in the Baptismal Controversy: explicit definitions, especially of the term regeneration, were largely missing. The theological results would have proved more fruitful, had this been the case from the very beginning.

¹ J.B. Mozley, *The Primitive Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration* (London, 1856), pp. xviii-xx.

² *Ibid.*, p. xx. Mozley here describes the whole controversy until the Gorham-case, but his judgment is also true for the situation in the Baptismal Controversy of the first decades of the nineteenth century. It is quite interesting that Mozley speaks of the "two-sidedness" of scripture in a manner similar to Simeon: the one side is free will, the other side absolute predestination. According to him, Scripture does not maintain one or the other truth alone; both truths must be seen together.

³ J.B. Mozley, *A Review of the Baptismal Controversy*, (London, 1895) [new ed.], p. 175.

Part B : Charles Simeon: Evangelical or Churchman?

1 The Evangelical Enigma: Simeon's Life

1.1 Simeon's Childhood

Charles Simeon was born in Reading on September 24, 1765, as the youngest of four boys. His father Richard Simeon, Esquire of Reading in Berkshire and "an upright man,"¹ was a wealthy and respectable lawyer.² Simeon's mother probably died in Charles' early childhood days.³ As there were clergymen in his mother's as well as his father's family, one would expect Richard Simeon to be a churchgoer. Indeed, he certainly belonged to the Anglican Church, had his sons baptized and even rented a family pew in the parish church of St. Lawrence. However, in the main, this allegiance to the Church seems to have been of a purely formal nature. In the same way, Charles' three brothers seem to have manifested little interest in religious matters.⁴ Thus, Simeon's home was not what later would have been recognized as a religious home.⁵

Apart from these bare facts, very little is known concerning Simeon's home and family.⁶

1.2 "The Deepest Shame and Sorrow:" at Eton

In 1767, Simeon was sent to the elite Royal College of Eton. A harsh life awaited him for the following twelve years in Eton: dull and spartan meals, sleeping accommodation in fifty-bedded dormitories. Coming from a wealthy and comfortable home, he needed some time to adjust to his new situation.⁷

¹ H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon* (London, ²1905), p. 4.

² Rev. T. Pentycross to John Thornton, July 28, 1783, quoted in C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 13.

³ C. Smyth couldn't find any positive evidence for the early death of Mrs. Simeon, but he sees his view supported by others; *ibid.*, pp. 12f.

⁴ Cf. H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 3f. Concerning his family, see also p. 30.

⁵ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 11f.

In general, he was what could be called a normal boy: He developed certain athletic abilities, especially in riding, his favourite sport. He also enjoyed playing cricket and other sports as well as peculiar home-made competitions such as jumping over six chairs.¹ His somewhat hot-tempered nature was matched by a certain extravagance in dress and appearance.²

The conditions of public schools at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century generally left much to be desired.³ In 1798, a contemporary of Simeon wrote: "I am no friend of public schools [. . .] Where they are beneficial to one they are ruinous to twenty."⁴

Simeon himself also had reservations as to the benefits of Eton. In 1827, he complained that the study of classics was overrated, whereas the instructions given in the Christian religion were neglected:

It is often with me a matter of regret that the atmosphere of Eton is so unfavourable for the health of the soul; and that amidst all the attention that is paid to the Poets and Philosophers of Greece and Rome, scarcely ever by any chance is the name of our blessed Saviour heard, especially in a way of admiration and love; and that whilst earthly honours are held up as proper objects of our ambition, so little is spoken of heaven as worthy of our pursuits.⁵

These words are reminiscent of following lines uttered by the poet Cowper in 1784 on the education of public school boys, who are taught at school much mythologic stuff,

¹ Cf. M. Seeley, *The Later Evangelical Fathers*. (London, 1914), p. 201; C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 42, note 2.

² See further M Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets. Evangelical Leaders of the Victorian Church* (London, 1979), p. 2.

³ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 46.

⁴ *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. J. Warter (1856), vol. i. p. 60; quoted in C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 47.

⁵ A letter dated September 4, 1827, to his friend Joseph Goodall, provost of Eton, found by W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 609f. Cf. also H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* (London, 1977), p. 14: "[. . .] the Provost promptly acted on his advice and a great change in the religious tone of the school was noted within two years."

But sound religion sparingly enough.¹
All this shows that at the end of the 18th century, religious education in Eton and presumably in most other schools was in a miserable state.²

But how was the religious education at Eton during Simeon's school-time in particular? Was it at all conducive to his later conversion-experience? Unfortunately, there is comparatively little information about the religious situation at Eton during Simeon's time there, although we have a fair amount of material for the time thereafter.³ The reports we do have paint a dismal picture:

Chapel services were duly held but conducted mechanically and very much with an eye on the clock. On ordinary whole school days three times a day prayers were said in Latin from the school prayer book. Preparation for confirmation was non-existent, and religious instruction consisted of the whole school assembling every Sunday afternoon at two o'clock to hear a Fifth Former read four or five pages of *The Whole Duty of Man*.⁴

As religious instructions were missing, the moral life at Eton was accordingly shocking. The dormitory, in which the pupils were locked in at night, was "a very undesirable, not to say, vicious place,"⁵ and moral conduct was appalling.⁶

Simeon later paints his early life in dreary colours:

[. . .] what an awful scene does that present to my view! Never have I reviewed it for thirty-four years past, nor ever can I to my dying hour, without the deepest shame and sorrow. My vanity, my folly, my wickedness, God alone knoweth, or can bear to know.⁷

The only earnest attempt to live a godly life apparently occurred during a day of fasting, two years before he left Eton:

¹ Cowper, *Tirocinium; or, a Review of Schools*, II. pp. 197f, quoted in C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 53

² H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 14.

³ Cf. C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79. Cf. H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 14.

⁵ Quoted in H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ C. Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p.4.

I thought that, if there was one who had more displeased God than others, it was I. To humble myself therefore before God appeared to me a duty of immediate and indispensable necessity. Accordingly I spent the day in fasting and prayer. But I had not learned the happy art of 'washing my face and anointing my head, that I might not appear unto men to fast.' My companions therefore noticed the change in my deportment, and immediately cried out [. . .] Woe, woe unto you, hypocrites, [. . .] by which means they soon dissipated my good desires, and reduced me to my former state of thoughtlessness and sin. I do not remember that these good desires ever returned during my stay at school.¹

1.3 "The Sweetest Access to God:" Simeon's Conversion-Experience

In Simeon's days, Oxford and Cambridge were the only university centres of England. They monopolized the education of the time, which had little to do with theological education as we know it today and mainly consisted of classics, although Oxford was predominantly classical, whereas Cambridge was also mathematical.²

Later, Simeon developed a unique method of aiding theology students in preparing for the ministry through his conversation parties and sermon classes. It can be said that the failure of the university to cope with this problem was the background to a lot of Simeon's work.

Entrance exams were not required at Cambridge University; the only condition for matriculation was the subscription of three articles aimed at deterring non-Anglicans from studying. Later these strictures were somewhat loosened, but not until 1871 was the University teaching staff opened up to all denominations.³

In consequence, Cambridge was a stronghold of Anglican Orthodoxy. However, other influences such as Unitarianism could not entirely be banned.⁴

¹ C. Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 5.

² C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 99, note 1.

³ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 102. Concerning life at Cambridge University see further F.D. Coggan, *These were his Gifts. A Trio of Christian Leaders. The Bishop Prideaux Lecture for 1974* (Exeter, 1974), pp. 12-15.

⁴ Sykes, *Religion in England*, pp. 353ff; C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 107.

Professor Hey, for example, held dogmatic statements about the Trinity to be meaningless and incomprehensible. Many of the students had similar difficulties with the 39 Articles and the Prayer Book.¹ At this time, Evangelicals had not yet gained a foothold in these universities, although it can be said that it was a time of religious unsettlement in Cambridge and Oxford.

In the light of this widespread attitude, it is interesting to note that Simeon later emphasized the importance of the Prayer Book, the Articles and the whole idea of church order and discipline.

For the undergraduates at college, spiritual activities mainly consisted in attending Evening and Morning Chapel at college, which was compulsory for students. This was more a point of discipline than of religious duty, and tutors and fellows made themselves conspicuous by their absence.² Altogether, worship at college had a negative effect upon many of the students. In 1834, there were serious agitations against this unpopular college tradition.³

To attain their degrees, students had to be members of the Church of England and they had to regularly attend Holy Communion.⁴ Simeon later criticized this

system of forcing the undergraduates to attend the chapel and take the sacrament [. . . and] eat and drink their own damnation.⁵

Simeon's college, King's College, was fairly small, consisting of 15 students, all from Eton. Due to lax regulations, even the more diligent had no special motivation for working hard; the students had no exams to take to attain their degrees, and after their degree they were free to go on and become fellows after three years

¹ Cf. C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 107f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 111-115; H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 25.

³ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 25f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 117f; cf. H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 25.

of residence. Idle tongues called King's "the grave of genius."¹ The few lectures held were in Latin, which naturally discouraged attendance.² This situation was not peculiar to King's College. The academic and religious standard was generally low in Simeon's days."³

January 29, 1779, Simeon entered King's College in Cambridge with his friends Joseph Goodall and William Moore. Other than in Eton, he could afford a fairly luxurious life here. He had, for example, his own bed-maker and coal-carrier.⁴

As mentioned above, Simeon was forced to attend chapel twice a day and take part in Holy Communion. After Simeon had been three days in residence in college and still not really settled in, he and his fellow students received a note from Dr. Cooke, the Provost of King's, requiring their attendance at Holy Communion in three weeks' time. Simeon had no interest in religious matters at all, so he asked for permission to abstain from attending. His reason:

Satan himself was as fit to attend as I; and that if I must attend, I must *prepare* for my attendance there.⁵

However, he could not obtain exemption and decided to prepare himself for the event in a suitable manner: as he had no religious friends at all and *The Whole Duty of Man* was the only religious book he had heard about, he bought and read it.⁶ This, combined with fasting, reading and prayer, only made him ill.⁷ Simeon

¹ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 18f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26. Cf. also F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 155: "Religious life in Cambridge when Simeon arrived was weak and thin. The churches were not well attended, the people seldom visited by their clergy, [. . .] nor were there any corporate religious groups or bodies or societies among undergraduates."

⁴ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 18.

⁵ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 6.

⁶ At this time, *The Whole Duty of Man* was an immensely popular book; cf. C.J. Stranks, *Anglican Devotion. Studies in the Spiritual Life of the Church of England Between the Reformation and the Oxford Movement* (London, 1961), p. 125.

⁷ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 6f.

later recognized that this was nevertheless an important phase of his life, as it made him conscious of his need for salvation.¹

Strangely enough, he omits any mention of his first attendance of Holy Communion at King's in February.² It was apparently in the time after this first Communion Service leading up to the second, decisive Communion Service on Easter Sunday that Simeon became a member of the SPCK, as he had a high regard for the books published through the society and therefore wished to support it.³ Two books which accompanied him at this time were a treatise on the Lord's Supper by Kettlewell and Wilson's *Short and Plain Instruction for the Better Understanding of the Lord's Supper*.⁴ Kettlewell does not seem to have appealed to him much,⁵ but Wilson attracted him greatly because of his moderate views.⁶ It was also the latter who aided him in discovering the gospel truth of the atoning death of Christ, which led to his conversion-experience on Easter Sunday:

in Passion week, as I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect: 'That the Jews knew what they did when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering.' The thought rushed into my mind, What! may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an offering for me, that I may lay my sins on his head? then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus; and on Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became

¹ W. *Memoirs*, p. 7.

² Most biographers seem to ignore the fact that Simeon attended Holy Communion once in February before his conversion-experience on the day of his second Holy Communion service on Easter Sunday; cf. for example H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 13f; F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 155.

³ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 7.

⁴ T. Wilson, *A Short and Plain Instruction for the Better Understanding of the Lord's Supper. With the Necessary Preparations Required* [. . .] (London, 1842) [new ed.]. A description of this work is found in W.H. MacKean, "VII. Anti-Roman Apologetics (*continued*)", *The Evangelical Doctrine of Holy Communion*, ed. by A.J. MacDonald (London, 1936), p. 244-246; D. Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, vol. 2 (London, 1909), pp. 483-7.

⁵ "[. . .] it required more of me than I could bear" (W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 7).

⁶ It "seemed to be more moderate in its requirements" (*ibid.*).

more strong; and on the Sunday morning (Easter-day, April 4) I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, 'Jesus Christ is risen today! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's table in our chapel I had the sweetest access to God through my blessed Saviour.'¹

Simeon's conversion-experience made a significant and far-reaching impact on his whole life.²

As Simeon did not make the acquaintance of anyone who shared his views and experience,³ he made the most of the services at college chapel and at church and even learned to appreciate them to a certain extent.⁴ He does not appear to have regretted this later; on the contrary, he indicates that it was for his own benefit:

God, no doubt for wise and gracious reasons, had kept far from me all spiritual acquaintance; by which means he made it to appear the more clearly that the work in me was 'not of man, or by man, but of God alone.'⁵

This instructive remark reveals that Simeon's conviction of the overwhelming graciousness of God in the face of man's inability to effect his own salvation is rooted in his own experience.

A further characteristic of Simeon also becomes evident in this time, namely his reverence for the Anglican liturgy, which again grew out of his ex-

¹ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 7-9. In several letters and notes, Simeon refers to his "conversion," cf. H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 15-17.

² Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 156.

³ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 29. Cf. also C. Simeon's own words, quoted by W. Carus: "As yet, and indeed for three years after, I knew not any religious person [. . .]" (*Memoirs*, p. 11) and H.C.G. Moule, "For three years he lived absolutely alone, as an earnest Christian, among his Cambridge coevals; not because of any pharisaic exaltation, as his whole tone of character and the matter of his narrative assure us, but partly because his College favoured a certain isolation, and much more because such 'methodism' as he practised was almost unknown in the University" (*Charles Simeon*, p. 21).

⁴ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 10: "The service in our Chapel has almost at all times been very irreverently performed: but such was the state of my soul for many months from that time, that the prayers were as marrow and fatness to me."

⁵ C. Simeon, quoted by W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 23.

perience of the edifying effect of the same. As he was often moved to tears during the chapel services,¹ he concluded

that the deadness and formality experienced in the worship of the Church, arise far more from the low state of our graces, than from any defect of the Liturgy; if only we had our hearts deeply penitent and contrite, I know from my experience at this hour, that no prayers in the world could be better suited to our wants, or more delightful to our souls.²

Simeon was not the type of person to hide his new faith. Thus, he recounted his conversion-experience to his college friends and on Sunday evenings invited his servants to read a "good book" and prayers of the Church with him.³ During vacations, he did the same with the servants at home. His father never joined this meeting, but his brother sometimes took part.⁴

1.4 First Steps into the Ministry

Simeon eventually felt the urge to serve God more fully, and in 1782, he was ordained a deacon of the Church by the Bishop of Ely and began his ministry in St. Edward's Church in Cambridge.⁵

During this curacy, he met Henry Venn and came to admire him greatly:

In this aged minister I found a father, an instructor, and a most bright example: and I shall have reason to adore my God to all eternity for the benefit of his acquaintance.⁶

¹ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*

³ H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 19. Cf. also W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 17ff.

⁴ H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 19-21.

⁵ Cf. M. Warren, *Simeon. An Essay on the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A., 1759-1836, Fellow of King's College and Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge* (?), p. 21 and W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 21. Cf. also H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 34-35.

⁶ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 23. Cf. J.C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh [et. al.] 1978), p. 283; W.R. Shenk, "'Towd Trumpet': Venn of Huddersfield and Yelling," *Churchman* 93 (1979), p. 49.

During Simeon's stay at St. Edward's, the church became quite crowded, and the attendance of the Lord's Supper increased threefold. Simeon visited all households in the parish, those of church members as well as those of dissenters.¹

1.5 Pastoral Work in an Academic Setting

Simeon had a high estimation of the office of ministry. As an ambassador of Christ, the minister must take upon himself self-denying habits and a spiritual concern for the masses, who are dependent on his propagation of the message of salvation. A minister must have experienced an internal call in his heart and an external call by the Church. It is expected that he be shepherd, father and mother of his church. Also typical is a saying of John Thornton, which Simeon delighted in repeating: "the three lessons which a minister has to learn, 1. humility - 2. humility - 3. humility."²

1.5.1 Growing Pains

When in 1782, Charles Simeon's brother Richard died, Simeon felt that he should leave college in order to take care of his aged father. At about the same time, the incumbent of Trinity Church in Cambridge died, and Simeon, desirous to get the living, asked his father to contact the bishop of Ely in this matter, despite the fact that the parishioners wanted Mr. Hammond, the former curate of Trinity Church.³ This did not however deter the bishop from granting the living of Holy Trinity to Simeon,⁴ where he was ordained a priest in 1783.⁵ He lived and worked in Trinity Church until his death.

The parish was deeply disappointed after it heard of the bishop's decision, which led to the parishioners acting unfavourably towards Simeon's ministry:

¹ Cf. W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74..

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-43.

⁴ Cf. M. Warren, *Simeon*, p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*

The people almost universally put locks on their pews, and would neither come to church themselves, nor suffer others to do so: and multitudes from time to time were forced to go out of the church, for want of the necessary accommodation. I put in there a number of forms, and erected in vacant places, at my own expense, some open seats, but the churchwardens pulled them down, and cast them out of the church.¹

Most of the parishioners were so bitter against Simeon, that he could hardly visit them. Simeon writes:

In this state of things I saw no remedy but faith and patience. The passage of Scripture which subdued and controlled my mind was, "The servant of the Lord must not strive."²

The opposition seems to have continued unabated for about ten years.³

1.5.2 Irregularity or Church Order?

Charles Simeon made the acquaintance of Henry Venn and John Berridge shortly after being ordained in 1783. Both men were impressed by the young clergyman from Cambridge. Simeon himself was rather more attracted to Venn of Yelling than to Berridge of Everton.⁴ Berridge was an itinerant preacher with little respect for church order, who often preached in barns and on fields. Venn also had spells of itinerancy, but he generally respected church order and was therefore much more cautious about encroaching upon the rights of neighbouring parishes. Thus, Venn once admonished Simeon for irregularly preaching in a barn in

¹ Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 43f.

² Simeon, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 44.

³ "The storm of opposition and contempt [. . .] began to abate within some ten years of the first outburst; though for many a long day afterwards it left its effects in more chronic forms" (H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 75). Moule recounts that as a freshman, his father "was warned not to enter Trinity Church because of the bad personal character of its fanatical minister" (H.C.G. Moule, *The Evangelical School in the Church of England: its Men and its Work in the Nineteenth Century* [London, 1901], pp. 8f).

⁴ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 270-272.

Bluntisham near Yelling.¹ The latter took Venn's words to heart and desisted from preaching in Bluntisham any longer.²

This event taught Simeon a lesson, which he never forgot:

not only in later life was he singularly attentive to order himself, but was wont particularly to enforce upon his younger brethren the importance and duty of not indulging their zeal at the expense of regularity and discretion.³

A few years before Simeon's death the following dialogue took place between Simeon and a friend of his, which demonstrates how deeply ingrained Venn's words had become:

'do you remember, Mr. Simeon, in former times coming very early in the morning to my great barn, to preach to the men before they went to their work?' After a most significant look, instantly turning his face aside, and then with his hands uplifted to hide it, he exclaimed - *O spare me! spare me! I was a young man then.*⁴

Nevertheless, Simeon maintained a few irregularities. For one thing, as a young clergymen he sometimes preached at churches of friends.⁵ For another, he also practised itinerancy on two tours through Scotland in 1796 and 1798, during which he preached in Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches alike; he even

¹ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 275.

² *Ibid.*, p. 279. Smyth comments: "we are entitled to regard as one of the most decisive factors in the development of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, his [= Venn's] determination that *Charles Simeon*, at the outset of a ministry so full of promise, should not and must not be permitted to enter upon a course of ecclesiastical irregularity and defiance of church order. It was all very well for himself and Berridge to have preached in barns to flocks inadequately shepherded by their lawful pastors: their conduct might have been mistaken, but it was at least excusable. It was quite another thing for the young Vicar of Holy Trinity to go out of his way to borrow from them an example which it was infinitely better should die with them" (*ibid.*, p. 281).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283. *Cf.* also Sidney, the biographer of Rowland Hill, concerning Simeon's observance of church order: "There is every reason to believe, that the observance of *order*, which has been so judiciously regarded by Mr Simeon and his followers at Cambridge, hastened greatly to promote the influence of numbers of the zealous clergy, who are now so vigilantly and successfully defending the best interests of the church" (quoted by *ibid.*, p. 284).

⁴ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 278.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60: "Having but one sermon in the week at my own church, I used on the week-days to go round to the churches of pious ministers, very frequently, to preach to their people."

took part in the Holy Communion service in Presbyterian churches.¹ He justified his conduct with following words, which sheds light on his pro-Establishment ecclesiology:

Except when I preached in episcopal chapels, I officiated precisely as they do in the Kirk of Scotland: and I did so upon this principle; Presbyterianism is as much the established religion in North Britain, as Episcopacy is in the South: there being no difference between them, except in church-government. As an episcopalian, therefore, I preached in episcopal chapels; and as a member of the Established Church, I preached in the presbyterian churches [. . .].²

Another irregularity, which gradually became institutionalized, consisted in holding meetings in a private room in the parish. Later, these gatherings were held in a larger room in an adjoining parish, even after opposition in the church towards Simeon had been quelled and Simeon was admitted into the church on Sunday evenings in 1790.

Another weekly prayer meeting existed, which had been initiated during the war with France and was continued afterwards in the absence of Simeon, the latter being indisposed to attend due to other obligations.³ Later, these societies got somewhat out of hand during a long spell of illness.⁴ Simeon seems to have had some difficulty in reasserting his authority, as we are told that he even expelled a steward, who seemed to be encouraging dissenting thought in the parish.⁵ A chief objection on the part of Simeon seems to have been the fact that persons not belonging to the Church had been admitted to one of the weekly prayer-meetings,

¹ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 120, 122, 125; cf. A.W. Brown, *Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A., Senior Fellow of King's College, and Curate of Trinity Church, Cambridge. With Introductory Notes* (London, 1863), p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 112f.

³ "This was an evil; but it was one which I could not remedy" (*ibid.*, p. 141; cf. also C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 287).

⁴ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 287f; cf. also W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 341: "It was not till I was laid aside by my long indisposition, that these evils shewed themselves in any considerable degree."

⁵ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 12; W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 142.

which to Simeon smacked of dissenters. His difficulties with this society seem to have come to a head in 1811, when he was forced to quell a mutiny and break it up into smaller groups.¹

Despite these setbacks, he encouraged the establishment of societies, although he was conscious of the centrifugal tendencies and of the risks involved:

My judgement most decidedly is, that without them, where they can be had, a people will never be kept together; nor will they ever feel related to their Minister, as children to his parent: nor will the Minister himself take that lively interest in their welfare, which it is both his duty and his happiness to feel.²

A primary motive for this positive attitude towards societies was Simeon's recognition of the fact that people often left the Church and joined the dissenters because they missed the warmth of close fellowship in the Church.³ He was convinced that the establishment of societies was in the interest of the Church⁴ and felt vindicated by the fruits of his societies.⁵

¹ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 288. See especially W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 332-339, who describes the incident in greater detail.

² W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 339; cf. also p. 139: "experience proves that wherever there is an effecient ministry in the Church without somewhat of a similar superintendence, the clergyman beats the bush, and the Dissenters catch the game."

³ C. Smyth *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 289.

⁴ "To have some opportunities of meeting my people I considered as indispensable; for how could I know my sheep, if I did not see them in private [. . .] I could learn, too, whether any were in danger of being drawn away by the Dissenters, or were imbibing any erroneous tenets [. . .] I am aware that even such societies as these are by many accounted irregular [. . .] it is a curious fact, that the establishing of such societies is generally supposed to indicate an indifference towards the Church, when it actually proceeds from a love to the Church, and a zeal for its interests. Were the Bishops acquainted with the ministers who are called Evangelical, they would soon see the importance [. . .] and the absolute necessity, of such meetings, not merely for the edification of the people, but chiefly for the preservation of the Established Church" (W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 138). See also J. Walsh, "Religious Societies: Methodist and Evangelical 1738-1800," *Voluntary Religion. Papers read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1985 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. by W.J. Sheils/D. Wood (Cambridge, 1986), p.295.

⁵ Simeon remarks that in the thirty years of his stay at Holy Trinity "the Dissenters have not [. . .] drawn away three whom I was not glad to be rid of" (W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 139).

1.5.2.1 "They are all His Flock:" the Dissenters

As a staunch churchman, Simeon felt no sympathy towards the convictions of dissenters.¹ He was acutely conscious of the weaknesses of Nonconformists such as a lack of liturgy, a "spirit of disunion" and the habit of judging over their ministers.² For this reason, he encouraged his students to visit dissenters and Romanists in their parishes, in order to move them to return into the fold. As he put it, "they are all his flock."³

On the other hand, this did not lead him to open hostility; he could accept dissenters as Christians⁴ and was generally on amicable terms with them.⁵ Accordingly, he had no inhibitions about supporting the inter-denominational Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society and a similarly structured Tract Auxiliary.⁶ This charitable attitude is well expressed in one of his sermons:

I honour all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, of whatever church they be; and I wish them, from my heart, every blessing that their souls can desire.⁷

1.5.2.2 "Pray the Prayers:" Liturgy and Renewal

Unlike some of his evangelical contemporaries, Simeon's 'Evangelical ecumenism' did not lead him to despise the Church and its forms of worship. On the contrary, he managed to blend his evangelical perspectives with a deep reverence

¹ Cf. A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 12; p. 224: "Dissent is an evil; but where the Gospel truth is not declared in the Church pulpit, I dare not blame a man for where he thinks or feels that his soul can be fed. [. . .] Schism is a great evil. It is the separating of a part of Christians; not a division among mere professing Christians, but amongst real Christians."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 221f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 220f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 294-295. Smyth writes that Simeon's "hostility" towards dissenters rested more upon politics than religion: dissenters were often radicals, Evangelicals usually High Tories (p. 296).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁷ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 194, vol. I, p. 290.

for the Church.¹ He was deeply devoted to the Prayer Book, and he ceaselessly spoke of the same in glowing terms in an effort to communicate his enthusiasm to his students; he desired that his students should grasp the inner beauty of the liturgy not only with their minds but also with their hearts.² Not only was he convinced that the Anglican liturgy was incomparably better than the modes of dissenting worship; he repeatedly evinced his belief that it was vastly superior to the Scottish liturgy.³ Simeon felt that the Anglican liturgy managed

to raise our minds to a holy and heavenly state, and to build us upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the only foundation of a sinner's hope.⁴

That these were no idle words are demonstrated by his own manner of worship: unlike many Evangelicals, he recognized the benefits of fasting, practised the ministry of absolution and taught that the benediction was not merely of the same nature as any other prayer.⁵ His staunch loyalty to the Church sometimes led to attacks from his Evangelical brethren, some of whom could not conceal their suspicion that he was more a "churchman" than a "gospel-man,"⁶ and that he put "the

¹ C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 311.

² *Ibid.*, p. 291. Cf. C. Simeon's own words in A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 221: "The finest sight short of heaven would be a whole congregation using the prayers of the Liturgy in the true spirit of them;" "Pray the prayers, and don't read them only" (*ibid.*, 15).

³ Cf. C. Simeon, quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 21f: "on all [. . .] times that I have visited Scotland [. . .] I have, on my return to the use of our Liturgy, been perfectly astonished at the vast superiority of our mode of worship, and felt it as an inestimable privilege that we possess a form of sound words so adapted in every respect to the wants and desires of all who would worship in spirit and in truth."

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 193, vol. i, p. 263.

⁵ M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," *Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Essays Written in Commemoration of his Bi-Centenary by Members of the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell (London, 1959), p. 126.

⁶ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 12.

Church before Christ."¹ His reverence for the Anglican liturgy knew no bounds,² but he unceasingly sought to show his hearers that the heart must also be in it.³

What lay at the root of Simeon's upright love for the Anglican liturgy?

Firstly, Simeon drew his strength from the Prayers and the liturgy (see pp. 89-90). Secondly, he repeatedly expressed his desire that the Church of England should actively return to the principles of the Reformation, which he saw expressed in the Articles and the Prayer Book of the Church of England.⁴ As he undoubtedly identified these principles with his Evangelical presuppositions, we may say that he believed that a true affection and reverence for the liturgy must necessarily effect an Evangelical "revival" within the Church. Thus only can we understand his insistence on the immaculate form of the liturgy, which according to him had no more faults than 'spots upon the sun's disk.'⁵ He could even go so far as to propose that "no other human work is so free from faults as it is."⁶

Thirdly, we may see a possible factor of his insistence on liturgy as well as church order in the uneasy and stormy time, in which he lived: the French revolution left an indelible mark upon English society, and gatherings in the university town of Cambridge could quickly attain a political character and rankled of revolu-

¹ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 60.

² "[. . .] there is scarcely a man in the kingdom that would not fall down on his knees, and bless God for the Liturgy of the Established Church" (C. Simeon, *Horæ Homileticæ*, sermon 193, vol. i, p. 274).

³ "[. . .] if our hearts be in unison with our words, verily we shall have reason to bless God to all eternity" (ibid., sermon 194, vol. i, p. 287).

⁴ Cf. A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 60.

⁵ Ibid., p. 62. Cf. C. Simeon's words regarding the Church of England found in *Horæ Homileticæ*, sermon 581, vol. v, pp. 367f.: "her Articles, how plain, how strong, how scriptural! there is no truth that is not there established [. . .] her homilies, formed by men of God who knew what assaults would be made against her. [. . .] they are as firm and immovable as at the first hour they were constructed: and they defy all the assaults [. . .] Then view her Liturgy. – Next to the Bible, it stands the wonder of the world. Never was there such a composition for the use of those who would worship God in spirit and truth."

⁶ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 62.

tion. It is therefore understandable that Simeon should insist on regularity and order within the Church, just as he was aligned to the Tories politically.¹

1.5.3 Principles of Church Growth

Because Mr. Hammond was the appointed lecturer, Simeon only had one weekly opportunity to preach. When he attempted to establish an evening lecture, he was locked out by the churchwardens.² Due to this continuing opposition, he finally hired a private room and began to hold regular meetings in it.³ Despite personal misgivings, he argued that this was the only means to prevent people from attending the meetings of dissenters.⁴ As attendance increased, the room became too small, and Simeon was forced to hire a large room in an adjoining parish. He had qualms about this as being contrary to church order and consulted his friend Henry Venn on the matter.⁵ In spite of initial reservations, Venn encouraged him to this step with the words: "Go on, and God be with you."⁶ In this room, Simeon preached on Sunday evenings and taught twice a week.⁷ After attendance increased yet again, he had to split the gathering into six groups in 1796, with specially instructed stewards for each group. These groups also collected alms for the poor, with the appointed stewards distributing the money. Further, a weekly prayer meeting was held in the above-mentioned room, which Simeon however did not himself

¹ This seems to be more probable than C. Smyth's contention that Simeon's being a Tory might have "assisted to align him with the party of regularity and order in the Church" (*Simeon and Church Order*, pp. 298-99). Cf. A. Härdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist* (Uppsala, 1965), p. 90.

² C. Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.* It may be mentioned that the members of his societies only belonged to his parish. See also F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies 1520-1799* (St. Leonards on Sea, 1963), p. 222, note 3.

⁵ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷ Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies 1520-1799*, p. 222.

attend after 1796. He regretted this later, as his absence apparently fostered dissenting thought (see above, 1.5.2)¹

These beginnings of Simeon's pastoral activity manifest that unlike many clergymen, Simeon became an adherent of parochial organization. He consciously aimed at organizing his parish by appointing stewards and establishing societies, whilst at the same time carefully supervising these groups and making sure that no dissenting principles or heresies wreak havoc in the parish. By 1829, he had 30 (male and female) helpers in his parish districts.²

We can thus observe that he recognized the benefits of societies and sought to tap these reservoirs of strength conducive to church growth whilst at the same time controlling the societies enough to hinder them from encouraging centrifugal tendencies at work within the Church.

It was this organizational talent, which helped to hold the flock together during a long spell of illness.³ On the other hand, the stewards became too independent during this time, and he was forced to expel one of them, who had begun to preach privately.⁴

A further organization initiated by Simeon was the "Visiting Society:" he divided his parish into several areas and appointed a man and a woman responsible for each district, who were to assist people in need or ailing people. Once a month, they met with Simeon to report and to receive advice on how to deal with difficult cases.⁵

¹ F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies 1520-1799*, p. 222.

² C. Simeon in a letter to Bishop Sumner, quoted by H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 53. See also M. Warren, "Charles Simeon: his Methods in the Local Church, the Church of England and the Nation," *Churchman* 92 (1978), p. 116.

³ Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies 1520-1799*, p. 223.

⁴ Cf. H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 49. See also J.H. Pratt [ed.], *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*, p. 490, concerning Simeon's societies.

⁵ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 47f.

When in 1790 a change of churchwardens allowed Simeon access to the church again,¹ he was finally able to conduct evening services at Holy Trinity in order to instruct the poor, who could not attend the service held earlier in the day.² Simeon later remarked that these were for several years regarded with outright suspicion, as they were a novelty for a parish church and therefore smacked of Methodism.³ For this reason, Simeon met with some opposition from the university and town.⁴

In 1794, Simeon was chosen for the lectureship connected with Trinity Church without any opposition,⁵ and he retained this lectureship until 1832.⁶ The sermons, which were attended by many students, were partly addressed to those who did not know much about religion and partly to the more experienced Christians.⁷

1.6 "Academic" Work in a Pastoral Setting

Simeon consciously made every effort to reach the university students, and he took his duties as a pastor in Cambridge very seriously. We find a student reporting that

¹ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 46.

² W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 85, 87.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-93. For several years, young students for example entered the church to disturb the service or insulted the hearers. H.C.G. Moule recounts that "In one college [. . .] a regular Greek Testament lecture was begun on Sunday nights, with the well-understood purpose of preventing attendance at Simeon's evening service" (*Charles Simeon*, p. 64). Simeon advised the students of this college to take part in the Greek Lectures instead of going to Trinity Church: "This will soon separate you from the ungodly and careless among your fellow-students, for in a little while they will grow tired of attending the lectures, and you will be left the only attendants; and thus it will be found that the religious undergraduates are the only persons who from principle uphold the authority of the heads of the College, and you will thus be the means of glorifying God" (A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 46).

⁵ After Hammond, a lecturer other than Simeon was chosen. Simeon became lecturer in 1794 (H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 46).

⁶ M. Warren, *Simeon*, p. 21.

⁷ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 45.



Mr. Simeon watches over us as a shepherd over his sheep. He takes delight in instructing us, and has us continually in his rooms. He has nothing to do with us as it respects our situation at college. His Christian love and zeal prompt him to notice us.¹

When in 1782 Simeon became a Fellow of King's College,² he did not become involved in compulsory teaching and lecturing, nor was he responsible for any kind of academic work.³ The voluntary work he did do amongst undergraduates was less academic and more of a pastoral character.⁴

Few fellows of King's appreciated his work,⁵ and at the university, he similarly experienced little support, notable exceptions being Isaac Milner of Queen's College and William Farish of Magdalene College.⁶

From 1788 onwards, Simeon also held various administrative appointments at college, notably several deanships.⁷

Between 1778 and 1788, the attendance of students at Great St. Mary's dwindled markedly, which spurred the Provost of King's College to press that either the attendance be made compulsory or the tradition of university sermons be abolished. When Simeon became select preacher for the university sermons at Great St. Mary's, the number of students attending apparently increased rapidly.⁸ Of his University Sermons,⁹ several attracted much attention, especially those of a controversial character.

¹ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 97.

² Cf. M. Warren, *Simeon*, p. 21.

³ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*; F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies*, p. 223.

⁵ Cf. H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 75.

⁶ Cf. H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58; H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 71. M. Warren's dates somewhat differ from the dates given by Moule and Hopkins (cf. M. Warren, *Simeon*, pp. 21-23). All however agree that Simeon had no administrative appointments between 1805 and 1827.

⁸ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 74.

⁹ H.C.G. Moule names the following dates for Simeon's sermons at Great St. Mary's: 1786, 1796, 1810, 1811, 1815, 1823, 1831 (*Charles Simeon*, p. 79). M. Warren's dates partly deviate from Moule's: 1786, 1796, 1805, 1809, 1811, 1815, 1817, 1821, 1822, 1824, 1828, 1831 (*Simeon*, pp. 21-23).

In 1805, Simeon preached a sermon entitled *The Churchman's Confession*,¹ which aroused the ire of Dr. Pearson² of Sidney Sussex College, who attacked Simeon for allegedly maintaining the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature and the doctrine of justification by faith alone and not by obedience also.³ The controversy flared up again in 1809, when Pearson objected to a sermon of Simeon's entitled *Evangelical and Pharisaic Righteousness Compared*,⁴ which was answered by Simeon with *Fresh Cautions*.

A more significant controversy than this rather mundane debate⁵ occurred in 1811, when Simeon preached a sermon on *The Excellency of the Liturgy*,⁶ his op-

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2000, vol. xvi, pp. 406-421.

² Edward Pearson (1756-1811) studied at Cambridge, later becoming fellow and tutor of Sidney Sussex College at the same time that he was curate. In 1796, he became vicar in Nottinghamshire. He became well-known as a controversialist. Among others he attacked J.H. Overton's writings published in defence of justification by faith. In 1807 he was appointed Lecturer at Lincoln's Inn. During the last years of his lifetime he was often embroiled in discussions with Simeon (*DNB*, vol. lxiv, pp. 164-165).

³ Cf. F.K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians. The Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 299. Cf. also W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 209 and H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 76.

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1299, vol. xi, pp. 98-113; W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 278-281.

Dr. Pearson wrote a pamphlet entitled *Cautions to the Hearers and Readers of the Reverend Mr. Simeon's Sermon, Entitled "Evangelical and Pharisaical Righteousness Compared"* (Broxbourn, 1810?). Simeon's reply: *Fresh Cautions to the Public: or, A Letter to the Rev. Edw. Pearson, D.D. [. . .] in Reply to his Cautions to the Readers of Mr. Simeon's Sermon, Entitled Evangelical and Pharisaical Righteousness Compared* (Cambridge, 1810). This pamphlet likewise experienced a second edition: *Fresh Cautions to the Public, or, A Letter with a Postscript to the Rev. Edw. Pearson, D.D. [. . .] in Reply to his Cautions to the Readers of Mr. Simeon's Sermon, Entitled Evangelical and Pharisaical Righteousness Compared* (Cambridge, 1811).

⁵ For further details cf. F.K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, pp. 299f.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermons 191-194, vol. i, pp. 232ff.

ponent being Herbert Marsh, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity.¹ This controversy centred around the assertion of Marsh that the Evangelicals were Calvinists and therefore against the Establishment, a charge which Simeon vigorously denied.²

A third controversy, in which Simeon was involved and which shook the university, began in connexion with the establishment of an Bible Society Auxiliary in Cambridge: about 200 Evangelical undergraduates desired to establish a branch of the Bible Society in Cambridge. Marsh however objected to this plan, and the authorities generally feared that revolutionary ideas from France might be encouraged, if undergraduates were to be allowed to hold meetings on their own. Isaac Milner, William Farish and Simeon backed the students, as did William Wilberforce, who played a significant role in drawing the Chancellor on the side of the Evangelicals.. After much discussion and procrastination, the Auxiliary Branch of the Bible Society could finally be established after all.³

¹ H. Marsh had published *An Inquiry into the Consequences of Neglecting to Give the Prayer Book with the Bible* [. . .] (London, ²1812), in which he asserted that it was dangerous to distribute the Bible without the Prayer Book. H. Marsh believed that the Bible could too easily be misinterpreted without the aid of the Prayer Book. Further, he attacked the "Calvinistic Clergy of the Church of England" [= the Evangelicals], as "a man, who adopts the doctrines of Calvin, cannot be zealously attached to our English Liturgy" (p. 48). Simeon's intention in preaching a sermon on "The Excellency of the Liturgy" was to show the loyalty of the Evangelicals to the Establishment (*Home Homileticae*, sermons 191-194, vol. i, pp. 232ff). When Simeon published "The Excellency of the Liturgy," he prefixed an Answer to H. Marsh's *Inquiry. Answer to Dr. Marsh's Inquiry, Respecting "The Neglecting to Give the Prayer-Book with the Bible"* (Cambridge, 1812). Cf. H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 76f; F.K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, pp. 301f.

² W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 293-299, 304.

³ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, pp. 77-79. Cf. also D.E. Swift, "Charles Simeon and J.J. Gurney: A Chapter in Anglican-Quaker Relations," *Church History* 29 (1960), p. 168; H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 125-127.

1.6.1 The Art of Preaching

For the benefit of the undergraduates, Simeon held private meetings in his own rooms at King's College.¹ In these meetings, the students learnt the rudiments of doctrine, pastoralia and homiletics² in preparation of their later duties in the ministry. As Simeon was at the same time minister of Holy Trinity, he provided an example of practical pastoralia and could offer practical advice on a range of issues.³ Through this work, he attempted to supplement the rather bare theory learned at university with his own practical experience and evangelical outlook.⁴

Simeon held sermon classes from 1792 to 1833.⁵ On every alternate Friday evening, he instructed approximately 15-20 undergraduates, who desired to learn how to compose and deliver a sermon. Besides teaching them how to structure and write a sermon, he also gave them lessons in how to train the voice and present a sermon properly.⁶

When in 1792 Simeon read Jean Claude's⁷ *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, he felt vindicated

¹ M.L. Loane, *Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession* (London, 1952), p. 195.

² A. Pollard, "The Influence and Significance of Simeon's Work," *Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Essays Written in Commemoration of his Bi-Centenary by Members of the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell (London, 1959), p. 166.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴ M. Hennell, "Simeon and the Ministry," *Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Essays Written in Commemoration of his Bi-Centenary by Members of the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell (London, 1959) p. 140.

⁵ M. Warren *Simeon*, p. 21.

⁶ M. Hennell, "Simeon and the Ministry," p. 143.

⁷ The Rev. Jean Claude was a French Protestant Divine, who was born in 1619. During his ministry in Nimes, he gathered candidates for the Protestant ministry around him in order to prepare them for their future work. Due to his opposition to the reunion of the Protestants and Catholics, he was forced to leave Nimes. When in 1685 the edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV., he left Paris and laboured at the Hague till his death in 1695 (A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 49-50; H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, p. 85).

that all the chief rules, which he prescribes to the composition of a sermon, had not only been laid down by myself, but practised for some years.¹

Later, in 1796, Simeon published a revised edition of this essay with an appendix of 100 skeletons or basic components of sermons² intended to aid the minister in working out his own sermons without slavishly copying the work of others.³

Simeon's explicit aim therein was

1. To impart to young Ministers a clear view of the Gospel.
2. To help them to an inward experience of it in their souls.⁴

In this way, he was able to leave an indelibly Evangelical mark on Anglican homiletics and generations of clergymen to come.⁵

What did Simeon aim to instill through his sermon classes? Simeon himself declared that the object of every sermon must be to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour and to promote holiness.⁶

It would be unfair to conclude from this that he was a typical fire-and-brimstone Evangelical. He rejected the view of some that the content of every sermon

¹ "[. . .] From seeing my own views thus reduced to a system, I was led to adopt the resolution of endeavouring to impart to others the little knowledge possessed in that species composition; and to adopt Claude as the ground-work of my private lectures; [. . .] For the space of about twenty years I have persevered in having a few young men to assist in thus preparing for that which is generally esteemed so difficult - the writing of their sermons; and from the many acknowledgements which have been made by ministers from time to time, I have reason to hope that my labours have not been in vain in the Lord." (Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 61).

² A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 48. Besides this, Simeon published following works: 1801: 500 'Helps to Composition'; 1819: 17 volumes of *Horae Homileticae*, 1827: revised/improved ed. of Claude's Essay, 1833: 21 volumes of *Horae Homileticae* (A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 48f).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 719. See furthermore A. Pollard's introductory words in A. Pollard (ed.), *Let Wisdom Judge. University Addresses and Sermon Outlines by Charles Simeon* (London, 1959), pp. 9-20.

⁵ A. Pollard, "The Influence and Significance of Simeon's Work," p. 167; H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850* (Princeton [N.J.]/London, 1961), pp. 232f.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, preface, vol. i, p. xxi.

must be conversion. On the contrary, he felt that it was absolutely mandatory to take the Bible-text of the sermon seriously in its entirety.¹

The style of his preaching seems to have been different from most of the formal sermons of his time. A factor for this may be seen in the fact that he was convinced of what he preached. His conscious effort at clearly structuring his sermons and carefully wording them must also have greatly contributed towards making them concise, easily understandable and practical.² A piece of advice, which he gave to his students, sums up both of these aspects:

Let him get his text into him in his study, and then get into his text in the Pulpit.³

1.6.2 Friday Tea-parties

In 1813, Simeon began what later became to known as the Friday Tea-parties, which he continued until 1830:⁴ These Friday tea-parties began at six o'clock, with up to 80 undergraduates taking part.⁵ After an introduction, Simeon sat down on an elevated chair and encouraged the undergraduates to voice their questions in the following manner:

Now, - if you have any question to ask, - I shall be happy to hear it, - and to give what assistance I can.⁶

While tea was served by two waiters, the students asked questions and Simeon gave answers.⁷ Abner Brown's *Recollections*, which contain a few of the many

¹ R.S. Dell, "Simeon and the Bible," *Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Essays Written in Commemoration of his Bi-Centenary by Members of the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell (London, 1959), p. 41.

² A. Pollard, "The Influence and Significance of Simeon's work," p. 168; W. Carus, *Memoirs*, pp. 717-19.

³ R.S. Dell, "Simeon and the Bible," p. 39.

⁴ M. Warren, *Simeon*, p. 22. Cf. also A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 52.

⁵ H.E. Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge*, p. 89.

⁶ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 649.

⁷ *Ibid.* Cf. also A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 52-54.

answers Simeon gave, offer valuable insights into these social gatherings. He writes that Simeon "seldom answered the same question twice in the same words."¹

1.7 Societies and the Evangelical Cause

Simeon recognized the benefits of societies as instruments, which could efficiently be used not only to encourage church growth in his own parish, but also to further and implement the aims of Evangelicals in society at large. A short glance within various societies proves this without a doubt.

For example, from 1796 onwards, he had a gathering for "Religious Intercourse with his Brethren in the Ministry." This social assembly of clergymen was held annually and lasted two days. Clergymen came to these gatherings from all parts of the kingdom together with their wives, the clergymen discussing theological subjects and the wives their contributions at home *etc.*²

Occasionally, Simeon also had small meetings attended by ministers, missionaries, laymen and ladies. In such cases, the subjects had more of a general character.³

Simeon also played an important role in the foundation of the *Church Missionary Society*.⁴ In 1795, he attended several clerical meetings dealing with the matter of establishing a missionary society, and in 1796 at the fourth Eclectic Meeting on Missions, he provoked a debate through several questions concerning missions. In a further meeting of the Eclectic Society held in 1799. Simeon proposed that catechists be sent out as soon as possible. As a result, a motion was passed proposing that a Mission Society be formed, and a month later, a further

¹ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴ J. Manor, "The Coming of Britain's Age of Empire and Protestant Mission Theology, 1750-1839," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 61 (1977), p. 47. There already existed the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* and the *SPCK*, but these two societies worked in the British Colonies and not in the "pagan" world. Further, there was the interdenominational *London Missionary Society* (LMS); H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 116f.

meeting was held 'For the Purpose of Instituting a Society Amongst the Members of the Established Church for Sending Missionaries Amongst the Heathen.'¹ Two of Simeon's former curates, Henry Martyn² and Thomas Thomason,³ later became missionaries in India with the Church Missionary Society.⁴

Although the interdenominational London Missionary Society already existed, Simeon felt that it was important not to work at an interdenominational level on the mission-field. Therefore he encouraged the foundation of the Church Missionary Society as an Anglican mission society.⁵

In 1809, the *London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews* was founded. After five years, it was quite mismanaged. At the end of 1814, Simeon recognized this, and as he was keenly interested in the conversion of the Jews, he threw himself into this work.⁶

Further, he was involved in the interdenominational *British and Foreign Bible Society* (founded in 1804). When a few undergraduates wanted to establish an auxiliary Bible society at Cambridge, Simeon and Farish agreed to plan a meeting. The already mentioned controversy with Marsh and also with Milner threatened to quash their plans, but in the end they managed to have their own way and establish the *Cambridge Auxiliary Bible Society*.⁷

¹ H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 117f. Cf. C. Hole, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East to the End of A.D. 1814* (London, 1896), pp. 25ff.

² H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 130-141.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-145.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁵ Cf. A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 12.

⁶ Cf. M.L. Loane, *Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession*, p. 208, and H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 122-124.

C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1000, vol. viii, p. 57; sermon 1008, vol. viii, p. 581: "we are called to be fellow-workers with God in their conversion." Cf. also sermon 1010, vol. viii, pp. 587-591.

⁷ Cf. V.H.H. Green, *Religion at Oxford and Cambridge* (London, 1964), pp. 245ff; H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, pp. 125-127; F.K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, pp. 295ff.

The importance, which Simeon attached to societies is manifested in the numerous societies in which he was actively involved. It is astonishing to find him at work not only at the heart of the societies mentioned above, but also in the *Society for the Relief of Poor Pious Clergymen*,¹ the *Eclectic Society*,² the *London Clerical Education Society*,³ the *Cambridge Clerical Society*⁴ and the *London Clerical Aid Society*.⁵

1.8 The Problem of Continuity

A further contribution of Simeon was "his" Trust, which tackled the problem of Evangelical continuity amongst the clergy.⁶

Simeon had himself faced difficulties in securing livings as a minister. Therefore he could understand the hurdles Evangelicals had to overcome in order to obtain livings (see also above, p. 18). A major factor seems to have been the necessity of raising considerable sums in order to purchase livings. The difficulties were not only of a spiritual nature. As Simeon remarks,

I saw efficient godly clergy passed over, and utterly worthless and useless idlers were able to secure important livings for the sake of the loaves and fishes.⁷

In order to counter these hinderances, he quietly began to purchase livings in 1817. The money drawn from his own fortune was later supplemented by the large sums of donors similarly anxious to sustain and increase the Evangelical presence

¹ Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies*, p. 242.

² *Ibid.*, p. 243. C. Simeon appears as a "visitor" in the Eclectic Society; J.H. Pratt (ed.), *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders*.

³ Cf. M.L. Loane, *Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession*, pp. 206f; W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 432.

⁴ Cf. M. Hennell, "Simeon and the Ministry," p. 147.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147. This society supported 20 men.

⁶ Two critical views of Simeon's Trust policies are found in H.H. Henson, *Sibbes and Simeon. An Essay on Patronage Trusts* (London, 1932), pp. 36ff; W.D. Balda, *'Spheres of Influence': Simeon's Trust and its Implications for Evangelical Patronage* (Cambridge, 1981) [unpubl. Ph.D.], p. 43.

⁷ A.J. Tait, *Charles Simeon and his Trust* (London, 1936), p. 38.

amongst the clergy. His efforts culminated in the formal creation of *The Simeon's Trust* in 1833.¹

A factor which gave him the chance to extend his purchases was the Municipal Corporations Act, enforced shortly before his death in 1836. This act demanded that advowsons of corporations be sold.²

It was a source of solace for Simeon that at his death "his" Trust had greatly contributed towards securing the legacy of the Evangelicals in the Church.³

¹ M. Warren, *Simeon*, p. 23. See also A. Armstrong, *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700-1850* (London, 1973), p. 147.

² O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, I, p. 449.

³ Cf. also C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, p. 310; A. Pollard, "The Influence and Significance of Simeon's Work," p. 171.

2 Sign and Thing Signified: Simeon's Solution

2.1 Baptism

Significantly, Simeon nearly always defines baptism in relation to regeneration. Thus, it is difficult to treat baptism separately from regeneration.

Simeon mostly deals with baptism by firstly positively stating what baptism is and then going on to say what it is not. One reason for this is the Baptismal Controversy, which mainly dealt with the relationship of baptism and regeneration to one another. As an Evangelical, Simeon felt the need of clearly distinguishing both.

Secondly, as a minister he had his parishioners in view, of whom all were baptized, but not all living accordingly. Therefore, he had no need to accentuate baptism, as Mant had done in his parish, where many had not been baptized; rather, Simeon felt called to stress the need of regeneration.

This produces a certain tension in Simeon's treatment of baptism:

On the one hand, it seems as if baptism is worthless or at least peripheral, as he emphasizes that without regeneration baptism is nothing. On the other hand, baptism does have a real effect:

1. It is the person's initiation into the Church, through which the baptized person is able to partake of the appointed means of grace.
2. God may effect regeneration in baptism, if he wants to, although this is not necessarily the case.

According to Simeon, baptism is necessary were it may be had. This was the conviction of the first Christians:

If any were inwardly convinced that the religion of Christ was indeed of divine authority, and were not prevented by insurmountable obstacles from conforming to this rite, they must cheerfully enlist themselves under his banners, and honour him in his appointed way; they must 'follow the Lord fully,' if they would be partakers of his benefits.¹

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 1461, vol. xii, p. 200.

The example of Paul following his conversion emphasizes the necessity of being baptized:

now, being converted to the faith of Christ, he must be baptized also, in order to participate in all the blessings of the Christian covenant.¹

Thus, baptism is normally necessary if one wants a title to all the blessings of the baptismal covenant.

they have a *title* to all the blessings of salvation; a title which, in an unbaptized state, they did not possess.²

Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this rule; in some cases baptism may under some circumstances be dispensed with,³ without implying that such a person is not regenerate.

2.1.1 The Nature of Baptism

Baptism is identification with Christ's death and resurrection: the baptized person is buried with Christ into his death, and he is resurrected to new life with Christ.⁴

In this way, baptism is the appointed rite of initiation into the Church.⁵

Furthermore, it is the external and visible sign of belonging to the Church as Christ's body.⁶

Baptism is however more than a mere sign; it is also a change of state. This change of state may be described through various terms:

a) It is a title to all the blessings of the Christian covenant. By being in the Church, one has access to all the "appointed means of grace:"

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 1806, vol. xiv, p. 543.

² Ibid., sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 232.

³ Ibid., sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 246.

⁴ Ibid., sermon 595, vol. v, p. 433.

⁵ "Baptism was the appointed rite of admission into the Christian Church. It was enjoined by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to all his followers without exception; nor could anyone be acknowledged as a Disciple of his, till he had submitted to this ordinance." (ibid., sermon 1806, vol. xv, p. 543.)

⁶ Ibid., sermon 1983, vol. xvi, p. 307.

[There is] *a great change effected in baptism*. But it is a change of *state*, and not of *nature*. By baptism a person is admitted into covenant with God, and obtains a **TITLE** to all the blessings of the Christian covenant.¹

Thus, by baptism as a change of state one obtains a title to all blessings of the Christian covenant.

b) it is a public profession of belonging to the Church:

Our Lord had appointed baptism as that rite whereby his Disciples should be introduced into the Christian covenant [. . .] and men's submission to this rite served as a test of their sincerity, and a public badge of their profession.²

c) it is also a sign and seal of privileges, without being the thing itself.³

d) By baptism, Christians have "a memorial of their engagements."⁴ These "engagements" consist of the vows they have made at their baptism:

to believe in Christ, to follow Christ, dying unto sin as he died for it, and rising to a new and heavenly life.⁵

In baptism, Christians acknowledge that these vows are their "most decided *sentiments*," and their "unalterable *obligations*." Further, they declare that they "*owe* [. . .] *everything to Christ*," and that they are bound "to *employ every faculty of* [. . . their] *soul for Christ*."⁶

e) Baptized persons have "an emblem of their duties."⁷

f) Baptism is ordinarily accompanied by the 'washing away of sin,' so long as it was connected with faith:

Baptism, though not *necessarily* accompanied with 'the washing away of sin,' [. . .] was ordinarily, and intimately, connected with it. *Of itself*, indeed, it could no [sic!] nothing; but, *as used in faith*, it did much. [. . .]

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 1462, vol. xii, p. 200.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 1065, vol. ix, p. 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 27, vol. i, p. 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 595, vol. v, p. 433.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sermon 1845, vol. xv, p. 143.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sermon 27, vol. i, p. 137.

Thus it was intimately connected both with the justification of the soul, and with its sanctification after the Divine image; and consequently, in the judgment of charity, it might be spoken of as 'washing away both the guilt and the pollution of sin.'¹

2.1.2 Infant Baptism

Simeon treats the subject of infant baptism very seriously. He is aware of the fact that the first Christians were generally regenerate before being baptized. Baptism was for them the "seal of righteousness," just as circumcision was a seal for Abraham. However, for the offspring of both, baptism or circumcision were only an "external right to these blessings."²

Just as the Jewish child was truly a Jew only if he was circumcised inwardly in the Spirit, the Christian child needs to be born again inwardly and receive the baptism of the Spirit.³

As infants cannot affirm that they believe in Christ,⁴ Simeon insists that sponsors must be capable of honestly confessing their belief in Christ in the stead of the infant. They must furthermore be willing "to contribute, as much as in them lies, to the instilling of these [Christian] principles" into the minds of the children.⁵

Simeon even believes

that God bestows a peculiar blessing to the child, [. . .] where the ordinance is really attended upon in faith, and prayer is offered up to God in faith.⁶

When the children become older and are able to comprehend the vows which were made by their sponsors at their baptism, they are bound to take them upon

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1806, vol. xiv, pp. 543-544.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 27, vol. i, p. 136.

³ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 230; cf. C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 27, vol. i, pp. 136-139.

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1761, vol. xiv, p. 348.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 1761, vol. xvi, p. 349.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sermon 1975; vol. xvi, p. 259.

themselves; they must devote themselves unreservedly to their Lord and Saviour and confess him openly.¹

How does Simeon reconcile his separation of baptism and regeneration, whilst at the same time holding on to the practice of infant baptism; how can he maintain the validity of the Anglican Baptismal Service, in which God is thanked for having regenerated the baptized infant by his Holy Spirit?

In order to answer this question, he offers the argument of charitable supposition, or, as he calls it, the "judgment of charity:" Paul calls all baptized persons people who have "put on Christ," that is people who are clothed with God's righteousness, even though not all of those addressed were in fact real Christians. In the same way, we can charitably suppose infants to have "put on Christ," even though not all have done so.²

2.2 Regeneration

2.2.1 Scope and Aim of Regeneration

For Simeon, regeneration is an absolute necessity for coming into God's presence. This "entering into the kingdom" has a **spiritual** and a **real** component: the spiritual kingdom is something, which the regenerate can enjoy here on earth, the "kingdom of glory" a future phenomenon.

without regeneration, 1. We cannot enter into God's kingdom of grace [. . .] 2. We cannot enter into the kingdom of glory.

ad 1: There are many duties to be performed, and many privileges to be enjoyed, by the subjects of God's spiritual kingdom, which an unregenerate man can *neither perform nor enjoy*.

ad 2: *God has declared, with repeated and most solemn assertions, that 'except a man be born again, he shall never enter into his kingdom.'*³

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 1806; vol. xvi, p. 546; sermon 1761, vol. xvi, p. 349.

² Ibid., sermon 2069, vol. xvii, pp. 149-151.

³ Ibid., sermon 1608, vol. xiii, pp. 248-249; cf. sermon 2463, vol. xx, p. 523.

Why is a man unable to partake of these divine realms without regeneration? Because of his corrupt nature, which separates him from God.¹ Simeon is here careful to point out that man is not altogether vile and depraved; indeed, he is able to do many good deeds. However, this is not enough to reconcile him to God, as he can never be completely sinless.²

The end, for which regeneration is wrought, may be defined as sanctification and holiness. Simeon is aware of the fact that some accentuate the sovereignty of God too strongly, which leads them to draw the conclusion that election is everything and that the life which follows conversion is insignificant. Conversely, they maintain that a holy life without election does not lead to salvation. Simeon contradicts this assertion: God elects men in order that they may live a holy life and glorify him with their lives.³

It is not to salvation *only* that God ordains his people; but to sanctification, as the way to, and the preparation for, the blessedness of heaven.⁴

The source of regeneration "is from God, and from God alone;"⁵ "the great *efficient* cause of it is God"⁶ God, who is our father in Jesus Christ, forms us altogether anew.⁷ God is not moved to this step, because we merited it. "The *moving* cause of it is his 'mercy,'"⁸ whereby "the *instrumental* or *procuring* cause of it was

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1974, vol. xvi, pp. 239ff; sermon 1056, vol. ix, pp. 152f.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 1974, vol. xvi, pp. 239-250.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 2359, vol. xx, pp. 39-40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37. "It is God alone who makes one to differ from another: it is 'God alone who gives us either the will, or to do,' what is good: and 'He who is the Author, is also the Finisher,' of all that can issue in a man's salvation" (*ibid.*).

⁶ *Ibid.*, sermon 2380, vol. xx, p. 137.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138: "That we are created *men*, was *grace*, because we might have been of a lower order of beings, like beasts: but to be new-created, after that we were fallen, and by this new creation to be made sons of God, is not only 'mercy,' but such mercy as never was vouchsafed to the angels that fell [. . .]."

the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ Whilst the death of Christ wrought salvation, his resurrection wrought the blessing of regeneration:

our regeneration may well be ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, not only on account of its proving his death to have been available for us, but as through it he is empowered to send down the Holy Spirit upon our souls.²

Although Simeon is careful not to restrict God's way of effecting change in men's lives to a particular means, he is convinced that God mainly uses his word to begin the good work and carry it on to perfection:³ it is the word of God which shows us our fallen state and the way of salvation. Through the word we are also cleansed, whatever state of salvation we are in.

However, the word alone is worthless, if it is not used by the Holy Spirit to bring about a change;⁴ the work of regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit:

The author of this work is the Holy Spirit, who by a supernatural agency renews our inward man, and makes us partakers of a divine nature.⁵

As the whole human nature is impaired by sin, nobody can be accepted as Christ's without a total renovation of the human nature by the Holy Spirit.⁶

2.2.2 The Nature of Regeneration

In his Sermon entitled *The Christian a New Creature* on 2 Cor. v. 17, Simeon draws a parallel between the creation of the world and the Christian as a new cre-

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2380, vol. xx, p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 2359, vol. xx, pp. 37-38: "It becomes not us to restrict God in the use of means. We know that he frequently makes use of affliction, and of conversation; and we will not presume to say that he never employs even dreams or visions for the attainment of his ends [. . .] but we are not at liberty to *limit* God to any particular mode of communicating his blessings to mankind. Of one thing however we are sure [. . .] namely, that whatever means God makes use of to bring the soul to a consideration of its state, it is 'by the word of truth' alone that he savingly converts it to himself. *By other means he may call our attention to the word*; but by the word only does he guide us to the knowledge of his truth, and to the attainment of his salvation."

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 247.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 225.

ation in respect to the manner, order and the end:¹ just as the world was created according to God's sovereign will, God likewise also regenerates men according to his sovereign will:

There is an instant time, however unknown to us, when the new man as well as the old, receives the vital principle; a moment, wherein we are 'quickened from the dead,' and 'pass from death unto life:' but the work of grace is carried on in a constant progression, and 'the inward man is renewed day by day.'²

Just as chaos became order and beauty at creation, man likewise is completely changed through regeneration; old desires and views are expunged. This change does not

import a mere change from profligacy to morality, or from a neglect of outward duties to the performance of them: the change must be entire; it must pervade every faculty of the soul; it must influence all our words and actions; our thoughts and desires, our motives and principles. [. . .] It must ever be remembered, that the renovation of the soul is a gradual and progressive work: we are to be continually putting off the old man, and putting on the new.³

The reader could gather the impression that Simeon believes in a sudden, instantaneous conversion-experience. This would however be a misunderstanding. Simeon goes to great lengths to deflect this charge. In a sermon *On the New Birth*, he says:

It is supposed by many, and indeed affirmed by some, that we require a *sudden* impulse of the Holy Spirit, which, *without any co-operation on the part of man*, is to convert the soul to God; and that we require this change to be *so sensibly and perceptibly* wrought, that the subject of it shall be able to specify the day and hour when it took place.⁴

It would seem that the charges brought against Calvinists are here made against the Evangelicals generally and Simeon in particular. It is interesting to find the opponents of Simeon here connecting the Ultra-calvinistic doctrine of election, in which

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2021, vol. xvi, pp. 519ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 521.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 523.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 1975, vol. xvi, p. 252.

man is not much more than a marionette, with the notion of a sudden and dramatic conversion-experience in vogue in many evangelical circles.

Simeon roundly denies this charge. Rather, he emphasizes the sovereignty of God, who can effect anything just as he likes:

God may effect this work in any way that he pleases [. . .] we never require any thing of the kind: we require nothing sudden. It may be so gradual, as that the growth of it like the seed in the parable, shall at no time be particularly visible, either to the observation of others, or to the person's own mind.¹

He similarly rejects the notion that man is converted and made regenerate without himself being actively involved:

We deny that we ever speak of it as wrought by an *irresistible* impulse of the Spirit, or without the co-operation of the man himself: for that a man is in all cases a free agent: he is never wrought upon as a mere machine. He is drawn, indeed, but it is with the *cords of a man*.²

On the other hand, "only the Spirit of God takes away from his [= the person's] heart that veil which was upon it."³ Here we have two conflicting statements, one of which expresses man's "free will," the other God's sovereignty and man's incapacity. Does Simeon try to reconcile these two aspects to one another? On the contrary, he consciously dismisses any attempt to do so as illusory:

How far the Spirit of God works, and *how far* the mind of man, is a point which no human being can determine.⁴

In this way, he endeavours to demonstrate the tension between the fact that God alone gives man freedom of will and action, whilst at the same time, man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. At this point, Simeon's knowledge of the Bible leads him to resist every attempt to press biblical truth into any system, through which it could become lop-sided. He consciously holds on to these conflicting statements, even though it sometimes causes him difficulties.

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1975, vol. xvi, p. 252.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

One can also feel his involvement in the Baptismal Controversy in following words:

God forbid that we should be disputing about a *term*, when our main concern should be about *the blessing connected with it!* [. . .] call it a new birth, a new creation, a renewal in the spirit of the mind, or a conversion of soul to God; only let an entire change of heart and life be included in it, and [. . .] we are satisfied.¹

He is not willing to fight imaginary dragons; therefore he is careful to define what he means by regeneration. He allows that it may be said to be identical to new birth, new creation, renewal of spirit and conversion. His primary concern however lies in the fact that "an entire change of heart an life" must comprise the core of regeneration. This wording once more manifests Simeon's Evangelical convictions.

According to Simeon, 1John iii.9 & v.4 speak of this "entire change:" the regenerated have overcome the world and cannot sin. In other words, regeneration not only implies an outward reformation or a partial change of the inward man. Rather, it is a total inward change of heart,² a new creation,³ a change of nature, "a spiritual and supernatural change of heart."⁴

Thus, regenerate persons are partakers of a divine nature. This does not mean that man's inherent powers of mind and body are altered, but rather that a new direction is given to them.

Our *understanding* is enlightened [. . .] Our *will* is changed, so that [. . .] we surrender up ourselves altogether to God's government [. . .] Our *affections* also are exercised in a very different manner from what they were before, [. . .] they are set upon things spiritual and eternal.⁵

Although this change is universal, no person is perfect. We find Simeon here struggling to express Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* in his Evangelical manner:

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2380, vol. xx, pp. 136-137.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 1056, vol. ix, p. 151.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 1608, vol. xiii, pp. 246-247; *cf.* sermon 2446, vol. xx, p. 436.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 2380, vol. xx, p. 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 248.

We say not that this change is perfect in any man, (for there are sad remains of the old and corrupt nature in the best of men; the leprosy is never wholly removed till the walls be taken down.) But the change is universal in all the faculties, and progressive throughout our lives: nor can it be effected by any efforts of man, or by any other power than that of God.¹

In another passage, Simeon interprets the assertion of John that the regenerate man does not commit sin from a slightly different angle:

it must import *a habit*, and *not a mere insulated act*: and *that* is its proper meaning in the text; 'Whosoever is born of God, does not *wilfully and habitually* commit sin.'²

After conversion, a person seeks to do the will of God, even though he still sins:

Not that he then becomes *perfect*: [. . . but] he never does, nor will, return to the love and practice of sin: if he offend in any thing, he will lament it, and implore forgiveness for it, and labour with renewed diligence and circumspection to 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.'³

Simeon's words are in effect a watered-down version of Luther's *simul iustus et peccator*; Luther much more clearly recognized that the "regenerate" Christian in actual fact could not stand up to the definition here given by Simeon.

According to Simeon, God helps the regenerate to resist their former ways by firstly planting in them his seed, the word of God.⁴ Secondly, he supplies them with grace according to the promises of his covenant.⁵ Thirdly, his faith helps him to overcome:

The Christian, to his latest hour, is no stronger *in himself* than others. [. . .] But [. . .] through the faith which is thus formed in his soul, he is enabled to maintain his conflicts even to the end: 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'⁶

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 248.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 2446, vol. xx, p. 436.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2463, vol. xx, p. 522.

The regenerate are wholly dependent on God, who forms this faith in man's soul: "from faith he derives his motives [. . . and] from faith he receives his strength."¹ This faith is a faith which leads us "to rely on Christ for every thing, and to devote ourselves entirely to his service."²

2.2.3 "Election but not Reprobation"³ (Regeneration and Election)

As shown above Simeon, relates regeneration to God's election, whereby he emphasizes that man does not become regenerated or converted without himself being involved. A corollary of this is the conviction that regeneration and election always have to do with holiness. The regenerate are drawn into a process of holy living. The question remains: once regenerate - is one always regenerate? Once converted - is one's final salvation guaranteed?

Simeon deals very carefully with the definition of election and predestination because of the controversial statements of the Arminians and Calvinists in this matter.⁴ He does not believe that the doctrines of election and predestination are of "primary and fundamental importance;" he rather emphasizes repentance and faith.⁵ Nevertheless, he is convinced that the doctrines of election and simple predestination have a biblical basis.⁶

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2463, vol. xx, p. 522.

² *Ibid.*, p. 523.

³ A. W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 274.

⁴ "The subject of predestination is confessedly very deep and mysterious: nor should it be entered upon without extreme caution," C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1878, vol. xv, p. 313.

⁵ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2092, vol. xvii, p. 271.

⁶ "To us the terms, Election and Predestination, almost sound like blasphemy: but the Apostles did not view them in this light: they considered every blessing we enjoy as the fruit of God's electing love, and of his sovereign will predestinating us from all eternity to the enjoyment of it" (*ibid.*, sermon 1068, vol. ix, p. 212). Cf. also D. Webster, "Simeon's Pastoral Theology," *Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Essays Written in Commemoration of his Bi-Centenary by Members of the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell (London, 1959), pp. 76-84.

Simeon recognizes that the doctrine of election and predestination makes clear that it is wholly God's work to regenerate and save a man. However, God does not elect man irrespective of his will¹ or character.² Election shows the love of God, as he draws man to him;³ furthermore, the doctrine of election should help to encourage people.⁴ Man is elected and predestined that he might be holy, take up his cross daily and follow his Lord Jesus Christ.⁵ Simeon urges men to pay serious attention to the doctrines of election and predestination, as this matter involves God's honour.⁶

Once during his curacy at St. Edwards in Cambridge he had a dispute with a dissenting minister on election, to which he remarks:

I could not receive the doctrine of Election, not being able to separate it from that of Reprobation: but I was not violent against it, being convinced, as much as I was of my own existence, that, whatever others might do, I myself should no more have loved God if he had not first loved me or turned to God if he had not by his free and sovereign grace turned me, than a cannon-ball would of itself return to the orifice from whence it had shot out. But I soon learned that I must take the Scriptures with the simplicity of a little child, and be content to receive on God's testimony what he has revealed, whether I can unravel all the difficulties that may attend it or not; and from that day to this I have

¹ "[. . .] for, notwithstanding it [*i.e.* the way of salvation] is dispensed in a sovereign way altogether according to God's good pleasure, he never interferes with the liberty of the human will, nor even draws any one but by 'the cords of a man,'" C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2092, vol. xvii, p. 270.

² "I will never agree with the Calvinists, that both election and rejection are irrespective of man's character; nor with the Arminians, that they are both dependent on it" (A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 277).

³ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1068, vol. ix, p. 210: "the drawings of God's Spirit do not in the least interfere with the liberty of human actions. The drawing [. . .] is 'with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love:' [. . .] True it is, that we cannot precisely declare the manner in which the operations of the Holy Spirit influence the soul."

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 2439, vol. xx, p. 408: "We are assured, that 'none can ever pluck us out of his hands;' and that, as 'he will not depart from us,' so his fear put into our hearts will be sufficient to keep us from ever departing from him."

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 1878, vol. xv, pp. 314-315.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

never had a doubt respecting the truth of that doctrine, nor a wish [. . .] to be wise above what is written.¹

This quotation shows that Simeon propagated the doctrine of election and predestination, as far as it is not connected with reprobation. He writes that in younger days, he

could not separate election from reprobation; and yet I knew election must be true [. . .] and felt reprobation could not be true.²

For him, election does not guarantee final salvation independently of how the once regenerated person develops; therefore he rejects a wrong doctrine of perseverance:

The doctrine of Final Perseverance, if unscripturally maintained, will be productive of the most fatal consequences to the soul. Shall any man say, 'I am born of God: and therefore can never perish, though I live in sin?' [. . .] Inquire whether you are delivered from the love of and power of sin, and following after universal holiness. These are the marks whereby alone you can form any sound judgement.³

Because of this danger, he also rejects the view of the Ultra-calvinists that the regenerated can never perish,⁴ and he warns people of taking the possibility of apostasy too lightly.⁵ He believes

in final perseverance as much as any of them; but not in *the way* that others do. God's purpose shall stand; but our liability to fall and perish is precisely the same as ever it was: our security, as far as it relates to

¹ Simeon, quoted in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 25.

² A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 273-274.

³ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2446, vol. xx, pp. 440-441.

⁴ "It is affirmed by some, that there is in true believers *an indefectible principle of grace*, which renders it impossible for them to fall - I confess, I think this a very erroneous view of the subject" (*ibid.*, sermon 2439, vol. xx, p. 407).

⁵ Simeon finds in the Bible examples of people who firstly believed in Christ and then fell away. Thus he "can easily conceive of a man having faith and yet falling away, if he neglect the principle of faith, and also neglect to come constantly for new supplies of grace" (A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 281). In this Simeon is reacting against the Calvinists, who use the term "true Christians." He holds this to be an unscriptural distinction, with which they wish to support their doctrine of final perseverance (*ibid.*, p. 286). "Calvinists say that one cannot fall away finally. St Paul says they can [. . .]" (*ibid.*).

Him, consists in *faith*; and, as far as it relates to ourselves, it consists in *fear*.¹

Thus, it is important to recognize that "Saints shall be preserved to the end, not because they cannot fall, for they may; but because God will uphold them."² The regenerate do not need to live in fear of falling:

though the danger of falling is such as may excite in us a holy watchfulness, it need not generate a slavish fear: since God engages to uphold the upright in heart: and they are therefore warranted in expecting from him all needful aid.³

As with the doctrine of election, Simeon does not hold the doctrine of assurance as such to belong to the fundamentals of Christianity: "assurance is a privilege, but not a duty."⁴ He himself distinguishes between three sorts of assurance, as he sees the source of incorrect conclusions concerning the doctrine of assurance to be based in a missing differentiation.

a full assurance of understanding [. . .], of faith [. . .], and of hope [. . .]. The first relates to a clear view of revealed truth in all its parts; the second to the power and willingness of Christ to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and the third, (which is generally understood by the word *assurance*) to our own personal interest in Christ.⁵

According to Simeon, assurance of hope "may doubtless be enjoyed; but a person may possess saving faith without it, and even a full assurance of faith without it."⁶ In this statement, his own experience as well as his convictions as a churchman seem to have acted as a safeguard against adopting the identification of "saving or

¹ Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 566.

² A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 279. "There is nothing in the saint that makes his salvation certain, yet God hath decreed that he shall not perish. He is preserved by God, but not by anything which God has put into him" (p. 280).

³ C. Simeon, *Horæ Homileticæ*, sermon 2316, vol. xix, p. 362.

⁴ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 15.

⁵ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*

justifying faith" with "faith of assurance," which particularly the Arminians seem to have propagated.¹

The manner in which Simeon deals with the subject of assurance and perseverance shows that he is less concerned about election; rather, it is God's promises which are important for him. Simeon is purposely ambiguous on this point: on the one hand, God gives everything and upholds one; on the other hand, it is important for the Christian to uphold the principles of faith. The activities of God and man cannot be surgically separated from one another.

He adamantly refuses to accept the doctrine of reprobation.² Although the doctrine of election connects him with the Calvinists, he rejects the Ultra-calvinist doctrine of reprobation; he can only understand predestination in this sense, namely as simple predestination.³

in predestination as fully as possible: It is entirely of God's free grace that any soul is saved. [. . .] Yet there is in all this nothing of reprobation; I do not find it in the Scriptures. [. . .] All the good we do is of God; all the evil is of ourselves.⁴

If we now once more take a look at the relationship between regeneration and election, several things become clear:

Simeon does *not* necessarily link regeneration to an assurance of salvation, as in the case of many evangelicals. His own experience and ecclesiology seem to have

¹ Simeon himself recounts his own experience after conversion: "when I found [. . .] that justifying faith was a faith of affiance, and not a faith of assurance, my peace returned; because, though I had not a faith of assurance, I had as full a conviction that I relied on the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as I had of my own experience. From that time to the present hour I have never for a moment lost my hope and confidence in my adorable Saviour" (ibid., p. 518).

² C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 1878, vol. xv, p. 316: "It will probably be objected, that, if there be any who are thus predestined unto life, the remainder must of necessity be ordained to death. But this we by no means admit. We grant that it is a difficulty which we are not able to explain: and we are contended to be ignorant of those things which it has not pleased God to reveal."

³ Ibid., sermon 2379, vol. xx, pp. 131-132: "many affirm, that *if the doctrine of election be true, that of reprobation, of absolute reprobation, must be true also*. [. . .] That it [the Bible] does deny the doctrine of absolute reprobation, I think is clear as the light itself."

⁴ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 274.

played a decisive role in tempering his Evangelicalism in this matter as well as in the related issue of predestination.

The Ultra-calvinists maintained that true believers, *i.e.* the truly regenerate, could never fall away because of the indefectibility of grace. In other words, regeneration was linked with election and assurance of salvation; once a believer - saved for ever. A consequence of this stance was the notion of final perseverance, namely that the regenerate must necessarily finally persevere, regardless of their conduct in life. Antinomianism could be a result of this. A further consequence was also a rejection of the possibility of apostasy.

Simeon, on the other hand, did not link a doctrine of the indefectibility of grace with regeneration. He could even go so far as to assert that assurance of salvation was not linked to regeneration. He criticized the antinomianism which could result out of Ultra-Calvinism, and held apostasy to be a reality within the Church.

2.3 Baptism, Regeneration and the Missing Link

Aware of the fact that many identified baptism with regeneration, Simeon formulated the following question: is it possible that every person baptized is regenerate, given the fact that regenerate cannot commit sin? His answer was no; experience tells us that this is not the case; many of those baptized commit sin, which implies that they are not regenerate. However, according to Simeon it does not follow that regeneration never occurs at baptism. Such a conclusion would limit God's sovereignty:

I will not say that God may not convert a person at the time of his baptism, as well as at any other time. God may make use of any rite, or any ordinance, or any occurrence whatever, to effect his own purposes: but to say that he always creates a man anew [. . .] under the ordinance of baptism, is as contrary to truth as any assertion that ever proceeded from the lips of man. And as long as these words remain in the Bible, that a man 'cannot sin, because he is born of God,' so long it must be

obvious to every dispassionate mind that there is a new birth perfectly distinct from baptism, and totally independent of it.¹

We find this hidden polemic in several sermons. It is obviously aimed at the Orthodox party's claim that regeneration proper always occurs at baptism.² Simeon does not want to identify new birth and regeneration with baptism, and he does not allow that baptism should be characterized as a rite which saves without any co-operation on the part of the recipient.³

In this matter, Simeon is prepared to make concessions to his Orthodox opponents and say that regeneration always occurs at baptism, as long as regeneration is defined as the right and title to salvation. This definition of course merely appears to be a concession, as it comprises Simeon's own definition of baptism.

Several elements are steadfastly maintained by Simeon in his description of the relationship between baptism and regeneration:

a) Baptism is the "outward work of man upon the body," whereas regeneration is the "inward work of God upon the soul."⁴ Therefore, the latter is necessary for salvation, whilst the former may be dispensed with in certain cases;⁵

b) Baptism is a change of state, whereas regeneration is a change of nature;⁶

c) Baptism is a "title to the blessings of salvation;" regeneration is the "actual possession" of these blessings. Through the former alone, actual renewal, salvation or sanctification cannot occur. The latter is absolutely indispensable:⁷

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2446, vol. xx, p. 439; cf. sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 231; sermon 1975, vol. xvi, p.257: "infants dedicated to God in baptism *may* and sometimes *do* (though in a way not discoverable for us, except by the fruits) receive a new nature from the Spirit of God *in*, and *with*, and *by* that ordinance."

² Ibid., sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 231.

³ Ibid., sermon 1975; vol. xvi, 262.

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 246; cf. sermon 1983, vol. xvi, p. 310.

⁵ Ibid., sermon 1608, vol. xiii, p. 246.

⁶ Ibid., sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 232; cf. sermon 1983, vol. xvi, p. 310.

⁷ Ibid., sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 232.

the actual possession of those blessings can only be obtained by the exercise of faith in Christ for the justification of their souls, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit for their restoration to the Divine image.¹

d) Baptism is the sign, regeneration the thing signified.²

To receive any *saving* benefit (for, if it be rightly received, 'baptism does save us') we must have not only *the sign*, but the *thing signified*, a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.³

e) Baptism is the baptism with water, regeneration is the baptism with fire and the Holy Spirit:⁴

we must be 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' [. . .] this which is so wanted, is the very gift which Christ alone can bestow, namely, the baptism of the Spirit, as contrasted with, and superadded to, the baptism of water: it is 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost' superadded to 'the washing of regeneration.' If we have received this spiritual baptism, it will infallibly discover itself by its effects upon our heart and life.⁵

Why is this baptism by the Spirit superior to baptism of water?

The baptism of water you are to receive but once: but the baptism of the Spirit you are to be receiving every day and hour.⁶

f) Baptism is a type or shadow, whereas regeneration is real, the real radical change of the external rite.⁷

g) Baptism is merely a figurative representation of the blessings, regeneration the communication of the same. The latter depends on the sincerity of the baptized person.⁸

Several biblical stories illuminate the difference between baptism and regeneration:

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1864, vol. xv, p. 232.

² Ibid., sermon 1283, vol. xi, p. 26.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 26f.

⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1283, vol. xi, p. 27.

⁷ Ibid., sermon 1056, vol. ix, p. 152.

⁸ Ibid., sermon 1806, vol. xiv, p. 544.

2.3.1 Simon Magus & the Dying Thief

Simon Magus was baptized, but he did not experience a change of nature.¹ Contrary to this, the dying thief on the cross was saved by faith alone, without being baptized by water.²

For Simeon, these two men are striking examples for the great difference between baptism and regeneration,

regeneration being absolutely necessary to salvation, while baptism [. . .] may under some circumstances be dispensed with.³

In a certain sense, baptism is lastly not nearly as significant for Simeon. In his eyes, Simon Magus and the dying thief are convincing proofs of the fact that regeneration is vastly more important than baptism:

It appears then from the superior importance of regeneration, from the design of Christ and his Apostles respecting it, and from the properties ascribed to it in Scripture, that it neither is, nor can be, the same with baptism. Baptism is an outward work of man upon the body; regeneration is an inward work of God upon the soul.⁴

2.3.2 Noah's ark

A sermon on *Noah's ark a Type of Christ* nicely demonstrates the relationship between baptism and regeneration. It also clearly expresses the thought that baptism alone is worthless without regeneration as the "answer of a good conscience."

Simeon draws a parallel between the ark and Christ:⁵

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 1608; vol. xiii, p. 246; sermon 1975, vol. xvi, p. 261: "Simon Magus was baptized; and yet remained in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, as much after his baptism as he was before [. . .] this is an infallible proof, that the change, which the Scriptures call the new birth, does not always and of necessity accompany this sacred ordinance."

² Ibid., sermon 1608; vol. xiii, 246.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., sermon 2404, vol. xx, p. 239.

the salvation experienced by Noah in the ark, was typical of that which we experience by Christ, and into which we are brought by our baptism.¹

As God has provided the ark for the salvation for Noah; he has also provided a saviour for those, who repent and turn to him today.²

Why then is baptism at all necessary, if Christ alone is the way to salvation? As a churchman, Simeon sees baptism to be the appointed way of becoming a member of Christ's body;³ through baptism, we are baptized into the faith of Christ:

When we are baptized into the faith of Christ, we profess our persuasion that 'there is salvation in no other,' and our desire 'to be found in him,' not having our own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith in him. Thus we come to be *in him*, as a branch in the vine, [. . .] as Noah in the ark.⁴

As an Evangelical, he can by no means say that the rite of baptism automatically saves. Rather, he limits the saving effect of baptism to those, who have "the answer of a good conscience towards God:"

Not that this benefit is annexed to the mere outward form of baptism, but to that baptism which is accompanied with 'the answer of a good conscience towards God.'⁵

In baptism, one is buried with Christ, brought to new life through Christ's resurrection and initiated into a "new and heavenly world," just as Noah was brought into the ark and saved. Baptism is thus more than a mere rite; it means being buried and resurrected with Christ.⁶

However, at this point Simeon's Evangelical affiliation once more asserts itself: he is compelled to clearly express his conviction that baptism in itself is in vain and cannot save a person, if he does not manifest a corresponding life:

¹ Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2404, vol. xx, p. 238.

² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³ "By 'baptism' we embark, as it were, on board this divinely constructed vessel" (*ibid.*).

⁴ *Ibid.*; cf. sermon 1806, vol. xv, p. 544.

⁵ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2404, vol. xx, p. 240.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 240f.

we shall in vain receive the rite of baptism [. . .] if we cannot *declare* [. . .] that it is our desire and endeavour to be holy as God is holy. Let us then not lay undue stress upon the outward observances of any kind; but rather seek a conformity to the Divine image; for it will surely be found true at the last, that 'the pure in the heart shall see God,' but that '*without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*'¹

This paragraph leaves the reader wondering, if Simeon in his typological exegesis of the ark of Noah in actual fact attributes any real meaning to baptism, or if he only views death and resurrection with Christ in baptism in a purely metaphorical sense.

Probably this would be a misrepresentation of Simeon. It rather seems as if we here have the two hearts of the churchman Simeon and the Evangelical Simeon, each in its own way struggling to express the biblical truth.

2.3.3 Circumcision and Baptism

A third picture which Simeon likes to use to express the relationship of baptism and regeneration is circumcision. Baptism corresponds to circumcision as a "seal of our privileges," a "memorial of our engagements," and an "emblem of our duties."²

Abraham is a type of the first Christians. In both cases their faith, imputed to them for righteousness, preceded the ordinance of baptism and the ordinance of circumcision. Thus the ordinance may be seen as a seal of something, which they already possessed.

Secondly, Simeon views names given at baptism and the introduction into the society of Christians as a kind of "memorial of our engagements" made at baptism:

We can never recollect to what society we belong, or hear ourselves addressed by our Christian name. but we have a striking memorial, that 'we are not our own [. . .].'³

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 2404, vol. xx, p. 241.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 27, vol. i, pp. 136f.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 137. This he views to be equivalent to the change of Abram's and Sarai's names.

As an "emblem of our duties," baptism reminds the baptized person of the "inward and spiritual grace." This "inward and spiritual grace" is the answer of a good conscience towards God and implies a discarding of the "filth of the flesh" and "a life of entire devotedness to God."¹

Again, we can observe the tension in which Simeon lived. On the one hand, he propagates infant baptism wholeheartedly; on the other hand, he maintains that the life of baptized persons must correspond to the vows at baptism. Therefore, he cannot accept the view of the Anabaptists that conversion and faith must of necessity precede baptism. Nor can he accept the Orthodox position concerning baptism, which in his eyes seems to imply *ex opere operato*. As an Evangelical within the Church of England, he is compelled to point out that the infant baptized has to accept the content and meaning of baptism for himself at some stage of his life.

The picture of circumcision aids him in clearly expressing this dual aspect. Firstly, the infant is baptized into the society of Christians and receives the seal and title of all privileges;² secondly, he needs to grasp this title, just as the Israelites needed to grasp theirs:

to their infant offspring the ordinance of baptism assured nothing more than an external right to these blessings, and a certainty possessing them as soon as they believed.³

Thus, circumcision of the offspring of Abraham as well as baptism of the offspring of the first Christians becomes effective only when followed by obedience towards God and faith.⁴ In both cases, one must have the answer of a good conscience towards God. Baptism is not really baptism without regeneration, just as circumcision of the flesh is nothing without circumcision of the heart.⁵

¹ C. Simeon, *Home Homileticae*, sermon 27, vol. i, p. 137: he describes this life as "death unto sin," "new birth unto righteousness," having "our conversation [...] in heaven."

² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

It is interesting to note that Simeon does not mention the Lutheran aspect of *fides/vita passiva*, i.e. the belief that baptism expresses the fact that faith is the work of God alone.

2.3.4 Baptism as a Covenant

By baptism, man is brought into a covenant. This covenant contains many blessings. However, access to these blessings can only be obtained if certain obligations are observed and the vows pledged at baptism are fulfilled.¹

These pictures once more demonstrate the thrust of Simeon's message. His audience is the Church of England, which is comprised of people baptized as infants. He is therefore not so much concerned about presenting the necessity of baptism. Rather, he sees the danger of people nominally belonging to the Church without having a real commitment to Christ. Therefore he continually points out that people need to grasp the grace given in baptism, that baptism is "effectual to those only who receive it aright."²

¹ See "General Index," of *ibid.*, vol. xxi, p. 442: "V. *The OBLIGATIONS of the Baptismal Covenant.*" Cf. sermon 27, vol. i, p. 136; sermon 595, vol. v, pp. 433ff.

² C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1806, vol. xiv, p. 544.

3 Baptism in the Light of Simeon's Life and Pastoral Theology

Simeon's view of baptism can be seen to be deeply embedded in his life and thought.

3.1 Simeon the Evangelical: Baptism and Conversion

We have seen that at the time of his conversion Simeon's background and surroundings did not encourage him to this step. His "parents had little influence on his religious development,"¹ and

the general environment of Simeon [. . .] was neither particularly favourable or [sic!] unfavourable to religion [. . .] the general atmosphere of public school and university was not conducive to any great advance in that direction.²

Thus, he could honestly say that his conversion took place without the help of any man.

This experience not only caused Simeon to praise God as the sole author of his conversion. It also left a deep-seated conviction in his heart that conversion and regeneration were generally the work of God alone; that true conversion was not dependent on human rhetoric, but rather on God's power alone.

As no human influence was instrumental at his conversion, he could wholeheartedly say that only the sovereign will of God was at work in his life. In the same way, his own experience of his inability to do good and turn to God confirmed the doctrine of the total depravity of man; his own life demonstrated to him that man alone is not capable of turning to God because of his corrupt nature.

In his own words, conversion is

contrary to the course of nature, and only brought about by God's almighty power [. . .] Before conversion, his heart and mind flow rapidly downwards - away from his Creator, by its natural tendency - towards destruction. After conversion, all its tendencies are changed, and it flows upwards from destruction, back again towards its Creator. Is this

¹ Cf. F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 191.

² *Ibid.*, p. 194f.

done by human agency? All the inhabitants of the globe could not do it. It is done by an invisible power, by a way of which we know nothing but the name and effects. Tell the worldling (who knows nothing of this power) these truths, and he will ridicule the whole idea, and you for entertaining it.¹

This citation shows that Simeon regards conversion to be a total change: before conversion, everything is found to be moving away from God; after conversion, everything moves towards him. For Simeon, this proves that God alone can effect true change in man.

Simeon's conversion also allows him to reject the belief of many evangelicals that it is always possible to name the date of one's conversion. In a letter, he writes that

to specify *the day* that I was *renatus*, is beyond my power.²

Thus in his teaching, he rejects the claim of some that it is necessary to specify a certain day or manner of conversion.³

After his conversion, Simeon began to feel the necessity of living for the benefit of others and changing his life-style. In this way, he experienced the fruits which his conversion bore. Simeon's emphasis on true Christian conduct is thus similarly rooted in his own life and experience. It lets us better understand what he means when he says that "faith and works are not separable,"⁴ or "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord*,"⁵ his own faith was rooted in the conviction that regeneration is inseparably connected to good fruits and holiness.

We can thus observe that Simeon's own conversion-experience had consequences for his theology. His own life showed him that he was unregenerate until he

¹ F.W. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 156. Moule recounts the following words of Simeon: "Under God, I owe everything to Provost Cooke;" the Provost forced Simeon to attend Communion (*Charles Simeon*, p. 16).

² C. Simeon in a letter to Rev. J.H. Michel in Oct., 1832; in W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 711.

³ F.W.B. Bullock, *Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain*, p. 225.

⁴ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 274.

⁵ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2404, xx, 241.

experienced conversion. He personally discovered how the "blessings of regeneration" bore fruit in his life. Of course, it would be wrong to derive all of his teaching from his experience. Rather, three factors seem to have together shaped his thoughts, namely conversion, the Bible¹ and the liturgy.

3.2 Simeon the Bible Christian: Baptism and Hermeneutics

A glance at Simeon's hermeneutics also helps us to understand his view of baptism better.²

3.2.1 "Be Bible Christians, not System Christians"

Not only was the Bible central for Simeon's theology and ethics; it was also the source of inspiration for his devotional life.³

In his sermon on *The Perfection and Sanctity of the Holy Scriptures*,⁴ Simeon describes the Bible as being perfect "as a revelation of God" and "as a directory to us."⁵ He emphasizes that it is not permissible to add or to suppress one single

¹ He regularly rose at four a.m. and spent four hours in Bible study and prayer; M. Hennell, "The Evangelical Revival in the Church of England," *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. by C. Jones/G. Wainwright/E. Yarnold (London, 1986), p. 461. Cf. also A. Bennett, "Charles Simeon: Prince of Evangelicals," *Churchman* 102 (1988), pp. 128f. H.E. Hopkins points out that the perusal of *Brown's Self-Interpreting Bible* greatly aided Simeon in his personal study of the Bible; *Charles Simeon. Preacher Extraordinary*, (Bramcote, 1979), p. 18.

² See J. Booty, "Reformers and Missionaries: The Bible in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century England," *Anglicanism and the Bible*, ed. by F.H. Borsh (Wilton, 1984), pp. 127-129. Booty underlines the Christological aspects of Simeon's hermeneutics.

³ R.S. Dell, "Simeon and the Bible," in: *Charles Simeon*, ed. by A. Pollard/M. Hennell, p. 29.

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, vol. xxi, pp. 277ff.

⁵ "The Perfection of the Scriptures - That may be considered as perfect, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be withdrawn. Now the Scriptures, in this view of them, are perfect: for there is nothing in them either superfluous or defective. They are perfect, 1. As a revelation from God [. . .] 2. As a directory to us" (ibid., pp. 278-279).

word.¹ However, he did not believe in a literalist kind of a verbal inspiration. Scripture is written in human words by writers inspired by God.² Although he concedes that there may be inaccurate statements concerning philosophical or scientific matters, he is convinced that in matters of faith, the Bible is without error.³ In his sermon *The Word of God Precious*, Simeon states that the word of God "is necessary for all," that "it is suitable to all," and that "it is sufficient for all."⁴ Then he goes on to point out the effects of the word of God:

In a man that is impenitent and unbelieving, we acknowledge that the word is calculated to inspire terror: but to one that is of a penitent and contrite spirit, it speaks nothing but peace and joy.⁵

Thus, it is not the reader who judges the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible judges the reader. Simeon's maxim is straightforward: to obey the Bible is identical to obeying Christ. Consequently Simeon's approach to the Bible consists in seeking the will of Christ as revealed in its pages.⁶

Only the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit can illuminate the meaning of the Bible.⁷ It is therefore important to pray for illumination when reading the Bible.⁸

¹ "Nothing can exceed the strictness with which the smallest alteration of God's blessed word is forbidden [. . .] God [will] on no account suffer us to suppress or add one single word." C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, vol. xxi, pp. 279-280.

² R.S. Dell, "Simeon and the Bible," p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1054, vol. ix, pp. 136-137.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶ R.S. Dell, "Simeon and the Bible," p. 45.

⁷ "To unenlightened man, the Scriptures are 'a sealed book;' nor, however learned he may be in other sciences, can he attain the knowledge of Christ, unless the Holy Spirit shine into his heart to give him that knowledge. If we look to a sun-dial, we may understand the use and import of the figures; yet can we not attain a knowledge of the time unless the sun shine upon it. So it is with respect to the word of God: we may understand the general meaning of the words; yet can we not receive its spiritual instructions, unless we have that 'unction of the Holy One, whereby we may know all things.'" C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 975, vol. viii, p. 422. See also H.D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation. An Historical Study A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860* (London, 1959), pp. 234-6.

⁸ "[. . .] while we thus read the Scriptures, [. . .] Let us pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit" (C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 975, vol. viii, p. 422).

Thus, "it is faith, and not learning," which is required, if we want to understand the Bible properly.¹

Simeon endeavoured to develop his theology according to the precepts of the Bible, without imposing his views upon the Bible.² He does not wholly deny that there is a system in the Bible, but he is convinced that the "system" in Scriptures cannot be fully comprehended by any human system; therefore, any dogmatical system falls in danger of missing the mark.³

Because of this attitude, he advises his readers to adopt both extremes, and not to vacillate between the two extremes or try to harmonize them. These apparent contradictions in Scripture work towards a common end:

[. . .] the truth is *not in the middle*, and *not in one extreme*; but in *both extremes*. [. . .] it is not *one* extreme that we are to go to, but *both* extremes.⁴

¹ "[. . .] be it known, that however valuable learning may be for the attaining of a *critical* acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, it is not at all necessary for a *spiritual* perception of their truths. It is faith, and not learning, what is wanting for *that* end" (C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 880, vol. vii, p. 562).

² In the preface to *Horae Homileticae* Simeon writes: "In the discussion of so many subjects, it cannot fail but that every doctrine of our holy religion must be more or less canvassed. On every point the Author has spoken freely, and without reserve. As for names and parties in religion, he equally disclaims them all: he takes his religion from the Bible; and endeavours, as much as possible, to speak as that speaks" (vol. i, p. xiv).

³ "The Author is no friend to systematizers in Theology. He has endeavoured to derive from the Scriptures alone *his* views of religion; and to them it is his wish to adhere [. . .] giving to every part of it that sense, which it seems to him to have been designed by its great Author to convey. [. . .] He has no doubt but that there is a system in the Holy Scriptures; [. . .] but he is persuaded that neither Calvinists nor Arminians are in *exclusive* possession of that system. He is disposed to think that the Scripture system, be it what it may, is of a broader and more comprehensive character than some very exact and dogmatical Theologians are inclined to allow" (C. Simeon, preface to *Horae Homileticae*, vol. i, p. xxiii).

⁴ W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 600.

Thus, Simeon saw the danger inherent in any attempt to systematize the Bible. In line with this is his maxim: "Be Bible Christians, and not System Christians."¹ He therefore always attempts to understand a text in its whole context; he protests against the misuse of words taken out of context.²

One result of this was that Simeon preached on nearly all biblical books.³

In conclusion, we can say that Simeon lived and taught according to his adage: "The Bible first, the Prayer Book next, and all other books and doings in subordination to both."⁴ He went about with all doctrines and theological statements accordingly. He did not press the biblical truth into a system, nor he did he feel obliged to represent any doctrine for its own sake. Rather, he had the freedom to allow apparently conflicting biblical statements to stand side by side without attempting to resolve the tension.

Admittedly, despite his claim that the Bible could not be reduced to a human system, his sermons and Brown's notes of the Conversation parties show that his

¹ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 269: "God has not revealed His truth in a system; the Bible has no system as such. Lay aside system and fly to the Bible; receive its words with simple submission, and without an eye to any system. Be Bible Christians, and not system Christians. [. . .] Never allow yourselves to *pit* one passage against another. [. . .] opposites may possibly be true, especially in Scripture, where we know so little of the mysteries to which passages point. [. . .] We cannot understand all now; but hereafter the veil shall be removed, and then we shall understand the whole." Simeon's attitude met with a great deal of criticism, as R.W. Heinze points out; "Charles Simeon - Through the Eyes of an American Lutheran," *Churchman* 93 (1979), pp. 245f.

² Cf. C. Simeon, preface to *Horae Homileticae*, vol. i, p. xxvii: "These Discourses, it may be added, comprehend all the topics which he considers as of primary and fundamental importance to mankind. On many other points there exists, and will probably continue to exist, a diversity of opinion: and in writing upon the *whole* Scriptures, it would not be expected but that he should occasionally touch on such topics, as they presented themselves to him in his course. But as he has endeavoured, without prejudice or partiality, to give to every text its just meaning, its natural bearing, and its legitimate use, he hopes, that those who dislike his expositions of the texts which oppose their particular views, will consult what he has written on the texts which they regard as the sheet anchors of their system."

³ A product of his sermons are the 21 volumes of *Horae Homileticae*.

⁴ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 12.

style was itself not entirely undogmatical.¹ Even Simeon was not completely immune against reading the Bible through a certain set of spectacles, even if his view was generally successful in keeping him away from the pitfalls of his Arminian and Ultra-calvinistic contemporaries.²

His avowedly "unsystematic" biblical interpretation influenced his statements concerning regeneration as well as the state of regeneration itself. Concerning the state of the regenerate, Simeon can state that on the one side, the regenerate must live in holiness; on the other side, "two wills" fight against one other in his breast. Although regeneration is wholly the work of God, God does not regenerate anybody against his will.

Simeon's loyalty to the Prayer Book besides the Bible as expressed in the saying "the Bible first, the Prayer Book next" becomes painfully evident in his statements concerning baptismal regeneration. These manifest his struggles between a biblical theology and his reverence towards the Prayer Book and generally follow a certain pattern: firstly, he examines the biblical texts; secondly, he compares his results with the statements of the Prayer Book. He then asserts that the Prayer Book never uses stronger language than the Bible itself. Finally, he concludes that the statements in the Prayer Book are indeed scriptural.³

Thus it can be said that Simeon's hermeneutics played a role in his view of baptism and regeneration.

¹ E. Jay (ed.), *The Evangelical and the Oxford Movements* (Cambridge [et. al.], 1983), p. 20. Jay criticises that in Simeon's writings "competing dogmatisms are dismissed." One has to be careful not to generalize this assertion, even though this critique is not entirely unjustified.

² Cf. W. Carus, *Memoirs*, p. 719: Simeon's declared aim in his sermons was "To promote a candid, liberal, and consistent mode of explaining the Scriptures. [. . .] *To weaken at least, if not eradicate, the disputes about Calvinism and Arminianism.*"

³ Cf. *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2069, vol. xvii, pp. 147-155.

3.3 Simeon the Churchman: Baptism and Ecclesiology

3.3.1 The Centrality of the Church

As we have seen, Simeon emphasized church order and the importance of the Church formularies. His reverence for the Prayer Book is well-known.

Of course, he was forced to interpret several passages in such a way as to prove his Evangelical convictions. As shown above, this was the case in his interpretation of regeneration. In all this, he was convinced that he was understanding the formularies as only a churchman could.

It is therefore not surprising to learn that Simeon's ecclesiology also shaped his baptismal convictions.

3.3.2 Church and Baptism

Several passages in Simeon's sermons illustrate the relationship of Church and baptism.

3.3.2.1 "Enter then into the Ark:" Faith and Baptism

Simeon explores the relation of baptism and Church in a sermon on the *Preservation of Noah*, in which the ark is compared with the Church:

This ark was typical of the Church of Christ. St. Peter compares it with baptism, by which we are initiated into the Church; and tells us, that as Noah was saved by his admission into the one, so are we by our introduction into the other.¹

For the Christians, baptism and the Church are the vehicle of salvation, in the same way that the ark was the vehicle of salvation for Noah. What does "vehicle" mean for Simeon?

Firstly, provisions and means have been provided for salvation - in Noah's case the ark and in the Christian's case the Church.² Baptism is the entrance into

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 16, vol. i, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-80.

the Church: the Church points out the way of salvation, namely the appointed means of salvation.¹

Within this typological exegesis, Simeon struggles to point out that baptism and Church cannot save automatically, but that they are merely the vehicle. In this his Evangelical stance once more becomes manifest.

Secondly, he argues that directions were given to Noah, through which he was saved. He had to obey these directions and enter the ark. For Christians these directions consist of the appointed means of salvation. At this point, the reader would expect Simeon to identify these means of salvation with baptism as the initiation into the Church. It is all the more astonishing to perceive that this is not the case. Simeon's thought takes a turn here, and he rather inconsequently identifies these means of salvation with faith in Christ, who is the door.²

Thus, he does not relate these means of salvation to baptism, but rather to Christians within the Church. Typologically, it would have been more logical to interpret entering into the ark as meaning baptism into the Church and to admonish his hearers to be baptized. Through this line of argument, a certain ambiguity arises: on the one hand, baptism is related to the ark, on the other hand to faith.

Why does he ignore this latter aspect and somewhat wilfully relate the means of salvation to faith in Christ? Once again, the answer must lie in his Evangelical outlook, which always felt the urge to emphasize the aspect of living faith and true commitment. The rest of the sermon confirms this supposition, as he endeavours to

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 16, vol. i, p. 81.

² Ibid.: "Noah having finished the ark, waited for further intimations of the divine will, which at length were given him. The directions, as it relates to us, implies [. . .] That we should use the appointed means of salvation ourselves - God having formed his church, and provided every thing requisite for the preservation of our souls, now speaks to every one of us, 'Enter thou into the ark.' Christ says to us, 'I am the door;' 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' By Him therefore we are to enter in."

demolish the belief that all who are baptized are saved. He does this by introducing a distinction between the visible and invisible Church.

3.3.2.2 Visible and Invisible Church: Branches, Fishes and Tares

Simeon holds that baptism is only initiation into the visible Church:

It is granted, that as far as the ark designates the *visible* Church of Christ, we are all inclosed in it. But we must distinguish between the *visible* and the *invisible* church.¹

The visible Church is constituted of both, true and merely nominal Christians. He illustrates this through three pictures taken from the New Testament:

Our blessed Lord has taught us carefully to distinguish between the fruitful and the unfruitful branches; which, though they are both 'in him,' will be very differently dealt with by the great Husbandman. The Gospel net incloses many fishes; but the good only will be preserved: the bad will be cast away. In the field, the tares grow together with the wheat: but a separation will be made at last; the one for the fire of hell, the other for the granary of heaven.²

"A separation will be made at last" - this shows that Simeon is not willing to classify people as regenerate and unregenerate, as this can only be done by God. He quite clearly states that he reckons with true and nominal Christians within the visible Church, just as "there was an 'accursed Ham' in the ark, as well as a righteous Noah."³ The main point driven home through these types is therefore

that it is not any outward privilege of profession that constitutes us Christians, but an inward change of heart, which approves itself to the all-seeing God.⁴

Through this interpretation of Noah's ark, Simeon can hold onto the conviction that baptism is the initiation rite into the Church, whilst at the same time maintaining that the Church is a *corpus permixtum*.

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 16, vol. i, p. 82.

² *Ibid.*, alluding to John xv.2; Matt. xiii. 47.48; Matt. xiii. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴ *Ibid.*

3.3.2.3 The "Individualism" of Simeon's Ecclesiology

Webster maintains that Simeon's ecclesiology is too individualistic and doesn't recognize the corporate side of the Church sufficiently.¹ According to Webster, Simeon differentiates between the Church at large and each member of it, because he thinks of the Church as a religious idea rather than as a corporate body.

Is this criticism justified? In order to ascertain this, we need to take a look at Simeon's own life and work:

Simeon often refers to the Church in its relationship to Christ. He views the Church as married to Christ, who is the bridegroom, the "supreme Head and 'Lord' of his Church."² As the head³ and husband, Christ gives life to the Church.⁴ As Christ's fold⁵ and Christ's mystical body,⁶ the Church is brought into an intimate relationship with God; she has

by adoption, by regeneration, and especially by her union with the Lord Jesus Christ become the 'daughter of the Almighty God.'⁷

Whilst the bridegroom - bride comparison mainly reflects the intimate connexion between Christ and the Church, other pictures emphasize the purifying, perfecting and caring behaviour of Christ:

¹ M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," pp. 128-9.

² C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 577, vol. v, p. 350. Cf. sermon 1144, vol. x, p. 16: "He is the Bridegroom of his Church; and every true Christian, as well as the whole body of his Church, is presented to him under the character of his spouse;" *ibid.*, p. 14: "THERE are various figures in the Scriptures to represent the care which God will take of his people: [. . .] He considers himself as standing in the relation of a husband to them [his people] [. . .] He had chosen them, and set them apart for that end;" sermon 1246, vol. x, p. 471: "He is the Head; and 'the Church is his body' [. . .]."

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 2096, vol. xvii, pp. 283ff.

⁴ M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," p. 127.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1001, vol. xviii, pp. 542ff: The Church is "Christ's mystical body" (p. 545), whereby "every member has its proper place, and its proper office: and, if one were wanting, the whole body would be defective, and deformed" (p. 546).

⁷ *Ibid.*, sermon 577, vol. v, p. 349.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church,¹ he is in his Church,² governs his Church³ and cares for her.⁴ Christ as the High Priest and King builds, supports, supplies and perfects his Church.⁵ He further administers to her such correction as she requires.⁶ Simeon writes: "Though the Church is vile in herself, she is complete in Christ."⁷

These pictures all tend to express the corporate aspect of the Church. It is therefore not surprising to find further evidence of this in Simeon's ecclesiology:

As the Church is composed of those who "flock to Christ, even 'as doves to their windows,"⁸ the Church is

that society of godly persons, to which all in every place unite themselves, as soon as ever they are converted to God: and it enjoys exclusively the manifestations of God's love and favour: and is often menaced by all the powers of earth and hell.⁹

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1374, vol. xi, pp. 445ff: "Christ, personally considered, is the only true foundation on which the Church is built" (p. 449, note n).

² Ibid., sermon 1106, vol. ix, pp. 386ff. "[. . .] his Church which he established, consisted only of himself and a few poor fishermen." Why did she survive? "God was in it, and therefore it was not consumed" (p. 388).

³ Ibid., sermon 910, vol. v, pp. 70ff; esp. p. 72: "The Church is under the immediate government of God [. . .] He is its Judge, its Lawgiver, and its King [. . .] it is JEHOVA who is our defence." Cf. also sermon 2096, vol. xvii, p. 285: Christ carries on the "government of his Church."

⁴ Ibid., sermon 898, vol. viii, pp. 1-3: "The Church [. . .] is set apart" (p.1) "She is preserved by an invisible, but almighty Protector [. . .] God promises to afford his people *continual* and effectual protection" (p.2).

⁵ Ibid., sermon 1246, vol. x, p. 470: "Christ is, by his offices, qualified to support and perfect his Church." Christ is the High Priest and the King: "From the union of these two offices in him arises his ability to build his Church;" "[. . .] in the use of his ordinances, we may expect all needful supplies [. . .] it is through the ordinances only that we can receive 'supplies of the Spirit from Jesus Christ'" (p. 471).

⁶ M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," p. 127.

⁷ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 577, vol. v, p. 350.

⁸ Ibid., sermon 731, vol. vi, p. 445.

⁹ Ibid., sermon 910, vol. viii, p. 71.

The Church as Christ's body consists of many members, who altogether form the complete body with Christ as the head.¹ Within this "one great family,"² each member has a special status, and a very real relationship exists between the different members.³ The duty of all these members of Christ's mystical body is "to submit to him," "to trust in him," to "rejoice in him" and to "walk in his steps." They must also "cultivate charity, and maintain 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'"⁴

But Christianity brings men not only into one body, but into a oneness of heart and affection.⁵

Thus, there is an **external and visible** as well as an **internal and spiritual** union between the members:

The internal and spiritual union expresses itself through "a participation of the same vital energies," "an accordance in the same divine principles," "a prosecution of the same heavenly pursuits" and "a sympathy with the whole body in all its parts."⁶

The external and visible union consists in the fact that "by baptism we are all brought into one body," disregarding of the spiritual state of each person in the

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 2096, vol. xvii, p. 285: "The Church is called 'his body,' and 'his fulness.' The body [. . .] consists of many members: and it is the whole aggregate of members that constitutes the body: and the body, joined to the head, forms the complete man. [. . .] Every believer is a member of Christ: the whole collective number of believers form his entire body: and, by their union with him, Christ himself is represented as complete."

² M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," p. 128.

³ Ibid.

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1921, vol. xv, pp. 549ff. The duty of all its members: "To submit to him" (p.551)/ "To trust in him"/ "Rejoice in him" (p.552)/ "Walk in his steps" (p. 553) - "it is [. . .] by no means necessary that we all conform precisely to the same rule in indifferent matters: but it is necessary that we cultivate charity, and maintain 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'" (p. 553).

⁵ Ibid., sermon 1983, vol. xvi, p. 307.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 308-309. Simeon concedes that Christians may have different views. Nevertheless, as the body of Christ they must agree in the basic doctrines.

Church.¹ Every member is admonished to perform the duties of his part of the body, so that the body doesn't suffer.²

This external and visible side of the corporate life of the Church is expressed by the ordinances of the [Established] Church. The visible Church is by her ordinances full of life: God dispenses his ordinances in the Christian Church as he formerly did on the Mount Zion:³

God assures his Church that he will bestow abundant blessings [. . .] on the ordinances [. . .], on those who administer the ordinances [. . . and] on those who attend the ordinances.⁴

In his sermon *The Excellency of the Liturgy*, Simeon goes so far as to say that in the prayers of the liturgy, all the needs of the people are met in a unique manner.⁵ This

¹ C. Simeon, *Homae Homileticae*, sermon 1983, vol. xvi, p. 307: "By baptism we are all brought into one body - Whatever may have been the former profession of any man [. . .]; he is no sooner baptized into the faith of Christ, than he becomes a member of Christ's mystical body. Let the disparity between them be ever so great, it makes no difference, as it respects their relation to Christ, or each other. The least honourable members of the body are as much dependent on the head, by which they subsist, and to which they minister. And this is precisely the connexion in which the lowest as well as the most exalted Christian stands to Christ and to the collective body of his Church and people." Concerning baptism: "I grant it does change the *state*, because by it we are made members of Christ's mystical body [. . .] But we must experience an inward change besides" (p. 310).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308: "Whatever part in that body we sustain, we should cheerfully perform the duties of it [- . . -] Every member is useful in his place, and necessary to the good of the whole. [. . .] There is nothing in the body either superfluous or effective. [. . .] and if it suffer defalcation, the whole is injured and deformed."

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 726, vol. vi, p. 426: "Thus in the Church of Christ, and in that only, have we the way of life and salvation fully opened. [. . .] wherever God has called people to the knowledge of his Son, and appointed over them a faithful shepherd, there his word is preached with power; [. . .] the administration of the sacraments is not there an empty ceremony, but a lively and impressive exhibition of the doctrines of grace."

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 427-8.

⁵ C. Simeon, *Homae Homileticae*, sermon 193, vol. i, p. 266: "there is no possible situation in which we can be placed, but the prayers are precisely suited to us; nor can we be in any frame of mind, wherein they will not express our feelings as strongly and forcibly, as any person could express them even in his secret chamber."

demonstrates how strongly he was convinced that the liturgy strengthened and deepened the corporate life of the Church.

Simeon also emphasizes the unity and solidarity of the Church at large; he feels that the mission-field is a place, where all Christians should work side by side: "We should labour in it *for the world's sake*."¹ In this manner, the Church as Christ's body faces a common responsibility at home and abroad.

The above conclusively demonstrates that Webster's judgment needs critical assessment. Simeon is not only interested in the individual aspects of the Church; he is also strongly committed to furthering the corporate aspect of the Church. Even Webster has to admit that the sermon *Christians one in Heart* is evidence for the fact that Simeon takes the corporate life of the Church seriously.²

Further, Simeon's parish work itself proves this. His organizational talent endeavoured to establish societies which deepened and strengthened the corporate life of the Church without breaking away from it (see above, 1.5.3).

Probably, Simeon would have answered Webster's criticism in the following way: it is legitimate and biblical to point out the need for commitment of each individual Christian. This does not have to oppose the corporate aspects, however. On the contrary, a firm commitment produces a deeper and more intimate love for one another and therefore a growing together of the whole Church.

3.3.3 Confirmation, Communion and Baptism

In Simeon's view, confirmation and Lord's Supper are intimately related to baptism:

at our baptism the promises were made for us by our sponsors; at our confirmation we took upon ourselves all that had been engaged in our behalf; and at the Lord's table we carry it all, as it were, into effect; and, by an open recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and our

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1008, vol. viii, p. 580.

² M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," pp. 130-131.

Lord, we declare before all, that we are determined, through grace, to live and die in his sacred cause.¹

This quotation quite clearly shows that an important element of both confirmation and Communion consists in publicly taking upon oneself his baptismal vows and obligations.

Although Simeon does not regard confirmation to be an "ordinance of God, nor even an appointment of the Apostles themselves, though it was very early,"² he finds it useful as an event corresponding to the presentation of Jewish children and as a "preparatory step to communion rather than as an object in itself."³ Although not instituted by Christ, confirmation is

highly valuable as giving a Minister contact with his flock; as opening their minds, at a peculiar season of life, and with the power of specific duty, to instructions which else would come sleepily on them.⁴

Thus, the children are instructed by their minister concerning the meaning of confirmation, and then publicly asked if they want to confirm their vows. In this way

are young people called upon to present themselves unto the Lord, and to take upon themselves those engagements which were made for them at their baptism by their sponsors.⁵

Those, who pledge to profess their belief in Christ and devote themselves to him,⁶ are made conscious of the guilt incurred if they do not hold their promise.⁷

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 595, vol. v, p. 434.

² A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 239: "I would always view it as an ordinance of the Church and not a specific command of God."

³ A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 239.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 595, vol. v, 433.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sermon 1761, vol. xiv, p. 349.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sermon 595, vol. v, pp. 433f. "Remember, then that all these vows are upon you. They are not to be regarded as empty words, [. . .] and every one who does not labour to carry them into effect, contracts the heaviest guilt" (p. 434).

Because of this benefit for the souls of the children, Simeon urges all ministers to take confirmation seriously:¹

Baptism not followed by confirmation is not void. The sponsors took the vows for the children; they are relieved at confirmation. Persons refusing to be confirmed go back again avowedly to the world; yet their right to the benefits of the Christian covenant remains.²

But what is the connexion between baptism and Communion? In a sense, it seems to be quite the same as confirmation for Simeon:

Partaking of the Lord's Supper is undoubtedly equivalent to confirmation, so far as ratifying in our own person the vows taken for us goes.³

As at confirmation the children publicly take the baptismal vows upon themselves for the first time. At Communion, they take these vows upon themselves anew and once again dedicate themselves to the Lord:

In coming to the table of the Lord, we profess to feed upon the body of Christ which was broken for us, and the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of our sins; and to dedicate ourselves to him afresh, as his devoted servants.⁴

Seen from this angle, Communion is the regular confirmation of baptismal obligation. It follows that confirmation as well as Communion force us to examine ourselves and see if we are in the right state of mind and heart before God.⁵

From this it is evident, that there are conditions for attending the Lord's Supper:

We should [. . .] examine ourselves well before we attend the table of the Lord.⁶

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1761, vol. xiv, p. 349: "in this view, the ordinance of confirmation, as administered in the Established Church, is of the utmost importance to be well improved by the ministers, for the benefit of their flocks; and by young people, for the everlasting benefit of their own souls."

² A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 235.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1761, vol. xiv, p. 349.

⁵ Cf. A.W. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 235.

⁶ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1978, vol. xvi, p. 294.

Citing 1Cor. xi.28, Simeon emphasizes the necessity of examining oneself, without being examined by others.¹ Self-examination is an important duty, for nobody can ascertain the state of his soul without it. In particular, it needs to be practised before attending the ordinance of Communion; the believer should examine his knowledge of the ordinance, the state of his soul before God and the immediate frame of it.²

The neglect of self-examination may rob us of all the benefit of the ordinance.³

Furthermore, people should not come to it with "selfrighteous hopes" or with "slavish fears," but "to express their gratitude to the Lord Jesus for what he has done for them, and to obtain fresh supplies of grace and peace at his hands."⁴ In addition to this, people should take the sacred elements in the expectation that God will give all the blessings purchased by his Son. Simeon also advises his hearers to

look forward to the feast prepared for you in heaven [. . . for] the more constantly and entirely you feed on Christ below, the better shall you be prepared for the nearest intercourse with him above, and the fullest possible communication of all his blessings to your souls.⁵

Parallel to the pascal feast, where the Israelites were reminded of their misery in Egypt through the bitter herbs, Christians must reflect on the guilt they have contracted:

When we eat of Christ's flesh, we must recollect that his sufferings were the punishment of our iniquities.

Therefore they have to attend at the Lord's table "with humble penitence."⁶ Besides penitence, faith in Christ is required to receive the ordinance aright:

¹ Cf. C. Simeon, *Homœ Homileticæ*, sermon 1761, vol. xvi, p. 349.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 1981, vol. xvi, p. 297.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 1980, vol. xvi, p. 296.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 1401, vol. xi, pp. 557f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 558f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 379f.

None can ever be saved, unless they eat of Christ's flesh, and receive [. . .] Christ in all his offices and in all his benefits [. . .] into their hearts by faith.¹

Further, people have to attend the Lord's Supper "with unfeigned sincerity" and "with active zeal." Sin is like leaven, and all of it must be purged out carefully and diligently. "Active zeal" also denotes that Christians are not to rest upon their laurels; rather they should be like pilgrims and thus feed upon Christ day by day.²

The possibility of **eating and drinking unworthily** and its consequences are pointed out: to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily means to defeat the purpose for which the ordinance was instituted, namely firstly by not remembering the death of Christ; secondly, by partaking of it uncharitably; thirdly, by celebrating it irreverently, *i.e.* with a "light, worldly, impenitent heart." Finally, people drink and eat unworthily if they attend Communion sensually, *i.e.* in a carnal way and with "a want of spirituality and affiance in Christ."³ As a consequence of so doing these people contract guilt, because "they manifest a contempt of [Christ's] sacrifice." They are punished. This punishment is however a temporal judgment, not eternal damnation.

Simeon makes an important distinction between "to be unworthy" and "to partake unworthily:" every Christian is unworthy of attending Communion, but if he attends it in the right spirit, he partakes of it worthily.⁴

It would however be fundamentally wrong to conclude that it is better not to attend Communion:

[in] baptism we covenanted to renounce the world, &c. and to serve God: this covenant we ought to renew and confirm at the Lord's table.

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 77, vol. i, p. 379. Cf. sermon 78, vol. i, p. 384; sermon 1401, vol. xi, p. 558.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 77, vol. i, p. 380.

³ *Ibid.*, sermon 1979, vol. xvi, pp. 293f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 295, note m.

But our refusing to confirm it is a tacit renunciation of it. And can we hope that God will fulfil his part while we violate ours?¹

If people neglect to commemorate Christ's death in this ordinance they are involved in the deepest guilt:

To come to the Lord's table, as many do, at the three great festivals of the Church, and to neglect it all the year besides, is to shew at once that they enter not into the true spirit of that ordinance.²

To neglect attending the Lord's Supper means "rebellion against the highest authority," for Christ commanded "Do this." Further Simeon warns his hearers not to be ungrateful towards Christ, "our great Benefactor," who had a great concern for the people just before he was betrayed. "They [. . .] who are at liberty, should attend 'as often' as they can," Simeon advises, and he adds: "Only they must be careful to communicate with reverence, humility, faith and gratitude."³

3.3.3.1 The "Peculiar Blessings" of Communion

It is a memorial of the death of Christ, and a medium of communion with Christ, whose body and blood we feed upon in the sacred elements, and by whom we are strengthened for all holy obedience.⁴

The Jewish pascal feast and the Lord's Supper are analogous in the same way that circumcision is comparable to baptism: the faultless male lamb under a year old denotes Christ, the Son of God, in a state of perfect manhood and perfect purity. The passover was a commemorative ordinance in remembrance of what God had done to bring Israel out of their captivity in Egypt.⁵

In attending the Lord's Supper, Christians commemorate the fact that

Christ in his death has effected a greater deliverance for us. In partaking of the bread and wine we 'shew forth' his death: we shew forth the manner of it as excruciating and bloody: we shew forth the end of it as a

¹ Ibid., sermon 1978, vol. xvi, p. 292.

² C. Simeon, *Horæ Homileticæ*, sermon 1761, vol. xiv, p. 349.

³ Ibid., sermon 1979, vol. xvi, p. 292.

⁴ Ibid., sermon 1401, vol. xi, p. 558.

⁵ Ibid., sermon 77, vol. i, p. 378.

sacrifice for our sins: we shew forth the sufficiency of it for our own salvation.¹

Christ himself instituted the Lord's Supper as a commemorative feast, and he ordained that in future times it should be observed to proclaim his death until he returns. In this way, Christ wished that the deliverance gained by his death be made known to all people. The cup

administered in remembrance of it, was to be a memorial for all mankind, that, on the Redeemer's part, every thing was effected for the salvation of men, and that all who would embrace the covenant so ratified [*i.e.* by the shedding of Christ's blood] should assuredly be saved.²

Further, Christ established the Lord's Supper as an "instructive emblem": it is not sufficient to celebrate the ordinance merely in a commemorative sense. The Christian celebrating Communion in a very real way partakes of Christ's death:

We must apply it, every one of us, to ourselves: we must feed upon it; and by so doing declare our affiance in it: we must shew, that, as our bodies are nourished by bread and wine, so we hope to have our souls nourished by means of union and communion with our blessed and adorable Redeemer.³

Besides this, there is an **eschatological intention** in celebrating the Lord's Supper: till Christ comes again, the expectation of his future advent must be preserved in the ordinance.⁴

The Lord's Supper observed in the described way is "an earnest and foretaste of heaven itself,"⁵ where it will be fully completed. All redeemed people will be spiritually renewed in this feast, and Christ will partake of it with them; he "will feed [them], and lead [them] unto living fountains of waters."⁶

¹ *Ibid.*, sermon 1978, vol. xvi, p. 290.

² C. Simeon, *Homæ Homileticæ*, sermon 1401, vol. xi, p. 554.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, sermon 1978, vol. xvi, pp. 290f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sermon 1401, vol. xi, p. 558.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 557.

But what are the blessings of the Lord's Supper on earth? Simeon interprets the "kingdom of God" mentioned in Matth xxvi.29 in the following manner:

True, indeed, corporeally he appears amongst us no more: but spiritually he does.¹

In this context it must be mentioned that Simeon interprets John xiv.23 and Rev. iii.20 eucharistically.² He supposes that the early Christians observed the Lord's Supper every day because of the "blessings which they obtained in the administration of it;"³ a peculiar blessing is connected with it as the event, in which he feasts with his Church.⁴ Thus,

Christ sometimes reveals himself in the breaking of bread, to those who had not so fully discovered him in the ministry of the word.⁵

Another blessing lies in the fact that through Communion,

we shall 'grow up into him in all things, as our living Head', and by him be filled with the fullness of God.⁶

"Come, then, to the table of the Lord," Simeon urges his hearers,

that ye may receive a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ ! [. . .] ye shall partake more richly of his vital energies, and be confirmed more strongly in the principles ye have imbibed, and be quickened more abundantly in your pursuit of heaven, and be rendered still more heavenly in all your tempers and affections. Thus shall the whole work of God be perfected in your souls.⁷

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1401, vol. xi., p. 555.

² Cf. M. Webster, "Simeon's Doctrine of the Church," p. 114.

³ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 1401, vol xi, p. 556.

⁴ Ibid.: "He truly, though spiritually, feasts with us, when we are assembled around the table of the Lord [. . .] And, though I am not aware of any express promise of a more than ordinary manifestation of the Saviour's presence in that sacred ordinance, yet I believe he does seal it with a peculiar blessing."

⁵ Ibid., sermon 1979, vol. xvi, pp. 291f.

⁶ Ibid., sermon 1984, vol. xv, pp. 310f. Cf. John vi.56f, Eph.iv.15.

⁷ Ibid., p. 311.

4 Simeon's Contribution Within the Baptismal Controversy

We have seen that in the Baptismal Controversy, the main points in dispute were baptism, regeneration and their relation to one other. In this respect, the Baptismal Controversy had nothing in common with the preceding Calvinistic Controversy. Another difference which distinguishes the Baptismal Controversy from the Calvinistic Controversy lies in the fact that the Calvinistic Controversy was an internecine quarrel within the evangelical camp, whereas the Baptismal Controversy involved the Orthodox and the Evangelicals.

The Orthodox believed that at baptism and only in this sacrament a person became regenerated. Thus the outward visible sign was always temporally connected with the inward and spiritual grace. This inward spiritual grace could nevertheless be lost if the person lived a life without good works and repentance.

Generally speaking, the Orthodox tended to locate the answer of man to God's grace in the baptismal rite; faith and repentance were therefore thought to occur together with regeneration.

The Orthodox rejected the Evangelical view of the necessity of a total change of nature, and they accused the Evangelicals of misrepresenting the doctrines of the Church of England. They themselves claimed to have the true view of the Church! Further, they thought the Evangelicals to hold Ultra-calvinistic views such as the indefectibility of grace, double predestination and a negation of the value of good works leading to antinomianism.

We have seen that the Evangelicals could be divided into three groups: firstly those, who saw a seed planted into the soul of the infant in baptism; secondly those, who allowed that regeneration might or might not take place in baptism and who harmonized the statements of the Prayer Book with the help of the notion of charitable supposition; lastly those, who did not allow baptism to have any effect, their motto being to hold nothing of baptism and to expect everything of regeneration.

In general, the Evangelicals of each group understood regeneration to be a total change of nature, through which the person estranged from God was reconciled once more. This total change of nature was necessary in their eyes because of the total depravity of human nature. Thus, they could not understand why in the Orthodox view it should be possible that somebody not having undergone this total change should be able to live a life of good works and repentance. To them, this seemed to be faith through good works, whereas they emphasized salvation by faith alone. On the whole, the Orthodox conviction looked suspiciously like an *ex opere operato* view of baptism.

As the subject of election and predestination, and of perseverance and indefectibility of grace, was connected with the question of baptismal regeneration, the Baptismal Controversy had a certain connexion with the Calvinistic Controversy. This hidden connexion encouraged many misunderstandings as well as much unnecessary strife on both sides.

Where does Simeon fit into this scheme? As he did not write any pamphlets on baptismal regeneration during the controversy, his point of view can only be culled out of his sermons and Brown's *Recollections* of his Friday Tea-parties.

In Simeon's case, it is interesting to see the tension between his Evangelicalism and his churchmanship:

As an *Evangelical*, he endeavoured to develop his views in accordance with the precepts of the Bible. He avoided becoming slavishly bound to any system and had a consciously vacillating position because of his conviction that the truth lay in both extremes. Simeon's biblical theology helped him to avoid extremes, despite the fact that his utterances sometimes became somewhat ambiguous.

More than most Evangelicals, Simeon the churchman tries to harmonize his Evangelical position with the teaching of the Church. He not only revered the Bible; but he also held the liturgy of the Church in high estimation. Thus, both his Evangelical stance and his position as a churchman contributed towards his views concerning baptism and regeneration.

On the whole, it may be said that his life and experiences played a significant role in shaping Simeon's theology. Similarly, his interest in the problem of baptismal regeneration was not purely theoretical; his intention was of a pastoral and practical nature.

Simeon identifies baptism with Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, he views it as the initiation rite into the Church and as the profession for belonging to the Church. He further views baptism as a change of state, which entitles to the blessings of the Christian covenant and the appointed means of grace. Connected with faith, baptism is accompanied by the washing away of sin.

As a churchman, he supports the liturgy of the baptismal service of the Church and harmonizes its strong language concerning regeneration with his Evangelicalism and with the aid of the notion of judgment of charity.

Regeneration is synonymous to new birth and new creation. Simeon regards regeneration to be of the utmost necessity: because of the total corruption of his nature, man is separated from God. Through regeneration he undergoes a total change of nature and is brought into God's presence; he is reconciled to God. The source of regeneration is from God alone, but God does not regenerate a person, who is not himself actively involved. The end of regeneration is sanctification and holiness.

The most significant connexion between baptism and regeneration is for Simeon the metaphor "sign and thing signified:" baptism is the outward sign, regeneration the spiritual grace; baptism is the sign, regeneration is the thing signified. Simeon does not want to restrict God. God may regenerate a person at the time of the baptismal rite, but he does not have to. The most important point is that baptism can only be effective if the life of the person involved corresponds with his baptismal vows.

Regeneration as wrought by God is connected with election and predestination. For Simeon, this subject is connected with the subject of final perseverance and reprobation: he rejects reprobation as unbiblical, whilst final perseverance is

biblical. With this, he means that God preserves man, but allows the possibility of apostasy; because God takes the will of man seriously, the doctrine of the indefectibility of grace cannot be right. This is one of the results of being an Evangelical and a churchman at the same time. Furthermore, it is rooted in his own experience.

Where does Simeon fit into the Baptismal Controversy? Which groups of Evangelicals does he belong to?

As in Simeon's view baptism changes one's state and gives a title to the blessings of the Christian covenant, he does not belong to the most radical group of Evangelicals, which rejected this identification of baptism with a change of state. For this group, baptism was only an act of obedience. In comparison, Simeon took the ordinance very seriously and linked it with God's peculiar blessing.

Simeon is closer to the position of Ryder. On the other hand, in his eyes it remains unproven that by baptism a seed is always and necessarily implanted, as Ryder argued. He only uses the picture of the seed in one sermon, and therein only very ambiguously.¹ One can conclude that Simeon in actual fact did not find the picture of the growing seed adequate for expressing what happens at baptism.²

His interpretation of the strong language of the baptismal service³ can also lead to a misrepresentation of his view of baptism: despite the fact that he approves of the reformers' words linking the remission of sin and the regeneration of the soul with baptism, he interprets it with the aid of the Evangelical paradigm of "judgment of charity." Needless to say, he finds his view wholly supported by the strong language of the Bible. As a result, Simeon can firstly say that not all baptized persons are regenerate; secondly, it is impossible to prove that God *never* regenerates

¹ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 192, vol. i, p. 256.

² W.J.C. Ervine, *Doctrine and Diplomacy*, p. 59, cites the above-mentioned words of Simeon and seems to suggest that they are a proof that Simeon uses the picture of the seed in the same sense as Ryder. As has been pointed out, this would seem to be a hasty conclusion.

³ C. Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, sermon 192, vol. i, p. 258.

anyone at baptism; it is only possible to say that he *may* regenerate through baptism.

This places him square in the middle group of Evangelicals. Like these, he propagates that regeneration may or may not be conveyed at baptism; further common points are the notion of "judgment of charity" (=charitable supposition) and of baptism as a change of state, a title to blessings, the entrance into the covenant, an initiation rite into the Church, an appointed means of grace. What makes him unique in a certain sense is the manner in which he rejects both the Calvinistic and the Arminian doctrinal systems. A further point which distinguishes him is his absolute loyalty to the Church and her liturgy.

Is Simeon truly an Evangelical or truly a churchman? The discussion above clearly demonstrates the fact that Simeon is Evangelical *and* churchman: he unites both his Evangelical nature and his churchmanship in a unique manner.

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