



Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON · NEW JERSEY



EM 4239 .B3 S36 1895 v.1
Scottish Church Society.
Conference 1895 :
The divine life in the
church

212

212

120710

21/10/97

SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY CONFERENCES

SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

In Demy 8vo. Cloth. Price 4s. 6d. nett.

Scottish Church Society Conferences.

FIRST SERIES.

In Demy 8vo. Price 6d.

The Scottish Church Society.

SOME ACCOUNT OF ITS AIMS.

By Professor MILLIGAN, D.D., President of the Society.
With Appendix containing the Constitution of the Society. &c.

In Demy 8vo. Price 6d.

Our Help is in the Name of the Lord.

A CALL TO PRAYER, WITH FORMS OF INTERCESSION.

By JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D., Minister of Govan Parish.

By the same Author. Price 6d.

Judge Nothing before the Time.

A Sermon Preached in St Constantine Parish Church of Govan on Sunday, 17th December 1893, referring to the Work of the late Professor WILLIAM MILLIGAN, D.D., and, Incidentally, to Current Criticism of the SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY.

With a Note on the REMEMBRANCE IN PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

In Demy 8vo. Price 4d.

Sacramental Vows and Privileges.

A Sermon preached in St Cuthbert's Parish Church, prior to the opening of the Second Conference of the SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY in Edinburgh, on Sunday, February 17th, 1895, by Rev. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A., one of the Ministers of St Cuthbert's Parish, Edinburgh.

Parish Tracts.

By Ministers of the Church of Scotland. Issued monthly and supplied in quantities for distribution at 1s. per 100; with space left for filling in name of Parish, &c.

Parish Tracts.

First Series. Being the first two years' issues neatly bound in cloth limp, price 9d.

THE DIVINE LIFE IN THE CHURCH

AN AFFIRMATION OF

The Doctrine of Holy Baptism

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS RELATING TO

The Scottish Church

Its History, Work, and Present Need



SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY CONFERENCES

Second Series

VOLUME I

Edinburgh

J. GARDNER HITT, 37 GEORGE STREET

GLASGOW: JOHN SMITH & SON, 19 RENFIELD STREET

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW

1895

“Ask for the Old Paths, . . . and walk therein.”

P R E F A C E.

THE following Papers were contributed at the Second Annual Conference of the Scottish Church Society, held in Edinburgh in February of this year.

A statement of the objects of the Society, in connection with which these papers (relating to matters obviously of high importance to the furtherance of the Divine life in the Church) are now published, will be found in the Appendix to this volume.

To the longer papers contributed to the Conference twenty minutes' time was allowed for delivery; to the shorter, ten, and in some cases five. This limitation—in some cases, however, exceeded—accounts for the brevity with which some of the subjects are treated.

The papers, after revision, are printed substantially in the form in which they were read.

The only exception is that of the more elaborate paper relating to Holy Baptism, of which only selected portions were read at the Conference. The fundamental importance of this subject; the defective or false teaching in regard to it, which is unhappily so prevalent; and the fact that no work dealing in any exhaustive manner with the subject has been published in Scotland—have led the Committee to feel that they are justified in devoting an entire volume to this great topic and those immediately cognate to it.

Each author is responsible only for the contents of his own paper.

It remains for us to express the hope that these volumes may be of some service, by the Divine blessing, in recalling the attention of all who read them to those "old paths" which alone secure consistent progress toward Catholic unity and order.

May 1895.

P A P E R S
AND
C O N T R I B U T O R S.

V O L U M E I.

OPENING ADDRESS—	PAGE
Rev. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D., Minister of Linton	1
THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM : THE PLACE ASSIGNED TO IT IN THE DIVINE ECONOMY OF GRACE, AND THE PRESENT NEED IN SCOTLAND OF EXPLICIT TEACHING IN REGARD TO IT—	
Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D., Minister of Govan, Glasgow	9
THE INSTRUCTION OF CATECHUMENS BEFORE AND AFTER FIRST COMMUNION—	
Rev. G. W. SPROTT, D.D., Minister of North Berwick	197
Rev. ROGER S. KIRKPATRICK, B.D., Minister of Dal- beattie	207
Rev. J. CROMARTY SMITH, B.D., Minister of Alexan- dria	214
SPONSORS : THE OBLIGATION RESTING UPON THEM, HOW IT MAY BEST BE FULFILLED, AND WHAT HELP THE CHURCH SHOULD FURNISH THEM WITH IN FULFILLING IT—	
Rev. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A., one of the Ministers of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh	221
Rev. EVAN M. MASSON, M.A., Minister of Dull	232

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS OF PAPER FIRST.

THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
1. Examination of popular prejudices hindering the due consideration of the subject	10
(1) That it is of a merely elementary character	12
(2) That it is of comparatively little practical importance	13
(3) That it involves the preaching of Sacraments in place of Christ	15
(4) That the mysteries which it involves are repugnant to "common sense"	16
Attitude in which the subject should be approached	18
2. Division of the subject into six sections	19

SECTION I.

ANTECEDENT DOCTRINE.

I. Conditions of attaining to a right apprehension of the place of Holy Baptism	19
1. Supreme appeal must be to Holy Scripture	20
2. Holy Scripture to be studied with a candid mind	22
II. Facts of the Divine Revelation which have to be antecedently perceived	23
Distinction between the question as to measure of knowledge and that as to the gift of faith	23
Necessity of studying the truths of Revelation in the divine order in which they are presented	26
Misapprehension as to the grace of the Sacrament of Baptism invariably traceable to a misapprehension of the Gospel generally	26
Three Compendiums of Pre-baptismal Doctrine to be found in the New Testament	29
1. In the seven records contained in the Acts of the Apostles	29
2. In the record of the instruction given by our Lord during the Forty Days	29
3. In the record of the instruction given by our Lord to Nicodemus	29

Contents.

ix

	PAGE
Concurrence of these records in emphasising three facts	29
1. Our participation in common of a fallen nature: what this implies	29
2. The Resurrection of our Lord, "the last Adam," and its distinctive import	31
3. The ascension of our Lord and the correlative event of Pentecost	34
Summary of contents of this section	37

SECTION II.

THE GRACE OF BAPTISM.

The question stated	38
The answer given in Holy Scripture and by the Catholic Church	42
The grace exhibited in Holy Baptism set forth	43
Enumeration of nine distinctive elements in the Scriptural Doctrine as to Holy Baptism	44
1. Marks the emergence of an Eternal purpose	44
2. Is an operation of the Holy Trinity	45
3. Is an instrument for the communication of grace	46
4. The grace of Baptism that of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ	46
5. Baptism constitutes a new relation between the baptized as made members of one Body	48
6. Baptism confers irrevocably on those to whom it is administered responsibility of a specific character	48
7. The benefits of Baptism, present or future, can only be personally appropriated through faith	49
8. Baptism one of a series of steps each of itself equally necessary	49
9. The benefits of Baptism, in one aspect, conditional and awaiting for their completion the close of the dispensation	49

SECTION III.

EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Two preliminary postulates	52
Classification of Evidence from Holy Scripture	52
I. First branch of Evidence— <i>The Declarations of our Lord</i>	52
Examination of St Matthew xxviii. 18, 19, 20	52
Examination of St Mark xvi. 16	55
Examination of St John iii.	57
II. Second branch of Evidence— <i>Records of the administration of Holy Baptism in the Acts of the Apostles</i>	63
Five points of doctrine in which these records concur	64
Examination of these records severally :—	
1. The Baptism of the three thousand (Acts ii.)	65
2. The Baptism of the Samaritan Converts, including that of Simon Magus (Acts viii.)	66

	PAGE
3. The Baptism by Philip in the desert (Acts viii.)	68
4. The Baptism of Cornelius and his household (Acts x.)	69
5. The Baptism of St Paul (Acts ix.)	71
6. The Baptism of Lydia and her household (Acts xvi.)	73
7. The Baptism of the keeper of the prison at Philippi and of his household (Acts xvi.)	73
8. The Baptism of the converts at Corinth (Acts xviii.)	74
9. The Baptism of the disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix.)	75
III. Third branch of Evidence— <i>Teaching of the Epistles.</i>	
The declarations of the Epistles on the subject of Baptism ar- ranged in a connected series, with analysis	77
Seven characteristics of Apostolic doctrine, with examination of representative passages from the Apostolic writings in support of them.	
Statement of first characteristic	81
Statement of second characteristic	81
Examination of (a) Titus iii. 4-7	81
Examination of (b) 1 Peter iii. 20-22	83
Examination of (c) Eph. v. 25	83
Statement of third characteristic	84
Examination of Col. ii. and iii. and Rom. vi.	85
Statement of fourth characteristic	86
Statement of fifth characteristic	88
Examination of Eph. i. and comparison with Acts xiv. in its bearing on the Apostolic doctrine of election	88
Statement of sixth characteristic	90
Statement of seventh characteristic	93
Examination of Epistle to the Corinthians	93
Summary of Evidence of Holy Scripture	98

SECTION IV.

DECLARATIONS OF FORMULARIES.

1. Statement of the doctrine of the Reformed Church as to the Mystical Union, as to the Sacraments in general, and as to the Sacrament of Baptism, in particular, as held by the Church of Scotland	100
Ten distinctive features.	
The first stated	100
The second stated	101
The third stated	101
The fourth stated	101
The fifth stated	101
The sixth stated	102
The seventh stated	102
The eighth stated	103
The ninth stated	103
The tenth stated	103

	PAGE.
II. Examination of the Reformation standards of the Church of Scotland	104
A. The Genevan Confession of Faith	105
B. The Scottish Confession	106
C. The Book of Common Order	109
D. The Catechisms	111
(1.) Calvin's Catechism	111
(2.) The Palatinate or Heidelberg Catechism	116
(3.) Craig's Catechism	117
III. Examination of the Westminster Formularies	118
A. The Westminster Confession of Faith	119
B. The Larger Catechism	122
C. The Shorter Catechism	125
D. The Directory	126
Summary of doctrine of Formularies	132
Examination of difficulties connected with the doctrine of the Formularies of the Church	132
1. Difficulties alleged to arise out of the qualifications required in candidates for Baptism as modifying the doctrine of sacramental efficacy	132
2. The doctrine of Baptism as a means of grace alleged to be necessarily at variance with the doctrine of Election	137
Aspects in which these two doctrines are not at variance	137
Aspects in which they are at variance	145
The position to be affirmed in reference to this	147

SECTION V.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

Classification of the objections usually advanced and their sources	148
I. Examination of difficulties arising out of the alleged conflicting character of the statements of Holy Scripture	149
1. Such as are of a minor order—	
(1) St Mark xvi. 16	149
(2) Certain passages of St John's Epistles	150
(3) Teaching of St Paul in 1 Cor. i. 17: "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel"	154
2. Such as are apparently of a more formidable character—	
(4) The case of Simon Magus	158
(5) The case of Cornelius	163
II. Examination of difficulties arising out of the alleged incredibility of the doctrine of Baptism.	
(1) The association of spiritual blessing with such trivial outward means	167
(2) The apparent subordination of Divine action to the will or caprice of man	170
(3) The assertion of abiding issues of Baptism alleged to be preposterous in view of the character of the act	171

	PAGE
III. Examination of difficulties arising out of (1) the existence of apparently similar dispositions among the unbaptized, and (2) the apparent absence of result where baptism has been administered .	172
IV. Examination of the allegation that the doctrine of Baptism leads to the disparagement of the doctrine of conversion or to the depreciation of justifying faith	174
V. Examination of the allegation that the doctrine of Baptism is fraught only with unhappiness, because of the consequences supposed to be involved in the case of such as die unbaptized	181

SECTION VI.

PRESENT NEGLECT OF THE DOCTRINE, AND SUGGESTIONS.

Evidence of this neglect :—

1. In Church teaching and administration, and personal life : illustrations in detail	183
2. In the decay of family religion	188
Results which would arise from the recovery of the doctrine	191
The prospect of such a recovery examined	192
Practical suggestions towards reviving the apprehension of the doctrine of Baptism :	193
1. The faith of the doctrine to be lived	193
2. A positive doctrine to be taught	193
3. The due instruction of candidates for Baptism	194
4. The more reverent administration of the Sacrament	194
5. The reformation of our existing methods as regards the pastoral care of the young	194
6. The reorganisation of the mission and evangelistic work of the Church on the basis of baptismal grace	194
7. The restoration of continuity of connection between the initial sacrament of Baptism and the regular celebration of and participation in the Holy Eucharist	195
Conclusion	195

OPENING ADDRESS.

REV. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D.

TO-DAY the members of this Society meet for our second Conference. We do not forget that, though our numbers are increased, death has in the interval taken from among us his customary tribute. At our former meeting one great loss was impending, and soon came. More recently another of our leaders has departed, full of years and honours, and a younger life, bright with promise, has been quenched in a moment. Now they "fear not slander, censure rash." The principles of the Society are still being keenly scrutinised, sometimes sharply commented on. We complain of neither scrutiny nor criticism, if they are fair and intelligent. But charges made against us ought to be at least exact in form. What meaning, for instance, do penmen and orators who assail us attach to their favourite word *ritualism*? Had they looked to our constitution they would have seen that it deals chiefly with other and higher things than ceremonial. Had they looked around, they would have seen most of the observances which they dislike practised, often with greater elaboration, by brethren who are attracted to a point of the ecclesiastical compass the very opposite of ours. If they look back for a very few years, they would discover that much to which this very name of ritualism was then applied has been adopted in the very quarters from which the outcry came. Or, turn from this word of shifting import to a more serious charge, which, be it true or false, is at least intelligible. It is said that our movement tends to strengthen the reviving

power of Romanism. It is not certain that that system is on the advance within our home empire. The conversion of persons who are socially prominent attracts notice, but the gain from this source is light when estimated by number and not by weight. Statistics show an increase in their buildings and officials; other bodies have the same boast to make. In this case, may it not be accounted for by the natural growth of British population, in which Romanists have their share, and by the influx of Irish? But while the inhabitants of this island have increased immensely within the last fifty years, the population of Ireland has fallen off by nearly one-half in the same period, and the loss there must have more than equalled the gain here. The political power wielded by Rome is certainly immense, because a section of men in Parliament, keeping one end steadily in view, compacted by discipline, and numerous enough to turn the scale of party, can make the whole community its will's instrument. But this state of things can be terminated at any moment, if representatives are given to understand that the mandates entrusted to them are not proxies to be at the command of the Roman interest, in addition to its own fair share of power. Apart from all this, there is another influence working for Rome, which, if she is advancing, is aiding her progress, if she is retrograding, is retarding her decay. That influence is the chaotic condition of the religious forces that are opposed to her. There is hardly a Christian doctrine or a Christian ordinance which is not depreciated or disowned somewhere in the conglomerate mass which has served itself heir to the Lutheran title of Protestant. There are those who say that this is the legitimate development of what took place in the sixteenth century. Certainly it was one which our fathers did not anticipate. It was a happy instinct which led them to choose the word Reformed as the distinctive epithet of their own and kindred Churches. For it implied that when accretions were cleared away there remained an irreducible substance of belief and order,

whereas the German word expressed merely negation. And now, both here and in its native land, the etymology of the word is asserting itself. The protest is not only against Rome, but against brother-Protestants, too often against truths which, at their separation, Reformer and Romanist alike held to be Catholic and essential. Thus it is that Reformed Christianity is having its life-blood drained away by self-inflicted wounds. Its divisions and sub-divisions must benefit any rival system which has the semblance of unity, and of a theology definite and harmonious. If the contest were only between the solidarity of Rome and our indeterminate beliefs, her progress ought to be rapid and overwhelming. That it is not so, surely proves that the wisdom and power of God are against her, and are mightier than our folly and weakness. Many who have eyes only for her aggressions are so smitten with panic that they are blind to other dangers. They take no note of a current of thought, wider, stronger, more fatal than any that is setting towards Rome. Not the Reformation only, but the Christian faith is being disowned. We cannot test by statistics the force and rate of this movement, because those who are carried away by it seldom organise themselves, and do not always own how far they have drifted apart from us. But there is a simple test which each of you can apply for himself. Within your own circle of observation, how many persons do you know who, having been bred in the Scottish Church, are now in the Roman communion; and how many who, starting from the same point of departure, are now alienated from the faith of the crucified and risen Christ? If the latter case is the more frequent, consider further which of the extremest points that can be reached by the respective wanderers is the more remote, the more perilous to the erring soul. When you have decided which of these ways is at this time most crowded, and leads the outgoers furthest from the Redeemer, then say which risk most loudly calls on us to be valiant for the truth. If any charge us with indifference to the lesser evil because we

apprehend graver and more immediate danger from the greater, we can only deprecate their hard judgment. We know our own minds. We disown all Roman doctrine, all, that is, which originated with Rome. Doctrine that Rome inherited, and the Reformers reasserted, we adhere to, as they did, not because it is Roman, but because it is apostolic and divine.

If we have been misrepresented within our own communion, we have been misunderstood by some of those who are without. We seem to be credited with a wish to break away from our own part, and gravitate towards some other centre of unity. The hopes are as groundless as the fears. We claim to be of the ancient Scottish Church, whose Catholicity has no need to be ratified or invigorated from any other source. She may, like a well-ordered state, have her foreign alliances, though some chapters of her past history have taught her that these are not necessarily a benefit. It is one thing to exchange experiences and form closer relations with the Christianity of other countries, another to imitate local peculiarities, the outcome of a temperament or a history other than ours. The Church's primary duty is to promote peace and truth within her own bounds. She should seek, by every warrantable means, to take up the dropped links of unity. If any who are apart propose what may make for reconciliation, it would be churlish not to consider it; it may be wise to adopt it, if it is not inconsistent with our order, and the price not too dear to pay for the healing of a breach. But there must be a reasonable probability that union will be the result; otherwise the Church might find, as has happened before in our time, that she had burdened herself to no purpose with some empirical novelty, out of harmony with her constitution and her history. There are concessions which she may not make. She may not accept as essential that which in her belief is accidental or indifferent. In such a case her duty seems to be indicated by the course which St Paul followed regarding the circumcision of his two Gentile disciples,

Timothy and Titus. For expediency's sake he was willing that Timothy should receive the Jewish sacrament, because it was, as he repeatedly declares in his Epistles, a matter of secondary moment. But when, in the case of Titus, the same concession was insisted on as necessary, he did not give place by subjection, no, not for an hour, and the principle of his decision was supported in all its breadth by the Council of Jerusalem, acting under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

We ask, then, credit for more of loyalty to the Church of our baptism, more of probity as her ordained servants, than the terrors of some and the expectations of others seem to attribute to us. Our desire is that she may retain and, where need is, restore the best features of Scottish Christianity as it appeared when it emerged from the inevitable turmoil of reform. It must be acknowledged that it is not a clear medium through which we look on the men and events of those remote times. It is the misfortune of our Church that she has been so much identified in popular opinion with her extremest men and parties. Men of diverse sympathies looking on these subjects from their several points of view have been at one in this, that they have studied only the highly-coloured pictures of partizans, who have accepted as gospel truth whatever in the literature or literary garbage of the past confirmed their foregone conclusions, rejecting all else as dishonest or legendary. We shall better understand those times if we remember that in the eyes of our forefathers, more than in ours, unity was the normal condition of national religion. Bitter religious discord there often was. The weaker party protested, resisted, suffered. But they did not think of "setting up altar against altar," as the phrase was. That was the remedy of a later generation. And even then, nay, down to times within our own memory, separatism had to be vindicated by the plea that the new sect was really the old Church, that she was the separatist, and hers the guilt of the schism.

But if some obscurity hangs over the annals of the Reformation, and the days immediately following, its theology, self-recorded, stands out clear and uncompromising, stamped with the impress of the great mind of Calvin. Not that we are to think of him as one who, like Bacon or Newton, discovered an untrodden path, waiting for some high intelligence to explore it. He found himself face to face with the great problem of necessity, which has confronted thoughtful men under all systems, Christian and non-Christian. The doctrines of grace which unfolded themselves from it did not germinate from the Reformation. Many of the greatest theologians of the Papacy were identified with them. Earlier still, the man who, more than Calvin or Aquinas, had the right to have them stamped with his name was St Augustine. Some may think that Calvin, in his devotion to his favourite branch of Christian philosophy, worked it with needless elaboration of detail into his theology. But it would ill become a Society which desires to stand on the old paths of their fathers, to disown the broad principles of that theology. There are those who suppose that the adjective Calvinistic is enough to discredit any doctrines, and all who uphold them. They do not consider that in so speaking they are ranging themselves on the side of Pelagius against the great African father, or, if it comes to be a question of modern names, that they are taking as their standard-bearer the Dutch Presbyterian Arminius. Till the 17th century, Augustinianism was the dominant belief throughout this island, and it was not till the Jesuits were making the other opinion supreme in the Roman Church that the reactionary party in England moved in the same direction. Scotland kept possession of what had been the common ground, and in profession at least we have never abandoned it. But to one section of the theology of Augustine and Calvin we have not adhered. Their doctrine of the sacraments is silently disowned, often openly controverted, by those who claim to be the champions of the Reformed faith in its purest form. Calvin was most careful to harmonise

the sacramental mysteries with the mysteries of election, alike in standards prepared for theologians, and catechisms for the young. His spirit breathes in the old Scottish Confession. His own catechism was recommended in the first Book of Discipline, and continued for many years to be the manual of instruction for the youth of Scotland. You will look in vain for any abrogation of these in the acts of our Assemblies, but you will also listen in vain for any advocacy of their sacramental doctrine in most of our pulpits. The latest statement of Calvin's matured opinions on this subject are to be found in his Commentary on Ezekiel, which he wrote with the hand of death upon him, and did not live to finish. He is speaking, and speaking strongly, of faith as necessary to the efficacy of sacraments, and the passage closes thus: "Man's unworthiness does not detract anything from them, for they always retain their nature. Baptism is the laver of regeneration, although the whole world should be incredulous: the Supper of Christ is the communication of His body and blood, although there were not a spark of faith in the world: but we do not perceive the grace which is offered to us; and although spiritual things always remain the same, yet we do not obtain their effect, nor perceive their value, unless we are cautious that our want of faith should not profane what God has consecrated for our salvation."

Sometimes the question is pressed on those who hold by the theology of Calvin, Why is it that the group of Reformed Churches which identified themselves with it have been so ready to lapse into Socinianism? In the time of St Augustine, or in the history of the Thomists, there are no traces of any connection between their opinions and that form of error. Calvin's views on Church government do not explain the fact, for Trinitarianism has been as steadfastly upheld in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland as in the Episcopal Church of England. Connection with the State does not account for it, since any argument that might be drawn from the case of Switzerland or Holland is neutralised by France and the New England States,

and the history of English and Irish Presbyterianism. One contributory cause may have been that these Churches did not give sufficient prominence to the ancient creeds, pervaded by the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as fully as the creeds of the Reformation are by the doctrines of grace. In their worship they were content with the simple baptismal creed of the West. The Nicene, of more assured date, wider acceptance, and fuller voice, and the hymn that bears the name of Athanasius, they owned in confessions,* but did not commend to the people. Probably another inlet of evil has been their neglect of Calvin's sacramental teaching. As they came to hold lower views of the signs, they learned to think less of the death and resurrection of Christ, to show forth and apply which these ordinances were instituted by Himself. So in time those great facts which lie at the foundation of Christian belief were to many no longer a sacrifice and a victory, opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, but only a martyrdom and a disappearance, closing the lessons of a beautiful life; communion with the living Christ seemed a tender imagination, and all belief in the great baptismal Names died away. From these evils may our Church and land be delivered by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

Let me end by expressing a hope that all our conferences will be carried on in a spirit of meekness and wisdom. There is room for difference of opinion among us within lines easily discerned by those who look to the terms of our constitution. Especially let us take pains to keep the door of our lips in discussions that follow on the reading of papers. When sudden thoughts have to find utterance in sudden speech, words may come which hearers misunderstand. Let our endeavour throughout be to be fair in statement, sympathetic in temper, and to speak as in the presence of Him whose truth we desire to know, to proclaim, and to defend.

* See French Confession, Art. 5, 1559. Later Helvetic Confession, Chap. II., 1566 (approved same year by Church of Scotland). Preface (probably by Beza) to Harmony of Reformed Confessions, 1581.

THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM : THE
PLACE ASSIGNED TO IT IN THE ECONOMY
OF GRACE ; AND THE PRESENT NEED IN
SCOTLAND OF EXPLICIT TEACHING IN
REGARD TO IT.

REV. JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D.

HE who in these days sets himself to the work of affirming Divine truth as to the grace exhibited in the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, and as to the distinctive obligation thereby created, must be prepared to encounter at the outset much prejudice. Among the ill-instructed, the doctrine of the grace of Baptism excites suspicions that hinder the due consideration of it, while to the worldly the obligations arising out of that grace prove even intolerable. We are at present in a position to feel the truth of this remark in perhaps an exceptional degree throughout Scotland, where the defection from the faith of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as sacramentally exhibited, is so marked, and has been so protracted. There is, however, no part of Christendom to which the same remark is not in some degree applicable. This is only another way of saying that one of the most obvious evidences of the declension of the Christian Church as a whole from its true vocation is seen in the loss of a due apprehension of the meaning of Holy Baptism, and in forgetfulness or rejection of its spiritual effect.

INTRODUCTORY : PREJUDICES TO BE REMOVED.

1. Among superficial objections often urged against any deliberate effort to open up the subject, are the following:—

“The subject is one,” it is alleged by many, “on which nothing new can be said”: they “know all that need be known about it”: they are “not much concerned about a rite that was administered to them without their consent when they were but infants”: it would be more to their mind that we should “pass on to something fresh and more enlivening.” It is, indeed, not uncommon for persons who are so ignorant as not even to know what are the first “principles of the doctrine of Christ” to demand, in some such terms as these, that they should be led on to topics more worthy of their contemplation. “Why waste time,” it is said again, “on discussions about merely ceremonial matters?” It would “surely be wiser to concentrate attention in the first instance on the strictly practical duties of the Gospel, on righteousness and charity, on temperance and chastity, or on the furtherance of that better social order for which the world is yearning. Baptism is, after all, little more than a form. Among professing Christians it is sufficiently common, but its recipients for the most part do not seem any the better of it.” A still more common form of objection finds expression in the question, “Why go on preaching continually about Sacraments? Preach Christ. Follow the example of St Paul, who said that he was ‘determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified’; and that Christ sent him ‘not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.’” The not less hostile line of apparent humility is sometimes taken—“All these subjects may be very well in their place, but there is a limit to the extent to which men should be asked to occupy their minds with such mysterious matters.” “For my part,” the objector of this type is in the habit of saying, “my ideas of religion

are plain and simple, and I have but little patience for conceptions which a man of ordinary commonsense cannot at once understand."

2. These or such criticisms are familiar to us. One observation applies equally to them all. They involve an ignorant and presumptuous pre-judgment of the question at issue. It is, of course, possible that our critic is familiar with all that can be said upon this subject of Baptism, and it is open to him to assert that it is a subject of no great practical importance, and one that involves the peril of substituting the preaching of ritualistic forms in place of Christ, or carries us into a region of unprofitable mystery. But he who so speaks has got to make good his case in the face of the explicit declarations alike of Holy Scripture and of the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, it might not be inappropriate for the expositor of Holy Baptism, pausing on the threshold of the subject, to address to his critic some such simple questions as these:—Are you sure as to the truth and security of your position on this matter? Have you ever studied the doctrine? Have you convictions upon it? How have you arrived at these convictions? Are they the product of mere prejudice or of thought? Have you been content to accept, without examination, the superficial impressions on such matters of the unthinking and the unspiritual? Or, have you, on the contrary, been careful to enquire into what the Church of all ages has affirmed for your guidance? Have you pondered what is said in the Word of God upon the subject of your Baptism? Are you confident that there is no part of that Word, relating to this matter, which you have left unexamined? Have you fought your way to your convictions by meditation and fasting and prayer? May it not be that, while speaking of Holy Baptism as if of little practical moment, you are among those who make it unpractical simply because they do not believe, or even understand, what it means? Is it not possible that, while you resent what you aver to be the undue discussion of the subject, you have actually not thought

much more about it, nor felt more the need of thinking about it, and of thinking prayerfully about it, than if your Baptism had involved only the registration of your name?

3. Such questions as these may be profitably addressed to all in common who think or say that much discussion of the subject of Baptism is unnecessary. The following answers may be offered at this stage to their several objections in detail:—

(1.) In connection with the idea—widely acted upon, if not always candidly avowed—that the subject of Baptism is of an elementary character, which may usually be passed from as sufficiently understood for all practical purposes, and to which it is unnecessary constantly to recur, it is important to point out that Baptism is pre-eminently that event in our spiritual history which we are least entitled to dispose of in such a manner. Baptism is not an isolated event of merely retrospective interest. On the contrary, it marks (as will afterwards be emphasised in this paper) the beginning of a continuous condition which ought to be progressive from that point, and which, as such, ought to be consciously and ceaselessly realised. In this, as in several other important respects, there is a close analogy between the day of Pentecost in the history of the Church, and the day of Baptism in our personal history. The coming down of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost from our Ascended Lord, to empower the Church as His Body—instead of being, as many regard it, an event or action, limited in its whole character to that particular day—was really the beginning of a process or manner of the Divine action towards the Church, which has been, and is, in uninterrupted progress from that hour to this. It is precisely so with our Baptism. What was therein sealed to us was our entrance into *a state of grace* in which we are called, through the conscious exercise of a renewed will, daily to abide.

No branch of the Christian Church has insisted upon this truth more emphatically or fully (as will be shown in a later section) than the Church of Scotland.

The Westminster Confession reminds us that "the efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred" *—a statement which, whatever contrary inferences may sometimes be unwarrantably drawn from it, at least implies, as the context shows, that the manifestation of the efficacy of Baptism is to be expected and sought throughout the whole after-history of the person baptized. At a later stage, I shall have to refer to the answer given in the Larger Catechism to the question as to how our Baptism is to be "improved by us." † For the present, it may suffice to quote its opening words: "The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism is to be performed by us *all our life long*, . . . by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein."

These statements are conclusive, so far as the judgment of the Church of Scotland is concerned, as to the folly and sin exhibited in the prevalent aversion shown towards any serious and persistent consideration of the subject of Holy Baptism.

(2.) The suggestion that the subject is not one of practical importance as compared with questions of Christian ethics, is one that will best be dealt with in a later section. Meanwhile, however, this much may be said, that, in point of fact, it is the doctrine of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism and of the grace therein conferred which best supplies the leverage, so to speak, for uplifting Christendom out of its present low condition. This truth admits of being presented in a great variety of aspects. The special responsibility resting upon the baptized, as distinguished from others even though equally redeemed by

* Westminster Confession, Chap. xxviii., Sec. vi.

† Larger Catechism, Q. 167.

Christ; the scope of that responsibility, as implying a demand made upon them, not merely for righteousness, which is a conformity with law, but for holiness (through the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ, into Whom they are baptized), and consequently, for their ceaseless consecration in body, soul, and spirit, to the worship of God and to the service of humanity; the equality with which that responsibility presses upon all the members of the Church (all being, through their Baptism, partakers in common of "the heavenly calling,"* and no one, therefore, being entitled to delegate his personal responsibility to another, whatever may be the ministerial office of that other in the Church)—these all are principles, lying at the very root of Christian ethics, of which the effectual revival is an impossibility apart from the full assertion of the truth as to the place and force of Christian Baptism. I refrain at present from going further into this subject by showing the practical bearing of the faith of Baptism on family religion as well as on personal holiness, and on the Church system throughout the entire extent of its practical operation—more particularly as regards the nurture of the young, and the maintenance of such a consciousness of unity among the various branches of the Christian Church as finds appropriate expression in the confession of a common sin in disregarding that unity, in the exercise of reciprocal charity, and in the holding fast of one catholic hope. Such points may come before us further on. At this stage I content myself with saying that the best answer to any one who speaks of the discussion of Holy Baptism as unpractical is simply to ask him to put it to the test. Let a man but believe in the doctrine of Baptismal grace, as affirmed in the Holy Scriptures, and endeavour to embody that belief in life and to lead others so to do, and he will speedily discover in the light of his own experience how vast a revolution that doctrine, realised by faith, is powerful

* Hebrews iii. 1.

to work not only in the personal life but in the whole Church of God.

(3.) The admonition so often given to those in the sacred ministry by well-meaning but ill-instructed persons "to preach Christ and not the Sacraments," and so to follow "the example of St Paul, who said he was determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," requires but a passing notice. It is sufficient to point out—(a) that the doctrine of the sacraments is part of the doctrine of Christ; (b) that to preach Christ aright is to preach Christ *in His present relation* to His people, and also *in His present operations* towards them (through the Spirit Who takes of *His* and declares* it to the soul), of which operations His act in Baptism is one of absolutely fundamental importance; (c) that no preaching of Christ can adequately profit us which does not show how we become spiritually united with Him, and that this involves the doctrine of grace and of the appointed channels of grace as well as that of the necessity of conversion and personal faith; (d) that the admonition to "preach Christ rather than Sacraments" is relevant only on the assumption (which is wholly false) that Baptism is but an act of man, instead of being an act *of the Lord*, though ministerially fulfilled; (e) that, as a general rule, the persons who so urge upon us to preach "Christ and not the Sacraments," are themselves conspicuous for constantly setting forth, not the *Person* of Christ in His present action among us through the ordinances which He has Himself ordained to be channels of His grace, but rather only a past act of Christ (usually that of His death) precisely as if the Gospel were an announcement rather of what Christ did on the earth eighteen hundred years ago than of what He now *is*, and is *now* doing, in heaven and from heaven (ministerially through the members of His Body), and will yet do; (f) that our Lord, when He commanded His Apostles to baptize, instructed them at the same time to teach His disciples

* John xvi. 15 (R.V.).

thereafter to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them— an injunction which implies the constant exposition of His ordinances, as the conditions, among other things, of our realising the power of His presence with us to the end of the age ;* and, lastly, (*g*) that St Paul, who is so often, and rightly, pointed to as determined to know nothing in His preaching but “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” has himself shown that the preaching of Christ’s action in the Sacraments is implied in the true preaching of Christ Himself, alike by the fulness with which, in all his Epistles, he enforces the ethical obligations constituted by Baptism, as also by devoting a considerable part of almost every Epistle to the direct exposition of the meaning and effect of Holy Baptism.† St. Paul preached Christ, and *therefore* preached the doctrine of Baptism as being a heavenly action of Christ ; and it remains for every faithful minister to do the same.

(4.) As regards the prejudice against insisting on the doctrine of Baptism, on the ground that it carries us into a region of “unprofitable mystery,” and raises issues repugnant to what is called “commonsense,” I have to remark that it is an objection which would apply with equal force to the exposition of every fundamental truth pertaining to our religion. A prejudice, so founded, sets against the entire conception of the Christian salvation as implying a mode of communion on the part of God with man and of man with God, opened up through the eternal mediation of “the Man Christ Jesus.”‡ The (*a*) Incarnation of the Eternal Son as a continuous fact ; His (*b*) substitution for sinners upon the Cross ; our (*c*) incorporation into Him, in His present glorified condition as risen from the dead (involving the truth both of our distinctive election as Christians, and of our membership in the Church as a new creation of God, and *actually* “the Body

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

† Compare—Rom. vi. ; Eph. iv., v., vi. ; Col. ii. 8-23, iii. 10.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

of Christ");* the (*d*) Christian Ministry, as a means whereby the Lord effects His presence and purposes among His people; † our (*e*) present personal life as one derived from a mystical union with Christ, having its parallel only in the union which subsists between the Father and the Son, ‡ and culminating in the redemption even of our body; § and (*f*) the hope of the Advent, when, through the operation of the Spirit Who raised up Christ from the dead, we shall in a moment be “changed,” and become transformed, even as regards our mortal bodies, into the likeness of “the body of His glory,” ||—all these are *mysteries*, and are expressly so described in the Holy Scriptures, ¶—not, indeed, so much in the sense of being miraculous facts, or facts contrary to nature, but rather as facts of a preternatural order, forming the subjects of a Divine revelation to the spirit of man, but not calculated for the present (on account of the weakness of the outward signs by which they are attended) vividly to impress the senses. They all derive their character throughout from the root “mystery,” the ultimate continuous “mystery of Godliness,—God manifest in the flesh.”** For any one to allow himself to become prejudiced against a full and frequent exposition of this subject of Baptism merely on the ground that it is “mysterious,” is therefore to place himself in danger of occupying a position fatal to a believer in the Christian Gospel. It is a prejudice, it may be added, which is especially out of place in connection with this subject. On the first occasion (so far as known to us) on which our Lord referred to Baptism, He expressly repelled a prejudice precisely of this character, and affirmed this Sacrament to be a “heavenly” mystery confronting every man on the very threshold of the Kingdom. “*How* can these things be?”

* 1 Cor. xii.

† Eph. iv. 8-12.

‡ John xvii.

§ Rom. viii. 9-25.

|| 1 Cor. xv. ; Philipp. iii. 20, 21 (R.V.).

¶ 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; Rom. xi. 25 ; Eph. iii. 1-10 ; 1 Cor. iv. 1 ; Eph. v. 30, 31, 32 ; 1 Cor. xv. 51-54.

** 1 Tim. iii. 16.

was the cavil of Nicodemus. "Jesus answered and said unto him, . . . If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of *heavenly* things?"* Nicodemus did not repent of the tenacity with which (notwithstanding the mystery of the teaching which he first received) he "followed on to know the Lord," when that blessed moment arrived at which he was privileged to take down the body of his Lord from the Cross, and to bear it to its place of rest, or when that further moment arrived, even yet more blessed, in which he was himself buried with Christ through Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so he also might walk in newness of life.† Nor will we repent of it if we imitate Nicodemus in his perseverance. The mysteries of Holy Scripture (and this of Baptism among them) are presented to us as elements or aspects of a new creation of God (constituting the crown of all the antecedent movements through nature and through history leading up to it) within the law and order of which we are embraced; which is now being gradually evolved in the course of an historical process from its root in the Incarnation; and which is predestined to find its appropriate consummation in the resurrection and in the Kingdom. Instead of cavilling at the doctrine of Baptism on the ground of its mysteriousness, it is therefore our wisdom and profit—and only the more earnestly and persistently because of that fact—to address ourselves to the contemplation of it, with this prayer perpetually in our heart—"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold *wondrous things* out of Thy law."‡ §

* John iii. 9-13.

† Rom. vi. 4 (R.V.).

‡ Psalm cxix. 18.

§ An apology is almost due for referring, even to this extent, to prejudices against the handling of the subject based on grounds so superficial. I have, however, thought it best to begin by so referring to them, because the hindrance created by such prejudices is so often an occasion of discouragement to those who seek to teach faithfully the truth of God on Baptism, and also because one aim of the Scottish Church Society is to deal with the subjects, on which we confer, in their popular as well as academic aspects.

DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

The subject proper of Holy Baptism, to which I now proceed, may be fitly sub-divided into the following sections:—

I propose, *first*, to consider the conditions essential to a due apprehension of the doctrine of Baptism; *secondly*, to indicate what the Scriptural doctrine of Baptism is, or, in other words, what is the distinctive “grace of Baptism”; *thirdly*, to examine the basis, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, on which that doctrine rests; *fourthly*, to illustrate the manner in which the doctrine of Baptism is declared in the authoritative formularies and historical documents of the Church of Scotland; *fifthly*, to deal rapidly with some of the principal difficulties or objections commonly urged against the full acceptance of the doctrine of Baptism; and, *sixthly*, to indicate the spiritual gain which, in various matters of vast importance, would follow, through the Divine blessing, from the restoration of the faith of Baptism to the place from which, by long neglect, or even by deliberate denial, it has undoubtedly been allowed to fall—enumerating in conclusion some of the practical steps which at present urgently need to be taken throughout Scotland towards its recovery.

SECTION I.—ANTECEDENT DOCTRINE.

The question as to the conditions essential to a right apprehension of the doctrine of Baptism may be said to embrace two subordinate inquiries—(*first*), What must be pre-supposed as regards the way in which we approach the subject; and, (*second*), What are those

antecedent facts in the history of the dealings of God with man, the believing apprehension of which must also be pre-supposed, before passing to the consideration of the further and specific operation of God implied in Baptism.

I.

As regards the first of these points, two demands have to be made, the reasonableness of which will surely be universally admitted. (1.) The first is that *our supreme appeal must be to Holy Scripture*. There is here no need to disparage any aid to be derived, whether (*a*) from what has been said by teachers of the Church in previous ages, or (*b*) from the consideration of the Catholic creeds of Christendom, or (*c*) from the study of the formularies of our Scottish Church. That man surely stands convicted of the grossest presumption who proposes to dismiss with negligent contempt the undivided testimony of the Catholic Church on any matter whatever. One illustration entirely relevant to the subject may be adduced. In connection with the question as to what interpretation should be put on the momentous declaration of our Lord recorded by St John—"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God"*—it must surely be conceded that the utmost possible weight ought to be attached to the indisputable fact that there is not a father or teacher, in the centuries following the time of the holy Apostles, who does not understand that passage to refer to the Sacrament of Baptism; and, further, that there is not an ancient liturgy to be found throughout all the bounds of Christendom which does not, in one form or another, employ those words, as directly embodying the Baptismal mystery. Surely such a fact supplies the strongest presumption that what Christendom, without exception, understood those words to mean, the Lord Himself intended them to mean. Traditional interpretation is thus, in this instance, a powerful help to our understanding the

* John iii. 5.

Word. In like manner we must avail ourselves also of the help provided by the catholic creeds. For example: in the Nicene Creed, we profess our acknowledgment of "one Baptism for the remission of sins." Obviously the terms of that Article are of immeasurable importance, as supplying a key to catholic doctrine on the subject in question. In addition to this, the very position of the Article—which does not emerge in the creed until we have first of all professed our faith in all the great historical facts of our Redemption on which it rests, and especially "in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church"—confirms, in a singularly suggestive way, a point on which I shall presently insist, namely, that our apprehension of the doctrine of Baptism depends upon the apprehension attained by us of doctrines which lie further back. In other words, even the connection and sequence of the various clauses is in itself a help as determining the order in which we should approach the special subject of Baptism. Furthermore, we must not here set aside the advantage to be derived from the study of the distinctive formularies of our Scottish Church. No branch of the Christian Church contains more definite sacramental doctrine in its formularies than the Church of Scotland. We who in these times are witnessing for Divine truth as to the Church, the Holy Sacraments, and all such matters pertaining to the Christian salvation, are not, it is important to remark, in the position of those who must plead for indulgence because they are taking liberty with the Standards to which they profess allegiance. The position we occupy is exactly the converse. Our complaint is not against the Standards of the Church as defective essentially on the points in question, but against the apparently widespread defection from the teaching of these Standards. To return, however—my present point is simply that, while it is incumbent on us to pay the most reverent heed to all that has been affirmed in writings of authority, or implied in the Confessions of the Church, our primary duty is to go straight to the fountainhead of authoritative teaching, provided for our use in the Word of God.

(2.) The second preliminary demand is, that we *approach the study of the Word with a candid mind*. This is a consideration of great importance. It will be found in experience that it is a much harder thing than might be supposed to cast aside, and especially in connection with this subject, every degree of illegitimate bias, or form of prejudice based on misconceptions. Nothing, for example, is more common than for persons to approach the study of Scripture professing a readiness to be guided by what is there laid down on the mystery of regeneration, while yet biassed by a total misconception as to what the word "regeneration" means. Such persons usually identify it with the term "conversion"—confusing the thought of a newly-constituted spiritual relation to God, or, at least, of the new development of a pre-existing relation, with an abiding state of practical conformity thereto. Thus setting out with an erroneous idea as to what is meant by the term "regeneration" as descriptive of a specific event in the spiritual life, they are under a temptation to shut out, without even an attempt to grapple with it, every point of Scriptural doctrine which appears to conflict with their false preconception. They proceed to argue that it is preposterous to suppose that such a grace as that of regeneration (meaning all the while that of conversion) can be conferred in Baptism, inasmuch as there are to be seen around us multitudes of persons who have been baptized, and "who seem to have received no good." Or they go on to urge that it is even a "soul-destroying and perilous delusion" to speak at all of a grace of Baptism; that it will lead men to think that because they have been baptized "nothing more is needed," and they "may dispense with the necessity of conversion," and so forth. Or they argue that the affirmation of Baptism leads only to "ritualism and Romanism." It is indeed a conclusive sign of the ignorance into which so many have fallen in matters of faith that they thus huddle together in confusion conceptions as opposite as light and darkness, and seem bereft of

power to separate between them. They would appear to have sunk into a condition in point of spiritual discernment, which suffers them not to know their right hand from their left. At a later stage it will be proper to deal with some of the above allegations; meanwhile, I only refer to them as showing the need of not merely making our supreme appeal to the Word of God, but of being on our guard, while so doing, against allowing ourselves to be unduly influenced by previous misconceptions, by the use of phrases in a wrong sense, or by unwarrantable antecedent bias of any sort.

2.

The inquiry as to the conditions of attaining to a right apprehension of the place and force of Holy Baptism embraces next the question as to what are the principal facts or aspects of the Divine Revelation which have to be antecedently perceived.

This question is to be distinguished from that as to the faith required of the candidate for Baptism.

On this latter point, although it is obviously one of great importance, it may suffice at present to make these remarks. In the first place (1), although faith toward God is undoubtedly a necessary condition of the progressive work of salvation in the heart of man, *such faith is, in no case, dependent altogether, and in some cases, is not dependent at all, on the amount of our knowledge.* That attitude toward God, which may justly be described as having the character of faith—whatever may be the instrumentality by which it is created, or whether there be any apparent instrumentality at all—is always the result of a prevenient operation of Divine grace in the spirit. It follows, therefore, that where faith, in this aspect, exists, the mind, in the measure of its power, is being prepared to apprehend, and, in the end, will be led to apprehend all that God may be pleased to reveal. Obviously, however, this conversion of the spirit may long

co-exist with only meagre knowledge. This must be apparent to any one who reflects on the examples of such conversion presented in Holy Scripture, derived from ages anterior to the Christian Revelation, when the knowledge possessed of the divine purpose was only of the most limited character. Again (2), *even the most immature degree or form of faith is to be regarded as an operation of God in the spirit equally with the most advanced.* The emphasis laid upon what is called "a realising faith," as contrasted with faith in its merely incipient degree, is often, in certain aspects, unwarrantable. Sometimes, indeed, it is even mischievous, because leading us, in our endeavours to point men to higher attainments, to ignore unduly the starting-point they have already reached. The faintest spark of faith toward God is as truly the gift of God, and a witness to the presence of His grace, as is the faith that moveth mountains. The importance of keeping this in view will appear when we come to deal with difficulties arising out of the apparent disproportion between the faith in which the candidate for Baptism is often presented for that rite and the immeasurable grace conferred in it. The gift of God ever exceeds the measure of our preparedness for it, or capacity of apprehending its value at the time of its reception; and in this, as in all things else, He indeed does for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."* Furthermore (3), it is to be remembered that a spiritual qualification for the reception of further grace, which, were the powers of the soul more developed, would doubtless find its appropriate expression in faith (using that word in its ordinary sense), may yet be imparted by God *without that qualification being a matter of intellectual consciousness at all.* This fact, that the Holy Spirit can thus undoubtedly work in the heart and spirit of man, and even in earliest infancy, in a manner entirely beyond our perception or comprehension, is of special importance in its bearing on the question

* Eph. iii. 20.

of Infant Baptism. If we are capable in infancy of receiving spiritual blessing, and even regenerating grace,* it follows of necessity that we must also be capable of receiving in infancy the spiritual qualification for these gifts. Such a conclusion ought not to appear incredible to anyone reverently pondering the amazing testimonies of Scripture. In the experience of Jesus, the Child of Mary, the words, we may not doubt, were literally fulfilled: "Thou didst make me *trust* when I was upon my mother's breasts."† The testimony recorded concerning the Lord's forerunner, even before he was born, is still more significant. Of him the angel said to Zecharias, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost *even from his Mother's womb.*"‡ "When the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears," such are the words recorded as spoken by Elizabeth to Mary, "the babe leaped in my womb for *joy.*"§ The most conclusive testimony on this point is, however, supplied to us in the record of our Lord's words and actions regarding those who, in the unconsciousness of infancy, were presented to Him for blessing. He pronounced them to be ideal types of fit candidates for His Kingdom, declaring that "of *such* is the Kingdom of God"; and "He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them."|| The spiritual preparedness (even when apparently of a merely passive character) for receiving blessing from God, to which—for the lack of any better word—we attach the name of "faith," is, in point of fact, a manifestation, or operation, of the Divine Presence in the spirit, the mode of which transcends our apprehension.

The question with which we are mainly concerned in this section is not, however, as to the measure or character of faith required for obtaining the grace of Baptism, but rather as to the antecedent knowledge required in consider-

* Confession of Faith, Chap. x. Sec. iii. † Psalm xxii. 9, 10 (R.V.).

‡ Luke i. 15.

§ Luke i. 44 (R.V.).

|| Mark x. 14, 15, 16 (R.V.). The above point is adverted to, in connection with this passage, further on.

ing what is the *doctrine* of Baptism. This point I conceive to be of the greatest importance. Nothing is more certain than that the truths of Revelation form a progressive series, and require to be taken up as subjects of study in the Divine order in which they are presented. The facts of the Divine procedure in accomplishing our salvation, and the various elements entering into that salvation, cohere in one organic whole or system of truth in such a way as to make it impossible to apprehend aright the place of any one of these facts, except in so far as we study it in its due relation to the whole. This circumstance appears to me to require specially to be kept in view in connection with all questions as to the purpose or scope of the Divine ordinances. The place and purpose of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, for example, can never be adequately understood, unless we endeavour to understand first the truth of our relation to the Father through our union with the Son Incarnate (as created through Holy Baptism), and of the vocation consequently devolving upon the Church as the Body of Christ, and distributed according to their various places among the members of that Body.* In like manner, the place which is assigned to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism in the Christian Gospel can only be apprehended in the light of our antecedent study of that Gospel. Misapprehension as to the meaning or force of the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in the form of defect, or of positive error, or even, as sometimes seen, of obstinate rejection of the teaching of Scripture and of the Confessions, is invariably to be traced to a misapprehension of the Gospel at large. If the Gospel is merely, as it is so often represented to be, an announcement of truths, which (although relating to some matters of a supernatural order) are yet left to exercise their influence, precisely like any other truths, by supplying motives through the understanding or affections

* In connection with this subject, I may be permitted to refer to my paper on "The Celebration of the Holy Communion," forming part of the volume—"Scottish Church Society Conferences—First Series," 1894.

to the will; if, in other words, the Gospel is not, strictly, the revelation of a new mode of communion with God arising out of the Mediation of Jesus, but, on the contrary, involves merely the presentation to our minds or hearts of a series of truths, tending (through an operation of the Spirit *in no way immediately connected with the present Mediation of Christ in His glorified Humanity and with our actual incorporation into Him*) to illuminate and make more easy of use that way of faith, based only on relations arising out of our original state, whereby man, previously to the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, had in some degree obtained blessing from God, or held communion with Him:—it follows that we necessarily come to regard the Holy Sacrament (as many do) simply as an array of signs representative of conceptions presented to the understanding, rather than as a Divine action or a Divine instrument of grace, and to imagine that there is indeed no difference between a sermon and a sacrament except that the one is a spoken, and the other a silent form of testimony. On the other hand, if the Gospel is discerned to be the revelation of a strictly *preternatural* mode of communion between God and man (that which had existed before the fall having become inaccessible); if what is distinctive of this preternatural mode of communion between God and man is seen to lie in the fact of the continuous mediation of the Eternal Son *in His human and glorified condition*; if the mode of communion thus constituted in virtue of the mediation of “the Man Christ Jesus” is seen to involve as the result of that mediation our actual union with God and participation of “the Divine nature” *through our incorporation into Christ*; if in other words, our blessed Lord is seen to have become, not figuratively, but actually, in virtue of His Resurrection and through His Ascension into heaven, “the Last Adam,”—empowered, as the “Lord from Heaven,” and “a quickening Spirit,” to impart His own nature—in the condition of it in which

He has been glorified, and in which He has received the Holy Ghost—unto all those given to Him, and so to become “the Everlasting Father”* of the *Church as a new creation in Himself*; and lastly, if the Gospel is discerned by us to contain a declaration, not merely of these facts, but *also of the means by which these facts are to be accomplished of God in our experience*, and by which our participation, through regeneration, of the nature of the Last Adam is to be as real as our participation, through generation, of the nature of the first Adam, which has subjected us to the law of death:—if these things are first discerned by us, we are compelled not only to inquire but, indeed, almost to anticipate the Scriptural answer to the inquiry—Whether God has not ordained some specific means, or instrument, whereby we may be assured on His part that this mystical conjunction between us, individually, and our Divine-Human Head in Heaven, Jesus Christ,—constituted to be the Depository and Fountain of all grace,—is actually effected, and if so, what that instrument is?

In answer to the question as to what are the antecedents to a right perception of the doctrine of Baptism, it might no doubt be replied that (as so strikingly suggested by the position in the Nicene Creed of the article “I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins” in relation to all the preceding articles) it is needful to study the entire record of the Redemptive Acts; of the original condition of man; of the Fall and its consequences; of the procedure of God toward man previous to the Incarnation; of the work of Christ Incarnate on the earth; of the relations constituted between God and man since the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ into Heaven; and of the consequent mission of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This, however, is a vast field. Is it not possible, then, to discover some Divinely-authorized syllabus of instruction presenting us with, at least, the cardinal points on which the doctrine of Baptism is hinged?

* Isaiah ix. 6.

Three such compendiums are to be found in the New Testament.

The first, in point of relevancy, consists of the pre-baptismal instructions recorded in the Acts, given by the Apostles and the Evangelists of the Lord to the persons presented to them for Baptism. Seven such records are contained in the Acts; the most comprehensive and suggestive for our purpose being necessarily that relating to the first administration of Baptism, described in the second chapter of that Book.

A second compendium is found in the record, contained in the Gospels, of the instruction which our Lord Himself, during the interval of the Forty Days between His Resurrection and Ascension, gave to His Apostles, before He finally instituted the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The third, and in some aspects the most emphatic of all, is supplied to us in the instruction which our Lord gave to Nicodemus (as recorded in the Gospel of St John) on the occasion on which, so far as known to us, He first alluded to the mystery of regeneration.

In studying these three examples of Divine instruction, given antecedently to the exposition of the doctrine of Baptism, it is most suggestive, I proceed to observe, that they all concur in emphasising three points. According to these instructions, what we have to understand and realize, in the first place (1), is *the condition in which we lie, through our participation, in common, of a fallen nature*. This truth does not involve (it is important to notice for a reason which will afterwards appear) the supposition that any change in the constituent elements of our common nature was brought about by the Fall, or that the corruption of our nature has been such as to make unavailing every form of restraint hindering it from bringing about, invariably, and in every man, the like extremity of wickedness. This notwithstanding, it does involve the fact that our nature, in the state in which it has been transmitted from Adam according to the law of natural generation, is by sin hope-

lessly sundered from its proper centre in God, is subject to the oppression of Satan and to the law of death, and has become incapable, without a Divine interposition, of regaining the righteousness from which it has fallen, or of fulfilling the purpose of God.

This fact, then, which, there is reason to fear, is receding unduly into the background of modern thought on such subjects, and to which the testimony of the Bible, from beginning to end, is explicit, falls first to be realised before we enter on the study of Baptism. And why? For this sufficient reason (to name no other), that along this line we best reach the perception of the necessity of that preternatural Divine interposition, which culminates in "Regeneration," or the "Second birth." If we start from the assumption (as many in these days do) that sin, or moral evil, is merely a form of defect inevitably inherent in the creature as such, or the product of ignorance, or an unavoidable stage of development, or a "necessary foil to goodness," the conclusion follows (according to the alternative preferred) either that moral evil is incurable, or else that all that is really required for its cure is better and more protracted education, involving the presentation of clearer truths to the understanding, and of fresh influences or motives to the affections and will. But if, on the other hand, we perceive in the light of the testimony of Scripture, that the nature we have inherited is not what it originally was, but fallen; that it is organically fallen; that it is not so true to say that we make our own nature as to say that our nature makes us; in other words, that we do not sin merely through external temptation or example, but that we are "conceived in sin," and inherit from our first father Adam (in the power of a common life transmitted by natural generation) a nature which is dead at its root, and has become obnoxious in the sight of God, and incapable, in this condition, of the fulfilment of His will in creating us: then we cannot but perceive also that what is needed to meet such a case is a Divine interposition, making attainable

by man the counterpart of the mystery of natural generation, even *another birth*, or *regeneration*,—not merely new truths, new influences, new motives, but the actual impartation from the Second Adam of *a new nature*, securing our admission into a condition or state in which, while the essential elements of our being remain precisely what they were, we are yet made capable of fulfilling, by communicated grace, the predestined functions of spiritual life.

The importance of discerning in this way the necessity of an act of spiritual regeneration affecting our entire nature, and accomplished by the grace of the Lord Incarnate, the Second Adam, is implied in all the representative examples of pre-baptismal instruction referred to above. It is, however, brought out with special clearness, as the first step in such instruction, in our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, as recorded by St John. Nicodemus, the Pharisee, came to Jesus (as many, apparently, still come) accosting Him only as a *teacher*.* “We know that Thou art a teacher come from God.” His inward thought seems to have been that all that was necessary to a higher spiritual life was *instruction*, or, in other words, a gospel after the manner of a philosophical system. Our Lord struck at the root of that delusion by the emphatic announcement—“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above (or ‘anew’) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”† In other words, He explicitly asserted that what was indispensable in the first instance was not additional teaching, but the communicated power of a new nature—the reconstruction of our nature at its root, in Himself, the Second Adam, and the impartation of that nature to such as believed in Him, in the mystery of a second birth.

(2.) The second thing illustrated to us in these three pre-baptismal instructions referred to is the need of discerning *the distinctive import of the Resurrection*.

By referring to St Luke's history of the Acts of the Apostles, it will be seen that the Apostles, before exhorting

* John iii. 2.

† John iii. 3 (R.V.).

those to whom they preached repentance to receive Holy Baptism, or proceeding to baptize, invariably opened up the doctrine of that *new condition* of our nature to which our Lord attained through Resurrection. In the Incarnation, He took our manhood as it is, "with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof,"* into indissoluble union with His own Divine Person, as the Son of God. In the Passion, He accomplished "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." His Passion was efficacious to this end through the infinite merit imparted thereto by the Divinity of His Person. Further, in His Passion, He acted also as the representative of our race, tasting death for every man,†—accepting the extinction (through death, which is the "wages of sin")‡ of our nature *in that condition* into which it has been brought through sin. His Resurrection was not merely a sign of the acceptance of His sacrifice, and of the unspeakable love of God to man (of which the Passion and Resurrection are alike manifestations), but was also an act accomplishing the redemption of our nature and its reconstruction, in a new, spiritual, and immortal condition,—involving spirit, soul, and body,—and making it now capable of fulfilling perfectly, through the Holy Ghost, the Eternal purpose of God. Before proceeding to speak of Baptism, the Apostles, therefore, invariably preached the *Risen* Christ, and the import of His Resurrection. The most representative illustration of their habitual practice in this respect is furnished in the ten verses extending from the 22nd to the 32nd of the second chapter of the Acts. The entire period of the Forty Days in the post-resurrection ministry of our Lord may justly be regarded as having been devoted to the endeavour, not so much to prove to the Apostles that He was risen from the dead, as rather to unfold to them, as His chosen witnesses, the mystery and glory of that absolutely new condition

* Confession of Faith, Chap. viii. Sec. ii.

† Hebrews ii. 9.

Rom. vi. 23.

of manhood in which, as the first-begotten from the dead, the first regenerate man, He had been raised through the operation of God. Even our Lord's teaching to Nicodemus contained, towards its close, the intimation of the approaching mystery of Resurrection, leading on to His being "lifted up" into heaven.

Why, then, in all these various pre-baptismal instructions, is this stress laid upon the Resurrection of our Lord? For two reasons. First, because in the Risen Christ we see the head and beginning of that new creation of God, of which all who are united with Him form part. In Him, *as risen*, we behold the pattern of our nature in that condition which is the true expression of God's original purpose in its Creation. God seeks not, be it said with reverence, to perpetuate our nature in the condition into which it has fallen, and which is, therefore, under the sentence of dissolution. He exhibits to us, in Jesus Christ, —in the spiritual, incorruptible, and glorious condition of spirit, soul, and body in which He has been raised from the dead, and in which, while truly and for ever man, He is yet capable of bearing the glory which He had with the Father before the world was,—that heavenly condition of our nature to which He desires those whom He chooses for that end to be now, in body, soul, and spirit, for ever conformed.

The other reason why so much emphasis is laid in the Apostolic teaching upon the condition to which our Lord attained by Resurrection is—that we might thereby be better prepared to apprehend the distinctive functions on which He entered at His Ascension when He received authority to impart to such as were given to Him of the Father the fellowship alike of the eternal life on which He had entered in our nature, and also of the power and glory with which He had become endowed.

(3.) We are thus brought to the third point insisted upon in these Divinely-ordered pre-baptismal instructions—and insisted upon even more emphatically than the two already

mentioned—that, namely, of *the import, on the one hand, of the glorious mystery of our Lord's Ascension, and, on the other, of the correlative event of Pentecost.*

Our Lord concluded His instruction of Nicodemus by pointing forward to the Ascension and to the dispensation of the Spirit thereafter to be inaugurated. Nicodemus said unto Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life." * These words find their full interpretation only in the light of the subsequent events of the Ascension and Pentecost. Again: the institution of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, given at the close of the Forty Days, was expressly set forth by our Lord in connection, on the one hand, with the announcement of His approaching entrance through the Ascension on the functions of His eternal mediation in heaven, and, on the other hand, with the sending down of the Holy Spirit from Him as ascended. "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye *therefore*, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." † "Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." ‡ The import of the Ascension and Pentecost must indeed have been the most fundamental of all "the things concerning the Kingdom of God," § which formed the subject

* John iii. 9-15 (R.V.).

† Matt. xxviii. 18, 19 (R.V.).

‡ Luke xxiv. 48, 49 (R.V.).

§ Acts i. 3 (R.V.).

of our Lord's teaching during the Forty Days. The most perfect illustration, however, of the importance of the doctrine of the Ascension and Pentecost, as preparatory to a right apprehension of Baptism, is, as might be anticipated, that furnished in the discourse of St Peter, recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and spoken, it will be observed, immediately before the first administration of Christian Baptism. This first Apostolic sermon is throughout simply an exposition of the Ascension and of Pentecost, and of the relation between these two events as supplying the basis on which Holy Baptism rests. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of My feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom ye crucified." It was "when they heard this" that they were "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" Immediately thereupon Peter said unto them, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"; and St Luke significantly adds the statement—"they then that *received his word* were baptized." *

Why then is the emphasis in all these passages so obviously laid on the doctrine of the Ascension and of Pentecost as leading up to the exposition of Baptism? I answer; For three reasons of great interest. First, because the Ascension marks that moment of time at which, in accordance with the purpose of the Father, the Risen Jesus *became*, in truth, the Second Adam—both

* Acts ii. 32-41 (R.V.).

in the sense that He then entered on the functions of His Heavenly Priesthood as our Head and Lord in Heaven; and also in the further sense that it was then that He received, in His glorified human nature, authority and power as “the Lord from Heaven,” the “quickening Spirit,” to beget spiritual offspring,* and to communicate to such as are given Him to be united to Him eternal life in the actual participation of “the Divine nature.” † A second and equally important reason is this: The history of Pentecost, rightly apprehended, marks not merely the commencement of the impartation of regenerating grace from the Lord in heaven as the Second Adam, but also presents to us an example of the *result of that importation of grace as exhibited in the birth of the Christian Church*,—consisting of persons chosen of God to be “created anew in Christ Jesus,” and now, as members of His body, knit into organic unity with Him and with one another; brought thus into a new relation to God the Father; and made partakers, in Christ their Head, of an eternal resurrection life, which, if duly nourished, is destined finally to culminate in their complete transformation, spiritually and bodily, into the image of His glory. The third reason why the exposition of the mystery of Pentecost precedes that of Baptism is,—because the manner of that event leads us to anticipate the predestined relations between grace and faith: and also helps us to apprehend the law of a *sacramental dispensation of grace*, under which it has pleased God of His mercy to place His Church. Contemplating the historical event of Pentecost, as recorded by St Luke, we see, on the one hand, that the union between the ascended Jesus and His disciples on earth was not effected through any operation, on their part, of intellect, or of affection, or of will, but, on the contrary, was effected solely by the personal operation of the Lord Himself, Who “poured forth” upon them

* Acts ii. 32-41 (R. V.).

† Compare John xvii. 1, 2; John vii. 37, 38, 39; Ps. xxii. 30; 1 Peter i. 4.

(while they waited and prayed in yet helpless faith) the grace and gift of His Holy Spirit, imparted through His glorified Humanity,—thereby fulfilling His promise that HE would come to them, and that they should live in Him and He in them—they being made one with Him through the proceeding presence of the Spirit as *His* Spirit, even as He, the Son, through the same Spirit, is one with God the Father. Studying the record of Pentecost, we see with equal clearness, on the other hand, that the Church—having been brought, although on earth, into that relation to her Head in heaven, which is implied when we speak of her as the Body of Christ, the Christ mystical,—is exhibited from that moment as containing within herself all the specific instrumentalities needed for her own advancement, and for acting henceforth as the organ of Christ's ministry in the world. The Apostles stand in the foreground as “stewards of the mysteries of God,” and, being first themselves spiritually quickened by His life, and made partakers of His anointing, are used by Him as His supreme instruments in ministering to others. Among these mysteries are the Holy Sacraments, which could now (the invisible grace proper to the visible means being in process of actual communication from the Lord in heaven) for the first time be administered; and of these sacramental instruments of grace, the first brought into effectual operation is the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, whereby “*the LORD added to them day by day those that were being saved.*”*

Such, then, to sum up the contents of this section, are the truths which have to be perceived antecedently to the study of Baptism:—*first*, the need of our *actual* regeneration; *second*, the meaning of regeneration—exemplified in the Humanity of our blessed Lord, in that present condition of it to which He attained by His Resurrection; and *third*, the reality of the Divine impartation of the grace of regeneration—made possible through the Ascension and all which the Ascension involves, and now, since

* Compare Acts v. 12-15; 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28; Acts ii. 14, 41-47 (R.V.).

the day of Pentecost, in process of continuous historical accomplishment, in and through the Church as the mystical Body of Christ.

SECTION II.—THE GRACE OF BAPTISM.

We pass now to the second section, in which we are to indicate the place definitely assigned to Baptism in the economy of grace, or, in other words, what constitutes, according to the Christian Gospel, the distinctive *grace of Baptism*.

The gain ensuing from the foregoing rapid survey of the transcendent spiritual realities, which have to be apprehended in their order and mutual relation before taking up the subject of Baptism at all, will now, it is hoped, be found in the greater clearness with which the problem to be solved is presented to our view.

That problem may be thus put : Here is our human race upon the earth, sharing in common a fallen nature, which has been transmitted from our first parents, which manifests itself universally in acts of sin, which leaves us spiritually impotent to work out deliverance for ourselves, which subjects us to the oppression of Satan and the doom of death. We are familiar with such statements ; but, when we pause to think what they really mean, the case involves a mystery far transcending our understanding. The organic life stream, poisoned at its fountain head, flows on uninterruptedly from one generation to another. Yet there is no material communication, no local contact. The community of Adam's nature in the condition into which it was brought by the Fall (on which fact is based the imputation to us of Adam's sin) resolves itself, at last, into *the operation of an invisible law*, affecting equally body and soul through the diffusion

of one common life. Such being the condition of the race, any effectual salvation wrought for it must first lay hold of our nature in its organic universal character, in order that thereafter the blessings of that salvation may be extended to the individual members who compose that race. No way or form of salvation other than this, it has been well said, could fully correspond to the breadth and the depth of the ruin that has to be remedied.* This, then, precisely, is the history of the salvation provided in Jesus Christ our Lord. Through the union (without confusion) of the two natures the Divine nature and our human nature, in the one all-glorious Person of the Eternal Son of God, our humanity, fallen in Adam, has been raised anew to the participation of a heavenly, immortal, and Divine life. "*The Word became flesh.*" Having been born into the world "in the truth of our flesh," and having thus identified Himself with our race—as in all things ordained to be its Representative—in that condition into which our common nature has been brought by the Fall, He has glorified therein the Divine Righteousness, and in His death on the Cross expiated our sin. Having been "delivered for our offences," He has been "raised again for our justification." Further: through His Resurrection He has prevailed to carry over our nature—body, soul, and spirit—into a condition, to which, indeed, it was eternally predestinated, but which has now, for the first time, been revealed in Him as risen from the dead, and in which, indissolubly united to the Godhead in His Person, it is at length made capable of being energized perfectly and for ever by the Holy Ghost. Unveiled, then, to the vision of faith, the Risen and Ascended Jesus stands before us as the Second Adam, exalted into heaven, and set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. But more than this. There was a "promise of the Father" to Him, as man, which (as

* I must here acknowledge my indebtedness to the powerful argument of the late Professor J. W. Nevin in his "Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist."

we are taught in many passages*) He was incapable of receiving, and, therefore, was unable to communicate, so long as He represented only the mortal order of our manhood. Having, however, passed through death, and attained by Resurrection to immortal life, He has entered on the inheritance of that "promise." He has "*received*," on His Ascension into heaven, the "promise of the Father." His human nature in that Resurrection condition in which it has been "highly exalted" has now become the supreme depository of the Holy Ghost, and of the "powers of the world to come." He has been "*made*" LORD, and, in that form of heavenly manhood in which He now abides in glory, He has been "consecrated" † to be eternally the "*our Mediator* between God and men," through Whom alone man can gain access to the Father, and through Whom also all the actings of God will proceed for ever to all parts of His creation. He has not only been made Lord; He has also been "*made*" CHRIST. In other words, He has obtained the right and power to *give* what he has received. All authority hath been given unto Him in heaven and on earth; and within the scope of that authority, as the Second Adam, He is enabled to make men *partakers of Himself*—that is, so to communicate the power of *His nature* to all whom God hath given unto Him, that therein, and in virtue thereof, they may have Eternal life.

The question then arises as to how this communication can be actually effected and visibly assured to all such as, gathered out of the world in the providential election of the Father, are presented unto Christ in faith, in order to their reception of grace. It is not enough that we should be left merely to contemplate the truths or doctrines of which we have been speaking, or to be influenced by motives supplied by them. It is not enough that we should be left merely to gaze on the person of our Ascended

* John vii. 37, 38, 39; xvi. 7; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4; ii. 33.

† Heb. v. 4, 5; vi. 15, 16; viii. 6.

and Glorified Lord, or even to believe in Him as the Last Adam and as the Head of the new creation of God. The Christian salvation, as first exemplified in Christ, is a *life* realized in a new condition of our nature—a life which, in the strictest sense of the word, must be *communicated* to us. It is not simply a doctrine for the mind to embrace, nor simply an event to be remembered with thanksgiving, nor simply even an example demanding imitation. It does not imply the constitution of a new order of motives only. It implies emphatically the power of a new order of life introduced into the very centre of humanity—involving a new condition of our nature, and requiring to be imparted to us individually in such a way as to affect, in its ultimate development, our entire nature—spirit, soul, and body. Just as the transmission of our fallen nature from Adam by natural generation is a fact in no degree depending upon ourselves, as recipients, so the communication of “the Divine nature” from the Risen and Ascended Christ through regeneration is also a reality which has its origin and basis outside the exercise of our own faculties altogether. In truth, our relation to the Ascended Lord as Second Adam and Head of the Church does not merely supply a parallel with our relation to the first Adam, but infinitely transcends it. Our eternal life must not only spring from Christ and be derived from the participation of His nature, but must also find in Him its abiding sustenance as an all-present, ever-active, personal life. This is that mystery set forth in the profound words with which our Lord closed His intercessory prayer:—“I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, *and—I IN THEM.*” *

To return then, the question is—How is this diffusion of the power of the Life of the Risen Christ to be brought about? How is Christ, in that condition in which He now is, to communicate Himself? How are we to be translated out of the state of sin and death in which, as

* John xvii. 26 (R.V.).

the children of the first Adam, we now lie, and to obtain *re-generation*? How are we to be *ingrafted* into Christ? How are we to be *visibly assured* that such an operation of God toward us has come to pass? How are we to know the *occasion* of its accomplishment, and the *reality* of it? These questions must be definitely answered if the answer to them is to be of any use. Christ is in heaven; and we are upon the earth. He does not personally come down from heaven to fulfil His present work among the children of men. He fulfils that work *ministerially*,—although by the conscious personal operation of His will. In other words, He fulfils that work in and through the Church, which is His Body Mystical, and in virtue of the presence in it as *His* Body, of the Eternal Spirit as *His* Spirit—as the Spirit of the Man Christ Jesus—“received” *by* Him, and now “poured forth” *from* Him. The Church is the organ of the present action on earth of the Risen and Ascended Christ; and the various members of the Church, in the places in which they are “set” by God, together with the various ordinances which he has entrusted to them for the ministerial fulfilment of His purposes, are the *instruments* whereby He acts. We are, therefore, only putting the same questions in another form when we ask *whether there is in the Church any instrument specifically ordained of God for the express purpose of so regenerating and ingrafting into Christ* those whom God calls, that in the believing use of it they may be made and may know that they have been made Sons of God through the communication of Divine grace, and may also know that they will be held thenceforward responsible for living as those who have been quickened with the Life of Christ, and made members of His Mystical Body.

The answer which Holy Scripture and the Catholic Church alike authorize us to give to this question is, that such an instrument has been ordained of God in the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

Through His *Word* and *Sacraments*, God makes men

partakers of that Eternal Life which is in His Son Incarnate, raised in our nature from the dead, and which through Him is brought into the world. The *Word*,—in the sense of a testimony to Christ, given by those who, having been themselves quickened with the Life of Christ, and ingrafted into Him, have become capable of being used as His members, and of acting with His commission and in His Name,—is the specific instrument by which God makes known His will regarding those whom He calls, and by which also He further works in them the effect of faith. *Baptism* is the instrument which He has ordained for the specific end of regenerating and ingrafting into Christ those whom He thus invites by His Word, and to whom, by the operation of His Spirit in the hearing of His Word, or otherwise, He imparts the gift of faith, or, at least, of such equivalent preparation as is requisite, so that through that sacramental act they may be visibly assured that they have obtained the remission of sins and are also thenceforward included among the members of Christ, the children of God, and the heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

To frame a definition of the grace of Baptism which will not at some point or other fall short of the entire truth is, perhaps, impossible. It is a mystery of grace so many-sided and so vast as to burst the bounds of every formal definition. We may, however, venture to expand, as follows, the answer we have given, so as to exhibit more clearly the relations of the truth of Baptism to other and balancing truths: thereafter setting forth its various parts in detail. Baptism, we say then, is that ordinance which God has appointed in His Church (1) in order that those whom He is pleased to call from among the redeemed to be made members of the Body of His Eternal Son Incarnate raised from the dead, and who, in conformity with His eternal election and providential leading, are presented before Him for that end, may, by the act of the Lord Jesus (graciously certified to them by the outward sign of water, sacramentally attached thereto, and used in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost) *obtain the remission of sins and the gift of regeneration through the Holy Ghost and be ingrafted into the same Lord Jesus Christ*: (2) in order that in virtue of their union with Christ (through the mystery of spiritual regeneration thus sacramentally wrought by grace, and assured to, and to be realized by, faith), they may know themselves to stand thenceforward in a spiritual relation to Him, as their Risen Head, different from that of all others who have not been so united with Him—a relation involving the fact that they have now become members of Christ's Mystical Body, and, in an equally specific sense, sons of God, children of His Household, and temples into which can enter the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit: (3) in order that they may know that they are thus placed under a distinctive responsibility, on account of the grace bestowed on them, to walk henceforth in newness of life as being now wholly Christ's in spirit, soul, and body, and as having become partakers of a Priestly calling in Him: and (4) in order that finally they may know that they are under the law of a distinctive probation as heirs of a Kingdom which remains to be revealed, and that they ought, therefore, to strive through the faithful use of all the Divine ordinances, and through obedience to the Divine will, so to make their calling and election sure, that in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God—when Christ shall be manifested, and His Kingdom shall come—they may be made perfectly like unto Him in His glory, and, in the distinctive manner proper to their predestined rank, inherit His Kingdom for ever.

The following are the various points in the above statement which have now to be specially noticed in detail:—

First: Holy Baptism marks the visible emergence in time of an eternal purpose of God.

In Holy Scripture, the Church, in its totality, as one organic whole, is represented as the gift of the Father

to the Son Incarnate,* to be the instrument used by Him for the fulfilment of His work in continuing to declare the name of the Father. The Church was, in this aspect, chosen in Christ Jesus "before the foundation of the world." Holy Baptism denotes the moment at which this election of God first comes decisively into view as regards the individual members successively called of God to compose the Church.†

It will be observed that the realisation of this fact places in a new light the providential disposition of circumstances by which candidates, whether in infancy or otherwise, are presented for Baptism, powerfully encouraging us to believe that where they are so presented there is always an antecedent preparation, although sometimes brought about in ways which may be quite indiscernible by us, for the reception of grace.

Such an expectation should be the more easily cherished wherever (as emphatically in the Scottish Church) due stress is laid upon the fact that the covenant of Baptism includes also, at least in certain important aspects, the children of the faithful baptized.

Second: Baptism is an operation of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

The Father gives those whom of His sovereign will He chooses unto the Son, to be incorporated into Him, and made very members of His Mystical Body (precisely as when the Father gave to Jesus, in the days of His ministry on earth, the Holy Apostles in answer to His intercession): ‡ the Son receiveth them as the Father's

* John xvii. 2; vi. 37.—"In our Lord's discourses, that which the Father hath given Him is spoken of in the singular number and neuter gender—'*all that which*'; whereas they who come to Him, the Son, are spoken of in the masculine gender, and sometimes also in the plural number—'*every man*,' or '*all they*.' The Father hath given to the Son, as it were, one mass, that all whom He hath given should be *one*; that whole mass the Son unfoldeth, one by one, in this following out of the Father's design. Hence also that which we read in ch. xvii. 2, '*that all that which Thou hast given Him, to them He may give eternal life*.'"—Bengel, quoted by Alford.

Compare Eph. i. 3-14, and Acts xix. 1-6.

‡ Matt. ix. 36, 37, 38; x. 1; Luke vi. 12-16.

gift, and effects that union between Himself and them through which they become spiritually His members: and the Holy Ghost (as the Spirit of Christ Jesus in that nature wherein as Man He is now glorified) quickens them with the life of Jesus, and imparts to them of the fulness that is in Him, preparing them thereby for His own personal indwelling as the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

The realisation of this truth that Baptism is an *act of God* not merely leads us to anticipate the doctrine of Scripture as to the efficacy of Baptism, but, indeed, makes the converse absolutely incredible.

Third: Baptism does not merely attest a covenant under which, on certain conditions, God will bestow future spiritual blessing (although this is no doubt one subordinate aspect of the rite), but is a means whereby the communication therein of grace for a specific end is—in virtue of the sacramental constitution of the ordinance itself, and of the relation between the sign and the thing signified—certified and assured to faith.

This point falls to be amplified afterwards, and is one of the more important points of contrast between the Reformed and the Zwinglian doctrines of the Sacrament.

Fourth: The grace communicated in Baptism is that of our *actual* ingrafting into Christ Jesus, or of our translation—out of the condition of our nature which, under the Headship of the first Adam, we have inherited, and which, through sin, has become subject unto death—into that condition of the one human nature in which Christ, under whose Headship as the Second Adam we are so placed, was raised from the dead.

Our entrance into this state of grace is the Divine Mystery of our Regeneration or Second Birth.

This state of grace obviously does not imply that there do not abide in us remnants of corruption, “whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war” between the flesh and the Spirit. The figure of birth, on the one hand, pre-

supposes a form of antecedent life, but, on the other hand, does *not* in itself imply the necessary continuance of life. This notwithstanding, our Baptismal ingrafting into Christ Jesus implies (1) the remission of sins through the blood of Christ; (2) the constitution of a new and specific relation between us and God the Father as in Christ His adopted sons; and (3) the capability of becoming the temples of the indwelling personal presence of the Holy Ghost.

All the benefits of Holy Baptism are included in the fact that we are therein made "*members*" of Christ* ("which one saying comprehends more than all which men's or angels' thoughts can conceive of blessedness"). It is, however, legitimate to distinguish some of these benefits in the above order.

"Until sin be remitted and condoned, and we be loosed from its power, we are in that condition wherein we were born, corrupt and unholy, "dead through trespasses and sins," "sons of disobedience," "children of wrath." † On the other hand, if we be living members of Christ, we are freed from the fear of judgment and from the power of sin. ‡ These, then, are two distinct and incompatible conditions; if we are involved in the one, we cannot have attained the other; if we be translated from the one to the other, it follows that the remission of sins must be *assured* to us."

The work of our blessed Lord is in all its parts the manifestation of the universal love of the Father. God is revealed in Christ as the Father of all. The love of the universal Father is the fountain out of which all streams of blessing flow. While this is so, it is, however, not the less true that the work of Christ is not merely (as it is so often represented to be) illuminative of a relation in which God has at all times stood to all. It is also *creative* of a new and distinctive relation which is constituted only between Christ and that election from among the race of the redeemed which, incorporated into Himself through

* 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27; Gal. iii. 26, 27; Rom. vi. 1-11.

† Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3 (R.V.).

‡ Rom. viii. 1 R.V.).

Baptism, is known as the Church. United by a specific act of Baptismal grace with the Eternal Son Incarnate, we *become* sons of God.*

Fifth: Baptism, thus constituting a new spiritual relation between those who receive it and the Lord Jesus Christ as their Head, constitutes also, of necessity, a new mutual relation between all the baptized themselves, as being collectively members of one Body. †

This point is of special importance in view of the tendency, nowadays evinced in so many forms, to ignore the Divine basis of unity supplied in one Baptism, and to fall back on some narrower basis arising out of covenants of our own making. It is of importance also, as delivering us from that individualism (often proclaiming itself as “evangelical”), which forgets that the Baptismal grace, which binds us to Christ, binds us equally to our fellow-Christians in Him, and that we cannot be united in the one Baptism with Christ Himself without being, at the same time, united with His Church. Further, it is a safeguard against the sectarianism, so common in our land, which habitually forgets, and sometimes even openly denies, that the glorious heritage of the whole Catholic Church, from the first, is one to which Baptism confers on each of the baptised an equal title.

Sixth: It follows that Holy Baptism—inasmuch as it constitutes a true relation between such as receive it and the Lord Jesus into Whom they are baptized—places these persons also under entirely peculiar obligations. The responsibility conferred by Baptism is of a specific character. Furthermore, that responsibility (even in the case of Infant Baptism) does not rest upon the parents or sponsors, but upon the baptized themselves. From the moment of their Baptism, the persons baptized are under an “engagement to be the Lord’s.” That responsibility is also *final*. No one can receive Christian Baptism a second time. ‡ Once

* John i. 12, 13; Gal. iii. 26, 27. † 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Rom. xii. 5.

‡ Heb. v. 4, 5.

baptized we must go forward in the way of life unto eternal blessedness, or be judged as *apostates*, and given over to the "second death."

The importance of these points (nowadays almost entirely overlooked or denied throughout Scotland) will appear at a later stage.

Seventh: The benefits of Baptism, whether present or future, can be personally realized only through faith. The grace of the Sacrament is imparted wholly by Christ Himself. But faith, or (in the case of infants presented for Baptism) such a disposition of the spirit toward God as might find its proper expression, were it possible, in acts of faith, must alike precede Baptism, attend upon it, and follow after it. Candidates may, conceivably, be presented for Baptism (although we venture to trust that such cases are indeed rare) who, through their unbelief at the time, reject the grace therein exhibited. The condition of Christendom would also seem to show (albeit we are taught, as must ever be remembered, to "judge nothing before the time") that multitudes of the baptized may, through their after unbelief, misuse, and well-nigh quench the grace imparted. These facts do not prove that unbelief can frustrate the operation of God, or make the obligation incurred by Baptism as if it had never been imposed; they illustrate, however, the indispensableness in the reception and use of Holy Baptism of that personal faith which is the correlative of grace.

The due assertion and realisation of this one point is an absolutely effectual safeguard against every possible danger which can arise from a full declaration of the doctrine of Baptismal Grace. That doctrine can never be other than a sure foundation to him who *believes* and *acts upon it*.

Eighth: Baptism is only one, and among the earliest, of a *series* of Divine acts, each of which has its own proper end.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this truth.

To the oversight of it may be traced much of the difficulty that hinders the more general acceptance of the doctrine of Baptism.

It is undeniable, that, according to the original constitution of the Church, the further blessing of participation in that "power from on high," with which our Lord was endowed on His Ascension to the Father, was ministered to the baptized, in the corporate unity of the Church, through the laying on of the Apostles' hands. Baptism prepared, so to speak, the temple for the Divine indwelling; and, in the laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost, imparting, as He willed, among other gifts the "powers of the world to come," took up His abode in that temple. Without here entering, however, on the profound and vital questions which these facts raise, this, at least, is certain,—that the grace of Baptism needs for its adequate development the continual use of all other ordinances appointed for its sustenance, and especially of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. In the remembrance of this point, we are saved from the peril of denying the efficacy of Baptism as a Divine means of grace in those innumerable cases where the apparent frustration of the operation of God is simply due to either the persistent neglect, or the as persistent misuse of other, and equally necessary, provisions for the nourishment of that grace.

Lastly : Ineffably blessed and glorious as are the benefits of Baptism set forth above, these benefits are yet in one important aspect to be regarded as only conditional for the present, and as awaiting, for their final completion, the close of this dispensation. As concerns our ingrafting into Christ, and the responsibility under which we thereby lie to live thenceforward in Him and to Him, the work of grace wrought upon us is already complete. But, in another point of view, it yet awaits its completion in the Resurrection. Although we are in Baptism now made sons of God and heirs of the Kingdom, we are, as such, still upon our trial, and cannot until the day of the Resurrection attain to "the

adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," and enter actually on our full inheritance. Though baptized into Christ and spiritually united with Him, we are still, while in the body of mortality, liable to temptation, and even to failure, and so may make our Baptism void, and indeed worse than merely void. At the Resurrection, however, the work now sacramentally begun will be *finally* completed. We shall see Jesus as He is, and shall be made for ever like unto Him in His glory. That day will accomplish, in the absolute, complete, and final sense of the word, our *regeneration*,* or new birth into the "life of the world to come." "Our citizenship is in Heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." † "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory." ‡ Your life is now "hid with Christ in God"; when "Christ, Who is our life, shall be manifested, *then* shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." §

The grace of Baptism can never be apprehended fully except in connection with the hope (alas! almost extinct in the Christian Church) of this ineffably glorious consummation.

* Matt. xix. 28.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 53-54 (R.V.).

† Philipp. iii. 20, 21 (R.V.).

§ Col. iii. 4 (R.V.).

SECTION III.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I now pass to examine the basis of the doctrine of Baptism above set forth, so far as that basis is supplied to us in the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

Within the limits to which I am restricted, it is impossible to do more than indicate the various converging lines of evidence. A full examination of every relevant passage, whether in itself or in its relation to the Christian Gospel as a whole, would require a separate treatise.

Two remarks may be made at the outset, of which the importance will be apparent to every one acquainted with the controversial writings on this subject.

In the *first* place, even *one* explicit declaration as to the meaning and force of Baptism, adduced from Holy Scripture, must be held to be conclusive in the absence of any contrary testimony of like authority.

In the *second* place, we must not employ inferences from passages not expressly referring to the ordinance of Baptism for the purpose of invalidating inferences suggested by passages clearly relevant to the subject. On the contrary, in cases in which our blessed Lord or His Apostles appear explicitly to declare the specific purpose and efficacy of the Divine action in the Sacrament, it is our duty—instead of qualifying the meaning of such emphatic declarations on the ground of what we assume to be implied in other declarations of less explicit character—to adjust our interpretations of less relevant passages to the teaching of those passages which bear plainly on the question.

The evidence from Holy Scripture* may be arranged in three sections: the *first* containing the declarations of our

* I refrain from entering on the subject of the Old Testament prophecies and types of Baptism, as, however interesting and important, the examination of it is not absolutely essential to my argument, and would require for its adequate treatment a separate section. I may here add also that I do not profess to discuss particularly, in all its relations, the subject of Infant Baptism. Obviously, however, the principles here affirmed determine the conclusions to be arrived at on that subject.

Lord; the *second* embracing the testimony furnished in the records of the administration of Baptism contained in the Acts of the Apostles; and the *third*, consisting of the expositions of the doctrine of Baptism, and the exhortations founded upon it, supplied in the Apostolic writings. I propose to take up rapidly these several sections in their order.

I.

The declarations of our Lord as to the place belonging to Holy Baptism in the economy of grace are three in number, and are explicit. 1. In the record of the institution of Baptism given in the closing verses of St Matthew's Gospel, our Lord is described as having addressed these words to His Apostles:—"All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."* These words must, undoubtedly, be regarded as a summary of teaching that had been given on this subject of Baptism, among others, during the protracted interviews of the Forty Days, and can only be justly interpreted in the light of the commentary upon them furnished by the after-teaching and action of the Apostles, to whom they were primarily addressed, and to whom, in that wonderful period of the Forty Days—the educative power of which is too little thought of—our Saviour spoke of "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." As regards their bearing on the doctrine of Baptism, it may be sufficient to make these remarks. (1) The occasion on which these words were spoken—our Lord's work on earth having at that moment reached its close, and His work in heaven, which is now in progress, being about to begin—is important of itself in preparing us to perceive

* Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20 (R.V.).

the place of Baptism as one of the *heavenly* actions of the Lord, though ministerially wrought through His Church; or, in other words, as being a specific work proper to Him after His Ascension, wherein He was constituted "the Last Adam," "the Lord from heaven," and "a quickening Spirit," and characteristic in a fundamental way, of the post-Pentecostal dispensation of grace. (2) This remark obtains additional confirmation, if we observe the way in which the commission to baptize is linked with the antecedent announcement of the constitution (through the Ascension into heaven and what followed upon it) of the mediatorial Kingdom. "All authority hath been given unto Me. . . . Go ye *therefore*, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them." Pondering this connection, and the way in which the right to begin the administration of Christian Baptism is made dependent on the attainment by our blessed Saviour of "the promise of the Father,"—conferred upon Him as man on His Ascension into heaven,—we are led almost to anticipate the doctrine that Holy Baptism is part of a heavenly economy or ministry of grace. (3) These words of institution do not, however, merely lead us to anticipate what is elsewhere set forth as to the grace of Baptism. They expressly affirm—(a) that our right to administer it and its efficacy alike depend directly and wholly on the mediatorial Headship of Jesus, as now the sole treasury and source of saving grace; and (b) that the purpose for which it has been instituted is that of admitting those who are called thereto *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, that its specific efficacy is realised in the imparted grace of union with the Father, through incorporation into the Son Incarnate, and by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of promise received by Christ in the glorified condition of our human nature to which He has attained, and now ministered from Him. (4) From the order of the various clauses of these words of institution, we learn, further, that Holy Baptism—although implying both an

antecedent declaration of the Gospel and a preventient operation of the Spirit of God—is yet, in virtue of the new relation thereby constituted, the assured basis on which the whole superstructure of Christian teaching and nurture is afterwards to be reared. And, lastly, (5) these words of our Lord imply that as His Presence—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—is, according to His covenant, secured to His Church through the ministries and ordinances which He has ordained, that Presence is, therefore, to be invariably recognised in the due administration of the holy rite of Baptism; in other words, that is no mere act of mortal man, but the act of the Lord Himself, God Incarnate, the Man Christ Jesus risen from the dead, and now wielding, in the Father’s Name, universal authority in heaven and on earth.

2. The Gospel of St Mark contains declarations as to the Sacrament of Baptism, which are also described as having been spoken by our Lord during the Forty Days. Having instructed His Apostles to go “into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation,” He added, we are told, these words:—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”* Much of what has been said above is equally relevant to this passage. The points which it is specially important to notice in connection with it are these. (1) Our Lord, in the most emphatic manner possible, here announces Baptism to be a means of salvation. It is implied also that a testimony to the position which Baptism occupies in the dispensation of grace is a fundamental and vital part of the Gospel. (2) Again, Holy Baptism is here set forth as involving, because of what is ministered in it, a step in advance of what is attainable by faith. It no doubt presupposes as indispensable that conversion of the spirit to God which we describe as “faith”; but it implies also our being

* Mark xvi. 16 (R.V.). The concluding verses of St Mark’s Gospel are here assumed to be authentic. It is obvious, however, that my argument would remain unimpaired, even were I to omit any notice of these verses.

put in possession of *more* than is made ours merely through faith. In other words, Baptism is *other* and *more* than an act of faith on our part, however indispensable faith may be. Faith is, in a sense, *our* act (though by God's gift). Baptism is the act of *God*. In Baptism, God imparts. Through faith, we receive. Faith brings us to the sacred fount of Baptism; faith approaches it in humility and penitence and prayer; and faith returns from it with joy and adoration. But it is God Himself who meets the approach of faith, and imparts to the duly qualified recipient the grace which He alone can give. It is through the conjunction of these two operations, that of grace and that of faith, that the blessed efficacy of the Sacrament is brought about. Lastly, our Lord's words in this passage imply (3) that, as has been already pointed out, Holy Baptism, while effective for its immediate end, is nevertheless in another aspect but the Divinely authenticated beginning of a work of grace which, if it is to reach its consummation, must thenceforward be continuously progressive. In one point of view, it accomplishes its end and, with visible assurance, admits us into a state of grace; in another and equally important point of view, it is inchoate and waits for its completion in the future. We are made competent candidates for our heavenly inheritance by our acceptance of the Gospel and participation of the grace of regeneration; but as such we are placed under probation in order to a final attainment. Certainly, the suggestion of this most solemn truth seems to be implied in the emphatic form of our Lord's statement:—"He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved.*"

3. Leaving at present out of account the passages, instructive as these are, in which our Lord distinguishes between "the Baptism of repentance," which His forerunner, John the Baptist, administered, and *Christian* Baptism, which could only be administered after the post-Pentecostal dispensation of grace had been inaugurated (a distinction obviously implying the difference between a rite

—which, however high the measure of honour put upon it, was only preparatory for the reception of a gift lying in the future—and the Christian Sacrament of a gift of grace actually present): we now come to the most explicit of all our Lord's declarations upon this subject of Baptism, as recorded by St John. On Nicodemus coming to our Saviour, confessing that he regarded Him as a "*teacher*" sent from God, the Lord confronted him with these words:—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." On Nicodemus objecting, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" the Lord answered:—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God"; and He added this further declaration—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." *For this reason*, He bade Nicodemus not to "marvel" at what He had said unto him—"Ye must be born anew,"—and added these words also, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

The first question to be considered is as to whether we are warranted in regarding our Lord as referring in this passage to the Sacrament of Baptism. On this, it is important to notice (1) that the consensus of interpretation, from the earliest ages of the Church, is overwhelmingly in favour of the primary reference of these words to Holy Baptism. In the earliest ages of the Church, carrying us back to Apostolic times, the consensus is absolute and invariable. The sense in which the Church at the close of the Apostolic age received these words is embodied in the description of Baptism given by Justin Martyr:—"As many as are persuaded and believe that the things taught and affirmed by us are true,

* John iii. 3-8 (R.V.).

and undertake to live accordingly,—these are taught to pray, and to beseech with fasting, remission of their former sins at God's hands; we also praying and fasting along with them. Afterwards, they are brought by us to a place where there is water; and after the same manner of regeneration that we were regenerated by, are they also regenerated; for they then receive the laver in water in the name of the Father of all things, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, 'Unless ye be regenerated, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'* No instance of interpretation can be adduced of which the character of *catholicity*—as sustained by an examination of all the writings which have come down to us from the post-Apostolic age, of all the ancient liturgies in east and west, and also, it may be added, of the writings of the greatest leaders of the Reformed Church in comparatively modern times—can be more emphatically asserted than that which holds these words to set forth the sacramental mystery of Baptism. The dissentients in later times from this interpretation cannot be regarded as writers of authority, unless indeed, in one case,† where the dissent may be attributed to controversial bias, and is associated with strange confusions of statement on the whole subject involved. The practical unanimity of the Church Catholic, through so many centuries, in placing but one construction on our Lord's words, must surely be admitted to afford, as remarked above, the strongest possible presumption that they were intended to bear that construction. (2) In addition to this, it is difficult to see how any other interpretation than that thus accepted so widely in all ages, and so universally by the Christian Fathers in the period immediately subsequent to the Apostolic age, can appear otherwise than as absolutely untenable to any un-

* Justin Martyr: Apol. I., 61.

† Calvin's "Institutes," Bk. IV., Chap. xvi., Sec. 25.—"The Spirit Who, in irrigating and cleansing the souls of believers, operates in the manner of water. By 'water and the Spirit,' therefore, I simply understand the Spirit, which is water."

biased mind. (a) It has been suggested that when our Lord used the word "water" He did not mean the actual element of water, but was speaking metaphorically of the cleansing power of the Spirit. On such principles of interpretation, however, Holy Scripture may be made to mean anything we please. It is precisely through such a mode of interpretation that Socinians contrive to evade the plain testimony of the Scriptures to the Divinity of our Lord. As warrantably might it be maintained (as has often been pointed out) that when at the close of the same chapter it is stated that John was baptizing at Ænon, "because there was much water there," the water referred to was a mere figure of speech. (b) It has been suggested, again, that when our Lord declared the necessity of every competent candidate for admission to the Kingdom being born anew of water and the Spirit, He was referring merely to that change of disposition and character which is at other times described as repentance or conversion. If this was so, it is impossible to see why our Lord referred to the element of water at all. Equally impossible it is to see why He should have associated with the element of water any such change as is accomplished when a man turns to God, or abandons a sinful course of life, or yields his will to God, or begins to realize the things that belong to his peace. Such a moral revolution, involving the surrender of the will, is constantly associated with the hearing of the Word, and may be associated, indeed, with innumerable means of awakening and helps towards holier living. But it is seldom or never associated, *at the time of its accomplishment*, with the ritual use of the element of water. Further, it is to be observed that our Lord did not first speak of the new birth of water and the Spirit, and thereafter proceed to explain it in more general terms, omitting all reference to the element of water; but, on the contrary, spoke first of the new birth from above, and, on being challenged to explain His meaning, proceeded to do so by referring to the purely sacramental aspect of that mystery

as including in "water" the outward and visible sign of invisible grace. On the supposition that He did not mean to declare the doctrine of the Sacrament, *the sequence* of His teaching is unintelligible. Lastly, if our Lord meant to speak of conversion, or, in other words, of a change of conduct arising out of the surrender of the will, it is impossible to understand why He should have spoken of it as a result with which mere "*teaching*" had little or nothing to do, and as a "heavenly mystery" dependent for its realisation upon His being Himself "lifted up" (a phrase implying the Ascension as well as the Crucifixion), and as a result which the enquirer to whom He was speaking was, at the time, necessarily quite unable to comprehend. (c) A third interpretation has been suggested for the purpose of evading the obvious force of these words of our Lord, to the effect, that while our Lord must be admitted to have been referring to the element of water, He was, in fact, speaking, when He referred to "a second birth of water and the Spirit," to *two* events which may be separated from one another by long intervals of time, or which indeed may never be simultaneous—a birth of water in baptism, and another birth of the Spirit which may occur either previously, or subsequently, or at any time, or never. To this, it is a conclusive answer to point out that the assumption is plainly contrary to the terms which our Lord employs. He speaks of *one* birth "of water *and* the Spirit," not of two births, one of water, and another *of* the Spirit. It is not for us to disjoin what the Lord has Himself thus expressly bound together. Further, we may observe that when interpreters thus divide what the Lord has united in the constitution of one sacramental ordinance, and then proceed, as they do, to speak in a depreciatory tone of "mere water Baptism,"*

* The following remarkable illustration of the process to which controversialists sometimes have recourse for the purpose of bringing Holy Scripture into accord with their own preconceptions will be found in an address ("revised") by the well-known evangelist, D. L. Moody, on the text—"Ye must be born again," printed in a volume bearing as its title—"The Faithful Saying" (the hiatus in the quotation is his):—"You cannot be baptized into

and as if the only matter of real importance was another and wholly disconnected birth of the Spirit, *while at the same time insisting on the administration of this "mere water Baptism,"* they are reducing the Christian Gospel to a system of the grossest ritualism. They end by putting a ceremonial observance practically on the same level, as matter of precept, with the most indispensable spiritual reality. Lastly (*d*), it may be said, that one further objection which has been taken to the supposition that our Lord, in His teaching to Nicodemus, was referring to Holy Baptism, namely, that the rite of Baptism had not then been formally instituted, seems to border even on irreverence. In any case it indicates a lamentable inability to realise the extent to which the yet future realities of His Kingdom and "the joy that was set before Him" were present during all the days of His earthly life (as may be most clearly inferred from almost all His words and actions) to the mind of Jesus.

We are not, then, to be debarred by these or any other considerations — prompted, for the most part, by controversial bias, and, indeed, usually connected with much misapprehension even of what is fundamentally distinctive of the Christian Gospel—from accepting these words of

the Kingdom of God. If I thought I could baptize men into the Kingdom of God it would be a good deal better for me to do that than to preach. I should get a bucket of water and go up and down the streets, and save men that way. If they would not let me do it while they were awake, I would do it while they were asleep; I would do it anyhow." "Another class says—'I go to the Lord's Supper; I partake uniformly of the Sacrament.' Blessed ordinance! Jesus has said that as often as ye do it ye commemorate His death. Yet, that is not being born again; that is not passing from death unto life. Jesus says plainly—and so plainly that there need not be any mistake about it—'Except a man be born of . . . the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' What has a Sacrament to do with that!"

I do not doubt that the evangelistic efforts of the writer of these words have been blessed to many—so powerful is the Gospel of Christ that no part of it can be preached in vain. But when Mr Moody finds himself compelled to omit the words of the Lord Jesus, and to substitute dots, in order to suit the Holy Scripture to his own views, he should certainly select for his addresses some other title than "The Faithful Saying."

our Lord, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" as explicitly and conclusively setting forth the place of Baptism in the Divine economy of grace. This is emphatically a case where we do well to recall the saying of Hooker, in a well-known passage of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, that in expositions of Sacred Scripture "when a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst." Accepting, then, these most solemn words of our Lord in their direct and obvious sense, it is impossible either to mistake or exaggerate their value as a dogmatic declaration of the grace of Baptism. They form, in truth, as it has been said, the key to the rest of Holy Scripture which in any way bears upon the same subject. We learn from them, *first*, the necessity, in order to our entrance into, or even vision of the Kingdom of God, not merely of teaching addressed to the understanding, but of such a reconstruction of our nature at its root as that, whereas it was formerly of the flesh, derived from the first head of our race, it may thereafter be reckoned of the Spirit, derived through regeneration from the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven. This is implied in these words of our Lord:—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." With these words, we may instructively compare the words of St Paul: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."* We learn, *secondly*, that this reconstruction of our nature is a spiritual operation, wrought by God Himself after the manner of a "heavenly mystery," and made possible only through the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God Incarnate, and that its appropriate fruit, according to the loving purpose of the Father, is found in the fellowship of that Eternal life, which is in the Son, and becomes ours as we live in Him. This is set forth

* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

in these words, in which our Lord, after first asserting the necessity of a birth from above (verse 7), and explaining (verse 8) that He is speaking of a birth of the Spirit, proceeds, "If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life." We learn, *thirdly*, that in the progressive communication of grace from the Ascended Saviour, through which this operation of God is wrought in such as believe, it is His will to conjoin the application of the outward element of water with our implanting into, the Name of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, to the end of effecting our second birth and visibly assuring us of the Divine act which has passed upon us.

II.

The second branch of evidence from Holy Scripture as to the place of Baptism in the Divine economy of grace consists of the testimony supplied in such records of the administration of the Sacrament as are contained in the Acts of the Apostles. These (omitting less important allusions) are nine in number. We have 1. The Baptism of the three thousand (chapter ii.); 2. The Baptism of the Samaritan converts, including that of Simon Magus (chapter viii.); 3. The Baptism by Philip of the Ethiopian in the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza (chapter viii.); 4. The Baptism of Cornelius and his household (chapter x.); 5. The Baptism of St Paul (chapter ix.); 6. The Baptism of Lydia and her household (chapter xvi.); 7. The Baptism of the keeper of the prison at Philippi and of his household (chapter xvi.); 8. The Baptism of the converts at Corinth (chapter xviii.); and 9. The Baptism of the disciples at Ephesus (chapter xix.).

The following remarks apply, almost equally, to all these records. (1) They all bring vividly before us the foundation of Christian Baptism as laid in an antecedent testimony of emphatic character to the Mediatorship of the Lord Jesus in the human nature in which He is now exalted, and in which, consequently on that exaltation, He has obtained "authority" to communicate unto as many as it pleases the Father to give Him the participation, through Regeneration, of His Life, and thereafter of His Glory. (2) Being for the most part, as might be anticipated, records of Adult Baptism, they imply the necessity of previous conscious conversion to God as a qualification for the due reception of the gifts of grace in Baptism. (3) They all concur, at the same time, in presenting to us Holy Baptism as involving access (through the operation of God therein) to a state of privilege and grace other than and exceeding that obtained by antecedent faith. (4) When studied in connection with such historical allusions as are to be found in the Epistles to the same persons, they all illustrate (some of them, no doubt, more vividly than others) the distinction between the grace of Baptism, effecting, when duly received, an actual ingrafting into the Risen Christ, and such other and further operations of God as then conveyed to those, so ingrafted into Christ and made members of His Body, the indwelling personal Presence of the Spirit enabling them for the functions proper to them in the Priestly service of the Church. And (5) they all show that, while the Lord is to be regarded as ever faithful on His part to His promise in making Baptism an effectual communication of His grace, the abiding fruitfulness of the grace received is dependent upon constancy thereafter in ever-renewed approach to God for the fresh reception of grace through all His ordinances, and in the perpetual consecration of spirit, soul, and body to His service.

Passing from these remarks, more or less applicable to all the records, I proceed now to take them up in detail, indicating the principal points which each of them severally illustrates.

1. The second chapter of the Acts is of supreme interest, as containing an account of the first administration of Christian Baptism. It is strictly a representative instance. In no other case have we, on the one hand, so full an exhibition of the antecedent doctrine essential to the due apprehension of the rite; and, on the other, of the relation in which Baptism stands to the subsequent course of the Christian life and the sacramental means provided for the sustenance and growth of that life. The points which this earliest record of Christian Baptism most clearly illustrates are these:—(1) The *immediateness* of the connection between the specific grace exhibited in Baptism, and that condition on which our Lord entered through His Resurrection and Ascension, as distinguished from the condition in which He was manifested while on earth. It was immediately on the testimony of St Peter to the glory of the *Risen and Ascended* Christ (the Holy Spirit using the word of *that* testimony as the instrument of conversion), that the people demanded what he would have them do (verse 37), and he replied,—“Repent, and *be baptized.*” (2) This record, again, illustrates the prominence given to the doctrine of Baptism, as in itself a *fundamental* element of the Apostolic Gospel. It can scarcely be doubted that the “many other words” referred to as having been spoken by St Peter previously to the administration, and given only in the briefest summary, included an emphatic testimony on this special subject of the purpose and efficacy of Baptism in the economy of grace.* (3) Again, the words of the Apostle in this record imply clearly the doctrine that Holy Baptism is a Divine act wrought for the purpose of putting the believing recipient in the assured possession of blessings other and beyond those which can be attained by such faith as stops short of the reception of that rite. Having already repented, they were to be baptized “*unto* the remission” of sins. (4) The truth that Baptism is to be regarded always as

* Compare verses 40, 41.

that act of the Lord Jesus Christ whereby He gives effect to the purpose of the Father, Who calls into the Church such as He chooses, is also implied. This will be apparent on a comparison of the verses which describe the Baptism of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost with the concluding verse of the chapter, where it is said that "*the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.*" * (5) This record also contains what seems (viewed in the light of more positive statements on the matter, to be considered later) an indication of the important distinction between the sacramental grace of Baptism, uniting us with Christ in the power of a common nature or life, and carrying with it the remission of sins,† and that further operation of God whereby, after being so united with Christ, the baptized are admitted by the gift of the Holy Ghost into the fellowship also of the anointing of the Lord, and of His "power from on high." After exhorting the people (*a*) to repent and (*b*) to be baptized unto the remission of sins, the Apostle adds, in the manner, it is to be observed, of one speaking of a *further* step for which these two first steps, though indispensable, were only preparatory, the assurance—"Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Lastly (6), the picture given in this passage of the after life of the persons baptized, and of their steadfastness in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles and in the celebration and use of the Holy Eucharist and in the offering of the common prayers, illustrates most vividly the truth that, in order to the abiding blessing of Baptism, the grace sacramentally conveyed and assured therein to them who believe has also continually to be *sacramentally* sustained and fed.‡

2. The Baptism of the Samaritan converts, described in the eighth chapter of the Acts, is of special interest in three ways. (1) It presents to us, especially when read in connection with the fourth chapter of St John's Gospel, a most instructive historical picture of the successive

* Chap. ii. 47 (R.V.)

† Rom. viii. 1.

‡ Acts ii. 41, 42.

stages which may be traced in the spiritual life according to what might be described as its normal order of progress. It exhibits (a) repentance and faith; (b) Baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus,* implying union with Him in the participation of the power of His Risen life; and (c) the further reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, participation, not only in the life of Christ, but in the glory of His Priestly anointing, through the laying on of the Apostles' hands.† The sequence of these facts in the spiritual history here described corresponds exactly, it will be noticed, to that implied in the words of St Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he declares the Gospel to be a declaration of the fact that God hath sent forth His Son (a) "to redeem us," in order to (b) our attaining "the adoption of sons"‡ (an attainment which is effected in the Baptism of such as believe), and to our (c) *thereafter* receiving ("because ye are sons") the gift of the Spirit of the Son into our hearts.§ (2) In common with that contained in the second chapter, this record also illustrates the immediateness of the connection between the doctrine of the specific grace of Baptism and the doctrine of what was brought to pass, both by the Ascension of Jesus when He was made "both Lord and Christ," and also by Pentecost as the birthday of the Church or Kingdom of God. Philip proclaimed unto them emphatically "the *Christ*,"|| and "good tidings concerning the *Kingdom* of God and the *Name* of *Jesus Christ*";¶ and it was on their belief of *these* "good tidings" that they were baptized into Jesus Christ: the reception of the Sacrament being obviously presented as involving their advancement into a higher state, following on their conversion, through their actual ingrafting by Baptism into "the Christ," and their entrance by a predestined second birth "of water and the Spirit" into the Kingdom of God. (3) No history in the Acts (with the exception of the later

* Acts viii. 12. † Acts viii. 16, 17. ‡ Gal. iv. 4, 5; compare iii. 26, 27.
 § Gal. iv. 6. || Acts viii. 5 (R. V.). ¶ Acts viii. 12 (R. V.).

record of the Baptism of the Ephesian disciples) illustrates more conclusively than does this now before us, both the distinction and also the relation between the grace of Baptism and the grace or gift then proper to Apostolic confirmation. On this point, however, it would be foreign to the purpose of this paper to enlarge further than to point out that it is as important not to misstate, in the way of exaggeration, the doctrine of Baptism, by representing that Sacrament, as if, according to the Apostolic order, it, of itself, contained the complete provision for our spiritual endowment, as it is not to understate it as if Baptism left anything lacking, wherever received in faith, to our true regeneration in Christ Jesus.

The incident of the Baptism of Simon Magus, which also occurred at Samaria, will be noticed further on when we come to deal with some of the objections urged against the doctrine of Baptism. For the present, it is sufficient to say that it is a case which seems to present no difficulty—unless, indeed, we seek to vindicate a doctrine of Baptism which does not assert the need either of faith or of obedience: which God forbid!

3. The account (rich beyond all others in picturesque interest) given to us of the Baptism of the Ethiopian Ambassador in the wilderness between Jerusalem and Gaza, while also illustrating many of the points already referred to, is specially remarkable (1) for the proof which it supplies of the stress evidently laid by St Philip on the outward element of water as essential to the constitution of the Sacrament (regarded as the Divine instrument for assuring to the recipient his admission by Baptism into the fellowship of the grace of the Lord Jesus). The details of the exposition given by St Philip to the Ethiopian of the 53rd chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah are not supplied. We may be absolutely certain that as he “preached unto him Jesus,” and came to the concluding part of that marvellous chapter, where the Prophet announces that after His soul had been made “an offering for sin,” the Messiah

would “see *His soul*” and “*of the travail of His soul,*” and be satisfied,—he opened to him the gracious mystery of that ordinance whereby, through a second birth “of water and the Spirit,” the Second Adam, the Everlasting Father, brings visibly into existence His spiritual offspring in the Church as the new creation of God. This is implied in the picture given to us of the apparently almost ecstatic joy with which, “as they went on the way,” and “came unto a certain water,” the Ethiopian cried out, “Behold, *water!* what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Furthermore (2), the indications supplied in this narrative are emphatic in a remarkable degree as to the glory of Baptism, and the heavenly honour put upon it as a culminating act of the Lord which crowns the faithful ministry and reception of His Gospel. As we read these words which tell us how, “*when they came up out of the water,* the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip,” and the convert, now baptized, thereupon “went on his way *rejoicing,*” we are almost reminded of the description given to us by St Mark of what occurred when our Lord submitted even to the Baptism of John:—“And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him.”* Such records remain to instruct us that acts which, alas! may be little accounted of in the eyes of man, and are, indeed, regarded by some as if they were but the merest forms, are operations of the Holy Trinity, and exceeding wonderful in the eyes of the angels of God.

4. The account of the Baptism of Cornelius and his household will fall to be more fully examined at a later stage of this paper. It is sufficient to point out now that it is of precisely parallel importance with the record contained in the second chapter of the Acts, so far as showing (1) how invariably the emphatic testimony to Christ *as risen*, was employed to prepare the way for the administration of Baptism. The doctrine which, of course, lies underneath this fact is that so often insisted upon, that Holy

* St Mark i. 10 (R.V.).

Baptism is not merely a sacramental sign of blessings purchased by the death of Christ, and offered or made over (as it is often put) to "such as believe that He died for them," but is rather the means whereby the Lord imparts salvation through union with *Himself in the condition in which He is now as risen from the dead*, and so makes us partakers of the power of His life. "We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be *saved by His life*."* (2), This record, so far from showing (as is sometimes said) the comparative unimportance of Baptism, supplies the most striking instance in the New Testament of a precisely opposite conclusion. That Holy Baptism is an operation of God of absolutely inestimable dignity, which He reserves for the accomplishment of infinitely glorious ends, could not be more conclusively shown than by the fact that He was pleased, by so wonderful a series of almost miraculous interpositions, and by so remarkable a departure from the ordinary manner of His procedure, to bring about, as the final end of all these steps of preparation, the admission *by Baptism* of Cornelius, the Gentile, into the Kingdom of grace. That all which occurred was fore-designed to lead up to this supreme result of Baptism, is implied in the words of the Apostle:—"Can any man *forbid water*, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? . . . What was I that I could *withstand God*?" † (3) The history of the Baptism of Cornelius may be said again to illustrate beyond any other in the Acts the distinctive virtue of Holy Baptism. The contrary inference is often drawn by persons who hastily assume that the gift bestowed on Cornelius previous to his Baptism was identical with that which he afterwards received in that Sacrament. There is no ground, however (as will fall to be pointed out when we have occasion to revert to this history at a later part of this paper), for such an assumption. The peculiarity in the wholly exceptional case of Cornelius (a peculiarity

* Rom. v. 10 (R.V.).

† Acts x. 47; xi. 17.

ordained for a special purpose) was this—that whereas ordinarily the grace of Baptism was administered antecedently to the gift proper to the laying on of the Apostles' hands, *in this case* this latter gift (being one of a different character and involving the personal presence of the Spirit manifested on this occasion in precisely the same form as originally on the Day of Pentecost) was bestowed *prior to* the impartation, sacramentally, of the grace of Regeneration. The distinction may be difficult to grasp, but it is, nevertheless, real and far-penetrating. It is the distinction between the preparation of the Temple of the Living God and the occupation of it; and it is most strikingly illustrated in the record. (4) Furthermore: that St Peter recognised the Holy Sacrament of Baptism as connected, immediately and instrumentally, with the dispensation of the Spirit, and as being, not less (though for a different end) than the laying on of Apostles' hands then in practice, a means whereby that dispensation was carried out, is implied (as is most interesting to observe) by what is mentioned *as having come to his remembrance*, and thus brought him to perceive that it was the will of God that he should proceed to baptize. “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. *And I remembered* the Word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?”*

5. The Baptism of St Paul, though mentioned by St Luke at an earlier stage, may, for our purpose, be more conveniently introduced here. The account of it is specially of value as illustrating (1) the truth to which we have so often occasion to refer, that Holy Baptism implies, according to the revelation made to us of the Divine purpose, admission into an assured state of grace, *other and more advanced* than is attainable merely by repentance and faith.

* Acts xi. 16 (R.V.).

This is seen in the form of the exhortation addressed by Ananias, specially commissioned for that purpose, to the penitent. Saul of Tarsus, although he had accepted, in deep abasement, the faith of Jesus Whom he had seen "in the way," would seem to have wavered, in the very intensity of his self-reproach and fear, before advancing to the font of Baptism. Viewing it in this light, we see how emphatic was the message of Ananias:—"And now, why *tarriest* thou? Arise, and be baptized, *and wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord."* Thereupon he was baptized, and (it may perhaps be inferred) received his *Christian* name, as one who, by a second birth, had become new created in Christ Jesus. There is no more reason to believe that St Paul had in full reality attained to this position previously to his Baptism, than there is to believe that, although a member of the Church, and also fulfilling a specific place of ministry therein, he had been admitted to the distinctive grace and power of *apostleship*, until separated thereto according to the word of prophecy, in accordance with the fore-ordering purpose of the Eternal, as described in the thirteenth chapter of St Luke's narrative. He had repented; he had believed; he had passed three days and nights in fasting, and supplication, and prayer: but, all this notwithstanding, he had to wait until Ananias called upon him to draw near to the laver of regeneration (as he himself afterwards called it), before he received the "one Baptism *for the remission of sins*." To say that St Paul submitted to Holy Baptism only as a public and formal confession of his faith, is to do violence at once to the letter and to the spirit of the record. If Holy Baptism is nothing more than a formal and public profession of personal faith, then, as it has been well said, the rite should be fulfilled *by the candidate acting in his own name*, rather than by the minister of Christ acting "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It may further be added (2) that the sequence of the steps taken in this

* Acts xxii. 16.

experience of St Paul acquires special interest—not only from the teaching which he himself was afterwards employed to give in all his letters on the subject of Baptism—but also from the striking parallelism between that sequence and the order in which he presents to us the various elements entering into the scope of his commission as an Apostle sent to turn men (*a*) “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (in conversion), “that they may receive (*b*) remission of sins and (*c*) an inheritance (in Baptism) among them that are sanctified” (in the sealing of the Spirit also) “by faith in” Jesus.*

6 and 7. The history of the Baptism of Lydia and her household, and of the Baptism of the Philippian jailor and his household, are specially interesting as bearing on the question of Infant Baptism—regarding which, in certain circles, so much unnecessary difficulty is raised. For the present, we have but to point out (1) that both these histories, in a remarkable manner, present Holy Baptism to us (precisely as in all the other cases) as a communicative act of God, which, because of the grace exhibited and conferred in it, is necessarily the occasion of the purest spiritual joy to the devout recipient. It was in gratitude for her Baptism, as a singular, immediate, and effectual token of the Divine favour bestowed personally on her, that Lydia thereafter invited to her house the Apostles of the Lord. In like manner, it was after he received, in Holy Baptism, his assured birth of water and the Spirit, that the Philippian jailor, with such joy, as in truth, is meet when “a man is born into the world,” rejoiced before his God. The history of the Baptism of the Philippian jailor is also important as (2) inferring that, however brief was the opportunity of ministering the Gospel, the declaration of the grace of God, as bestowed in Baptism, was never omitted in the Apostolic preaching. It is inconceivable that St Paul could have proceeded to the administration of the rite without first giving the convert specific instruction on the subject.

* Acts xxvi. 18 (R.V.).

Further (3), that in the circumstances Holy Baptism should have been administered at all is a most instructive testimony to the place assigned to it in the economy of the Gospel of grace. And lastly (4), the whole history is suggestive as to the difference (referred to in previous sections) between faith—or such faith as is the prerequisite for Baptism, implying an attitude of the spirit toward God, brought about through a foregoing operation of His grace—and anything approaching to an intellectual apprehension of the truths of the Gospel. The supposition that the Philippian jailor had attained to any such apprehension is quite incredible. It is certain that he had, nevertheless, come to believe in God, and to look to Him through Christ; and this measure of faith, or degree of preparation, was accepted as an adequate condition for the faith-quickening operation of the Holy Ghost in his Baptism. The instruction afterwards given is not recorded; but it must be assumed that, as in all other cases, the Lord, Who had begun a good work in him, providentially opened the way for its continuance.

8. The Baptism of the converts of Corinth is instructive in connection with what the Apostle says upon the subject in his later Epistles to that Church. The agent employed in their Baptism is not mentioned; and St Paul afterwards in his first Epistle records his thankfulness that, with certain exceptions, he himself baptized none of them. The inference sometimes drawn from the way in which St Paul refers to this circumstance is that he attached but little importance to the rite. An examination, however, of the passage, shows that it suggests an exactly opposite inference. St Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of them at Corinth except Crispus and Gaius. True: but *why?* Lest it should be in the power of any to say that he had baptized *into his own name*;* in other words, lest any should imagine that there was such a thing as a Pauline Baptism, that Baptism was but an act of man, or that Baptism was

* 1 Cor. i. 15 (R.V.).

an admission into a sect or society merely of man's making—instead of being, as it is, an act of God, admitting its recipients into the Lord Jesus through the communication of His life, and simultaneously into the Church also, as that Divine organism which is His Spiritual Body. What the Baptism of the Corinthian converts meant, although the incident is so rapidly noticed in St Luke's narrative, falls to be gathered from the words in which St Paul, when afterwards writing to these same Corinthians, and reproving them for their inconsistencies, nevertheless (as will be pointed out in a later section) appeals without a shadow of hesitation to the reality of the grace which had been bestowed on them, and for which they remained responsible as having been *baptized* by one Spirit into the one Body of Christ.* The fact that the majestic superstructure of doctrinal and ethical teaching which is disclosed to us in his Epistles is obviously based throughout upon the act of God which had passed upon them in their Baptism, although so rapidly noticed in St Luke's narrative, may well lead us to realize how much greater and more truly pregnant with momentous and eternal significance is the moment of Holy Baptism than any uneducated or unbelieving onlooker might suppose.

9. We come, lastly, to the record of the Baptism of the disciples at Ephesus. Here, again, as in the instances of the Baptism of the Samaritan converts and of that of Cornelius, we have an arresting illustration of the distinction between the grace of Baptism, and the gift almost immediately afterwards ministered through the laying on of the Apostles' hands. The importance, as has already been pointed out, of observing that distinction is, that it helps to concentrate our attention more definitely on the grace of the impartation, in a fundamental form, of the power of the Risen Life of Christ, through union with Him, as that proper to Baptism, and as distinguished from the gift and personal manifestation of the Holy Ghost.

* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

On this point I need not further dwell. It is indisputably clear from the statement in the narrative,* that they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, and that, *thereafter*, “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them”—dividing unto each of them severally as He willed. It is more relevant to our present purpose to observe (1) how clearly *Christian* Baptism is here presented to us as distinguished from, and even contrasted with, the Baptism of St John, by the fact that Christian Baptism belongs, in virtue of its being an effectual means of Resurrection Life, to the dispensation of the Spirit. “Into what, then, were ye *baptized*?” was the question of St Paul on discovering that as yet they knew nothing in experience of a ministry and reception of Pentecostal grace. This surely is a circumstance which must be admitted to corroborate, in a very marked degree, what has been asserted as to the place of Holy Baptism as no mere sign of privileges and blessings forming matters of revelation or lying in the future, but as being a sign and seal of *present* blessings actually exhibited therein and conferred. (2) A comparison between the record of the Baptism of the Ephesian disciples and St Paul’s words in the Epistle to the Ephesians † is also instructive, it may be added, as showing how much of *sacramental* doctrine may be implied in passages where no mention is made of the Sacraments at all. Were it not for the record in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, we might read (as many do) St Paul’s words in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians—where, addressing the Ephesians, he reminds them that after they believed they “were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” which was “the earnest” of their inheritance, without suspecting for a moment that any *sacramental* action was implied. When we turn, however, to the record in the Acts, we see that what St Paul meant (described on its sacramental side) is that they were first baptized after they believed, and that,

* Acts xix. 5, 6.

† Ephesians i. 13, 14.

thereafter, they received from him, in the exercise of his specific ministry as an Apostle, "the laying on of hands."

Putting together, then, all these representative historical instances of the administration of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism,—of the instruction which preceded, and of the effects which followed it,—of the faith and expectation in which it was approached, and of the rich fruition of promise which followed its reception,—we may affirm, with the most unhesitating confidence, that they sustain, and are throughout in complete consistency with, the doctrine of Holy Baptism, as being the Sacrament of our ingrafting into God Incarnate, or, in other words, of our Regeneration.

III.

We now come to a third and still more important branch of evidence—viz., that derived from the explicit teaching of the Epistles.

1. Here it will probably be found helpful if we first put together as *in one connected series* the more prominent declarations relating to the subject of Baptism which lie scattered over the various Epistles of the New Testament. These may be grouped as follows, and should be read in consecutive order. For the sake of additional clearness I introduce from point to point a brief indication of the special branches or aspects of the subject presented, so as the better to bring out the symmetrical completeness of the Apostolic teaching:—(1) *The need of Regeneration*, or, in other words, of our translation from our present condition as inheriting a nature which is corrupt and subject to death, into that condition in which we are placed by our ingrafting into Christ Jesus, and by the impartation to us of the power of that life in which He has been raised from the dead:—"Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* (2) *The basis of Regeneration as*

* Rom. v. 12 (R.V.).

laid in the Death, and pre-eminently in the Risen Life of our Lord:—“But God commendeth His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His Life. . . Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (3) *The salvation brought to us through our union with the Person of the Son of God Incarnate raised from the dead, and His imparting unto us of the life wherewith He is alive for evermore:—*And you did He quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, . . . and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:—but God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ, . . . and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the *heavenly* places, in Christ Jesus . . . for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.”† (4) *The sacramental means whereby in Holy Baptism the effectual impartation of the life of Christ has been assured to us, making us, in a distinctive sense, sons of God and heirs of His Kingdom:—*“For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”‡ “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full . . . in Whom ye were also circumcised . . . in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried

* Rom. v. 8, 9, 10, 20, 21 (R.V.). † Eph. ii. 1-10 (R.V.).

‡ Gal. iii. 26, 27 (R.V.).

with Him in Baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead." * (5) *The distinctive obligations laid on us as having been thus assured in our Baptism of the impartation to us therein of saving grace from the Risen Christ:—*"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death! We were buried therefore with Him through Baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. . . . But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died unto sin once: but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." † "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." ‡ (6) *The description of our privileges as baptized into Christ, and as, therefore, introduced through faith into a justified state and made children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of the Kingdom of heaven:—*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." § "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is

* Col. ii. 9-13 (R.V.).

† Rom. vi. 1-11 (R.V.).

‡ Col. iii. 1-4 (R.V.).

§ Rom. viii. 1, 2 (R.V.).

Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body; . . . and were all made to drink of one Spirit. . . . Now ye are the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof.* “Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”† (7) *The glory of the consummation towards which the grace of our Baptism, if we continue faithful, carries us forward, and its manifestation in the Kingdom of God:*—“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.”‡ “Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ’s at His coming. . . . If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass

* 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27 (R.V.). † Rom. viii. 15-17 (R.V.).

‡ Rom. viii. 19 (R.V.).

the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. . . Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord."*

2. The following remarks may be offered on the teaching of the Apostles on the subject of Baptism, as presented generally in their Epistles. A full exposition of the points emphasised would require an exhaustive analysis of all the various references in detail. It may suffice, however, for the present, to adduce at least one representative illustration under each head.

(1.) Holy Baptism, as an operation of God, involving an effectual manifestation of the Divine purpose and communication of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, would appear, even when not mentioned in so many words, to have been constantly present to the recollection of the Apostles, and to have been habitually regarded by them as supplying the basis on which all their exhortations rested. One illustration of this has been already pointed out in comparing Ephesians i. 13-14 with Acts xix. 1-6. No one can read intelligently such chapters as Romans vi., or 1 Corinthians vi., or Colossians ii. and iii., without observing that Holy Baptism was invariably fundamental to their thought, and that it was the recollection of Baptism which moulded the language they employed.

(2.) Where they refer explicitly to Holy Baptism, the Apostles uniformly speak of it as a surpassing manifestation of the mercy and love of God, and also as an operation of God, assuring to its believing recipients that union with the Son of God Incarnate therein effected, in virtue of which they were also made sons of God, and the power of all His saving acts had been communicated to them. The following are representative illustrations:—

a. The first is contained in the Epistle to Titus, chapter iii. 4-8 (R.V.), where we have one of the most compre-

* 1 Cor. xv. 20-58 (R.V.).

hensive summaries to be found in the Holy Scriptures of the Gospel of our salvation :—“ When the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing” (or “laver) of regeneration and renewing” (or, “and through renewing) of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be careful to maintain good works.” In order of importance, this passage is second only to that which contains our Lord’s words in the third chapter of the Gospel of St John, and has, in all ages, been regarded as relating, equally with these words, to the Holy Sacrament. It will be observed that here (*a*) the Apostle speaks expressly of Baptism as the washing, or laver of regeneration, or, in other words, that he directly connects the grace of regeneration with the sacramental operation of God; (*b*) he emphasises the act of God, *in distinction from any work of ours*, as accomplishing the Baptismal impartation of grace, and our admission into a state of salvation; and (*c*) he appears to refer (in accordance with the distinction necessarily adverted to so often) to a twofold operation of the Holy Ghost: one in Holy Baptism effecting to such as believe their participation in the life of Christ, and another consequent thereupon effecting their participation in His anointing and power. This seems to be the full force of the later clauses in the passage, where he speaks of the Holy Ghost (“the earnest of our inheritance”) as being “*poured out upon us richly*, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that (first) being justified by His grace we might (second) be made heirs, according to *the hope of eternal life.*” This doctrine of the grace of God, effectually bestowed upon us in the laver of regeneration, is that which he emphasises in this passage as “*a faithful saying*” on

which he himself rests ; and he exhorts Titus to affirm it confidently as underlying the obligation resting on all them who believe to maintain good works.

b. A second representative passage, as explicitly affirming the saving efficacy of Baptism, is that contained in the First Epistle of St Peter, chapter iii., verses 20 to 22 (R.V.). Here the Apostle, after speaking of the long-suffering of God in waiting in the days of Noah, "while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water," thus proceeds :—"Which [*water*] also after a true likeness" (or "in the antitype) doth now save you, *even Baptism*, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; Who is on the right of God, having gone into heaven." We notice (*a*) the power of the analogy by which he opens up to us the spiritual significance of the Sacrament, representing the Church, as a second ark, resting on the waters of Baptism ; (*b*) the definiteness with which St Peter affirms that Baptism is a *saving* act, visibly admitting its due recipients through union with Christ into the true ark of the Church of God ; and (*c*) the clearness with which also he points out, on the one hand, the sacramental conjunction of the element of water, visible to our senses, with the invisible grace of the promise, and, on the other hand, the truth that the saving grace of the Sacrament is communicated, and acquires its distinctive character from the fact that it is so communicated, from the Risen Christ Who is in Heaven,—while it must also be effectually realized by us through the sincere response of faith toward God.

c. A third representative passage is contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where, in the fifth chapter at the 25th verse, St Paul, speaking of the love wherewith the Lord loveth the Church, uses these remarkable words :—"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it ; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it *by the washing* (or "*laver*") *of water with the Word*, that He might

present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . No man ever hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church; because we are members of His body." * This passage refers, undoubtedly, to Baptism. It will be observed that it refers expressly both to the outward element of *water* and also to the *Word* which pronounces our admission, through Holy Baptism, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The remarks that have been made upon St Paul's words in the Epistle to Titus are here equally relevant. It is, however, specially worthy of note that St Paul, in this passage, speaks of Holy Baptism both as being (*a*) a supreme manifestation of Christ's love to the Church, and as (*b*) an essential and absolutely fundamental step toward that course of progressive sanctification by which the Church is being prepared for her final presentation to the Lord in the glory of the Kingdom. It may be added, as further set forth in this passage, that it is through and in the *Church* that we partake individually of all the blessings of Baptism; that it is the Lord Himself, and not man, Who baptizes; and that the mystery of Baptism, whereby we are made members of Christ, is parallel with the heavenly mystery of the Church itself, as being actually His Body.

(3.) A third and most important characteristic of the teaching of the Apostles on the Sacrament of Baptism which falls now to be noticed is the following:—It is to Baptism—as an operation of God supplying ever afterwards to its recipients an incontrovertible assurance of grace therein communicated—in contradistinction to a mere profession, past or present, made on our own part, or even to the work of Christ (in its general aspect as wrought for all) that the Apostles almost invariably point, when enforcing our Christian responsibilities. This is a

* Eph. v. 25-27, 29, 30 (R.V.).

circumstance which, duly weighed, is obviously of great significance. One representative illustration out of many scattered over all the Epistles is presented to us in the Epistle to the Colossians (chapter ii. 12, R.V.), where St Paul begins by first reminding the persons whom he addressed of their "*having been buried with Him [Christ] in Baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God*" (*toward them in that Sacrament*), and then proceeds (chapter iii.) to exhort them, *on the specific ground that they were at that date so raised together with Christ*, to seek the things which are above.* In these passages we have characteristic examples of an habitual usage of expression. When in search of a solid basis of incontrovertible fact on which to rest their exhortations, the Apostles found, not on the profession that the persons to whom they were writing were themselves then making or had previously made, but emphatically on what *God* had wrought for them in the past; and the specific act of God to which they point as thus making certain their ingrafting into Jesus Christ, and corresponding responsibility thenceforward, is invariably, explicitly or implicitly, His act in Holy Baptism. The fact that Baptism is God's Sacrament for ingrafting into Jesus Christ is, in truth, what explains to us the constant use by the Apostles of the *past* tense (descriptive of an act already finally accomplished at a certain definite date), when desiring to set forth the certainty of grace having been communicated by God,—as distinguished from the measure of response to that grace afterwards given in the life of conversion. "*Ye died with Christ. . . Ye were buried with Him. . . Ye were raised up together with Him.*" The Revised Version, it may be said in passing, has done a signal service to sacramental truth by its restoration, in many decisive passages, of the true force of the Greek tenses. In the above instance we have a usage of speech which must be regarded as furnishing the

* Compare chap. iii. 10-12; Rom. vi.

most conclusive indication as to the light in which the Apostles regarded Holy Baptism as constituting, through the operation of God therein effected, the peculiar responsibility resting ever afterwards upon the baptized.

(4.) Again, the ethical teaching of the Apostles, in its leading divisions, and even minutest details, involves invariably the assumption of the reality of Baptismal grace, and of that responsibility thereby constituted to which I have just referred. This also is a point of great interest. It might well, indeed, be considered as so obvious to any intelligent reader of the later sections of the Epistles, and especially of the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Colossians, and Ephesians, as almost to make it superfluous to reproduce instances in detail.

a. The joy of conscious sonship is always presented as the most characteristic fruit of the power of the Incarnation of the Son of God as realized in the personal life toward God. Emphatically as the Apostles exhort us to walk as those who are now "the sons of God," not the less emphatically do they connect our distinctive standing as sons of God with the grace of Baptism. "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."* Our sonship is spoken of—not (as so often in much of the teaching in our time as to the Divine Fatherhood) as if it were a position common equally to all men and only revealed through the Incarnation,—but, on the contrary, as a *new* relation constituted by a Divine adoptive act of the Ascended Lord Incarnate, Who, in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose, has given to us, through a union preternaturally effected with His own Person, "the right to *become* children of God," and this distinctive sonship of adoption is invariably (on the Divine side of it) associated with Baptism. We were redeemed in order "that we might *receive* the adoption of sons"; and we receive that grace of adoption through God's act in Holy Baptism.

* Gal. iii. 26, 27 (R.V.).

This will be seen to be explicitly asserted by St Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, if we compare the summary of the Gospel contained in the fourth chapter—from the 4th to the 7th verse—with the 26th and 27th verses of the previous chapter quoted above.

b. Again: the ethics of the Epistles, so far as relating to the personal life, emphasise the necessity of ceaseless self-mortification and absolute consecration to God, as “the law of the Spirit of life,” under which we are placed as members of Christ, who are called, on the one hand, not to let “sin reign in our mortal body,” and to crucify “the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof”; and, on the other hand, to “present ourselves unto God” as “alive from the dead,” and our “members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” While this is so, we are, however, at the same time continually reminded, and not the less emphatically, that the power to fulfil the distinctive vocation thus laid on us, as united with Christ, arises out of the reality of our incorporation *by Baptism* into Him as now risen from the dead. It is *because* we have been buried by Baptism into Christ’s death (compare Romans vi. and Colossians iii.), and in Baptism “quickened together with Him,” and therein “raised with Him through faith in the working of God,” that we are to hold ourselves as thenceforward responsible for walking “in newness of life,” and as therefore reckoning ourselves “to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.”

c. Further: the social ethics of the Gospel obviously have as their fundamental principle the truth that we are members of Christ, and therefore members one of another. Here also our responsibilities as Christians are always described as rooted in and grounded on the fact of our Baptismal ingrafting into Christ. If we are clearly called to act in all our mutual relations, whether as brothers and sisters, or as parents and children, or as sons and daughters, or as husbands and wives, or in whatsoever relationship we stand, under the guiding inspiration of the perpetual remembrance

that we share together one life "in the Lord," and are, in very truth, mutually connected by a distinctive bond, and made "members one of another," we are as clearly so called because of the fact that "in one Spirit were we all *baptized* into one body." Of this line of argument the concluding chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians—which may be regarded as a system of social ethics based in magnificent super-structure upon the foundation laid at the beginning of the fourth chapter, in the description of the "one body" constituted by the "one baptism,"—may be taken as a sufficiently representative illustration.

The point, then, here is, that the distinctive character of the ethical teaching of the Apostles is founded throughout on the assumption of a distinctive responsibility created through Baptismal grace. In truth, it is not too much to say that there is scarcely to be found even one figure of speech, or illustrative metaphor, or emphatic phrase, in the ethical or hortatory portion of the Apostolic writings, which does not derive its distinctive form, or glow of colour, or urgency of tone, as well as its dogmatic support from the doctrine of grace conferred by God's act in Holy Baptism.

(5.) The assumption of Baptismal grace is a fundamental part of the Apostolic doctrine of *election*. This is also a point of much importance. In reading the Epistles, our attention cannot but be often arrested by the emphasis and assurance with which the writers of these Epistles constantly dwell on the privileges of the Churches they address, as being "the elect of God." They invariably write to the members of these Churches as "knowing their election of God." They also found on that knowledge as supplying a ground for abounding thanksgiving and encouragement. This manner of address is the more striking when we contrast it with the habit of modern times, in which we have come to associate the term "election" only with controversial Calvinism, and to put aside every question as to our election as involving a mystery beyond our ken, and as, therefore, unfitted to yield any solid comfort to our con-

templation. The explanation of this difference, then, in the point of view from which we too often regard the subject of election as compared with that in which it is most frequently presented in the Apostolic writings, is to be found in the distinctive aspect (as compared with what may be called the modern view) in which the Apostles apprehended the import of Baptism. According to the teaching of the Apostles, the *baptized* are, in a true sense, the "elect" of God. The Apostles were able to say of the people to whom they wrote, that they *knew* their "election of God," because they knew that they had been called and baptized through the operation of God. The Church is His election. The members of the Church, as constituting the body of the baptized into Christ, are God's elect; His "household"; His "people"; His "possession"; His "dwelling-place"; His "temple." In other words, the teaching of the Apostles as to the purpose and efficacy of Baptism implies (as has been remarked in a previous section) that Baptism marks the manifestation (through God's providential preparation) at a given point of time, of an eternal elective purpose, forming a necessary step in the application individually to such as have been fore-ordained of God to be called into the membership of His Church, of the grace belonging to the Church in its totality as the Body of Christ: and supplying thenceforward a basis of invulnerable confidence in the Divine purpose on which the after-life of personal faith and obedience is to be reared. One representative example of this form of teaching is furnished in a passage already referred to—the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, as compared with the record of the founding of the Ephesian Church given in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. St Paul, in his Epistle, again and again refers to the fact that it had pleased God to bless the Christians of Ephesus in common with the other Churches over which he presided, "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ . . . before the foundation of the world." Comparing, however,

the 13th and 14th verses (where he speaks of their having been sealed, after they had believed, with the Holy Spirit of promise as an earnest of their inheritance) with the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, which describes their Baptismal ingrafting into Christ and subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the Apostle's hands—we may be certain that the fact which was present to his mind as being on the Divine side the visible and abiding evidence of their election was *that of their Baptism*, wherein they who had been heretofore "strangers and foreigners" were made, and enabled to know that they were made, "*according to the eternal purpose*" of God, "fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the Body," "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." The possibility of the recovery of such a use of the doctrine of Election as may serve to quicken confidence toward God, and stimulate to holier living, is dependent, we may safely assert, on our regaining a firm grasp of the truth of Holy Baptism as a Divine act, manifesting in time a Divine Election which is eternal.

(6.) It is important here to say that while the Apostles thus insist on Baptism as manifesting, in the spiritual privilege it imparts, an eternal election of God, and as being the Sacrament of the grace proper to that election, they, at the same time, give no ground whatever in their teaching for the assumption that such grace can be effectually operative otherwise than through faith, or that it may not be neglected, perverted, or even withdrawn. In one point of view, the grace of Baptism, according to the teaching of the Apostles, is irrevocable and eternal. It imparts a responsibility proper to it, which can never, on our part, be altered or diminished, and from which, once conferred, it is thenceforward impossible for us to escape. Once baptized with "the one Baptism," we can never be again as if our Baptism had not been. We are shut up to one or other of two alternatives—either that of advancing to the ineffable glory of our inheritance, or that of being judged

as apostates, and consigned to the "Second" Death of the twice born. In entire consistency with these facts, the Apostles in their Epistles invariably write as if the grace exhibited to us in Baptism, according to the Divine purpose, may be so misused or forfeited as only inconceivably to augment in the end our final loss. We are taught that holiness alone—absolute, actual, and perfect holiness, realized by our personally abiding in Christ Jesus in life-long conversion—can avail to fulfil the requirements of God. We are taught that we need at every step to have the life which has been imparted to us sustained by grace, and by grace as ministered through the Divine ordinances, and, pre-eminently, through the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ.* We are taught, further, that we stand and live only by personal faith. In one point of view, we have received in the one Baptism remission of sins; in another (as has been referred to in a previous section), we wait for our absolution from the throne. In one aspect, we are now by Baptismal ingrafting into Christ, made sons of God; in another, and equally real aspect, we yet "wait for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," and "the whole creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." In one aspect, the act of our regeneration has been effected and is complete; in another, the day of "the regeneration" has yet to dawn, when "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead" shall not "die any more," and shall be declared to be "sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." In one sense, our election is already made known in our Baptism; in another, it remains for us to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure." These counterbalancing aspects of truth are not inconsistent with, but, on the contrary, are inseparable from, the doctrine of Baptismal grace when rightly presented. One of the most typical illustrations of this form of teaching is that given to us in the tenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians,

* Compare John vi. and Acts ii.

where St Paul—after dwelling first on the warning supplied in the history of Israel as God's elect, in the case of whom the participation by *all* in spiritual privilege and gift, was yet followed by the final overthrow of the greater number—proceeds to show that these things happened by way of example also unto us who have been admitted by Holy Baptism into the fellowship of Christ, and are written for our admonition ; and closes with this counsel—" Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." All the Epistles, however, teem with similar illustrations. Baptismal grace is a reality ; but it is only the beginning of a series of steps, each of which is in a sense, (as already pointed out), equally necessary. The importance of this point lies in the fact that the perception and assurance of it are indispensable as safeguards against that complete misunderstanding of the doctrine with which we are dealing. The faith that Holy Baptism is a grace-imparting act of God Himself would not be so difficult to apprehend, or prove so repugnant as it undoubtedly proves to many, if it were generally perceived now, as in Apostolic times, that it is only one of a chain of acts, each of which has its own essential place : that the Church of God, into which it admits us, is in all its ministries and ordinances, and in all that relates to it, a sphere of Divine operation : that the life supernaturally quickened by Him, must also in every stage be by Him supernaturally sustained : that grace and faith, though two different things, are not antagonistic, but each complementary of the other : that even faith itself is a mystery of Divine gift : that all is first *in God*, and from first to last *of God*, Who is over all, and through all, and in all, and bestoweth the measure of grace which He seeth meet on each : and, finally, that the spiritual life which we receive through union with Christ, has also to be continuously and sacramentally nourished in Christ (according to the law embodied in Holy Baptism as a channel of grace to faith) from the moment of the first visible emergence of God's purpose to us in that blessed rite onwards (if we abide in Christ and He abides

in us) in a continuous historical process of development until that day of our final redemption, when the possibility of failure will be for ever removed, and our mortal bodies, through the Spirit now working in us, shall be "conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself."

(7.) Lastly, as a final characteristic of the teaching of the Apostles it remains to be added, as indeed follows necessarily from what has been already said, that when they had occasion to rebuke, as was continually the case, the backwardness, or the backsliding, or even the almost utter apostasy of the baptized persons to whom they were writing, they never referred to their inconsistencies of character and life, however great, as proofs that they had not received grace, but invariably founded on these inconsistencies as involving a peculiar aggravation of their guilt and peril before God, just for this reason, that while grace had been undoubtedly bestowed, they had yet failed to turn it rightly to account.*

The Apostolic argument is *never*—"You are living in sin, and therefore your Baptism meant nothing as an operation of grace," but, on the contrary, *always* this.—"In Holy Baptism you have passed under an operation of God, and your consent thereafter to even one wilful sin is a monstrous contradiction of the grace in which you stand."

No point admits of more varied and vivid illustration from all the writings of the Apostles than this, and there is no point more conclusive as to the Apostolic doctrine of Baptism.

One of the most convenient representative examples of this argument is furnished in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Parallel instances, however, can be adduced from all the other Epistles.

St Paul addresses equally *all* the Corinthians. He speaks of them in their collective aspect as "the Church of God,"

* Among modern books of a popular character on the subject of Baptism, those by the Rev. M. F. Sadler are notable for the clearness and fulness with which this special line of argument is illustrated in them.

as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," as "called to be saints," as "in Christ Jesus," as "God's husbandry," as "the temple of God," as "having each one received the manifestation of the Spirit," and as being "members of the Body of Christ." * These assertions, it must be observed, are advanced as applicable collectively to them *all* and individually to *each*. He draws no distinction between one class and another, refusing to affirm such things of some because their character is bad, and affirming such things of others. On the contrary, he lays most emphasis on these assertions just in the cases in which he had most occasion to speak in terms of rebuke—as, for example, in the sixth chapter, where he introduces his condemnation of the fleshly sins into which some of them were falling, by exclaiming—"Know ye not that *your* bodies are the members of Christ?" He makes these assertions regarding the whole Church to which he was writing, and all the individual members of that Church, and he makes them in the tone of one insisting upon indisputable facts. The question, then, arises as to what underlies these assertions. Did the Apostle, we may ask, (*α*) mean to affirm, when he so writes, that all these members of the Corinthian Church were actually living good lives? Such a suggestion cannot for a moment be entertained. The opposite was the case. The whole course of his argument throughout the Epistle proves that the best of them were as yet but imperfectly advanced in the way of life (chapter viii.): they were all of them in some degree tainted with the spirit of faction (chapter iii.): they were sectarian, self-seeking, and vain-glorious (chapter xiv.): some of them were living unrighteously, doing wrong, and defrauding even their brethren (chapter vi.): others of them had fallen into deadliest sins of the flesh (chapter vi.): there were even some who profaned the Holy Table by their manner of approaching it (chapter xi.): and there were some also who had gone so far as almost to deny the cardinal doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (chapter xv.). It

* Chap. i. 1, 2, 4; iii. 9, 16; xii. 7, 27.

is impossible to suppose that St Paul, in any expression which fell from his lips, could have forgotten, even for a moment, this condition of things. His whole Epistle is throughout an indignant remonstrance against the sins into which the Corinthian disciples had fallen, and an impassioned entreaty that they would repent of and abandon them. None the less, however, he affirms of these persons, and of all of them without exception, that they were responsible for a grace received, and that the consummation of their sin lay in their misuse and perversion of that grace. Was the Apostle, it may be asked again (*b*), merely advancing in regard to these persons a hypothetical assumption as to their position which he knew to be unjustified by the facts, but to which he nevertheless had recourse as supplying the leverage he needed for the purposes of his argument? Did he merely mean to speak as if they had received grace for which they were responsible, although, in point of fact, he knew this supposition to be untrue? This theory has been argued with great ingenuity by a modern writer on the subject of Baptism;* but of all theories it is surely the most utterly untenable. Something might be said for it if the Apostle used language implying that he was referring only to a profession made by these persons themselves, to live as members of Christ: or that he was only setting forth to them an ideal which he was, on his part, wishing them to perceive and pursue: or if he had only, in an exceptional way, in a passing phrase, and, as it were, unguardedly, used language conveying the impression that he was attributing to God an operation involving a communication on His part of grace, which the facts proved to be wholly a delusion. But in view of the circumstances that St Paul, in addressing the Corinthian Church, professes to speak of what *God* had done, and of a position in which they had been placed *by God*; that he *never* speaks as if merely announcing his own ideal for them, but always as uttering a revealed and outwardly em-

* Mozley's Primitive Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

bodied purpose of the Eternal God on their behalf; and that he used language of this sort—not once or twice,—but *habitually*, and after the manner of one appealing to the most *certain* historical facts,—it is impossible, in consistency with due regard whether to the truthfulness, reverence, or charity of St Paul, to suppose that he meant merely to argue on an assumption which had not, and was known by him not to have, any actual foundation. To have insisted on the assumption that *God had done* what *he knew God had not done*, would have implied the grossest irreverence. Not less obviously it would have implied the reverse of charity; for if these members of the Corinthian Church, in their inconsistent and wavering lives, gave proof that they had not as yet been partakers of grace, the true charity on his part would have been to tell them so, instead of fostering in them, by high-sounding titles, so perilous a delusion as this of imagining that they were still members of Christ when they were not such, and never had been such. Are we to suppose, then, it may be asked, finally (*c*), that what St Paul meant was that there had been imparted to them not grace but a *capability* of grace; not actual membership of Christ but a capacity of membership; not actual sonship by the grace of adoption, but a capability, or assurance of the capability, of attaining to such sonship? This also is a mode of interpretation to which some have had recourse to evade the force of the language used. But it is sufficient, by way of answer, to say, on the one hand, that the language implied by the Apostle goes far beyond the suggestion that merely a spiritual *capability* is imparted to the persons whom he describes as being actually regenerate; and, on the other hand, that if the grace referred to was one of mere capacity or possibility of attaining to such a position, he would have been affirming of them nothing in any way distinctive—unless, indeed, the capability referred to is to be held as implying impartation of grace, which is the very point which the persons advancing this theory endeavour to

evade,—and there remains accordingly no reason why he should have addressed them in such terms at all. We are brought back by all these circumstances to the one conclusion which the language of the Apostle suggests when interpreted fairly and also in consistency with his invariable mode of argument in similar circumstances throughout his other Epistles, namely, that the underlying fact in the spiritual history of these Corinthian Christians to which the Apostle had regard—as a sure proof that, however they were ignoring or perverting or denying or quenching it, they had nevertheless by a Divine operation become responsible, and still remained responsible, for grace imparted, according to which they would be judged,—was that of God's act in Holy Baptism, whereby they had been “all baptized into one Body.” In other words, the fact that the Apostles—in spite of the flagrant contradictions presented in the lives of many of these persons,—instead of arguing from their inconsistencies that they had yet to become recipients of grace, and had never passed under any effective elective act of God at all, persisted *in attributing to them responsibility as for grace received*, forms one of the most arresting testimonies that can be given to the strength of the Apostolic doctrine of Baptismal grace here set forth. As it was then so also would it be now if the Apostles of the Lord were to find access to the congregations of the baptized in our land. They would find us indeed to be (as St Paul feared to find the Corinthians) * “not as they would,” as doubtless they would be found by many of us to be “such as we would not.” They would find among us in Scotland in great abundance “strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults,” drunkenness, fornication, uncleanness. All these things notwithstanding, we may be verily assured of this that they would not address us (after the manner of so many of our modern evangelists) as if we were but heathen ; as if no operation of saving grace had ever passed upon us

* 2 Cor. xii. 20.

at all ; as if, forsooth, because we were not living as children of God (which we have been effectually and by His own Word declared to be, in the Sacrament of adoption), our first step to repentance must be to disbelieve that Word of God which has declared to us on His part our regeneration, and to make up our minds to begin regenerating ourselves. Nay — they would revert to the old appeal, “ Know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you ? unless indeed ye be reprobate.” “ Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ?” “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God ?” “ Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God ?” And after the manner of St Paul, in that marvellous outburst which occurs in the sixth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians—perhaps the most characteristic passage which remains to us of Apostolic ministry, so far as regards the urgency of the struggle which it depicts, to express, as with “ open mouth,” the ineffable reality of the Divine approach to the spirit of man in the ordinances appointed,—they would endeavour—pointing to “ the laver of regeneration ”—to resuscitate in us the faith that “ we are a temple of the living God ; *even as God said*, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people ; . . . and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters ” : and, on the ground that as being the temple of God we *have* these promises, exhort us to “ cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

We have thus, then, completed our examination, necessarily rapid, of the Scriptural basis on which the doctrine of Baptism rests. All the evidence, as derived from Holy Scripture, points in one direction. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, and the teaching of the Apostles, concur, as with one voice, in affirming the reality of Baptismal grace ; and

the responsibility constituted thereby. Not one relevant passage is to be found which points in the opposite direction. On the one hand, there is no Scriptural foundation for the idea that Baptism is but a sign, or a seal, attached to a document containing promises which we may warrantably expect to be fulfilled independently of the seal which is so placed to them, and which God is under no obligation, on the occasion of the administration of the Sacrament and in virtue of its Divinely-established constitution, to fulfil. On the other hand, none of the passages quoted, as it is of course equally important to remember, justify the conception that Holy Baptism is a rite which works, as it were, in a magical way,—in virtue of the mere fulfilment of its appointed form, and independently of antecedent and subsequent operations of the Divine grace proceeding forth to, and sustaining faith in, the soul. The statements of Holy Scripture, in other words, converge to sustain that conception of the Holy Sacrament set forth to us in the following words with which we may fitly close this section, and which, were they only as universally apprehended as they are familiar, would indeed leave little to be desired, so far as concerns the dogmatic enunciation of the truth.—“*Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.*” *

* Shorter Catechism, Q. 94.

SECTION IV.—DECLARATIONS OF FORMULARIES.

Having thus dealt with the Scriptural basis of the doctrine of Baptism, we have now reached the stage at which we may best pass to examine the declarations on the subject contained in the Standards and other historical formularies of the Church of Scotland.

Here I propose first to set forth in a series of propositions the leading or fundamental aspects of the sacramental doctrine, viewed generally, of the Scottish Church, and thereafter to present in their historical order such statements from the "Standards" and other writings as illustrate these propositions in connection specially with the Sacrament of Baptism,—indicating by a brief note prefixed to each extract any matter which calls for special notice, and reserving to the close of this section what falls to be said on certain statements in other parts of the "Standards," and on other subjects, which, it is sometimes alleged, go to qualify their sacramental teaching.

I.

1. In the sacramental doctrine of the Scottish Church (which, it may be remarked, is opposed throughout to what may be called the Zwinglian type of doctrine) the *Person* of Christ occupies the foreground. In the economy of grace the order is *Christ* first and *then* His benefits. He is not made ours only in the benefits arising from the constitution of His Person or from His work; but, on the contrary, these benefits are ours through our participation *in Him*. Not any one part of His Person, or fact in His history, or work effected by Him, or benefit imparted by Him, but *He Himself* is the subject and substance of the Sacrament. The purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God is in this aspect realized in the personal union of the believer with Him: a union which is not merely figurative, nor merely

moral, nor merely based on a federal relation, nor merely legal as involving only the imputation of His merits, but *rital*, involving an actual participation with Himself in the power of a common life: a participation accomplished indeed by the Holy Spirit—not, however, by the Holy Spirit acting, as it were, apart from the incarnate Person of the Son, but on the contrary acting as the *Spirit of Jesus*, Whose temporal mission it is to impart from *Him* and quicken us with *His* life.

2. This communion of the believer with the Person of Christ is set forth to us as holding essentially through the medium of the *human* nature of Jesus. The manifestation of the Godhead through the humanity of Christ is as permanent as the Incarnation; and His human nature (bound indissolubly to His Divine Person) is emphatically the medium through which He effects our participation of Himself.

3. The mystical union constituted between the believer and Christ is emphatically a union with Him *in that condition of our common nature to which He has attained by the Resurrection and Ascension*. We are united with Christ in that state into which He has been advanced *as risen from the dead*. This involves the participation by us in Him of a new order of life (a mystery hidden as yet, but to be manifested when He shall appear in His glory, and we shall be made like unto Him).

4. This union between the believer and Christ involves also that our whole nature, body as well as soul and spirit, has part in the mystical conjunction so constituted, and that the resurrection, as marking the completion of an historical process of development, is the consummation of our redemption. The Catechism in a remarkable passage speaks even of the bodies of the faithful departed as “being still united to Christ.” *

5. The Christian Sacraments are not merely signs of truths relating to the Person and work of Christ, nor yet

* Shorter Catechism, Q. 37.

merely seals of a covenant according to which the grace of union with the Person of our glorified Saviour, and of participation in His life will be, on certain conditions, independently communicated to the believer, but *are means wherein* He (in the power of His glorified humanity) and all such benefits as are derived from Him, are "applied" to believers. In other words, the Sacraments are *efficacious means of grace* through the operation of the Lord Who instituted them to that end. They "exhibit," or in other words (according to the well-understood sense of the term in the formularies of the Reformed Church) * *convey* the grace which they represent.

6. It follows from this that the union between the sign and the thing signified in the Sacraments is represented as having an objective force which holds good *in virtue of the constitution of the ordinance* and of the covenanted Presence and blessing of the Lord, and not simply in the faith or inward frame of the recipient. Faith is the indispensable condition of the reception and right use of the grace exhibited, but the condition is different from the gift itself, for which it makes room, and of which it lays hold. This view is equally distinct, alike from the Roman type of sacramental doctrine on the one hand, and the Zwinglian on the other.

7. This sacramental reception and communication of "Christ and His benefits"—while belonging to a preternatural order of life, according to which the believer lives continually and from moment to moment in Christ and

* "This passage" (referring to an extract from Beza) "reminds us that one word in the Confession has lost to our ears its true meaning. To *exhibit* is probably supposed by most readers to be synonymous with *typify*. It had at that time (of the Reformation) a different and well understood meaning, which still survives in medical science—to *present, to apply*." Thus Calvin says on Eph. v. 26: "Quod baptismo nos ablni docet Paulus, ideo est, quod illic nobis ablutionem nostram testatur Deus, et simul *efficit quod significat*. Nisi enim conjuncta esset rei veritas, aut *exhibitio quod idem est*, impropria haec loquutio esset, Baptismus est lavacram animae."—Leishman's Critical Account of Theories of Sacrament of Baptism, p. 28. This usage of the word "exhibit" admits of ample illustration.

Christ in him, and while, therefore, under one aspect of it not confined to the sacramental actions—is yet, under another aspect, *specific in its nature* and different from what takes place on all other occasions. The manifestation of Christ and communication of grace to the believer in the Holy Sacraments is of a special character and demands an *exercise of faith peculiar to the occasion*. The Sacraments, in other words, are not signs and seals of grace in general, but of grace in a specific form, and demand a faith appropriate to the reception and right use of that specific grace. This is a cardinal point of distinction between the Reformed and the merely Zwinglian doctrine which at later times has so banefully tainted our Scottish Church.

8. The specific end for which the Holy Sacrament of Baptism has been ordained by our Lord, and in order to the accomplishment of which it is administered “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” is not merely to seal the admission of the person baptized into the visible Church, but also to be to him so admitted a seal of the covenant of grace and of *his* regeneration and ingrafting into Christ and consequent participation of the benefits which flow to the believer from union with Him in His Divine Person, and from the participation of His life as now raised from the dead, and as alive for evermore.

9. The Holy Sacrament of Baptism does not only signify and seal in the above sense our ingrafting into Christ, but, further, exhibits or accomplishes our “giving up of ourselves therein unto God through Christ,” and our engagement therein to be wholly “the Lord’s.” In other words, Holy Baptism imparts a specific vocation and a specific responsibility arising therefrom, and lays distinctive correlative engagements not on the sponsors (who, in the Scottish Church, in the case of infants, are usually the parents) but individually *on the persons baptized*, whether they be adults or infants. No point of sacramental doctrine has in recent years fallen more utterly into the background than this.

10. And lastly, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,

while ordained in its supreme aspect for the commemoration before the Father of the one offering up of Himself by Jesus Christ, with "a spiritual oblation of all possible praise," is, in its relation to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, ordained for the specific end also of exhibiting, or, in other words, imparting to the believer, Christ in His Person and in the power of His glorified humanity as his spiritual nourishment, and to confirm "his continuance and growth in *Him*,"—"the Body and Blood of Christ being . . . as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses." *

These are some of the principal features of the Reformed doctrine as to the mystical union, as to the Sacraments in general, and as to the Sacrament of Baptism in particular, held by the Church of Scotland. I reserve to a later point some observations as to the extent to which we have fallen away alike from the profession and the inward life and power of this doctrine. Suffice it for the present to say that any one who wishes to set forth in detail the characteristic features of the popular teaching nowadays common on such subjects, could not do so more conveniently or effectively than simply by drawing up such a series of statements as would, in every detail, be the precise converse of those here laid down.

II.

The principal Reformation Standards, or authoritative formularies of the Church of Scotland, relating to the subject, consist of (1) The Genevan Confession of Faith; (2) The Scottish Confession of 1560; (3) The Book of Common Order, which embodied the worship of the Church from 1564 to 1645; and (4) the Reformation Catechisms, namely (*a*) that known as "Calvin's Catechism," (*b*) the Palatinate Catechism, and (*c*) that which was known as

* Confession of Faith, Chap. xxix., Sec. 1, 2, 7.

“Craig’s Catechism.” I shall here take up these documents in their order, passing afterwards to the “Standards” proper, and other historical documents of the Westminster period.

A.—THE GENEVAN CONFESSION OF FAITH.

This Confession of Faith, used in the English Church of Geneva, and received and approved by the Church of Scotland, is emphatic in its testimony to some of the principles laid down in the previous section as antecedent to the right apprehension of the doctrine of Baptism. It contains the following :—

1. *On our regeneration in the Second Adam through participation of His nature imparted by grace through faith :—*

“When through our father Adam’s transgression we were become children of perdition, there was no means to bring us from that yoke of sin and damnation, but only Jesus Christ our Lord ; Who, giving us that by grace which was His by nature, made us through faith the children of God.” (Gal. iii.).

2. *On our union to Christ as Risen and participation thus of the Benefits of His Passion :—*

“As by rising again from the grave the third day He conquered death, even so the victory of our faith standeth in His resurrection, and therefore without the one we cannot feel the benefit of the other. For as by death sin was taken away, so our righteousness was restored by His resurrection.”

3. *On the Divine election as implying gifts of grace although requiring to be received in faith.*

Remembering the origin of the Confession from which it was drawn, the passage which follows is remarkable for its apparent recognition of operations of grace which may yet be made void through unbelief :—

“It is not sufficient to believe that God is omnipotent and merciful, that Christ hath made satisfaction, or that the Holy

Ghost hath this power and effect, except we do apply the same benefits to ourselves, *who are God's elect.*" (John xvii.).

4. *On the one Baptism for the remission of sins:—*

"By Baptism once received, is signified that we (as well infants as others of age and discretion) being strangers from God by original sin, are received into His family and congregation, with full assurance that although this root of sin lie hid in us, yet to the elect it shall not be imputed. . . . Therefore whosoever . . . contemneth them" (the Sacraments) "in time and place procureth to himself damnation." (Rom. vi.; Gal. iii.; Col. ii.; Tit. iii.).

B.—THE SCOTTISH CONFESSION.

The Scottish Confession, which is by far the most important document of the Reformation Church of Scotland, and has been justly described as "the banner of the Church in all her wrestlings and conflicts," is specially emphatic on the following points:—

1. *The Incarnation is the fountain of the mediatorial work of Jesus, and is the channel of all grace, involving as its end our participation of the Divine nature, in virtue of a new relation constituted between us and God, through union with the Son of God made man, and now ascended in our nature into heaven:—*

"Bot becaus that the enmitie betwix the justice of God and our synnes was sick, that no flesche by it self could or mycht have atteanit unto God, it behovit that the Sone of God sould discend unto us, and tak him self ane body of oure body, flesche of oure flesche, and bane of oure baneis, and sua became the perfyte Mediatour betwix God and man; gifing power to sa mony as beleif in him to be the sonis of God, as him selff dois witnesse—'I pas up to my Father and unto your Father, to my God and unto your God.' By quhilk maist halie fraternitie, quhatsoever we have lost in Adam is restoirit to us againe. And for this cause ar we not effrayit to call God our father, *not somekill in that he hes creatit us,* (quhilk we have common with the reprobat,) *as for that he hes gevin to us his onlie Sone to be our brother,* and gevin unto us grace to [acknowledge and] *embrace him for oure onlie Mediatour, as befoir is said.*"

2. *The Sacraments are effectual means of grace.* It is in reference to this Article that one of the greatest of Scottish Churchmen thus wrote:—"It was this Article which delivered me from the infidelity of Evangelicalism, which denies any gift of God either in the work of Christ, or in the Sacraments, or anywhere, until we experience it to be within ourselves; making God a mere promiser, until we become receivers; making His bounty and beneficence naught but words, till we make it reality by accepting thereof; in one word, making religion only subjective in the believer, and not elective in God—objective in Christ, in order that it may be subjective in the believer; a religion of moods and not of purposes and facts; having its reality in the creature, its proposal of reality only in God. The true doctrine of the Sacraments will always strike this infidelity upon the head."*

The points which it is most important to notice in the testimony of this Article to sacramental doctrine are as follows:—(1) The emphatic protest which it contains against Zwinglian views, or any falling short of the truth that the Sacraments are means of grace ordained of God to effect specific ends; (2) the clearness with which it insists on our participation "in the right use" of the Sacraments of the *Person* of our Divine Lord, and through the medium of His *humanity*; (3) the force with which it emphasizes the fact that—while the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is being in one aspect poured out upon us continually, and being continually received by us, if we abide faithful—it is yet in another aspect imparted *in a specific way* through the Holy Sacraments by "the Holy Spirit, which can never be divided from the right institution of the Lord Jesus," and "will not frustrate the faithful of the fruit of that mystical action"; and (4) the remarkable illustration by which it sets forth the truth that grace is invariably conveyed effectually to the faithful, although "at the very instant action" they may not apparently profit

* Edward Irving. Collected Works, Vol. i. p. 606.

by it, so that it shall “ afterwards bring forth fruit as lively seed sown in good ground :—

“ We utterly dampne the vanitie of those that affirme Sacramentis to be nothing else but naked and bare signes. No, we assuredlie beleve, that by Baptisme we ar ingrafted in Christ Jesus to be maide partakaris of his justice, by the whiche our synes are covered and remitted; and also, that in the Supper, ryghtlie used, Christ Jesus is so joyued with us, that he becomis the verray nourishment and foode of our saullis. Not that we ymagine any transsubstantiation of bread into Christis naturall body, and of wyne in his naturall bloode, (as the Papistis have perniciouslie taught and dampnable beleved;) but this union and communion whiche we have with the body and bloode of Christ Jesus in the ryght use of the sacraments, is wrought by operationn of the Holy Ghost, who by trew faith caryes us above all thingis that ar visible, carnall, and earthlie, and maikis us to feid upoun the body and bloode of Christ Jesus, whiche was ones brokin and schedd for us, whiche now is in the heavin, and appeareth in the presence of his Father for us. And yit, notwithstanding the far distance of place, whiche is betwix his bodye now glorifeid in the heavin, and us now mortall in this earth, yit we most assuredlie beleve, that the bread which we break is the communion of Christis body, and the cupp which we bliss, is the communion of his bloode. So that we confesse, and undowttedlye beleve, that the faithfull, in the ryght use of the Lordis Table, so do eatt the body, and drynk the bloode of the Lord Jesus, that he remaneth in thame and thai in him: yea, that thai ar so maide flesche of his flesche, and bone of his bones, that as the Eternall Godheid hath gevin to the flesche of Christ Jesus (whiche of the awin conditionn and nature was mortall and corruptible) lyfe and immortalitie, so doeth Christ Jesus his flesche and bloode eaten and drunken by us, give to us the same prerogatives: Whiche albeit we confesse, are neather gevin unto us at that onlie tyme, neather yit by the propir power and vertew of the Sacramentis onlie; yit we affirme, that the faithfull in the ryght use of the Lordis Table hes sick conjunctionn with Christ Jesus, as the naturall man can not comprehend: yea, and farther we affirme, that albeit the faithfull oppressed be negligence, and manlie infirmitie, doeth not profeitt so mekill as thei wold att the verray instant actionn of the Supper, yit shall it after bring furth frute, as livelic seed sown in good ground; for the Holy Speirit, whiche can never be divided frome the ryght institutionn of the Lord Jesus, will not frustrat the faythfull of the frute of that mysticall actionn. But all this, we say, cumis by trew fayth, whiche apprehendeth Christ Jesus, who onlie maikis his Sacramentis effectuall unto us; and, thairfoir, whosoever sclandereth us,

as that we affirmed or beleved Sacramentis to be onlie naked and bair signes, do injurie unto us, and speak against a manifest treuth."

C.—THE BOOK OF COMMON ORDER.*

We come next to "The Book of Common Order" (or John Knox's Liturgy). The "Order of Baptism" contained in "The Book of Common Order" deserves careful examination as a witness to sacramental truth, and offers in the amplitude and fulness of provision for the due celebration of the rite, if even in nothing else, a humbling contrast to the perfunctory and irreverent manner in which, it is to be feared, that rite is too often administered throughout Scotland in our own times. The following are the principal points which have to be noticed :—

1. The office begins with a question which emphatically implies that the specific end for which the Sacrament is sought is that of the ingrafting of the candidate for Baptism—not into the Church visible merely—but *into the mystical body of Jesus Christ*:—

"Do ye here present this child to be baptized, earnestly desiring that he may be ingrafted in the mystical body of Jesus Christ?"

2. The Address which follows the above question contains an affirmation of the doctrine of Baptism which, while guarding against the idea that a merely outward element can avail to our inward cleansing, at the same time implies, with equal emphasis, an imputation of righteousness and effectual communication of grace through Baptism to those who believe, which will, in time convenient, accomplish the perfecting of their regeneration, while they continually strive to walk in that pureness and perfection wherewith they are "clad in Baptism":—

"*The justice of Jesus Christ is made ours by Baptism; not that we think any such virtue or power to be included in the*

* The quotations which follow from the "Book of Common Order" are taken from the edition published with historical introductions, &c., by Spott and Leishmann, 1868.

visible water or outward action, for many have been baptized and yet never inwardly purged [as Judas, Simon Magus, Hymeneus, Alexander, and Philetus]; but that our Saviour Christ, who commanded Baptism to be ministered, will, by the power of His Holy Spirit, effectually work in the hearts of His Elect, in time convenient, all that is meant and signified by the same. And this the Scripture calleth our Regeneration, which standeth chiefly in these two points—in mortification, that is to say, a resisting of the rebellious lusts of the flesh, and in newness of life whereby we continually strive to walk in that pureness and perfection *wherewith we are clad in Baptism.*” (Eph. ii. ; 1 Cor. xii. ; Rom. vi. ; Col. ii.)

3. The concluding part of the address dwells with great fulness and beauty on the meaning of Baptism, on the advantage to be derived from the frequent meditation of the blessings vouchsafed therein, and on the responsibility of parents towards baptized children, as grounded on the fact that they have been manifested “*as the children of God’s favour and mercy.*” The exhortation specially addressed to parents, *hereby to take “most singular comfort”* to themselves, and “*greatly to rejoice*” in the knowledge “*that nothing can come unto them (i.e. unto their children), without His good pleasure,*” would seem framed in such a way as to sustain (a point of great importance) the faith that the providential ordering by which a child is presented for Holy Baptism is itself an indication of a purpose on the part of God to bestow the gifts of grace. The address implies further that the basis of the Christian responsibilities devolving on parents, together with that of the catechetical system of the Church, alike rest upon the assumption of the reality of Baptism, as sealing to such as are baptized in infancy their true admission by adoption into the number of the children of God :—

“Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is not only of necessity that we be once baptized, but also it much profiteth oft to be present at the ministration thereof, that we (being put in mind of the league and covenant made between God and us, that He will be our God, and we His people, He our Father, and we His children) may have occasion as well to try our lives past as our present conversation,

and to prove ourselves, whether we stand fast in the faith of God's Elect, or, contrariwise, have strayed from Him, through incredulity and ungodly living, whereof if our consciences do accuse us, yet by hearing the loving promises of our Heavenly Father, who calleth all men to mercy, by repentance, we may from henceforth walk more warily in our vocation. Moreover, *ye that be fathers and mothers may take hereby most singular comfort to see your children thus received into the bosom of Christ's Congregation, whereby ye are daily admonished, that ye nourish and bring up the children of God's favour and mercy, over whom His Fatherly Providence watcheth continually. Which thing, as it ought greatly to rejoyce you, knowing that nothing can come unto them without His good pleasure* (Matt. x. ; Luke xii.), so ought it to make you diligent and careful to nurture and instruct them in the true knowledge and fear of God (Eph. vi.), wherein if ye be negligent, ye do not only injury to your own children, hiding from them the good-will and pleasure of Almighty God their Father, but also heap damnation upon yourselves, in suffering His children, bought with the blood of His dear Son, so traitorously, for lack of knowledge, to turn back from Him. Therefore it is your duty, with all diligence to provide that your children, in time convenient, be instructed in all doctrine necessary for a true Christian."

4. The exposition of the Creed (following the recitation of it, as provided in the Rubric, by the father, or, in his absence, the god-father), is of singular interest as a sign of the elaborate care with which it was in these times sought to instruct all who presented their children for Baptism in the antecedent doctrine essential to the true apprehension of the rite. In common with the passages quoted above it contains (1) the most emphatic teaching in regard to our Lord as having obtained by His Resurrection and Ascension *that* which He now, since Pentecost, communicates,—a point, the discernment of which is of fundamental importance to the apprehension of the office of the Spirit in the Church, and in the sacramental acts appointed therein :—

“The third day He rose again, victor and conqueror of death and hell, *by the which His resurrection, He hath brought life again into the world, which He, by the power of His Holy Spirit, communicateth unto His lively members.* . . . He visibly ascended to the heavens, and was taken from the eyes of men, and placed at the

right hand of God the Father Almighty, where presently He remaineth in His glory, only Head, only Mediator, and only Advocate for all the members of His Body, of which we have most especial comfort, first, for that, that by His Ascension the heavens are opened unto us, and an entrance made unto us, that boldly we may appear before the throne of our Father's mercy. And, secondarily, that *we know that this honour and authority are given to Jesus Christ, our Head, in our name and for our profit and utility.*"

The Exposition of the Creed further contains (2) the following most remarkable testimony both to God in His *Fatherhood* (a point undoubtedly insufficiently prominent in the Westminster documents) as the ultimate Fountain of all grace, and also to Christian sonship--as involving a relation between God and those on whom it is conferred of a *strictly supernatural character*, or, in other words, of a relation other than and additional to that arising on the basis of nature out of the fact of creation:—

"First, of God we confess three things; to wit, that He is our Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Our Father we call Him, and so by faith believe Him to be, *not so much because He has created us (for that we have common with the rest of creatures, who yet are not called to that honour to have God to them a favourable Father), but we call Him Father by reason of His free adoption, by the which He hath chosen us to live everlasting in Jesus Christ, and this His most singular mercy we prefer to all things earthly and transitory; for without this there is to mankind no felicity, no comfort, nor final joy; and having this, we are assured that by the same love, by the which He once hath freely chosen us, He shall conduct the whole course of our life, that in the end we shall possess that immortal Kingdom that He hath prepared for His chosen children; for from this fountain of God's free mercy or adoption springeth our vocation, our justification, our continual sanctification, and, finally, our glorification, as witnesseth the Apostle.*"

5. The "Prayer before Baptism" embraces the entire spiritual life of the infant presented for Baptism from that moment onwards until he attains to the "full fruition" of Divine joy in heaven, and, having regard to Baptism as the first stage of that life, entreats God "*to sanctify with His Spirit, and to receive into the number of His*

children, this infant to be baptized according to His word." The Thanksgiving following the administration implies throughout a conclusive recognition of *grace as having been bestowed by God* (according to the mercy in which He not only blesses us with common benefits, but heaps upon the Church most abundantly rare and wonderful gifts) in Holy Baptism whereby He has *not only numbered us ourselves among the saints, but also of His free mercy does call our children unto Himself, marking them with this Sacrament as a singular token and badge of His love.* It emphasises the grace bestowed as one of a *distinctive filial standing*, and the danger of its misuse, and it concludes with the prayer that the infant offered and presented to God may *never be permitted to fall into such unkindness whereby he shall lose the force of his Baptism.* This prayer of thanksgiving is as follows:—

“As he speaketh these words [‘I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’], he taketh water in his hand, and layeth it upon the Child’s forehead; which done, he giveth thanks, as followeth:—‘Forasmuch, most Holy and Merciful Father, as Thou dost not only beautify and bless us with common benefits, like unto the rest of mankind, but also heapest upon us most abundantly, rare and wonderful gifts; of duty we lift up our eyes and minds unto Thee, and give Thee *most humble thanks for Thine infinite goodness, Who hast not only numbered us amongst Thy Saints, but also of Thy free mercy dost call our children unto Thee, marking them with this Sacrament, as a singular token and badge of Thy love*; wherefore, most loving Father, though we be not able to deserve this so great a benefit . . . yet, for Christ’s sake, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt confirm this Thy favour more and more towards us, and take this infant into Thy tuition and defence, whom we offer and present unto Thee, with common supplications, and *never suffer him to fall into such unkindness whereby he should lose the force of Baptism*, but that he may perceive Thee continually to be his merciful Father, through Thy Holy Spirit working in his heart, by Whose divine power he may so prevail against Satan, that in the end, obtaining the victory, he may be exalted into the liberty of Thy Kingdom. So be it.’”

D.—REFORMATION CATECHISMS.

Among the Reformation documents we have, lastly, the Catechisms ; which are three in number—(1) Calvin's Catechism, which is referred to in the Book of Discipline (1560) as "the most perfect that ever yet was used in the Kirk," and, as there appointed, formed the text book for the public instruction of the young in the afternoon of every Lord's day ; (2) the Palatinate or Heidelberg Catechism, which came subsequently into use, and was sometimes printed along with the Book of Common Order (though apparently without any official sanction) ; and (3) the Catechism known as Craig's Shorter Catechism, which was the immediate precursor of the Catechisms of the Westminster period.

I. CALVIN'S CATECHISM.

Calvin's "Catechism of the Christian Religion" is of importance (especially as compared with his "Institutes"), because embodying his more matured teaching on the subjects to which it relates. His teaching on the Sacraments (subject, of course, like that of the other formularies to a qualification arising out of its doctrine on other subjects, the limits of which qualification fall to be considered further on) is explicit and emphatic. A general characteristic is the frequency with which it presents the Sacrament of Baptism as an instrument ordained of God to impart grace for certain ends instead of merely as a formal attestation of a covenant which is independent (so far as regards the fulfilment of its essential conditions) of the sacramental ordinance. The following points may be noticed in detail. I use the titles for the most part as they stand in the Catechism :—

1. *The signification of Baptism.*

"M. In what points do the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, and wherein differ they the one from the other?"

C. Baptism is unto us an entry into the Church; for it witnesseth unto us that whereas we were before strangers from God, He does now receive us into His family. The Supper of the Lord is a testimony unto us that God will nourish and refresh us with food, even as a good master of a house studieth to sustain and feed such as be of his household.

M. What is the signification of Baptism?

C. The signification of Baptism standeth in two points—first, our Lord representeth unto us herein the remission of our sins: secondly, our regeneration. (Mark i. 4: Rom. vi. 3; Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5.)”

2. *The mystery of the water in Baptism.*

M. What similitude hath water with those things, that it may represent them?

C. First, the remission of sins is a manner of washing whereby our souls are cleansed from their filthiness even as the filth of our body is washed away by water.”

3. *Wherefore the water is poured on the head.*

(What is to be noted here is that the conception of regeneration as an act admitting us to a new state, rather than as identified with our abiding in that state in the life of conversion, is implied, though, perhaps, inconsistently with Calvin’s way of using the term regeneration in many other passages.)

M. What sayest thou of regeneration?

C. Because the beginning of our regeneration standeth in the mortification of our nature, and the end that we become new creatures through the Spirit of God, therefore the water is poured upon the head to signify that we are dead or buried, and that in such sort, that our rising again into a new life is therewithal figured, in that, that the pouring of the water is but a thing of a very short continuance, and not ordained that we should be drowned thereby.”

4. *The water is not a bare figure; the promise is joined to it* (the “promise” being the grace actually in the Sacrament offered and received).

M. Meanest thou then that the water standeth in none other stead unto us than as a figure?

C. It is such a figure as hath the verity joined unto it, for

God keepeth His promise and deceiveth no man, wherefore it is certain that remission of sins and newness of life is offered to us in Baptism, *and that we receive the same there.*

M. Is this grace received indifferently of all men ?

C. No ; for divers, through their wickedness, cause it to stand them in no stead ; nevertheless the Sacrament looseth not his property albeit that none feel the comfort thereof but only the faithful."

5. *Baptism the sacrament of regeneration imparted in union with Christ as risen.*

"*M.* What thing is that whereby our regeneration is wrought in us ?

C. By the death and resurrection of our Saviour Christ ; for His death standeth in this stead unto us, that by it our old Adam is crucified, and our sinful nature is, as it were, buried ; so that it beareth no more rule in us. *As touching the newness of life, which is to be obedient to God's will, that we obtain by his resurrection.*

M. How do we obtain this grace in Baptism ?

C. Because we are *there* clothed with Christ and indued with His Holy Spirit, if so be that we make not ourselves unworthy of His promises which be there given unto us."

6. *Wherein the right use of Baptism standeth.*

"*M.* As touching our part, what is the right use of Baptism ?

C. The right use thereof standeth in faith and repentance ; that is *in that we be sure that we have our consciences cleansed in the blood of Christ : and in that we both feel in ourselves, and make it known to others by our works, that His Spirit abideth in us, to mortify our affections, and so to make us ready to do the will of God.*"

2. THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

I reprint following extract from the Heidelberg Catechism as interesting because of the clear distinction which seems drawn between the declaration made generally in the Gospel of the truths of salvation and the assurance given individually in the Sacrament of Baptism of an effectual application therein to the baptized person of saving grace :—

"Q. 73. Why then doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins ?

“*A.* God doth not without great cause so speak, to wit, not only to teach us that, as the spots of the body are cleansed with water, so our sins are purged by the blood and Spirit of Christ, but *much more, that by this heavenly token and pledge, He may assure us, that we are as truly washed inwardly from our sins, as we are washed with outward and visible water.*”

3. CRAIG'S CATECHISM.

What has been said above of Calvin's Catechism is applicable to the Catechism known as Craig's Shorter Catechism, which was also at that period an official and authoritative document of the Church of Scotland. The teaching of this Catechism generally on the subject of our union with Christ, on our spiritual life as thence derived, and on the Church, may be said to be fuller and more emphatic than that even of the Westminster Catechisms. “The Shorter Catechism is systematic, Craig's is scriptural and simple; the Shorter Catechism is intellectual, Craig's Catechism is vital.” They are pervaded by the same general ideas on (1) the sacramental conjunction between the outward sign and the grace it represents; and on (2) a state of grace being represented in the Sacrament, his entrance on which therein is also assured to the believer, and in which state he is thenceforward to abide. I take the following extracts from the larger edition, which, though not commonly used, may be regarded as more fully exhibiting what is taught in both:—

Of the Sacrament of Baptism.

- (1) “*Q.* What is the signification of Baptism ?
A. Remission of our sins and regeneration.
- (2) *Q.* What similitude hath Baptism with remission of sins ?
A. As washing cleanseth the body so Christ's blood our souls.
- (3) *Q.* Wherein doth this cleansing stand ?
A. In putting away of sin and imputation of justice.
- (4) *Q.* Wherein standeth our regeneration ?
A. In mortification and newness of life.

- (5) *Q.* How are these things sealed up in Baptism ?
A. By laying on of water.
- (6) *Q.* What doth the laying on of water signify ?
A. Our dying to sin and rising to righteousness.
- (7) *Q.* Doth the external washing work these things ?
A. No ; it is the work of God's Holy Spirit only.
- (8) *Q.* Then the Sacrament is a bare figure ?
A. No ; but it hath the verity joined with it.
- (9) *Q.* Do all men receive these graces with the Sacraments ?
A. No ; but only the faithful.
- (10) *Q.* What is the ground of our regeneration ?
A. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- (11) *Q.* When are we partakers of His death and resurrection ?
A. When we are made one with Him through His Spirit.
- (12) *Q.* How should we use Baptism aright ?
A. We should use it in faith and repentance.
- (13) *Q.* How long doth Baptism work ?
A. All the days of our life.
- (14) *Q.* Wherefore is Baptism once administered only ?
A. Because it is enough to be once received into God's family."

The answer to the eleventh question must be read in connection with the seventh and eighth, in order to the full apprehension of the force of the teaching above conveyed.

III.

We now come to the formularies of the Westminster period, embracing (1) the Confession of Faith (1647), which, in the strictest sense of the term, is the existing "Standard" of the Church of Scotland ; (2) the Larger Catechism ; (3) the Shorter Catechism ; and (4) the Directory. I omit any notice of that Confession of Faith which is otherwise termed "The National Covenant," partly because it is not of obligation, and also because it contains no relevant reference to the subject of Baptism, except in one clause, where it protests against "the absolute necessity of Baptism" in the Romanist sense, where, also, the character of the protest is so qualified and emphasized (by the use of the word "absolute," read in the light of other statements in the

formularies as to the peril contracted “through contemning or neglecting the ordinance of grace when and where it may be had”) as not to imply the denial of the efficacy of Baptism as being ordinarily the means of our ingrafting into Christ.

That the documents which issued from the Westminster Assembly, albeit of different origin and pervaded by a somewhat different spirit from that which breathed in the Scottish Confession, and other formularies above referred to, are emphatic in their testimony to sacramental doctrine, admits of ample proof.

A—WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith the following statements are those most worthy of note:—

1. *The exhibition or conferring of the grace of God through the Sacraments is advanced as a point of sacramental doctrine:—*

“The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, *but upon the work of the Spirit and the word of institution* which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.”*

It is to be observed that the doctrine here implied is carefully distinguished from the supposed Romanist assumption of a power in the Sacrament itself (although capable of being frustrated by the want of due intention on the part of the administrator or other causes), and that it is equally distinguished from the Zwinglian idea now so prevalent that the use of the Sacraments is primarily or exclusively to instruct. *The Sacraments are for the exhibition or conferring of grace.*

2. The Holy Sacrament of Baptism is affirmed to have been ordained not only for our admission into the visible

* Chap. xxvii. Sec. iii.

Church, but *also* (1) for the exhibition of the covenant of grace to the person baptized (in its bearing on him individually); and, further (2) for assuring him of his personal ingrafting into Christ *as therein effected*.

(1) "Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ, *not only* for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but *also* to be *unto him* a sign and seal of the covenant of grace."

(2) "Baptism is ordained by Jesus Christ . . . to be unto him (the person baptized) a sign and seal . . . of *his* ingrafting into Jesus Christ."*

It is to be noted that Tit. iii. 5 and Gal. iii. 27 are quoted in support of the above affirmation.

3. *Baptism is set forth as conferring on the person receiving it a distinctive vocation arising out of his entire consecration to God therein sealed to him:—*

"Baptism is ordained . . . to be unto him . . . a sign and seal . . . of *his* giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life." †

It is to be observed that Romans vi. 3, 4 is quoted in support of the above assertion of a responsibility resting on the baptized in consequence of their Baptism.

4. While the efficacy of Baptism is affirmed to extend to the entire after life, *that* efficacy is none the less clearly connected *with the right use of the ordinance in itself, as containing the assured communication of grace on the part of God to such as are the proper objects of it:—*

"The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, *by the right use of this ordinance*, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto according to the counsel of God's own will in His appointed time." ‡

It is important to read this clause in the light of the comment above prefixed to it. It is sometimes hastily

* Chap. xxviii. Sec. i. † Chap. xxviii. Sec. i. ‡ Chap. xxviii. Sec. vi.

construed as utterly divorcing grace from the Sacrament. On the contrary, it must be observed emphatically to connect the after realisation or progressive realisation of the grace promised *with the right use of the ordinance*. Its doctrine to this extent runs precisely parallel with that of the Larger Catechism, as will be shown in a quotation which will follow afterwards.

5. It must be here added that the force of these statements is not actually invalidated by the fifth section of this twenty-eighth chapter of the Confession, where, after an affirmation as to the great sin of contemning or neglecting the Sacrament, it is added that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated" (the case of Simon being adduced as the evidence of the latter part of this statement). It is not essential, it must be remembered, to the due affirmation of the doctrine of the grace of Baptism (as implying the constitution of a distinctive relation between the baptized and the Lord Jesus, in virtue of their being ingrafted into Him and made members of His Body; and also of a vocation and responsibility proper to them in virtue of that relation) that we should maintain that no one can attain to "regeneration,"—in the very different sense of deliverance personally from eternal damnation,—otherwise than as having been baptized. It is not for us, it may be reverently said, to pronounce as to how the Father may deal in Christ Jesus with such as He has not been pleased to call into the Church, or to bring under the glorious vocation peculiar to the members thereof. We are concerned directly for the present only with God's revelation regarding *the Church*, or, in other words, that election from among the redeemed, which is now in process of being gathered and which will be completed when this dispensation has run its course, and when we may anticipate with patient confidence a fuller and clearer revelation of the ever-advancing purpose of God.

Meanwhile, we know that Baptism is ordinarily the Sacrament of God's election, *and the only Divinely-provided means of admission to the peculiar grace and vocation belonging to the Church.* Beyond this assertion we are not at liberty to go. We are not entitled to say that God is tied by His own appointments in the sense that He may not go beyond them. This is the position taken by the Confession. I do not say that the Westminster divines, in drawing the distinction they did, looked at the matter entirely from this point of view. *The terms they use are nevertheless consistent with this view.* Again, it is obviously not essential that we should affirm that all who are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated in the sense in which the term "regenerated" may be used as describing the profitable reception and use of grace. The doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacrament, as a means of grace, necessitates no such supposition. Obviously in the case of adults, the Sacrament may be approached in unbelief, or followed by apostasy. It is to be carefully observed, however, that such cases imply not the mere loss, but (as in the reception of the Holy Communion on the part of the unworthy receiver) the *rejection* of the grace proper to the Sacrament, and the contraction thereby of guilt analogous to that of those who, in the Holy Communion, eat and drink, not "discerning the Lord's body," and so are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

B—THE LARGER CATECHISM.

The doctrine of the *Larger Catechism* on the subject of the Sacraments generally, is rooted, as in the case of all the foregoing documents, in the conception of the *Church* as the sphere of the offer and ministry of grace, under an aspect restricted to the Church alone, and appropriate to her special vocation. It is also emphatic on the mediatorship of our Lord as the basis of the covenant of grace, and of His *human nature* as the channel through which His

grace is bestowed. (1.) It defines a Sacrament as a holy ordinance "instituted by Christ in His Church to signify, seal, and *exhibit* unto those that are within the covenant of grace the benefits of His mediation."* In other words, it describes a Sacrament as not merely a sign or even channel, but as an *instrument* of grace. (2.) The definition of Holy Baptism given in the Larger Catechism, while presenting, generally, the doctrine advanced in all the formularies noticed above, is remarkable for the emphasis laid on one subject which, perhaps more than any other, is lost sight of in later times—that, namely, of the obligations arising out of Baptism, as laid on the baptized. It speaks of these obligations as engagements *contracted in Baptism*, and *renewed* in the Lord's Supper. This will appear from the following:—

"Q. 165. What is Baptism ?

"A. Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself, of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His Spirit ; of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life ; and *whereby the parties baptized* are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, *and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.*"

(3.) By far the most remarkable declaration, however, of the larger Catechism, as implying throughout the highest conception of the place of Holy Baptism in the economy of grace, is that contained in the answer given to the question as to how Baptism is to be improved by us. No branch of the Christian Church can point to a more comprehensive and exalted declaration of Christian duty in this relation, or to a declaration more saturated in every clause with the purest sacramental truth than that here presented to us. Studied in the light of the following analysis, it will be seen to be emphatic on (a) the grace of Baptism ; (b) on the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed

* Larger Catechism, Q. 162.

thereby; (*c*) on the pardon of sin sealed to us in the Sacrament, into the assurance of which as so sealed we are to grow up; (*d*) on the throwing open to us in Baptism for our perpetual use thenceforward of the resources of the resurrection power of the risen Christ into Whom we are baptized; (*e*) on our admission therein, not merely to the participation of personal benefit, but also to the fellowship of a vocation proper to the Church, as being the Body of Christ, in virtue of our being baptized by the same Spirit into one body; (*f*) on the personal laws and engagements made in Baptism "in which we give up our names to Christ"; (*g*) on the need "of endeavouring to live by faith," as the response due to the grace imparted; (*h*) on the efficacy of Baptism as admitting us to grace which is to be retained and used "all our life long," the growth of which we are especially to seek (as shown in the answer to the question immediately following) in the feeding in the Holy Communion on the Body and Blood of Christ; and, lastly (*i*), on the need of our deliberate and perpetual reverting to the remembrance of our Baptism with serious and thankful consideration of the gifts conferred thereby, of our humbling ourselves for "our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to" its grace, and especially of summoning the recollections of it to our help "in the hour of temptation." The force of the statements implied in this answer is made doubly emphatic, it may be added, if we have regard to the various passages from Holy Scripture which are advanced in support of them. It is, indeed, matter of deep thankfulness that so remarkable a declaration of duty remains to us, as is here embodied in one of the Standards of the Church, showing us both how far we have in these later years fallen from the faith, and also pointing out to us the way of recovery. The answer thus described is as follows:—

"*Q.* 167. How is our Baptism to be improved by us?

"*A.* The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the

time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others ; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein ; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of Baptism, and our engagements ; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that Sacrament ; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace ; and by endeavouring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body."

C--THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

The Shorter Catechism, which is now the most familiar to the people of the formularies of the Church, need not detain us, as it merely renews the declaration of the doctrine of Baptism as set forth above. It is important, however, to point out that none of our formularies contains a more comprehensive presentation of the essential aspects of sacramental truth than that given in the Shorter Catechism. (1) It sets the Person of Christ in the foreground ("Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant"). (2) It also describes a Sacrament as not merely a channel, but as an instrument "wherein *by sensible signs* Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace are . . . *applied* to believers." (3) It describes the "grace of Baptism" as that of *our* ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace ; or, in other words, it affirms the Sacrament to be not only the seal of the covenant in general, but to be also the seal of Christ and the blessing of the covenant as being *therein imparted personally to the baptized person*, and emphasizes this aspect of it by mentioning no other. (4) And lastly, it testifies to the peculiar vocation laid personally on each of the baptized as having also therein been put wholly at the disposal of the

Lord as a member of His body for His use. Baptism seals "*our engagement to be the Lord's.*" We may further add that its statement appears to be framed so as to imply that in the case of infants the grace of Baptism, as there ministered, is not dependent (whatever preparation of the spirit has gone before) on the conscious exercise of personal faith. It is a most instructive circumstance (to which I shall have occasion afterwards to refer) that in the description of Baptism contained in the Shorter Catechism, such phrases as are used in the answer relating to the Lord's Supper to describe the condition of the worthy receiver are omitted, and appear to have been so omitted intentionally. One of the most erudite of living Scottish Churchmen,* in the introduction to his valuable edition of the "Catechisms of the Second Reformation" (a work which deserves to be better known than it is), speaking of the Shorter Catechism, says, "I shall never lose hope of the living orthodoxy of the Presbyterian Churches, while their rising ministry and Church members are intelligently and affectionately trained in the Shorter Catechism, and set themselves to train their flocks in it earnestly and affectionately." I trust that, without presumption, I may add that in what has been here said on the most familiar of our Scottish Catechisms, I have sought gratefully to contribute to the furtherance of this hope.

D—DIRECTORY FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

We come, lastly, to the Directory (1645) which, though not strictly one of the Standards of the Church, is yet (Act of Assembly, 1856) of authority, (at least to the extent which its title implies, and so far as not at variance with what is affirmed in the antecedent formularies in various particulars connected with public worship and spiritual instruction) and, as recently as 1870, was commended specially as supplying guidance in the matter of Baptismal addresses and exhortations. We are under no temptation

* Professor Mitchell of St Andrews.

to exaggerate the value of the Directory or to deny the traces it bears of its historical origin as a book of compromise. These defects are more noticeable in connection with liturgical order than with doctrine, and are, no doubt, to be deplored. While making this concession, we must, however, add that in the parts of the Directory which relate to sacramental truth, there is nothing to justify the tone in which it is sometimes referred to by Anglican theologians of a certain school, who are never weary of dilating on the excellencies of their "incomparable liturgy." In a well-known work of this type* the author introduces his historical notice of the section of the Directory which deals with the celebration of the Communion by characterizing it as "that presumptuous and irreverent parody of the liturgy," and adds,—“When the children asked for bread this was the stone which was offered them during the persecution of the Church by the Puritans, 1654-61.” Statements of this character indicate the provincial and sectarian rather than the historical spirit. As matter of fact, the guidance supplied in the Directory in the section relating to the Holy Communion, whatever may be the defects of that section, implies even higher sacramental doctrine than the Anglican service, and guards against some of the most obvious and lamentable defects of that service.† We are, however, concerned at present with the Directory only in so far as it bears on the doctrine of Baptism; and it may suffice to say that the type of doctrine generally is that asserted in the Standards, and that it contains even many of the characteristic terms already quoted, both from the more distinctly Scottish Confession and also from the later Standards and Catechisms of the Church.

* Blunt's "Annotated Book of Common Prayer." Appendix to the Communion Office, p. 207.

† It is in truth matter of amazement that the Scottish Episcopal Church should have allowed her own stately and exalted office of 1764—rich pre-eminently in these elements which are lacking in the comparatively defective and feeble office of the Church of England—to be almost entirely superseded by that of the "Book of Common Prayer."

1. It provides for an address before the administration "touching the institution, nature, use, and ends of this Sacrament," and the direction given as to the order to be followed is so full as substantially to supply almost a model form. This address is as emphatic, as are all the formularies above quoted, in asserting (1) that Baptism is to be regarded as sealing "*our* ingrafting into Christ and union with Him." It is emphatic also, as are all the Scottish formularies, in the statement of the truth (2) that the promise in the covenant of grace is made to believers and their seed, and that "the posterity of the faithful, born within the Church, have, by their birth, interest in the covenant." This is a suggestion which, when rightly presented, is of importance as lending, if we may so speak, an antecedent credibility to the doctrine of Baptism as being a Divine instrument for the communication of the grace proper thereto. The advancement of the assumption of a prevenient manifestation of grace through which the children of the faithful are already "federally holy," goes far to create an anticipation of that further elective act of God which takes place in the presentation individually for their Baptism, of such children. The address is emphatic, further, on the fact (3) that an obligation of a *specific* character is contracted by "*all who are baptized,*" and that they "*do renounce, and by their Baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh.*" This fact cannot indeed be too often emphasized. The truth that Holy Baptism implies a peculiar vocation for the fulfilment of which the baptized are ever thereafter held responsible most surely implies as its correlative the presumption that a gift is bestowed in Baptism commensurate with the vocation which is its end, which gift will be increased to the believer in the measure in which the glory of that vocation becomes revealed. To suppose the contrary is to say of God that He is a "hard Master," and reaps where He has not sown. In full consistency with this view, the address, where it speaks of "*the inward grace and virtue of*

Baptism," reminds us also that this grace is *not tied to the very moment when it is administered*, and that the fruit and power thereof reaches through *the whole course of our life*. And the address concludes with a grimly-worded remark on the necessity of outward Baptism which, duly pondered, duly points in precisely the opposite direction to that toward which it is sometimes turned,—the remark, namely, that "outward Baptism is not so necessary that through the want thereof the infant is in danger of damnation" (obviously in the strict sense of eternal perdition, and not mere forfeiture of a high vocation), "or the parents guilty *if* they do not contemn or neglect the ordinance of Christ when and where it may be had."

2. In the exhortation which next follows, addressed on the one hand to such as are present at the administration, and on the other to the parents or sponsors, the distinction between the obligations resting on the *sponsor* and those resting on the *baptized* (nowadays so often obscured) is further emphasized. The witnesses of the Baptism are exhorted to recall the covenant sealed at their Baptism betwixt God and their souls, and to repent of the sins against what is termed their covenant with God; and the sponsor is exhorted "to consider the great mercy of God . . . to his child," and to train him up, on the ground of his Baptismal standing, in the nurture of the Lord.

3. The prayer in the Directory appointed "*for sanctifying the water to this spiritual use*" may be instructively compared with the provision in the section relating to the celebration of the Holy Communion for the prayer of consecration, to the effect that God will "vouchsafe His gracious presence, and the effectual working of His Spirit in us, *and so to sanctify these elements both of bread and wine, and to bless His own ordinance*, that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ, . . . and so to feed upon Him that He may be one with us, and we one with Him, that He may live in us, and we in Him." In

both cases there is the clearest regard to the grace of both ordinances as flowing from the operation of God, *assured in the sacramental constitution of the ordinance*, and not originating merely in the inward frame of the recipient. The direction given for this prayer before Baptism for “the sanctifying of the water to this spiritual use” assumes throughout that the end of the Sacrament is to effect *then* admission of the infant into a condition with his continuance in which all his days his eternal blessedness is bound up; and it is penetrated throughout with sacramental doctrine. The following is the prayer referred to:—

“This being done, prayer is also to be joined with the word of institution, for sanctifying of the water to this spiritual use; and the minister is to pray to this or the like effect:—

“That the Lord, who hath not left us as strangers without the Covenant of Promise, but called us to the privileges of His ordinances, would graciously vouchsafe to sanctify and bless His own Ordinance of Baptism at this time: that He would join the inward Baptism of His Spirit with the outward Baptism of water: make this Baptism to the infant a seal of Adoption, Remission of sin, Regeneration, and Eternal Life, and all other promises of the Covenant of Grace; that the child may be planted into the likeness of the Death and Resurrection of Christ; and that the body of sin being destroyed in him, he may serve God in newness of life all his days.”

4. The same remarks apply, lastly, to the direction provided for the post-baptismal prayer of thanksgiving. After baptizing the child with water, calling the child by his name, and uttering the sacramental words, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” thanksgiving is offered to this effect:—

“Acknowledging with all thankfulness that the Lord is true and faithful in keeping covenant and mercy: that He is good and gracious, not only in that He numbereth us among His saints, but is pleased also to bestow upon our children this singular token and badge of his love in Christ: that in His truth and special Providence He daily bringeth some into the bosom of His Church to be partakers of His inestimable benefits, purchased by the blood of His dear Son, for the continuance and increase of His Church: and

praying that the Lord would still continue, and daily confirm more and more this His unspeakable favour: that He would receive the infant now baptized, and solemnly entered into the household of faith, into His Fatherly tuition and defence, and remember him with the favour that He sheweth to His people: that if he shall be taken out of this life in his infancy, the Lord, who is rich in mercy, would be pleased to receive him up into Glory; and if he live and attain the years of discretion, that the Lord would so teach him by His Word and Spirit, and make his Baptism effectual to him, and so uphold him by His Divine power and grace that by faith he may prevail against the devil, the world, and the flesh, till in the end he obtain a full and final victory, and so be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is incontrovertible that, in this model of a post-baptismal thanksgiving, Baptism is regarded as no mere sign of grace which, on certain conditions, may be afterwards, and altogether independently bestowed, but as marking *a stage now accomplished once for all in the spiritual history of the infant baptized*, involving (as following a previous ordering of the special providence of God) the bestowal upon him of "*a singular token of the love of God to him in Christ*"; involving also his admission into a condition in which—"solemnly entered into that household of faith" which is made up of those who, by adoption, are sons of God, and "taken into the bosom of the Church," which is Christ's Mystical Body, in order to his participation thenceforward of the inestimable benefits therein dispensed—he may now be commended in a special way to God's Fatherly tuition and defence, and "to the favour that He showeth to His people" (or His elect); and in virtue of which condition it remains—not that there should be asked for him any longer the initial gift of grace—but rather that he may now be so "*upheld by Divine power and grace*" that by faith he may obtain the full and final victory, and be "kept by the power of God unto salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We have thus, then, completed a rapid survey of the doctrine of the leading post-Reformation formularies of the

Church of Scotland on this subject. As regards their evidential value on the question at issue, we may say confidently that they sustain the affirmation that Holy Baptism is an instrument of grace.

IV.

Before closing this section it is necessary to deal with one objection—the only one of apparently formidable character—which may be urged for the purpose of evading the force of the statements which have been adduced. That difficulty may be presented in one or other of two forms. It may be said that the doctrine as to the place of Baptism as a means or instrument of grace is modified by what the Church has laid down regarding the necessary qualifications of recipients. Or it may be said that the doctrine in question is modified by the doctrine of the Church on other subjects, and especially on the subject of “Election.”

I. To begin, first, with the difficulty supposed to arise out of the qualifications of the candidates for Baptism, as affecting the efficacy of the Sacrament. What is maintained by those who have recourse to this argument is that a Sacrament is defined in our Standards to be an ordinance “wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to *believers*,” and that, therefore, when Holy Baptism is spoken of as signifying and sealing our ingrafting into Christ, or regeneration, this must be understood merely to mean the ingrafting into Christ, or indeed even the representation of the ingrafting into Christ, of those of us—and of those only—who have *already* been ingrafted into Christ *by faith*. In other words, the doctrine of the Church is alleged to be—not that Baptism is a means or instrument for conferring grace, but that it merely attests in a formal and definitely instituted way the faith in which the candidate comes, and the benefits which, through that faith, he has in substance already received. A typical illustration of

this mode of argument, and of the theological standpoint of those who usually advance it, is furnished in a well-known essay on Zwinglianism and the doctrine of the Reformation, which appears in a volume on "The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation" by the late Principal William Cunningham—an essay, I may venture to remark, which literally abounds with illustrations of the Zwinglianism that has in modern times so perniciously affected Scottish theology, leaving the wine of Catholic truth in it so mixed with water that the wine is hardly indeed discernible, and which furnishes throughout a representative example of the mode of reasoning on Divine things characteristic of the transitional stage of enlightenment in which men are seen but as trees walking. Now, in answer to the averment that the Sacrament is generally described only as a means of grace to *believers*, and that, therefore, what is said of the Sacrament of Baptism must be read as invariably qualified by that limitation, it is important to point out, in the first place, that it involves a gross mis-statement of the actual facts. If such a qualification of what seems to be the doctrine of the Church as to Holy Baptism was intended, nothing would have been easier than to introduce it. So far from this being the case, however, no clause involving an invariable limitation or qualification of this sort occurs in those sections of the Confession and parts of the Catechisms which relate to Baptism. Such qualifying clauses *are* inserted in the parts of the Standards which relate to the Lord's Supper, and are as invariably *omitted* in the parts which relate to Baptism. The Lord's Supper is described as sealing certain benefits to true believers, or "worthy receivers" (various phrases being used to describe recipients in that position). On the other hand, in the various documents in which Holy Baptism is described as the Sacrament which seals our ingrafting into Christ, no mention whatever (such as occurs in the *general* description of the Sacrament) is made of personal faith as a qualifying condition. The obvious reason, of course, is this, that the Church does *not*

hold personal faith (*in the ordinary sense of the word*) to be an invariable qualification for the grace of Baptism. It is so in the case of adult candidates for baptism. In their case, the exponent of the doctrine of Holy Baptism, as an efficacious means of grace, must always be understood to maintain with equal urgency the reality, on the one hand, of God's purpose to bestow grace in the Sacrament, and on the other, the indispensable necessity of conversion toward God and faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as qualifications (no doubt conveniently imparted by God) for the due reception and use of Baptismal grace. The case of *infants*, however, is different; and because any definition given of the Sacrament of Baptism had to be framed in such a way as to include its application to a vast proportion of persons who are unable to bring to it the qualification of personal faith (whether in the sense of an intellectual apprehension of the truths of the Gospel, or even of a conscious act of spiritual trust toward God), such qualifying clauses in the case of Baptism are omitted, as are beyond doubt entirely relevant in a definition of the Lord's Supper. In thus arguing, I do not, of course, mean to say that, in the case of an infant presented for Baptism, no spiritual pre-requisite is needed. On the contrary (as has been repeatedly pointed out), such a prevenient operation of God as, were his spiritual faculties more matured, might take (as it were) the form of faith, and as serves to make him a fit recipient of the Divine blessing, must be pre-supposed as accomplished in the spirit of every child, who—being the seed of the faithful, and, in a sense, born within the covenant—is presented for Baptism in accordance with God's providential order, and, as we also believe, elective purpose. All I mean is that faith, in the sense spoken of, as a condition of the efficacy and right use of Baptism in an *adult*, is certainly not requisite in order to the efficacy of infant Baptism; or, in other words, is not requisite in *the overwhelming majority of instances in which the rite is to be administered*, and that this, therefore, may be held to be

the reason of the deliberate omission,* in the description given in our Catechism of Holy Baptism, of an invariable qualifying clause such as is appropriately introduced in connection with the Lord's Supper. Our first answer, then, to the suggestion that when the Standards speak of the efficacy of Baptism as a means of grace, they must be understood as referring only to the case of "true believers" is that it is contrary to fact. In affirming the efficacy of Baptism the Standards contemplate, as the terms employed show, the case of the immeasurably larger number of candidates who are incapable of conscious personal faith (in the specific sense of that word), and affirm as to them—and *apart altogether from the qualification necessarily imported into any definition applicable generally and equally to both Sacraments*—that Baptism signifies and seals *their* ingrafting into Christ. Obviously, if the converse were true and the doctrine of the Church were that Holy Baptism is a means of grace only to believers, it would be difficult to justify infant Baptism at all. It is, indeed, instructive to observe, as a matter of fact, that they who repudiate the doctrine of the Church that Holy Baptism is not a mere attestation of previous faith, but a means of grace are, and usually feel themselves to be, in an inconsistent and logically untenable position when called upon to defend the Baptism of infants in their practice.† But, secondly, a further answer to the suggestion that the Baptismal doctrine above set forth must be held to be qualified by the alleged invariable demand made for per-

* This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that among the principal answers to the question—"What is Baptism?" rejected by the Westminster Assembly when that which is now given under Question 94 in the Shorter Catechism was finally accepted, was one which runs in the following terms:—"It is a Sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by the minister's once washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is represented and sealed *to the right receiver* the powerful washing of the Blood of Christ, &c."—Professor Mitchell's "*Catechisms of the Second Reformation*," page 32.

† Compare Principal Cunningham's "Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation." Article:—"Zwingle on the Doctrine of the Sacraments."

sonal faith in the recipient, is this—that not merely, as has been pointed out, is no such demand made in the case of infants, but that even where made in the case of adults, it involves no qualification whatever of the positions advanced and sustained from the foregoing formularies referred to as to the doctrine of the Church. When it is said, as in the work of Principal Cunningham above referred to, that the Baptismal doctrine of the Church is that Baptism seals in the case of adults the ingrafting into Christ only of such as have already been ingrafted into Him by faith, a position is affirmed which is absolutely contrary to fact. They who so aver beg the whole question. The doctrine of the Church is that the Sacraments do not merely attest faith, but “*exhibit*” or “*effectually apply Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace*”; in other words, that they are seals, not merely of the faith that receives them, but of the grace conveyed through them. Whatever may be the pre-requisite, whether in the case of the infant who is regarded as, in a certain, though yet incomplete sense, within the covenant, or in that of the adult who is required to come in the profession of personal faith toward God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—the doctrine declared is that the Sacrament is a divinely-ordained means by which the Lord imparts *what the candidate cannot of himself bring, or more than the candidate brings or can even at the time realize, and so* (in the special case of adults, by a specific gift of grace) increases even the faith in which he comes. However urgently then the Church asserts the need of faith in the case of adult Baptism—whether in order to the reception of it, or in the after use of it,—or the need of any other antecedent condition prior to the administration of infant Baptism, the doctrine (if the above averments are true) that Baptism is a means for the impartation of grace in a specific form, and for the specific end of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, remains unimpaired; and can, indeed, be repudiated only by such as are prepared to maintain that to believe is, in itself, one

and the same thing as to be regenerated (I use the word here in its limited technical sense): which is about as preposterous as it would be to say that to believe in Christ is, in itself, one and the same thing as to have attained to the resurrection; or to say that man's act in receiving and God's act in giving are identical manifestations of grace; or, in point of fact, to say, as many would seem to do, that *grace* and *faith* are but two different names for one thing.

2. Another, but closely connected, form in which objections are sometimes drawn from the alleged teaching of the Standards in one part of them for the purpose of invalidating the force of their declarations in other parts, is that which maintains that the doctrine of Baptism, as a means of grace, cannot be legitimately held except with the most guarded qualifications, because necessarily at variance with the Confessional doctrine of election. This objection, it may be said in passing, is usually advanced in an apparently dishonest spirit. What I mean is that it is an argument to which controversialists often have recourse who do not themselves accept the alleged teaching of the Confession on the mysterious subject of election, but who emphasize, or even exaggerate, that alleged teaching, because it suits their purpose in denying to others the right of accepting the Confessional doctrine of Baptism in the full sense of the terms in which it is stated. There is no reason, however, why the exponent of the doctrine of Baptism here laid down should seek to evade the full force of this objection, whatever may be the spirit in which it is urged. I desire, therefore (though without, of course, travelling into the elaborate discussion of subjects lying outside the scope of this paper), to make on this important point the following remarks.

Everything depends on our defining clearly the precise form of that doctrine of election with which this of the efficacy of Baptism as a means of grace, or as a means of the ingrafting of the baptized into the mystical body of Christ, must be admitted to be at variance. To begin with, (1) the doctrine of Baptism in no way conflicts with that

of election, or even predestination, in so far as all three, in common, merely imply the will or purpose of God as fore-running, in the kingdom of grace, as in all things else, the will of man. The faith of the Divine predestination is involved in the faith of the Divine prescience, and follows upon our apprehension of infinite perfection. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." To deny this truth would be to deny the existence of God, or to affirm a conception of His Being implying limitation or defect. God's eternal purpose (which is the aspect of the subject which, at this stage, more closely concerns us) is, in point of fact, the fountainhead of grace. This is constantly the teaching of the Apostles, who, in all their Epistles, set out by dwelling on the purpose whereby we have been chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world." In all things relating to the economy of grace, God is *first*, and must be declared to be first. Salvation originates not in the will of the creature, but of the Creator; and in every stage of its administration, God's will fore-runneeth ours. So far, however, from the doctrine of Baptism, which has been advanced above, being at variance with facts such as these—requiring as they do to be contemplated in their manifold relations with deep adoration—the very opposite is the case. One of the most necessary antecedents to the true apprehension of the significance and efficacy of Holy Baptism, and one of the most indispensable safeguards against many errors on the subject, is to be found in the true apprehension of the doctrine of election in the aspect thus far presented. To take an illustration: the difficulty is often raised by persons, who think but superficially on such matters, as to the injustice of imposing on us the obligations constituted by Baptism in our infancy, and while we are accordingly incapable of either giving or withholding our personal assent. The answer to this difficulty is supplied in the simple fact that God has a sovereign right over us, and that election is an assertion of that right, and that our call to Baptism is one expression

of that election. God has created us, and not we ourselves. He has redeemed us, and that while we were yet sinners, by His own unspeakable gift. God has thus a two-fold right—in that He has purchased us unto Himself, as well as in the fact that He is God—to call out or select from among all whom He has created and redeemed the number whom He pleases, and those whom He pleases, that He may lay upon them the further vocation belonging to all whom He incorporates into the Church, as the mystical body of His incarnate Son. He acts in accordance with this right, and He so acts in the vocation of Baptism. God does not come into the world (as would seem to be the modern evangelical theory) only to invite such, or to bestow His gifts only on such, as will *volunteer* to enter into the Church. He predestinates to the offer of that dignity of rank those whom He pleases, and He calls them out according to His purpose fore-ordained before the foundation of the earth was. He is not required, be it said with reverence, to begin by asking our consent. He is entitled to begin by laying on us His command. We are the subjects of His eternal choice; and He created us for His glory, and in due time He makes His choice known to us in the Gospel, and, having made it known therein, calls on us to submit to that further operation of His hand, whereby He would make us partakers of His nature through our ingrafting into Him Who is the Word made flesh. This is the history of our Baptism (alas! indeed, too little pondered) as the emergence in time of an eternal purpose toward us of God. We are, according to that eternal purpose, “the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand,” and in Holy Baptism “He calleth His own sheep by name” in order that He may “lead them out.” It may here be added also that the dignity of vocation so laid upon us in Baptism, and arising out of the eternal election of God, is to be accepted, not as if involving the recipient only in augmented responsibility and peril, but, on the contrary, as a most singular token of the

Divine love. It is a vocation, not only or even primarily, as too often represented, to merely personal salvation, or to any merely personal benefit, but to *service* on behalf of others, and to a service to be rendered on the basis of our peculiar relationship to, and participation in, the *life* of Him, Who, being now raised from the dead, *liveth unto God* for evermore. What the final objects of that vocation may be we for the present do not fully know. The Divine purpose advances in ever-widening stages from dispensation to dispensation; each stage as it is completed leading only to yet wider manifestations of the abounding mercy of God. What that use is to which the Church, or mystical number of the elect, now being gathered, shall, at future stages of this great and unending development, be put in that day when it is perfected remains yet to be disclosed. Meanwhile, however, we know this much,—that ineffable is the glory which already is the portion of those who are given to Christ to be *at His disposal as the members of His body* for the accomplishment even of His present purposes on the earth. We know also that Baptism, whatever else it means, is the sacramental sign and seal of our vocation to the participation of that glory, and that it is, therefore, to be accepted, not reluctantly,—as merely loading us with additional burdens of peril,—but rather with adoration, as assigning to us a dignity which is amazing even to the angels of God. To return, however, from this partial digression, our present point is this, that the doctrine of Baptism, as implying thus a divine vocation arising out of the eternal purposes of God, is in no degree at variance with that of election *in the aspect in which that doctrine implies that the Divine will in all things fore-runs the will of man*. In point of fact, the doctrine of Baptism finds its very support and illumination in that form of the doctrine of Election. (2) Neither, again, can it be said that the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism is at variance with the doctrine of election, or of predestination, regarded as an assertion not merely of the eternal purpose of God,

but further regarded even as an assertion of an actual impartation of privileges on the part of God, in accordance with His decree, *provided that that impartation leaves untouched the personal responsibility of the recipients of those privileges.* This aspect is one under which Divine election and predestination are undeniably presented to us in Holy Scripture and in the history of God's dealings with man. In the Old Testament as in the New, election to *privilege*, carrying with it distinctive responsibility, confronts us at every step. Such *privileges*, it may here be said (though by way of anticipation), would, indeed, seem inseparable from an actual impartation of *grace*, as included in them, and qualifying the recipient for the due use of the privilege bestowed. It is beyond question that the doctrine of election, as held by the Early Church, took the form of an affirmation of inward grace, as well as of outward privilege, as being bestowed upon the Church, while yet leaving untouched the individual responsibility of the recipient in the employment alike of that privilege and of the grace involved in it. In this way the Church held equally these two aspects of truth, and recognised the perfect harmony subsisting between them as embodied in the teaching of the Apostles of the Lord, who at one time describe us as actually ingrafted into Christ and made members of His mystical body, and yet, at another, warn us of the danger, *if we continue not in His goodness*, of being finally cut off; * and as embodied also (it may be added) in such words of our Lord Himself as those in which He says, "Ye did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide," and yet on the very same occasion says also, "Every branch *in Me* that beareth not fruit, He (the Father) taketh it away. . . . If a man *abide* not in Me, he is cast forth *as a branch* and is withered; and they gather them and they cast them into the fire and they are burned." † In connection with the

* Rom. xi. 12.

† John xv. 16, 2, 6 (R.V.).

subject of Holy Baptism, it is of extreme importance to remember that the principle in man which invests him with individual and personal responsibility is not destroyed, or weakened, or affected in any way by regenerating grace, any more than by the former corruption of his nature. What a man was before his regeneration, *so far as his responsibility is concerned*, he remains thereafter. In other words, the grace of regeneration is not to be conceived of as involving the infusion of any new property, or substance, or element, into the constitution of our nature as originally formed. It is in itself indefinable, and cannot be described otherwise than as involving simply the transference of the man in whom it is effected out of a condition of his nature in which he is incapable of adequately realizing what is now the purpose of God for him, *into another condition* (the essential elements of his nature remaining as before), in which he becomes spiritually capable of fulfilling that purpose. When we attempt to go further, and to define what, ultimately, the life of regeneration is, we lose ourselves in the same unfathomable mystery which is presented to us in seeking the origin of life in every form. Of our regenerated spiritual life, even as of our physical life, we can but say, and say with tenfold increase of emphasis, that it is "*hid with Christ in God.*" Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, a new relation or way of access is constituted between man and God, and God and man; and Baptism is one means whereby those whom He calls are brought under the power of that relation. This notwithstanding, it does not affect their freedom of action as to the *use they make* of that gift of grace. As they were free under the law of nature to use or misuse God's gifts, they are alike free to do so when placed in the Kingdom of grace. These assumptions underlie the doctrine that inward grace may be bestowed while it yet may be neglected, perverted, or finally forfeited. At this stage of my argument, however, I am neither insisting on election as involving a predestination to inward grace, nor on Baptism

as implying the communication of such grace. I merely plead (for the sake of argument and with the object of clearing the ground) that the doctrine of Baptism is not at variance with the doctrine of election, *so far, at least, as both may be restricted to the affirmation that God bestows on those whom He chooses inestimable privileges of an outward order, involving the most exalted responsibilities, though not necessarily involving any personal gift of inward grace.* (3) But now, to go one step further, I aver that the doctrine of Baptism, even if presented as implying the impartation, in some real degree, of grace (as distinguished from merely external privileges), is not necessarily in conflict even with that more advanced form of the doctrine of predestination, which involves the affirmation, as regards some at least, of their final perseverance in grace. There is an aspect in which what is said in the third chapter of the Westminster Confession, about which so much controversy has been waged, to the effect that “they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ: are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season: are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation,” and that “neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, *and* saved, but the elect only”—is, if we are careful to read these terms as being *collectively* applicable to the same persons, merely a truism. It is as if it should be said that they only will be saved (using the word in its absolute sense) who are saved finally. In other words, they only are the elect, in that special and extreme sense of the word, who have been elected—to persevere. The affirmation that there is such an inner election of God manifested in the final salvation of those who are the subjects of it might be admitted without its involving the denial of the fact that there may be also a real and present election of others, and *that* to inward grace—though falling short of that measure of grace which ensures in the cases above supposed their final and

absolute attainment. It is well known that St Augustine, who—like many in all ages of the Church—held at one and the same time the strongest predestinarian and the strongest Baptismal doctrine, advanced the theory that there may be an election as it were within an election; involving the giving of a common degree of grace to many but of a special grace of perseverance only to some.* It is not indeed for us presumptuously to affirm that it may not be so. These things belong to the innermost counsel of God. Looking in this light at this deep matter, we see clearly (and this is the point to be at present noticed) that a doctrine of Baptism which not merely affirms that Baptism is the outcome of a call originating wholly in the purpose of the Eternal, or that it involves the impartation of spiritual privilege with corresponding responsibilities of a special order—but which also goes so far as to affirm that it is a means of inward grace, and of every degree of grace *short only of the gift of perseverance*, would be still a doctrine reconcilable with that of election in the light in which it has been presented above. The baptized may all be the elect of God to the extent of being responsible for grace actually set forth, sealed, and exhibited to them, while they only among the baptized, who in the end attain the crown of perseverance, are yet entitled to be described as “the elect” in the restricted and absolute sense in which that term may be held applicable, not to the redeemed and adopted, but only to the finally sanctified and saved. A strictly parallel case to this two-fold sense, in which the same word may be used, is presented to us in

* “Of two pious men, why final perseverance is given to one and not given to another, is a still more inscrutable part of God’s judgments. But this much we are quite certain of, that one is predestinated and the other not.”—Augustine : *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, Chaps. viii., ix.

So also even Calvin—“Paul comprehends the whole Church when he says that it was cleansed by the washing of water. In like manner, from his expression in another place, that by Baptism we are ingrafted into the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13), we infer that infants, whom he enumerates among His members, are to be baptized in order that they may not be dis severed from his body.”—*Institutes*, Bk. IV., Chap. xvi., Sec. 22.

the term "regenerate." The baptized may, indeed, in the most real sense, be described as through regeneration the sons of God, for they are "all sons of God in Christ Jesus," inasmuch as so many of them "as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ": but yet, in another and equally real sense, they only among that number are entitled to be so described as shall attain, by the predestinating gift of God, to the resurrection of the blessed, and shall then be pronounced to be "sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

The doctrine of Baptism, which has been affirmed as set forth in the formularies of the Church to the effect that the Sacrament of Baptism is not merely a sign, but a means effectually exhibiting the grace of God to all presented at the font, and leaving them under personal responsibility for the acceptance or right use of that grace, is not then at variance with the doctrine of election in any of the restricted aspects above referred to, in which that doctrine may be set forth.

There is, however, I now proceed to say, (4) *one* aspect, as distinguished from all these three noticed above, in which the doctrine of election may, beyond doubt, be presented in such a way as necessarily to sap the foundations of what has been set forth in this paper as to the efficacy of Baptism. What, then, I ask is that aspect? It is that in which a conception of election is maintained, which implies the assertion of this position, that grace is never bestowed except on such as are predestinated infallibly to make a right use of it; in other words, that *none* receive grace who do not at the same time receive the gift of infallible perseverance in the right use of grace, and that consequently the *failure*, as we might describe it (on a contrary assumption), *to abide* in the state of grace is in point of fact a proof *that the state of grace has never been attained; or that where election has not implied the gift of perseverance there has been no election to any gift of inward grace at all.* The assertion, in this sense, of

God's eternal decree, and of the predestination only of the elect to eternal life, would certainly seem at variance with the belief that Baptism is an act of God which secures to all who in infancy receive it, as well as to all such as, believing the Gospel, are baptized in their riper years, "their ingrafting into Christ and participation in the benefits of the covenant of grace." We may hold the doctrine of Baptism above set forth, and, at the same time, be convinced (*a*) as to God's prescience as inherent in His perfection, (*b*) as to God's eternal counsel as the originating source of all grace, (*c*) as to God's predestination as manifested in the impartation of every gift of grace, and (*d*) even as to the gift of perseverance as one which it may please Him to impart even in this life, in accordance with His inscrutable decree, to an election known only to Himself. All these convictions we may hold consistently with the affirmation of Baptismal grace. But we cannot hold at one and the same moment, except, indeed, as two seemingly contradictory things, the doctrine that Baptism seals a gift of grace to *every child*, as well as to every adult who draws near in faith, and a doctrine of God's election which excludes from the participation of grace, in any degree, all who do not finally persevere. In these circumstances what are we to do? Personally, I make no admission here as to whether such a conception of election is that presented in the Standards; but, if it be averred that it is so, and that of these two doctrines, that of Election in this extreme form, and of Baptism as here vindicated, one must be allowed to qualify the other, I unhesitatingly say—and it is to this point that I have been leading up—that it is the doctrine of Baptism which should lead us to qualify our conception of election, and not the conception of election which should be allowed to qualify the doctrine of Baptism. Such a doctrine of Election as that referred to bears, it must be observed, not on Baptism only. It bears equally on the doctrine of the Gospel of redemption, through our blessed Lord J sus Christ, as one to be declared to all, in

the faith that "God is not willing that any should perish," and that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should have everlasting life," and in the faith, also, that every one who hears that Gospel is responsible for the rejection of a true offer of grace. To return, however, to the matter of Baptism, if the choice is forced upon us, in loyalty to the Confession, of deciding between these two alternatives,—that of accepting, only with qualification, the doctrine of Election when presented in its most extreme form (because conflicting alike with the conception of a free Gospel and with the conception of God's covenanted faithfulness to the ordinances which He has Himself appointed in His house); or that of rejecting utterly the conception of Baptism affirmed above, as a Sacrament which, by God's own act, places us under responsibility for the grace which He truly exhibits to all the baptized, and which, indeed, as regards the infants whom we bring to the Lord Jesus, is practically only the embodiment of the loving action in which He of old "took them in His arms" and "blessed them, laying His hands upon them," and declaring that "of such is the Kingdom of God,"—then I say of these two alternatives we choose the first: modifying our conception of the hidden mysteries connected with God's predestination by the revealed facts of His present providential dealing, instead of allowing these facts (lying, as it were, before our eyes) to be obscured or confused by inferences drawn from speculations as to things which manifestly must lie far, and perhaps for ever, beyond our ken. "THE SECRET THINGS BELONG UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD, BUT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE REVEALED BELONG UNTO US AND UNTO OUR CHILDREN FOR EVER."

SECTION V.—ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

I have dwelt at what might, perhaps, appear undue length on the teaching of the historical formularies of the Church. I have done so, however, partly because so many of our fellow-countrymen nowadays do not read these documents, or if they do, read them with a veil upon their hearts: and partly because I have been anxious to show a legitimate way of escape out of the hesitation felt by some in asserting to the full the teaching of the Standards on this special subject of the place of the Sacrament of Baptism in the economy of grace—a hesitancy which, indeed, goes far to make void the comfort intended to be derived from the rite, as an act of God, marking once for all a definite date in our spiritual history, and supplying to us an assurance of His purpose wholly independent of our own varying moods and feelings. Before passing to the concluding section of this paper, I propose now to advert to some of the principal difficulties which, let the teaching of the Standards be what it may, are alleged by some to prove insuperable obstacles to the acceptance of the doctrine of a Baptismal impartation of grace.

These difficulties may be classified as follows:—

It is alleged that the evidence supplied in Holy Scripture is conflicting, and that while there are some passages—such as those which have been quoted in the preceding sections—which point in one direction, there are passages of apparently different import, which have to be set over against these. Apart from this, it is said that even were it admitted that the teaching of Holy Scripture apparently sets only in one direction, there are circumstances which must be allowed to modify the interpretation to be put upon it. For example, it is pointed out that it is preposterous to conceive of spiritual blessing being associated invariably with visible means so ineffectual and almost trivial in character; or it is urged that the conception of

grace, as so associated with any act of man or use of a material element, seems almost to subordinate the freedom of the Eternal Spirit to human will, or even caprice; or it is suggested that it is simply incredible to suppose that an operation of God, fraught with such momentous and far-reaching issues, should be accomplished as in a moment of time, and in a manner affording no evidence whatever of its meaning and importance. Again, it is sometimes argued that the condition of Christendom at large sufficiently disproves any assumption as to the efficacy of Baptism. In other words, the efficacy of the Divine rite is denied on the ground of the absence of any proportionate result. Further, it is alleged that this doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism is fraught with spiritual danger, and is, indeed, as it is sometimes put, a "soul-destroying delusion," because leading inevitably to the disparagement of personal conversion and of the need and sufficiency of personal faith toward God. Lastly, it is sometimes maintained that it is a doctrine involving consequences of an appalling character because of the inferences to which it leads, as to the condition and eternal prospects of such as die unbaptized.

I now rapidly take up these various difficulties in their order.

1. Of difficulties arising out of the alleged conflicting character of the statements of Holy Scripture, some are of a minor order of importance. As representative of these we may take the three following:—(1) One is founded on a passage already quoted from the Gospel of St Mark, which contains in a condensed form our Lord's commission to the preachers of His Gospel. That passage concludes with the words, "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Here, it is said, there is no allusion to any question as to whether a man has or has not been baptized. The only thing adverted to as entailing final condemnation is the want of faith toward God, and it is impossible to suppose that our Lord would have so spoken if the reception of

Baptism was a matter of such vital importance. I would not even refer to this difficulty—and, indeed, I feel I owe an apology to any intelligent reader for noticing it—were it not for the frequency with which it is put forward in ordinary discussions of the subject. It is sufficient to point out two things:—First, that it would have been quite unnecessary for our Lord to refer to neglect of Baptism in the concluding part of this passage, or to any other damning condition, except that of unbelief, for the simple reason that an unbeliever must be supposed either to have refused to present himself for Baptism at the hands of God, or, if he has not so refused, to have either received the rite in impenitence or forfeited its blessing through apostasy. In the next place, it is to be observed, that the passage in question, rightly regarded, furnishes on the other hand the strongest support of the doctrine advanced as to the importance of Holy Baptism. Our Lord says that “he that disbelieveth shall be condemned,” but He also says, in the immediately preceding verse, “he that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved.” The fact thus implied, namely, that while disbelief alone avails to condemn, faith in itself does not avail to save, *except through the further grace of which the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, received in joyful obedience, is the Divinely-ordered channel*, is surely a most significant indication of the inestimable value of the ordinance.

(2) A similar difficulty of a minor character is sometimes founded upon the *criteria* of the regenerate life given in the Epistles of St John. In the third chapter of the First Epistle of St John these words occur:—“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”* Here, it is said, we have no mention of

* 1 John iii. 9, 10.

Baptism. The sole test of our being regenerated is alleged to lie in absolute freedom from sin, and in perseverance in the love of God and of our brother. It is inconceivable, it is urged, to suppose that St John would have so written if he believed that the sacramental act had any necessary or invariable connection with our entrance on the life of adoption. In answer to this it may be pointed out, first, that it is equally inconceivable that St John—as one of the Apostles whom our Lord commissioned to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—should have intended, in any way, to disparage the spiritual significance and intention of the ordinance thus solemnly committed to his hands. Apart, however, from this, the passage referred to in the Epistle of St John, carefully studied, furnishes one of the clearest illustrations we can get of the need—if we would understand the Holy Scriptures aright—of our first observing carefully the different aspects in which the same subject may be presented, and then comparing these aspects, and harmonizing them, instead of simply looking (as many do) to one of such aspects to the exclusion of all the rest. In a later portion of the same Epistle, St John uses these words:—“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and everyone that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him.”* Here, again, there is *another* criterion supplied to us of the reality of our adoption which—on the principle on which the former passage referred to is pronounced to be at variance with the supposition of any connection between the act of God in Baptism and our adoption—might also be held to be at variance with St John’s previous statement, above quoted from this same Epistle, that *sinlessness* is the practical test of the presence in us of regenerating grace. The tests applied by St John in the third chapter would seem too stringent, and the test applied in the fifth chapter too lax, to admit of their being

* 1 John v. 1.

equally relevant to the matter under consideration. How are we to escape from this difficulty? Without entering fully at present on the discussion of the interpretation to be put upon this most solemn declaration of the Apostle (unquestionably too little pondered)—that they who are called unto the life of adoption are indeed brought under the law of inflexible righteousness, and are responsible for absolute holiness of heart and life—it may be remarked that St John, in both passages, is obviously presenting to us only two different aspects, or perhaps stages, of one spiritual process. Under one aspect, or in one stage of their history, the regenerate are described as those on whom is bestowed the gift of faith that Jesus is of a truth the Christ of God. In another aspect, or at a further stage of their history, the regenerate are described as those who consistently reckon themselves as indeed dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ: on whom no condemnation rests, because of their union with Christ Jesus: who perfect holiness in the fear of God. There is no inconsistency, then, between these *two aspects* in which the *one* life of sonship in Christ toward God may be viewed. On the same principle, then, of interpretation, there is no inconsistency between the tests which St John supplies in this Epistle and that elsewhere advanced by St Paul when he refers to *Baptism* as the visible assurance that “ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus: *for* as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” St Paul is speaking of an initial sacramental act of God in our adoption: St John is speaking in part, in this passage of his Epistle, of the faith in which we submit ourselves to that act of God, and partly, also, of the response to the grace implied in it, which is exhibited through our conformity ever afterwards with the law of life. The truth is that Holy Scripture abounds in illustrations of this variety of aspect in which the same spiritual facts may be regarded. Thus, for example, we are said to be “justified” in many different ways—sometimes by

faith, sometimes by works, sometimes in the blood of Christ, sometimes by His resurrection—all these being but different aspects of one many-sided fact. In a precisely similar manner, the grace and glory of the life of adoption are set forth in at least four different ways, according to the precise stage of the history of that life which is contemplated. That glory is associated (*a*) with our *Baptism* in our Lord's words where He says that "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." It is associated (*b*) with *faith* (divinely imparted to us by God) *in the Incarnation*, in the words of St John, where he says that "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," and that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." It is associated (*c*) in a still further aspect of it with our realisation from moment to moment, in the facts of our life, *of that law of perfect righteousness and holiness* under which we are placed, as in the words in which St John also reminds us that "Whosoever is born of God" (or, in other words, is loyal to the obligations and powers of the state of grace in which he stands) "doth not commit sin . . . and he cannot sin because he is born of God." And it is associated (*d*) in the final aspect of it with our *complete emancipation in the day of the resurrection*, when they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world at the resurrection from the dead, shall be declared in the absolute sense of the phrase to be sons of God." All these *criteria* of the regenerate life are of equal importance, and, in dealing with one of them, we must not do so to the exclusion of any other. He who would make right use of his Baptism, as the act by which God has sealed to him his regeneration and adoption, must never forget for a moment that he is yet only on his trial as a candidate for a crown of life, which he may finally miss; and is in the position, and is called to follow the example, of the Apostle who counted himself not as having already

attained, or being already perfect, but as under an obligation to press toward the mark, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.* In like manner, he whose eyes have been opened to apprehend what is the glory of that distinctive "*prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," which is set before him in the Kingdom, ought to apply himself to draw perpetual encouragement and inspiration from the remembrance of the step which God has already taken with him—far exceeding all that he can ask or think—in setting upon him the seal of Baptism, and so marking him out as indeed among the number of the sons of God, and of the heirs of the Kingdom, through his incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

(3) A third among these difficulties of minor importance—the consideration of which may, however, be specially helpful—is sometimes founded upon a declaration of St Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians,† namely, that Christ had not sent him to baptize but to preach the Gospel. It is argued that it is impossible to suppose that the Apostle would have made any such declaration—involving, apparently, the depreciation of Baptism as contrasted with the office of preaching—if the Sacrament of Baptism was Divinely intended to occupy a place of such supreme importance. Here, too, it may be pointed out that it is equally impossible to suppose that St Paul—who made the Sacrament of Baptism and the obligations and responsibilities which arise from it so constantly the topic of his impassioned teaching in almost all his Epistles—could have intended, even for one moment, either to depreciate the value of Baptism, or to place it in antagonism to the ministry of the Gospel. If St Paul regarded himself as having been sent to preach the Gospel, he must, on the same principles, have regarded himself as called to preach the spiritual efficacy of Baptism, as obviously according to

* Phil. iii. 11-14.

† 1 Cor. i. 17.

our Lord's commission to His Apostles one principal part of that Gospel. Further, it has been pointed out in a previous section that the passage on which this difficulty is founded is one which, rightly considered, in a pre-eminent degree implies just that exalted doctrine of Baptism which it is used to set aside. What was the reason why St Paul expressed his thankfulness to God that he had not at Corinth baptized any but Crispus and Gaius? As has been already pointed out, the reason was, lest any should say that he had baptized *in his own name!* In other words, his reason for thankfully recalling the circumstance that at Corinth he had not personally administered the rite, was that the Corinthian disciples had thus escaped a danger to which, in their spiritual condition at the time, they were specially liable, that, namely, of accepting a defective conception of Baptism, and of regarding it as an act of man associating its subject with a school of opinion, or a sect, or a fragment of the Church, instead of seeing it to be an act of God (by whomsoever administered) availing to incorporate its recipient into the one body of Christ, and to bring him under the power of that one principle of life and order which is sovereign throughout the one Church—which is His body. A still further and even more important consideration is to be offered, however, in connection with this passage. It is worthy of notice that when St Paul says that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the Gospel, he is certainly not speaking of the preaching of the Gospel in the comparatively meagre and defective sense which that phrase now conveys. He is not placing the administration of Baptism in comparison with what we now call "preaching," or the mere verbal declaration of the truths of the Gospel. Under the phrase in which he describes himself as sent "to preach the Gospel," St Paul habitually describes the Gospel as a whole which was entrusted to him in his place as an Apostle of the Lord. What was distinctive of the *Apostolic* ministry was that it was *not* in word, but as he himself describes it, in "*demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

In other words, the phrase describes the entire range of action proper to him as an *Apostle* to whom was committed "the word of reconciliation," and involving, as its highest function, not the mere declaration of the way of salvation after the manner of a spoken address, but the actual *ministry or bestowal of the Spirit*. That this is so will scarcely be doubted by any one who ponders the words used in almost every epistle: as when, writing to the Galatian Church, he speaks of himself as having "ministered to them the Spirit": as when, writing to the Roman Church, he speaks of his longing desire "to impart unto them some spiritual gift": as when, writing to the Corinthian Church, he refers to the fact that he had begotten them through the Gospel, and that the testimony of Christ was so "confirmed in them" that they "came behind in no gift": as when, writing to the Ephesian Church, and referring to the grace bestowed upon them by the laying on of his hands, he describes them as (in the same sense as that in which the Corinthians were "confirmed") sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the earnest of their inheritance: as when, writing to the Thessalonian Church, he affirms his Gospel unto them to have been, not in word only, but also "in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." All these passages, and many others that might be quoted, —in short, the entire scope and structure of the Apostolic writings, *read in connection with the Acts of the Apostles*, —enable us to recover the full meaning, now, undoubtedly, greatly overlooked, of the words in which the Apostle describes himself as entrusted in the preaching of the Gospel with the actual *ministration of the Spirit*. Accordingly, when in the passage now under consideration, St Paul says that Christ sent him "not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," he is not referring to these two parts of his vocation as if they were antagonistic to one another, or as if the latter was a matter of insignificance as compared with the former. He is speaking in the attitude of one who only compares a part of his vocation—and that its less distinc-

tive part—with the whole. It was the primary office of the Apostles to impart to the whole Church one Faith, and the blessing of one authoritative Divine rule, and further, continually to replenish the Church with “power from on high,” in virtue of the fact that they were the ministers whom God set *first*,* and who, *immediately* consecrated by the Lord in heaven, were themselves the channels through which the grace of His heavenly anointing, in the laying on of their hands, was poured out upon all the members of His Body. It was not specially their province *as Apostles* to administer the fundamental rite of Baptism. Dealing as they often did at times with multitudes of people it would have been out of their power so to do. That rite they delegated to inferior ministers. Such a delegation in no degree interfered with its efficacy, for, by whomsoever it is administered, it is, as has ever been maintained in the Catholic Church,—if administered aright, in the use of water in the name of the Trinity,—an act not of man but of God. So far as the administration of ordinances was concerned, the distinctive office of the Apostles was to minister the grace of *ordination* to those set in places of ministry, and to communicate to the baptized the grace proper to their respective places *through the laying on of hands*. It is in the light of this fact that we understand the Apostle’s so-called “depreciation” (as it appears to the un instructed) of Baptism, as merely implying that Baptism is one of a series of spiritual actions, each of which has its own importance, and all of which are knit into organic unity in the supernatural order of the Church. He is contrasting a part with the whole; but *that* does not involve any depreciation whatever of the value of that part in its own Divinely-ordered, though, under one aspect of it, relatively subordinate place.

Passing then from these difficulties of a minor order founded on what is alleged to be conflicting in the representation of Scripture, we now come to two which

* 1 Cor. xii. 28.

are supposed to be of a more formidable character. These two are derived from the histories of the Baptism of Cornelius, recorded in the tenth chapter of the Acts, and of that of Simon Magus, recorded in the eighth chapter. In the former case, it is said, we have an instance in which the grace of Baptism was bestowed antecedently to the administration of the rite, and in the latter case an example of the administration of the rite without its being apparently attended at all, as the after history of the recipient proved, by any gift of grace. Both instances concur, it is maintained, in disproving the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism as a means ordained of God for bestowing grace in a specific form. These, it may be remarked in passing, are the only instances which are adduced in the Westminster Confession of Faith to sustain the statement that although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated." They are also constantly referred to in controversial literature as if decisive on the question as to the efficacy of Baptism. Now, it is no part of our contention that these instances are irrelevant under certain limitations to the statement contained in the Confession. None the less clearly, however, it may be shown, on a fair consideration of what they imply, that—instead of invalidating—they on the contrary in a remarkable degree confirm the doctrine set forth in regard to the place belonging to Holy Baptism in the Divine economy of grace.

(4) Taking up these histories in the order in which they are given in the Acts, it is to be observed, in the first place, (*a*) that the case of Simon, described in the eighth chapter of the Acts, is wholly irrelevant to any question as to the efficacy of Baptism, *so far, at least, as regards such as are presented in infancy for the reception of the rite.* This point, duly weighed, is surely of considerable

importance. Controversialists who write in support of the Zwinglian conception of the purpose of the Sacraments, are constantly in the habit of referring to adult Baptism as if supplying the ideal type of the ordinance. In order to understand aright the nature and purpose of the Sacraments, it is claimed that we should begin by studying it in the case of adults—that being the primary and normal type embodying the true doctrine of the Sacraments,—and then proceed to study it in its secondary application to such as are presented in infancy. Our Lord's words and acts would appear to suggest precisely an opposite view. In the indignation with which He rebuked those who forbade parents who brought infants to Him for blessing, He undoubtedly taught that infants were to be regarded as proper candidates for the reception of grace.* In the words which He then added when He declared that "of such is the Kingdom of God" (or, in other words, that of such is that "Kingdom," the only entrance into which is through the second birth "of water and of the Spirit"), He advanced, however, a step further and seems to indicate that not merely are infants proper candidates for the reception of grace, but that *they* rather than adults are the ideal candidates. This inference is confirmed by our Lord's words on another occasion, when he took "a little child" and "set him in the midst" of His disciples, and said, "Except ye turn and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." † These declarations, viewed in connection with our Lord's actions when He took up the infants in His arms, and *thereafter* "put His hands upon them and blessed them" (actions which, in their significant order, would no doubt appear to be prophetic both of the Sacrament of Baptism and also of the *further and complementary Blessing*, of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, as then administered subsequently to Baptism, in the laying on of hands), would certainly appear, in a striking degree, to

* Mark x. 14-16.

† Matt. xviii. 3.

show that infant rather than adult Baptism furnishes the most perfect type of the ordinance in its relation to the ends for which the Lord has instituted it; and that, in order to a due apprehension of the doctrine of the ordinance of Baptism, we should begin by studying it, not first in its applicability to the adult—who must always approach it more or less in the consciousness of spiritual conflict, and as one who says, “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief”—but rather in its applicability to the infant who passively submits therein to the operation of God, or, at all events, brings only the pre-requisite of a Divinely-wrought intuition of trust in the Saviour, in Whose blessed arms he lies.* Were this course followed, it is scarcely to be doubted that many would be helped toward a clearer apprehension than they now have of the grace of the Sacrament, just because of their being led to regard it, as it were, more from its Divine side, as an administrative act of God, rather than (as so often) almost exclusively from its human side, as if it were an act the efficacy of which primarily depended upon the self-conscious movement of the will and spirit of man. Further, it is certain that the immeasurably vaster area within which the administration of the holy ordinance, as provided for infants, was to be fulfilled, must have been present to the mind of our blessed Lord in instituting the Sacrament, and in the end for which He instituted it. In the light of these considerations it becomes additionally important to perceive that a case such as that of Simon Magus, whatever may be its significance, is at least utterly irrelevant to the matter of infant Baptism; or, in other words, is irrelevant both to *the ideal type of Baptism* (in the sense above presented), and also to *the overwhelming majority of cases in which Baptism falls to be administered.*

(b) Looking next, however, to this case of Simon Magus, even as bearing on *adult* Baptism, we have to ask what

* It is significant that the two most characteristic features of childhood are proneness to sin and readiness to trust.

that supposition is which it is adduced to prove? If it is brought forward for the purpose of proving that, although Baptism is an operation of God to the end of communicating the grace proper to it, that grace may, nevertheless, be made void of blessed result through the unbelief of the recipient, or may be afterwards misused or forfeited—it is adduced only to prove what no one disputes. Loyalty to sacramental doctrine, let it be said for the hundredth time, does not make it incumbent upon us to maintain that the efficacy of the Sacrament, viewed from its human side, is independent of the faith of the recipient or of the use to which he afterwards puts the grace bestowed. Faith on the part of the candidate in approaching to the rite of Baptism, and his after response of obedience are alike indispensable. The fact, therefore, that Simon Magus, although he was baptized, was declared subsequently to be still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity,” only illustrates the truth that, as has been repeatedly affirmed above, the grace of the Sacrament is not bestowed in any magical way, or, in the case of adults, apart from the personal faith and obedience of the recipient; and to that extent the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism which has been asserted remains precisely where it was.

(c) Here, however, a further question arises, which is of great importance in order to a right interpretation of this history in its bearing on the question before us; and in the light of which it will be seen that, as we have said, it is a history which, instead of invalidating, *confirms* the Catholic doctrine of Baptism. Is the case presented to us in the history of Simon that of one who never received grace, or is it not rather that of one who miserably perverted, and so fell into the peril of finally forfeiting the grace received? Unquestionably the general tenor of the narrative seems to justify the latter of these two assumptions. In the first place, Simon is described as having “believed” before he was baptized, and there is not a syllable to suggest that his faith was merely hypocritical or formal. It would seem

that he continued for a considerable time in the fellowship of the Apostles before he began to fall away. It was at a later stage of his history,—when assailed with the temptation to seek spiritual powers for selfish ends,—that the unworthiness of his character was disclosed. The words used by St Peter in the admonition addressed to him would certainly suggest that the peril in which he lay was of an exceptional character—just *because* of the position which had been assigned to him through the operation of Divine grace in his Baptism, and of the ineffable glory of the further gift, in the laying on of the Apostle's hands, now brought within his reach. In the light of these considerations there is room to believe that the instance of Simon is not one, as commonly represented, in which Baptism was administered without any accompanying exhibition or application of grace, but, on the contrary, that it is an instance—and doubly appalling on this account—of the wilful *rejection* or *misuse* of grace. The after history of Simon is not disclosed to us. We are not, therefore, entitled to form any conclusion upon it. So far as the record goes, it would seem as if the presence of Divine grace in him had not been entirely quenched. There is evidence of this in the meekness with which he accepted the exhortation addressed to him, and in the humility and fervour with which he entreated the prayers of the Apostle. But however that may be, his case seems clearly to be presented in the sacred narrative—not as demonstrating the inefficacy of Baptism as implying an offer and actual exhibition of grace, but rather as demonstrating the possibility of *grace being received in vain*. It is not true to say that, in the instance of Simon, his Baptism made no difference, or that he was thereafter precisely as if he had never been baptized. On the contrary, it was the reality of what had been brought to him in Baptism (so far as the Divine intention and purpose are concerned) that constituted the measure alike of his responsibility and of the final judgment which he provoked. As it was in the

case of Simon, so it is invariably. The full efficacy of our Baptism depends undoubtedly upon our after obedience; but whether we be obedient or otherwise, the *fact* of our Baptism remains and supplies the standard by which we shall be judged. There are but two alternatives. Our Baptism is to us a pledge, either, on the one hand, of the Crown of Life which we shall inherit if we persevere, or, on the other hand, of that thrice fearful judgment which shall undoubtedly be the portion of all who trample under foot the privileges of the Divine Covenant, and forfeit, through unbelief or misuse, the "powers of the world to come."

(5) I pass now to the case of Cornelius (recorded in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Acts) referred to so often in the controversial literature on this subject as decisively at variance with the doctrine of Baptism. Here the ground taken by the objector is somewhat different. Baptism, it is alleged, cannot be the Sacrament of a specific grace proper to it, inasmuch as in this case that grace was bestowed antecedently to and independently of the rite. In this case also, however, a little consideration will show that the real bearing of the history is precisely the converse of that which is alleged. In the first place, the history of Cornelius is exceptional throughout. It embraces a succession of circumstances of an unusual, and, indeed, almost miraculous order, which were brought about under the special providential guidance of God for the purpose of inducing St Peter to decide on the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Christian covenant through faith and Baptism, and apart from any other way of entrance. Obviously, then, what God has been pleased to do in an exceptional way, and on a wholly exceptional occasion, has no relevant bearing on what He is pleased to reveal regarding the administration *ordinarily* of the laws of His Kingdom. The history of Cornelius, from this point of view, can only be legitimately adduced to prove, at most, that God is not, as it were, tied to the

instruments which He has Himself appointed for the communication of grace, but is free to go beyond, or to invert the order of, their application, when He so wills. This, it is unnecessary to say, is a position which the exponent of the due efficacy of Baptism is not called upon for a moment to gainsay. In addition to this, however, two things have here to be pointed out. (a) In the first place, it would appear plainly contrary to the facts to say that in the instance of Cornelius the grace proper to Baptism was administered antecedently to the rite itself. Where is the proof of this assumption? A distinction (as already pointed out) has to be carefully drawn between the grace of our ingrafting into Christ, "signified and sealed" in Holy Baptism, and the further and different gift of grace described in the Acts ministered ordinarily through the laying on of hands.* The distinction is one which it may be difficult to grasp—especially in the existing condition of the Church. The reality, however, of it is indisputable; and the historical evidence of it is abundant. It is a distinction which is, in the first instance, apparent in the history of our Lord Himself—both as regards His *pre*-resurrection and also His *post*-resurrection life. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. From His infancy "the grace of God" was upon Him; and in the power of that grace He presented unto God a perfect sacrifice in the blameless thirty years of silence. This notwithstanding, it is also recorded that on the occasion of His Baptism in Jordan, having come up out of the water,

* The attention now awakening in the Church of England and elsewhere to the subject of "Confirmation," and the discussions raised, even as to the intention and meaning of the rite, are full of interest, and in various ways instructive. However little such a question may be thought of by many, and in whatever aspect it remains to be handled, it most surely stands in the first rank of importance. While reserving expression of opinion on matters lying so far beyond our present limits, I may refer to the recent work of Dr Mason on "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism, as taught in Holy Scripture," and the less systematic addresses of Bishop Webb on "The Priesthood of the Laity in the Body of Christ," as of special interest in connection with the stage at present reached in the discussion.

“the Holy Ghost descended upon Him,” and in the power of that anointing He thenceforward entered on the public ministry which the Father gave Him to fulfil. Again, in like manner, through the operation of the Spirit, He was raised from the dead, and attained in our humanity to that immortal life in which He now for ever liveth unto God; and, this notwithstanding, it is recorded with equal clearness that it was after His being thus raised from the dead that He received on His Ascension into heaven “the promise of the Father;” the Holy Ghost, Who then became the Spirit of the Incarnate Christ, exercising the functions of His Heavenly Priesthood, and glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. It is impossible to read such records as are preserved to us in the eighth or the nineteenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles (not to name at present others equally clear) without perceiving how precisely analogous to these two-fold operations in the Spirit are those universally realized in the Apostolic age in the experience of believers, when they were, in the first instance, quickened personally in Holy Baptism with the resurrection life of Christ, and thereafter endued with His power from on high for the fulfilment of the functions proper to them, in the corporate unity of the Church, by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands. These records present to us in the clearest manner three stages in the spiritual history of the persons to whom they relate. They believed; they were then baptized, and so quickened with the life of Christ; and thereafter they received, each in his place, and in the measure appropriate to that place, the grace of the Holy anointing, carrying with it both *illumination and power*, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. In the history of Cornelius, then, what is presented to us is *not*, as is often supposed, the bestowal of the grace of Baptism antecedently to Baptism; but rather the bestowal of *the gift of the Spirit antecedently to Baptismal grace*, and the bestowal of that gift (not as ordinarily, and on all other occasions except at

Pentecost, through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, but) as at Pentecost *immediately from God*, and without any instrumentality at all. In short, the exceptional circumstances in the history, to put it accurately, are two-fold—first, the inversion of the order usually followed in the bestowal of the “manifestation of the Spirit” *prior* to the grace of Baptism, and second, in the communication of the gift or manifestation of the Spirit “*as at the first*,” or in other words—apart from the ordinance proper thereto. These, then, being the real facts of the case, it follows (*b*) that so far from the history of Cornelius being one which tends to discredit the importance and efficacy of Baptism, it has beyond all others recorded in the New Testament a precisely opposite bearing. The vision which had been given to St Peter as he prayed at Joppa on the housetop, and all the various circumstances which followed it, had apparently sufficed to convince him that he was warranted in at least preaching to Cornelius, although he was a Gentile, the Gospel of the Divine forgiveness, and in declaring to him that whosoever called upon the name of the Lord should be saved. These circumstances, however, did not suffice to lead him to the discernment of the farther fact, that it was implied in the Divine purpose that Cornelius and his household should be also admitted by the gate of Baptism into the Kingdom of grace. In order, therefore, to induce, and indeed almost compel St Peter to take this further, and, as it proved, most momentous step of administering to them Christian Baptism, there occurred that further interposition of God, whereby the Holy Ghost fell on these persons precisely as on the Apostles themselves “at the beginning.” This exceptional and, indeed, almost miraculous occurrence it was, which at last opened St Peter's eyes to what the will of the Lord was, and led him to resolve no longer, as he himself says, to “*withstand God*,” or to “*forbid*” water that those whom God had so chosen, and who had so received the gift of the Holy Ghost, should also be admitted into the grace of Baptism. Surely, then, these two facts—

first, that the reception of the gifts of the Spirit on the part of Cornelius and his household, in this miraculous manner, and apart altogether from any human instrumentality, was not regarded as a reason for dispensing with the necessity of their reception also of the distinctive grace of Baptism ; and second, that what was almost, so far as Cornelius and his household were concerned, a second Pentecost, was pre-ordained of God (as the record shows) for no other purpose than that of leading up to their Baptism, and making it clear that the Gentiles, as such, were thenceforward, through the gate of Baptism, to be received into the Christian Church,—instead of implying any disparagement whatever of the ordinance of Baptism, on the contrary, in the most wonderful way, illuminate the doctrine set forth as to the place which that Sacrament ordinarily occupies, according to the Divine constitution of the Church, in the economy of grace.

2. We pass now to difficulties of another character. It is alleged that whatever may be the apparent teaching of Scripture, the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism is more or less incredible. This difficulty is put in various forms. It is sometimes said, in the first place, that it is inconceivable to suppose that spiritual blessing is associated with the use of such trivial outward means ; or it is suggested again, that such a doctrine of Baptism, as has been presented, imposes a limitation upon the Divine freedom, and seems to make the action of God dependent upon the will or mere caprice of man ; or, it is said, that it is preposterous to imagine that any act fraught with such abiding and solemn issues should be wrought, as it were, in a moment of time, and in a manner so unimpressive to our senses. It may be best to take up these various forms of the objection in their order.

(1) As regards the first of them, that, namely, which asserts the incredibility of the conception of grace as associated invariably with visible means so trivial, it is to be pointed out that it is an objection which is not merely

directed against this Sacrament, or sacraments in general, but rather against the whole conception of grace as communicated to us through the mediatorship of the *humanity* of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to the distinctive New Testament revelation, Divine grace is first concentrated in the person of the Incarnate Son of God, and through His human nature, bestowed on such as are the proper recipients. The grace of God, according to the distinctive law of the Christian dispensation, is communicated to us through the humanity of the Lord, and not otherwise. The sacramental operations of the Church are therefore, as it were, anticipated in the fact of the Incarnation on which the Church is based. The disproportion of the visible means to the grace bestowed, which forms a stumbling-block to some in dealing with the Sacraments, finds its first and immeasurably more emphatic illustration in the Incarnation itself, through which humanity—our true human nature—becomes the sphere of the manifestation of the glory of Him “Whom no man hath seen nor can see.” The sacramental function (if we may so speak) of the human race as the organ of the Divine manifestation to the world, of the Church as the specific organ of the Divine manifestation to the race, and of the Sacraments as the specific instruments of the communication of grace to the Church, is anticipated in the Incarnation itself, and in the first message of the angels at Bethlehem, which pointed to “the babe lying in a manger,” as the sign of the mystery of the birth into our world of the “WORD MADE FLESH.” Further, the law of sacramental grace is prophetically anticipated in all the actions of the life of Jesus Christ while upon the earth. There is scarcely an instance to be found in which faith alone put any one who drew near to Him in possession of the blessing he sought. In faith they approached Him, they prayed, they asked, they waited, they received; but the blessing itself was invariably imparted in the form of virtue which went out from His Sacred Person, and which

was "signified and sealed" to the recipient by the breath of His mouth, or the word of His lip, or the touch of His hand. Facts such as these are surely to be regarded as prophetic of the sacramental operations whereby, in virtue of His Presence now with the Church, which is His Body, His touch "has still its ancient power." Faith was the one condition of the reception of the blessing of the grace, viewed from man's side; but, on the side of God, the blessing was bestowed in virtue of a definite, conscious, and supreme act of the Lord Incarnate, and invariably in the use of external means—usually of the most insignificant character—which appealed to the senses of the recipient. Lastly, it is impossible to read the second chapter, or the eighth, or the nineteenth of the Acts of the Apostles, or, indeed, any part of that history in its connection with the Epistles, without seeing that, as matter of fact, the Church, as constituted at the first, recognized the sacramental operations of God as among the laws of the Kingdom, through obedience to which she could alone look either for the quickening or the nourishment of her spiritual life. The Church of the Apostles joyfully acquiesced in the conception of grace as being invariably,—because of the very fact that it proceeds from Christ, the Son of God Incarnate,—either by word, ministry, or ordinance, sacramentally conveyed. All this being so, we must either accept the constitution of the Church *as sacramental*, or else assume that it was intended of God that, after the time of the Apostles, a total revolution should occur in the manner of the dispensation of grace. They, therefore, who stumble at the doctrine of grace as sacramentally imparted are, in point of fact, to that extent rejecting the Christian Gospel. They are rejecting what is distinctive of the Christian dispensation as a communication of the gifts of redemption from God to man by the Man Christ Jesus. They occupy the position of persons, not so much rejecting the doctrine of the Sacraments, as rejecting in part the specific grace which is administered in them. In other words, however unconsciously to themselves,

they are in danger of dealing with the Gospel almost as if it were merely a clearer revelation of a purely pre-Christian mode of Divine communion,—resting on a basis of nature, and leaving each man free, in any way he himself prefers, to approach unto God,—rather than as being, what it undoubtedly is, the revelation of a new way of access of God to man and man to God, opened up through the amazing manifestation of Divine grace, in which the Son of God has actually taken to Himself indissolubly our nature, that we, through union with Him, in the mystery of our second birth, might as actually become partakers of the Divine nature.

(2) As regards the suggestion that the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism seems to limit the freedom of the Divine will and to subordinate it to the caprice of man, two things may be said. The suggestion is one which is somewhat inconsistently advanced by persons who, as a rule, are more than any others in the habit of speaking, as if Divine grace, when manifested in conversion, were almost entirely dependent on the merely human instrumentality of their favourite preacher or evangelist. They appear to disparage, or to exalt, human instrumentality precisely as it suits them, and without any principle of guidance. It is, however, more important to point out that the argument (if it may be so called) is one which—pressed to its full extent—involves an assumption which is grossly irreverent, namely, that it is beyond the power of the fore-ordering Providence of God to secure always, and in ways incapable of being frustrated by human caprice, the accomplishment of His purposes. They whom it pleases God to call out from among the number of the redeemed in order to their receiving, through Christian Baptism, the vocation which it is His will to assign to them, will, we may be assured, in due season be so called through prevenient operations of His Almighty Providence. I make this remark in reference to observations by which it has sometimes been attempted even to cast ridicule upon the conception of Baptismal grace.

(3) And lastly, as to the suggestion that it is preposterous to suppose that an act fraught with such far-reaching issues should be accomplished in a manner so unimpressive, and at a definite moment of time, the following remarks may be made. It is not improbable, for one thing, that they who adopt this particular line of argument are imputing to Baptism more than belongs to it. Baptism determines nothing as to the final position of the recipient, except in so far as it assures him thenceforward of grace which has been given to him of God, for the right use of which he is accountable. We must be on our guard against any way of speaking which could possibly be misconstrued to imply that in any other sense the after history, or destiny, of the recipient is determined by the one Divine act, occupying a few minutes of time, of his Baptism. Further, this form of objection is also one which is generally most inconsistently used. The persons who most often object to the acceptance of Baptism as an act of God, marking once for all in their spiritual history a date of enduring and unspeakable importance, and who refuse to associate the thought of it in any definite way with the position assigned to them as the regenerate members of the Mystical Body of Christ, are precisely the persons who are most in the habit of transferring to their own "experiences"—always variable and sometimes delusory—the security of confidence which belongs only to the sacramental and covenant acts of God; and of dating what they infer as to their spiritual standing, not from any objective act of God, but from the moment in which, as they express it, they "felt" this or that, or "knew" that they found Christ, or at this meeting or that "got peace." Finally, to refuse to recognize in Baptism a divinely authenticated stage of our spiritual history, to be ever afterwards recalled with a sense of encouragement and hopefulness, is, in point of fact, to ignore a supreme aspect of God's goodness. We can never be too thankful that in the right apprehension of the doctrine of Baptismal grace, we are driven away from the thought of a merely emotional

union with God—such as is indeed liable to be clouded over, or become matter of doubt to us, just at the moment when assurance is most needed,—and led to rest on an unalterable objective act of God. The well-known words of Hooker, in his “*Ecclesiastical Polity*,” contain the declaration of a fact which, instead of being cavilled at, should stir in us the most fervent gratitude :—“*Christ and His Holy Spirit, with all Their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man, we are not able to apprehend or express how, do, notwithstanding, give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible.*”* The dates, in other words, in the Kalendar of our spiritual history, in the accuracy of which we may most trust, are precisely those which mark not what *we have realised*, but what *God has sealed*.†

3. A third difficulty which we must notice is presented sometimes in a double-edged form. It is said, on the one hand, that the fruits of disposition and character which are supposed to be the peculiar products of the grace of Baptism, or that, at least, fruits similar in character are to

* Hooker's “*Ecclesiastical Polity*,” Book V. 57.

† “*But when such moods are upon men (and they are not among the least formidable of the temptations of the Evil one), when a mist arises from their internal perturbation, and intercepts the remembrance, or, at all events, the practical sense, of those unnumbered marks of care and love wherewith God attends the Christian along his daily path—is it then no small comfort to be enabled to fall back on these facts, palpable as facts, and not less pregnant than palpable, for they surely speak, in terms not to be mistaken, of the favour of God towards our souls? Thus they are in this sense like the lighthouse to the seamen, visible when all other objects are eclipsed, though little heeded in the abundant splendour of the day.*” Again : “*In them*” [the Sacraments] “*our merciful Father takes, as it were, upon Himself the adjustment of the whole instrumentality, which in other cases seems rather to be located within ourselves : to use an illustration from the parable, the approach and the advance, as well as the embrace, seem wholly His (Luke xv. 20) ; and if in the whole of our religion we are more specifically recipients than agents, it is here that this momentous truth receives its most accurate and vivid illustration.*”—W. E. Gladstone's *Church Principles*, pp. 176, 177.

be seen among persons who have never been baptized at all, and even among persons who (like the "Society of Friends," or similar religious societies) have deliberately rejected the Sacraments; and it is pointed out, on the other hand, that among persons who have been baptized, these fruits, in a degree equally marked, are often absent. In other words, it is sought to discredit the doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacrament, both on the ground of the grace which it is alleged is often manifested where the Sacrament has not been administered, and on the ground of the frequent absence of grace where it has.

(1) Dealing first with the former of these two assertions, we find much that requires consideration. In the first place, (*a*) it must be remembered that the grace of the Incarnation is not restricted in its operation to the *Church* (in the strict sense of that term, as describing the company of the baptized). The operation of grace is confined to the Church so far as regards the specific ends for which the Church is constituted, and the special vocation which is laid on its members; and it is certainly matter of faith that, apart from the specific grace ministered within the Church, these ends have never been attained, and are (so far as revealed to us) incapable of attainment. It is, however, equally certain that the grace of the Incarnation has a range of effect going beyond the Church, and, indeed, it may be believed, co-extensive (in certain important aspects) with the whole race. The power of the Incarnation, as a permanent fact, has entered into universal history, and it is impossible for us to set limits to the effects that may arise from it. In the grace issuing from the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, *all* men, in a true degree, have part. It is in virtue of this, and because of the infinite virtue of the Passion of the Son of God, that the Gospel of Redemption is preached to all. It is because of this that the Church is sent to and abides among all nations as the light of the world. In virtue of this community of interest which all men have in Christ Jesus

it is, that the hope of the resurrection is extended to all. This is the argument of the Apostle where he says that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Christ, in a sense, of which the full extent is only gradually being realized, is, as He hath ever been, and will ever more manifestly be, "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is, therefore, in no degree inconsistent with the doctrine which associates with the Holy Sacraments distinctive aspects and results of grace, realized only in the corporate Body of the Church, that even beyond the Church there should also be found such moral results as are clearly attributable, directly or indirectly, only to the originating power of the Incarnation. Again (*b*), it is obvious that as regards believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have never yet passed under God's sacramental act in Baptism, we may admit to the full the moral, or even spiritual, beauty of their character and of their lives, without thereby being compelled to qualify in the least our faith as to the specific character of the grace proper to the Sacraments of God. What is morally beautiful in the lives of such persons is clearly due to the communion with Christ which they enjoy through prayer and the use of other means of devotion, and through the blessing of the Spirit. It is impossible, indeed, for the soul of man to seek, in any form, fellowship with the Saviour, without such resultant blessing. Obviously, however, this does not prove that a blessing of another and yet fuller character would not have been found in the cases supposed if the sacramental channels of God's appointment had not been mistakenly set aside. These preliminary considerations bring us, however, to the points which it is chiefly important to press in answer to this argument, derived from the manifestation of grace similar, it is alleged, to that proper to Baptism, among unbaptized persons. (*c*) It is not for us to say whether the result is, as matter of fact, the same in the one case as in the other. That is a matter on which it is wholly premature and presumptuous

for us to judge, and of which, in truth, He alone can be Judge who requires us to "judge nothing before the time." We may, however, venture to say this much (*d*) that there are elements entering even into the personal character of the rightly-instructed member of the Church of Christ, who uses, in humble and reverent faith, the Divinely-ordered ordinances, which, even on such a superficial examination of the facts as is for the present possible to us, seem not to be found in like degree, or at all, where these ordinances are repudiated. In addition to this, it is to be remembered also (*e*) that the characteristic grace of Baptism imparts a vocation inseparable from our place in the corporate unity of the Church, and having reference to yet unrevealed purposes of God in the future, and that, therefore, the question as to the efficacy of Baptism is not one to be wholly determined (so far as it may be so determined experimentally) by comparisons of the merely personal character. Again (*f*), if the baptized are not conspicuous beyond others for the grace exhibited, it proves not the unfaithfulness of God, but, on the contrary, only how indisputable and how aggravated are their special temptations and common apostasy. And lastly (*g*), in its bearing on the question here under discussion it is surely a conclusive circumstance—the importance of which, in relation to the form of objection with which we are dealing, can scarcely be exaggerated—that no religious movement has ever become an *enduring* influence for good, or *even succeeded in maintaining the aspiration with which it was at first inaugurated*, which has not been rooted and grounded in sacramental truth. This remark, it may be observed, is amply justified even by the history of "Quakerism" (to which reference in this connection is so often made), beautiful as we may admit many of its examples of piety to have been; and it will, no doubt, in due time be even more conclusively illustrated in the ultimate history of some of the popular religious movements of the day. The fact is one that may well be commended to the consideration of those, who, in their religious actions, are

perpetually multiplying their own inventions, and yet casting aside the Divine ordinances.

2) In regard to the other form of the objection with which we are dealing, that, namely, which seeks to discredit the efficacy of the Sacrament on the ground of the apparent lack of result where it has been administered, several considerations of somewhat similar character have to be weighed. (a) We must be on our guard against unduly exaggerating this alleged lack of result. The shortcoming of the Church at large is, no doubt, indisputable and appalling; but notwithstanding all its shortcoming, Christendom in other words the body of the baptized) still shines as "a light in the world"—and with full-orbed lustre, compared with the darkness of surrounding nations. As regards the individual life, as distinguished from that of the corporate body of the Church, *the distinctive type of sanctity* which has been created by the grace of the Incarnation has had its examples innumerable in every age, and continues to furnish these abundantly from generation to generation. An impartial survey of the history of the Church would certainly seem to justify the conclusion that the most illustrious of these examples have been associated with the believing use of the Sacraments of God. They in whom the characteristic fruit of sonship toward God has attained its greatest maturity of beauty and power, are they who have most consciously realized the glory of their vocation as derived from the Sacrament of adoption, and have sought growth in grace through the perpetual communion of the body and blood of Christ. This scarcely admits of dispute.* (b) Further-

* "They who believe and realize the height of the gift of God in Baptism must, in the belief of the great things which God has done for them and His whole Church, have a source of solemn responsibility and deep awe, and humble amazement at God's graciousness, peculiar to themselves." The doctrine of the grace of Baptism is connected with the Incarnation of our blessed Lord, "gives a depth to our Christian existence, an actualness to our union with Christ, a reality to our sonship to God, an interest in the presence of our Lord's glorified Body at God's right hand, a joyousness amid the subduing of the flesh, an overwhelmingness to the dignity conferred on

more, the imperfections of individual Christians must not be allowed to hide from us the presence in them all the while of the grace of God. There is that in every Christian's personal experience which helps him to understand how grace, consciously derived *sacramentally* from God, can yet co-exist in his spiritual history with much that is alien to the life of grace, that tends to deaden it, to corrupt it, to thwart it, and to destroy it. The treasure is *there*; and we know that it is there; though, alas! it is equally matter of consciousness to us that it is still but in an earthen vessel. (c) This leads me to say, next, that even were these assertions denied, as no doubt they will be by many, it is yet wholly premature for us to pronounce on the issues of grace or to found any inference as to the inefficaciousness of the Sacraments of God because of a lack of merely immediate or present results. We must "judge nothing *before* the time." We are not in a position to estimate the extent to which the final repentance or the ultimate salvation of the souls that have been once baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," may be due to the abiding presence with them of that Spirit Who,—on the very ground that they have been claimed and set apart to be His temple,—we may believe, never wholly abandons their inmost spirit while the faintest possibility of hope remains. (d) Lastly, we would ask those who object to the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism on the ground of an apparent absence of result, to what this absence is due. Is it not due to the almost utter neglect in many parts of the Church of God of that culture of the grace of Baptism which is essential to its growth? Is it any matter of surprise to anyone, who sees how universal is the neglect alike by parents, by sponsors, and by pastors, of the duties imposed upon them, that multi-human nature, a solemnity to the communion of saints, who are the fulness of Him, Who filleth all in all, a substantiality to the indwelling of Christ. that to those who retain this truth, the school which abandoned it must needs appear to have sold its birthright."—Pusey's "Doctrine of Holy Baptism," pages 12, 13.

tudes of the baptized should grow up without the faintest apprehension of the meaning or end of the holy rite through which they have passed? Is it reasonable to charge God with unfaithfulness when the explanation of failure lies so obviously with ourselves? If baptism seems often fruitless, does not the explanation lie simply in the fact that the grace conveyed in it has never been believed? It is not, then, the consummation of presumption that they who themselves disbelieve in the efficacy of Baptism, and who address themselves persistently to the task of inducing others to disbelieve in it,—as if the Holy Sacrament were a mere piece of human ceremonial, and faith in its grace a form of superstition,—should then proceed to construct arguments for their own ends out of the consequences of their unbelief? He who ponders these things will find cause to wonder, not at the fruitlessness, but rather at the fruitfulness—in spite of all the perversity of man—of the sacramental operations of God.

4. A fourth objection is sometimes put thus:—It is said that the doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacrament is of a perilous character inasmuch as it necessarily leads either to the disparagement of the necessity of conversion, or to the depreciation of the place of justifying faith. Now it is at once to be conceded that a lesson of importance is suggested by the form in which such an objection is put. It is undoubtedly possible to preach sacramental truth, or at least certain aspects of sacramental truth, in an exaggerated and formal manner, which cannot but be fraught with danger both to the preacher and the hearer. Nothing can be more certain than that to emphasize the efficacy of the Sacrament on its Divine side, without at the same time equally emphasizing the necessity of the response of the will in personal consecration to God and in the endeavour to perfect holiness in His fear, is both to be ourselves ensnared, and to ensnare others, in fatal delusion. To preach the Sacraments apart from the life of conversion is as perilous as—indeed, in certain aspects, more perilous

than—to preach the life of conversion apart from the grace of Baptism. While making this concession, we must, however, point out that in the one case, as in the other, it is only a half-truth that is being preached. The doctrine of conversion is not preached either on a right basis or in a right aspect, except in relation to the responsibilities which devolve on us through our Baptismal ingrafting into Christ; and, in like manner, the doctrine of the availing efficacy of the Sacrament of Adoption, whereby we were, even in our infancy, made the sons of God through Christ, can never be rightly preached without involving, at the same time, the most fervent and ceaseless testimony to the need of personal conversion.

Our answer, therefore, to the objection stated above is three-fold. In the first place, as a matter of fact, it is not found that a true faith in the efficacy of God's act in Baptism is ever attended by a false security. Very rarely indeed (if ever) is the man to be found who argues—albeit it is alleged that such is the risk likely to arise from the doctrine of the efficacy of Baptism—that because he was baptized he need not trouble himself further, and may rest as one assured of the Kingdom of Heaven. On the other hand, they are to be found in multitudes, who—misled by false teaching on the subject of conversion, and uninstructed as to the true meaning of their Baptism—are content to remain in unconcern from year to year, comforting themselves with the delusive belief that no special responsibility or vocation is as yet resting upon them, and vaguely waiting, as they profess, for some decisive awakening (they know not of what character) or call of God. Secondly, nothing can be more certain than the fact that they only are in a position to preach fully the doctrine of conversion who, at the same time, hold firmly—and in its relation to all other truths—the reality of Baptismal grace. Repentance toward God, if it be rightly preached, must embrace the confession of our sin in falling away from the grace, and in breaking the

solemn vows, of our Baptism. The doctrine of Baptism implies also a testimony to our responsibility for actual *holiness*, inseparable from the faith of our union with God through Christ resulting from a sovereign act of God Himself, and not dependent on our own faith, feelings, or moods. When the true doctrine of our call to holiness, and of the grounds on which it rests, sinks into the background, a spurious doctrine of holiness—as there is some reason to fear is the case in our own time—is certain to be invented to supply its place, and may, indeed, for a time do so successfully. In the end, however, according to the invariable experience of the Church of God, every theory of holiness must prove worse than unsubstantial which is not rooted in the faith of God's sacramental acts. The histories of many of the so-called "revival" movements of our time teem with illustrations of the lack of depth and balance; of the want of inwardness, awe, and humility; of the incapacity of progress; and of the instability and proneness to delusion characteristic, uniformly, of all movements not resting on the basis of sacramental grace. Time proves all things; and that law of the Kingdom never fails to reassert itself at the last, which our Lord—immediately after speaking of the birth of water and the Spirit—affirmed:—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." As regards the idea (lastly) that the affirmation of the grace of the efficacy of the Sacrament leads to the disparagement of justifying faith, it is surely unnecessary, after the many allusions to this which have been made in the preceding sections of this paper, to do more than point out that it is that Apostle who, beyond all others, is supposed to have laid most stress on the power of faith, to whom we also owe the fullest and most persistent teaching in the New Testament on the subject of the grace of Baptism. St Paul is as strong on the one subject as on the other, and so must every teacher be who holds by the Apostolic doctrine.* It is surely preposterous to aver that

* "If ever man held justification by faith, it was Martin Luther; and if there be any book in which he embodied what he held, it is his Commentary

we cannot proclaim God's grace in giving, without disparaging man's need of receiving, and cannot magnify grace without dishonouring faith. The indissoluble harmony in which these two elements of our salvation are knit together in the eternal Gospel, is expressed in the words which tell us that "*by* grace are ye saved *through* faith," and that even faith itself is yet not of ourselves, but "*is the gift of God.*" *

5. It is unnecessary to do more than add a sentence as regards the last of these five-fold difficulties with which we are dealing. To those who affirm that the doctrine of the efficacy of Holy Baptism is fraught only with unhappiness, because of the consequences which, as they allege, it involves in regard to the position of all who die unbaptized, suffice it to say that their assumptions are unwarrantable. The faith that the remission of sins is assured, and that grace, in a specific form, is effectually bestowed in Holy Baptism on such as it pleases God to call into the Church, is not inconsistent with even the widest hope as regards the innumerable multitude whom it has not pleased God so to call. The Church is an election of God—from among all whom He has redeemed—having reference to a specific and eternal end which it is specially created to fulfil; and Holy Baptism, as has been repeatedly urged, marks for each individual soul whom it pleases God to incorporate into the Church, the emergence of the Divine purpose. It does not, however, follow that all on whom it has not pleased God to lay the vocation proper to those constituting this election are necessarily lost. It does not follow, we may, perhaps, venture to add, that, even where the vocation of Baptism on the Galatians; and yet in Gal. iii. 27, he thus expresses himself:—"Therefore the righteousness of the law, or of our own works, is not given, but Christ becomes our garment. This place is to be carefully noted, as it stands opposed to the fanatics who extenuate the majesty of Baptism, and speak of it wickedly and impiously. Paul, on the contrary, adorns Baptism with magnificent titles, calling it "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," and here says that all the baptized "have put on Christ.""—Sadler's "The Second Adam and New Birth," p. 213.

* Eph. ii. 8.

has been imposed by God, the forfeiture of it—immeasurable as that loss may be—must involve, in the ordinary sense of the word, personal and final damnation. One of the greatest teachers of religious truths of our time somewhere uses these suggestive words:—“*Vocations* are lost daily; but not therefore in equal proportion *souls*.” However that may be, it is at least presumptuous for us to bind ourselves to conclusions relating to the eternal destiny of such as have never heard the Gospel, nor been incorporated into the Church of God. The Holy Scriptures are written to guide us in matters that pertain to the present stage of the Divine dealing—which is that of gathering and perfecting the Church. When that stage is past we shall doubtless know more. Meanwhile, however, we must not allow our apprehensions of what appears to be clearly revealed regarding God’s method in bestowing grace upon His people, to be hindered through speculations as to how He may deal with souls whom these methods do not embrace. In the special case of infants, being of “the seed of the faithful,” who through no fault of their own, die unbaptized, the Church is explicit in her testimony. That which God would have imparted by Holy Baptism (had it been administered) we must trust Him, of His mercy, to impart otherwise. One final observation must, however, be added as to the strange inconsistency of those who—while ready to affirm their belief, or what they call their belief (often, it is to be feared, a mere matter of benevolent impulse, arrived at without any deliberate reflection as to its grounds), that every child taken in infancy is, even though not baptized, blessed in the reception of saving grace, and gathered for ever into the bosom of the Good Shepherd—are, at the same time, equally or even more ready to denounce as superstition the belief that at least every infant is invariably so blessed who, *for that very end, is presented*, in obedience to the Divine commandment, at the sacred font, and who, as one whom the Good Shepherd claims as a lamb of His flock, is there

visibly baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Inconsistency, we may surely say, cannot further go.

**SECTION VI.—PRESENT NEGLECT OF THE DOCTRINE,
AND SUGGESTIONS.**

I devote the concluding section to the consideration of some suggestions as to the steps which should be taken for the purpose of reviving in Scotland the spiritual power of the doctrine of Baptism.

1. It will be apparent to all who have followed with even the least degree of sympathy what we have endeavoured to set forth, that faith in Baptism as an efficacious means of specific grace is well-nigh extinct among us. I have had occasion to refer, in terms which some may perhaps consider to be of undue severity, to the writings of the late Principal William Cunningham on the subject of the Sacraments. There is, however, one sentence in his writings with which I heartily concur. That sentence is the following:—"We believe that there is scarcely any subject set forth in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches that is less attended to and less understood than this of the Sacraments; and that many even of these who have subscribed these Confessions rest satisfied with some defective and confused notions on the subject of Baptism, and on the subject of the Lord's Supper, while they have scarcely even a fragment of an idea of a sacramental principle, or of any general doctrine or theory on the subject of Sacraments."* This indictment is not the less emphatically true, although offered by one who furnishes, in his own contributions to the discussion of sacra-

* Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, p. 238.

mental doctrine, so conspicuous an illustration of its truth. The doctrine of Baptism is seldom preached in the pulpits of Scotland. The teaching in regard to it, there is reason to fear, is as indefinite as it is infrequent; or, where it is definite, is so, indeed, only in the direction of destroying what little faith still survives among the people. The peculiar responsibility constituted by Baptism is apparently not apprehended by our ministers, and is consequently seldom enforced. The rite itself is too often perfunctorily administered. The security which the Church, by repeated enactments, has taken for the more reverent and public administration of the Holy Sacrament is set at nought; and, so far as may be inferred from the procedure of recent Assemblies, there seems to be little likelihood of speedy amendment.* Little care is bestowed, and, in many cases, none, in instructing parents, when presenting their children for Baptism, as to the meaning of what they do. It is to be feared that the most urgent question sometimes addressed to the applicant for Baptism is merely as to whether or not he is prepared, at an early date, to become a seat-holder or a communicant. Who, indeed, can doubt that, in these days of "seat rents" and "statistics," the ambition to swell the numbers of the Communion Roll is a fruitful cause of unfaithful ministry and of lax discipline? The pastoral care of the young—so far as based on the recognition of the reality of Baptism, and finding embodiment in a rightly-ordered system for the instruction of catechumens from the period of their Baptism till they are presented as communicants—is almost at an end. What is substituted for it, at best, is a delegation of one of the highest functions of the Pastorate—the feeding "the lambs of the flock"—to Sunday Schools conducted often in practical independence of strictly *pastoral* oversight. Except in so far as

* According to the "Report on Public Worship and Sacraments," submitted to the General Assembly in 1891, out of 758 ministers reporting, 100 stated that they administered Baptism "generally in Church," while 658 admitted that they administered the Sacrament almost always in private.

thus provided for, the children of the Church are allowed to pick up such instruction as they can get in week-day secular schools, with which their Pastors, as such, have nothing to do. The children of the middle class are, in this respect, even in a worse position than those attending primary schools. The ignorance even of elementary religious knowledge in which, for the most part, they are allowed to grow up, is immeasurable. This, it may be said in passing, is one of the most obvious of the many accursed fruits produced by the sectarian application of the so-called principle of "religious equality," of which the triumph—now sought by professedly evangelical Dissenters—would be a complete effacement in Scotland of a national recognition of the Christian faith. Large numbers of the young are looked after by institutions* which almost glory in the fact that they never make any inquiry as to whether their pupils have ever been baptized at all. The truth, in short, that in Holy Baptism the children of the Church have passed under an operation of God, which has placed them in a position requiring continuous pastoral care, and have received gifts of the Divine grace needing to be sedulously watched over, guarded, and nurtured until the period of first Communion—has almost ceased to be a vitalizing force in our Church system.

The fruits of this state of matters are on all sides apparent. The scope and height of the demand for personal holiness made upon all such as have been baptismally ingrafted into Christ, and made partakers of "the power of His resurrection" † is unrealized. Sainthood—which, in the true sense of the word, expresses the fact of our responsibility for living in conformity with a law of life imposed on us by Baptismal consecration to God—is regarded as something *more* than is requisite in, or can ever be expected of, the majority. It is treated as a *distinction* (analogous almost to that of genius) which may be appropriately looked for in some, but not as a description

* Foundry Boys Society, etc.

† Ephesians i. 15-23.

of a state of grace arising out of the Divine covenant which may justly be predicated of all. So much has the sense of the word "Saint," as used in the writings of the New Testament, decayed and almost vanished from the minds of Christians, that were a letter from an Apostle to be received to-day in any parish in Scotland, addressed to the "Saints" of God—precisely as of old to the "Saints" in Colosse or in Ephesus—it would, undoubtedly, in the ignorant humility which often only masks a false pride, be left unclaimed of all,—unless, indeed, by the "Plymouthists," or some such body of "believers." The consciousness, again, of Priestly vocation, belonging to all Christians as distinguished from others, scarcely exists. Laymen, indeed, proclaim aloud that "all men are priests" on occasions when it suits their purpose to decry the distinctive place of such as have been admitted by Holy Ordination into offices of Christian ministry; but, so far as regards any burden of position and distinctive responsibility of a priestly character resting upon themselves,—as men distinguished by their Baptismal standing from all others, and as sworn to a life of devotion and sacrifice,—the phrase has no meaning on their lips. They do not even see the distinction between affirming that all *Christians* are part-takers of a holy priesthood (which is true) and affirming that all men are priests (which is false). They go to Church as "hearers," or "to get good," or sometimes, alas! as critics, but with no idea of any priestly burden laid on them not less really, according to their several places, than on the ordained ministers of Christ, to fulfil in unity with the Lord, and for the advancement of Divine purposes, a Divinely-ordered worship. The sense of our incorporation by Baptism into *one* Body, in which, with all the baptized, we have fellowship in the heritage of all the past, has also almost perished. Our people act as if they had been merely baptized into their several sects, and sometimes even glory in belonging to Churches which, by their own representation, were created but as yesterday. The idea of

union merely by federation sought through covenants of our own making, by "negotiations," or by treaties of compromise, has taken the place of faith in that unity of God's making which already exists,—the unity of the one body through the one Baptism,—which, in its fundamental reality, cannot be broken, and which, of all other conditions of blessing, it is our duty first to realize.* Revival movements, it may be further said, or so-called "revival" movements,—which begin by denying the pre-existence of the life which they seek to revive;—which ignore Baptism as completely as if it were an operation with which God had nothing whatever to do;—which count it a *sine qua non* of orthodoxy, or a mark of exceptional loyalty to Evangelical truth, so to ignore it;—which, for the most part, present as the Gospel—not *Christ Himself* as the depository and fountain of life of a preternatural order, but, instead of Christ, mainly only a past fact in the history of Christ, to wit, that He died for us, as supplying a reason why we may therefore consider ourselves exempt from the punishment which is our due;—which lead men to speak of the day in which they were "converted," or "found Christ," as if it

* It may not be irrelevant here to refer to a protracted correspondence which appeared in the *Guardian* (English) of 1893, involving (in the opinion of the principal writer) the question, among others, as to the validity of the Baptism of such as have received the rite in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The correspondence was initiated by Bishop Chinnery Haldane of the Scottish Episcopal Church in Argyleshire. According to the canons (1890) of the Scottish Episcopal Church, it would seem that no warrant for conditional Paptism is given in cases where the clergyman is satisfied as to the essential "form and matter" having been used. Bishop Chinnery Haldane, however, endeavoured to reconcile with this provision an opinion entertained by him, to the effect that Baptism, as administered in the Presbyterian "sect," should be treated as invalid in the case of applicants for confirmation and admission to the Holy Communion. One special difficulty which he advanced, among others, was as to the efficacy of water when "sprinkled from a pulpit." There is some reason to believe that Bishop Chinnery Haldane's method of preparing the way of the Lord among the Scottish people does not wholly commend itself to his brethren. Were it otherwise, the prospect would indeed be disheartening to such as hope that the Scottish Episcopal Church may contribute much in the future to the furtherance of true Catholicity in Scotland.

marked the beginning of their salvation, instead of marking merely the realisation thereof;—which seem, in short, to imply that God cannot be said to have sought us and found us until we have ourselves become aware of it, confusing thus the act of adoption with the life of conversion;—which provide no security whatever either for the due enlightenment, or support, or nurture of the convert through the ministry of the Word, and through the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, apart from the use of which, it need scarcely be said, true progress is impossible;—and which too frequently, as might be anticipated, end in disappointment and reaction and despair:—revival movements, of which these are often the abundant characteristics, are but poor substitutes for the sober and godly Church system which they supplant, and only augment, in some aspects, the evils they are invented to cure. In these, as in so many other ways, we may of a truth be said, not merely to have forsaken the fountain of living water, but also to hew us out “cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

The decay of *family* religion in our land is quite as marked as that of Church life. What little faith still remains among parents as to the need of obtaining Baptism for their children is too often treated as if it savoured of superstition. In such circumstances, parents not unnaturally infer that the continuance of the practice of Baptism is inconsistent with the principles they are taught. A rite which means nothing is necessarily but a form; and Ritualism, they are constantly taught, is a thing in all shapes to be abhorred. The doctrine that the ordinances and Sacraments of God cannot secure for them any blessing which they may not equally obtain otherwise, independently of the Church, through the exercise of their own private faith,—or in any manner that suits their private fancy,—is seen to be bearing fruit among the masses in their general neglect of the Sanctuary. In no sphere is that fruit more apparent than in this of family life. In Scot-

land, the household altar is nowadays almost wholly thrown down or forsaken. Daily worship has long ceased in the Church, and it is now ceasing in the family. *The fact of the Baptism of their children* is no longer that most vividly present to the faith of parents, as a Divine ground of encouragement in seeking to train up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In prayers provided for households by Matthew Henry, whose well-known Commentary on the Bible has so long been among books oftenest found in the poorer homes of Scotland, these petitions occur:—"Lord, it is Thy good providence that hath built us up into a family: We thank Thee for the children Thou hast graciously given Thy servants; the Lord that hath blessed us with them, make them blessings to us, that we may never be tempted to wish we had been written childless. We lament the iniquity which our children are conceived and born in; and their corrupt nature. But we bless Thee there is a fountain opened for their cleansing from that original pollution, and that they were betimes by Baptism dedicated to Thee, and admitted into the bonds, and under the blessings of Thy Covenant; that they are born in Thy House, and taken in as members of Thy family upon earth. It is a comfort to us to think that they are baptized, and we desire humbly to plead it with Thee: they are Thine, save them, enable them, as they become capable, to make it their own act and deed to join themselves unto the Lord, that they may be owned as Thine in that day when Thou makest up Thy jewels."* It is to be feared that prayers (whatever may be their defects of structure) breathing such a recognition of the deep reality of Baptismal privilege nowadays but seldom ascend from the household altars of Scotland.

As regards the young themselves, it is no exaggeration to say that the link between Baptism and the Holy Communion is all but severed. Out of the numbers of the baptized who are to be found in our schools and classes,

* Henry on Prayer, p. 263.

comparatively few appear afterwards at the Holy Table. The idea that they become "members" of the Church for the first time only when they become communicants is universally accepted. They, therefore, naturally act as under no particular responsibility until, of their own accord, they decide, as they express it, to "come forward" and make such a profession as may, for the future, bind them to the service of God. Ask a non-communicant whether he is "a member of the Church," and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he will reply (to the utter oversight of his Baptism, or of what it meant,) that he is, as the case may be, "a hearer," or "an adherent," but "not yet a member." The significance of such symptoms as to the spiritual condition of our people can scarcely be exaggerated. They seem to point for their cause to organic confusion, or, at least, to fundamental defect. It is a condition which is suggestive, not so much of an imperfect realisation, but rather of the suppression or rejection of essential aspects of truth. They go so far as to indicate, not merely a lack of zeal in the ministry of the Gospel, or of consistent obedience to it, but even the substitution of "another Gospel,"—a "Gospel" so-called, which leaves men to suppose that they can, each for himself, and in the exercise of his own "views," attain to such spiritual regeneration as is possible, apart from the mediation of the Lord Incarnate, and the sacramental communication of grace by the ordinances or modes of His operation, which He has Himself ordained. There are those who suggest that this condition is the necessary outcome of errors inherent in Presbyterianism. We do not admit the inference—for this reason, among others, that a defection on the part of the baptized from the standing which has been given to them, and from the conscious realisation of the vows which have been laid upon them, is not confined to Presbyterian as distinguished from Episcopal Churches, or, indeed, to any one part of the Church. We are compelled, however, in candour to admit that although such defection is obvious, in varying degrees, throughout Christendom at

large, the extent of it apparent in Scotland can be more readily accounted for by the teaching which is now prevalent. If, indeed, it should be proved that Presbyterianism, in its development, must always end in what is virtually Socinianism or Naturalism, or, at least, that it tends inevitably, and, as it were, through a self-inherent bias, to fall over from the security of basis provided in the due recognition of the sacramental acts of God, the ominous significance of such a conclusion would be indisputable.

2. The results that would arise from the recovery of the doctrine of Baptism obviously must correspond to the evils to which I have been describing. It is, therefore, unnecessary to dwell on this part of the subject. The far-reaching fruitfulness of Baptismal doctrine is in exact proportion to the depth to which its roots stretch down into the Christian Gospel. One result would be seen in the deepening of the life of *personal conversion*. The awakened sense of responsibility toward God in connection with a special vocation; the fuller apprehension of His purpose; the confidence of having had a starting point in the higher life secured already by the operation of His grace; the joy of an assured reception of power:—all these, and many kindred elements, would necessarily so enter into the heart yielded up to God in the recognition of Baptismal grace, as to develope inestimably that “newness of life,” which St Paul (writing on this subject) describes as specially the calling of those who, *because of their Baptism*, can reckon themselves “as dead” indeed unto sin, and “alive unto God in Christ Jesus.” Again, *family religion* would be revived; and on a higher than any mere natural basis. This would result both from the quickening in parents, as sponsors, of a sense of their responsibilities (now so ignored) to God, and to His Church, and also from the adoption of right methods of religious education. The reconstruction of the educational system of the Church, involving the *pastoral* care of the young, would in itself accomplish little short of a revolution. It may be

added, lastly, that it would be found impossible to revive the right apprehension of the one Sacrament, without its inevitably leading to a recovery of the due use of the other. It need scarcely be said that a perception of the place in which the Holy Communion stands as primarily the Divinely-ordered means by which the Church fulfils her office in presenting her worship in and through the Son before the Father, and also as the supreme means by which she is perpetually nourished in the power of resurrection life through the body and blood of Christ, is a vital condition of spiritual progress and growth in grace. On these points, however, it is unnecessary further to enlarge.

3. On the likelihood of such a recovery of Baptismal doctrine as that for which we here plead being speedily brought about on a wide scale throughout Scotland, it would be presumptuous to speak. On the one hand, it is to be admitted that nothing is more difficult than to arrest doctrinal or spiritual declension when it has become characteristic of communities of persons. Looking to the record of God's dealings in times past, we find it impossible, in this aspect, to survey the existing condition of Christendom as a whole without dismay. On the other hand, it is clear that we have not been denied in Scotland, especially of late, some share of that widespread revival of the higher life—a fruit, indeed, of the long-suffering which still sustains unweariedly the act of intercession—which, however hindered or thwarted by local circumstances, is in one form or another to be seen throughout the Catholic Church at large. God has shown such patience, and has extended such signal tokens of His favour toward the Church of Scotland (her many provocations notwithstanding), as to encourage us still to hope for yet richer blessing.

4. Meanwhile, however, the most important question is that which concerns our immediate practical duty. I therefore conclude by offering the following suggestions, all of them of a merely elementary character, as to steps devolving upon us in seeking the restoration of faith in the place

Divinely assigned to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism in the economy of grace.

First. The faith of this doctrine has to be *lived*. It is impossible to exaggerate the evil that has been wrought through handling such topics in a merely controversial way, while yet, from slothfulness or worklliness, we draw back from the endeavour to embody in our lives the convictions we assert with our lips. A testimony to the efficacy of Baptism, not followed up by a consistent endeavour to conform to the standard of holiness, as regards the service of God and man, which it implies, is but a phase of hypocrisy, and can but provoke weightier judgment. The supreme testimony of the Church is to be found in being, and in being seen to be, in herself the exhibition of that which she declares.* She witnesses for Christ primarily by her *life* as the Christ mystical in the world. This recollection must be carried with us into every part of our testimony. They, who believe in Holy Baptism as at once the Sacrament of Divine Adoption and of Catholic brotherhood, must undeniably make manifest the characteristic power of Divine sonship and Catholic brotherhood in their lives.

Second. We must teach the true doctrine of Baptism to our people. What I mean by this is that we must teach a *positive* doctrine upon the subject. We have dealt too long in negations. There are too many who spend their time in teaching the people what the Sacraments are *not*, but who leave them entirely in the dark as to what the Sacraments *are*. Men are not profited by negations. We need to affirm positively, and beyond all possibility of mistake as to our meaning, what that grace *is* which is lodged in the Sacraments by the Divine appointment. We must not merely confuse the minds of our people by talking generally about the "sealing of covenants," and the like. We have had long experience of the

* Students of the late Professor Milligan's valuable book on "The Resurrection of our Lord" will remember many striking and beautiful references in it to this point.

fruitlessness for good of that sort of teaching, which, true up to a point, is yet defective as regards even the most important aspect of the matter. We have got to show our people some valid reason for the Baptism of their children, other and further than can be derived from the fact that it illustrates certain conceptions of truth, or forms matter of positive injunction. Our doctrine in this aspect must be rational and spiritual, or the practice of Baptism must inevitably degenerate into Ritualism.

Third. We must grudge no effort in instructing candidates for Baptism (whether they be parents seeking Baptism for their infants, or adults seeking Baptism for themselves) as to the significance of the rite.

Fourth. It is incumbent upon us to take security for the more reverent administration of this Holy Baptism. In cases in which it is considered expedient to depart from the rules of the Church in discouraging private Baptism, or in which such departure is unavoidable, it is the more necessary to secure, through pre-arrangement of the minutest details, that the rite shall be administered in consistency with its ineffable dignity, as an action wrought "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Every candid minister will acknowledge that there is much in connection with this point on which he cannot but look back with the keenest compunction. Possibly the Church is not at present in a position favourable to addressing herself hopefully to the task of creating a suitable liturgical office for the administration of Baptism. Happily, however, no minister need experience any difficulty in obtaining such private guidance from the Directory, and also from the liturgical provision existing in other parts of the Church Catholic, as is requisite for this part of his work.

Fifth. We need to effect a revolution as regards our existing parochial methods, with the object of securing adequate *pastoral* care of the young. Our congregations, if rightly instructed, will not grudge any sacrifices in order

that the ministers of Christ may discharge that part of their commission which involves their feeding of the "lambs" as well as the sheep of the fold. To enter on the details which are embraced under this head would of course be foreign to the purpose of this paper.

Sixth. We need to organise the mission or evangelistic work of the Church directed to the conversion of souls on the basis of a deliberate and invariable recognition both of the reality of Baptismal grace, and of the need of taking security for the sacramental nourishment of the life revived, as equal in point of importance to the need of reviving it.

Lastly. We need to restore the connection so greatly lost in our Church system between "the porch and the altar," or, in other words, between the initial Sacrament of Baptism and the continual celebration and participation of the Eucharist. The position affirmed by our Church in these matters is sufficiently consistent; but we must bestir ourselves to act in the light of it. It is humiliating to reflect on the slow advancement which is, as yet, to be seen throughout Scotland in this direction. We seem content to sacrifice to the increasing worldliness of the age many services once full of spiritual edification, while we are yet indolent in providing such higher substitutes as are within our reach in throwing open to our believing people, Sunday by Sunday, the Holy Table of the Lord. These, indeed, are only elementary steps in the direction of restoring the power and reality of the truth of Holy Baptism in our land. Apart from our obedience to these steps, the hope of ascending to higher things is idle. Vain it is to discuss, as some seem eager to do, questions relating to the constitution and purpose of the Church, so far as these are dependent upon our acceptance of other conditions, unless the spiritual life of the baptized is quickened first at its root. When, by the blessing of God, this end is accomplished—as God grant it soon may be—we may confidently hope to see evinced a preparedness to weigh all that may further have to be declared as to the

provisions made in the unrevoked and irrevocable covenant of the Father, "FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST: TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST."

THE INSTRUCTION OF CATECHUMENS BEFORE FIRST COMMUNION.

REV. G. W. SPROTT, D.D.

IN the Primitive Church those who were being prepared for Baptism were called Catechumens, but it is convenient in our changed circumstances to apply the term to those who are under instruction for the Holy Communion.

The Reformed Churches discontinued the ancient practice of giving the Communion to infants, believing that children should not be admitted to the Lord's Table till they were of sufficient age to learn the rudiments of the Faith and to examine themselves. Thus in 1560, the compilers of the First Book of Discipline declared that none should be admitted to that holy mystery who could not formally say the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of Belief, and the Sum of the Law.

It would be instructive to trace the training of Catechumens in our Church from that time forward, as we have much to learn from a better past, before rationalism on the one hand, and a defective evangelicalism on the other, had reduced the religion of Scotland to its present condition. But I have only time to refer briefly to the law and practice since the Revolution of 1688.

In 1706, the Assembly recommended ministers "to take as strict a trial as can be of such as they admit to the Lord's Supper, especially before their first admission thereto, and that they diligently instruct them . . . as to the covenant

of grace and the nature and end of that ordinance as a seal thereof and charge upon their consciences, the obligations they lie under from their Baptismal covenant, and seriously exhort them to renew the same."

Two years later, the Assembly enjoined ministers, in their visitation of families, to remind the children "how they were dedicated to God in Baptism, and when of age and fit, and after due instruction of the nature of the covenant of grace and the seals thereof, to invite them to engage themselves personally to the Lord, and to desire and prepare for and take the first opportunity they can of partaking of the Lord's Supper (and) to be especially careful how they communicate at first, much depending thereon." Passing on for a century, we find Principal Hill stating that "When young persons partake for the first time of the Lord's Supper," ministers "are careful by private conference and public instruction, to impress upon their minds such a sense of the nature of that action that they may consider themselves as then making that declaration of Faith, and entering into those engagements which would have accompanied their Baptism had it been delayed till riper years."* And in 1818, the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff writes as follows:—"The clergy are universally accustomed to converse privately with those who are admitted to the Communion Table for the first time."† During the last century and the earlier part of this, Catechumen's classes do not appear to have been common, but they were not so essential then as they are now, because the young were so thoroughly catechised in other ways. In all pious families they were made to repeat the Catechism on Sunday evenings; in the Parish School they received regular instruction in Bible and Catechism from teachers who were always members and often licentiates of the Church, and who were stimulated by the annual examination of the Presbytery, when the religious knowledge of the children was taken special account of. Ministers preached catecheti-

* "Theological Institutes," p. 317.

† "Life of Dr Erskine," p. 72.

cal doctrine at one of the Sunday services—*i.e.*, they took a question of the Catechism for the subject of discourse. In some cases they examined the children in church; in all they catechised the families under their charge, on week days, from house to house. In former times all who intended to communicate were examined in church previous to the celebration of the Communion, and this custom was continued in some Parishes till the present century.*

All this has been changed, and we have few opportunities now of fulfilling the obligation to feed the lambs of the flock laid upon us by the Chief Shepherd, except those afforded by the Sunday School, the Bible Class, and the Class for Catechumens. Parents who do not send their young people to these Classes, and who thus prevent ministers from discharging a most important part of their duties, incur a very heavy responsibility.

To come now to practical details. At what age should we encourage the young to join the Catechumen's class? For long after the Reformation they were admitted to Communion much earlier than at present, as we learn—*e.g.*, from the autobiographies of three famous ministers of the Church. James Melville says—"I received the communion of the Body and the Blood of Christ first at Montrose [in 1568], . . . in the thirteenth year of my age." † Robert Blair relates that he communicated first [in 1605] when "he was growing up to the twelfth year of his age," and he refers to this as the ordinary time. ‡ John Livingstone states that he made his first communion in 1617 when he was at school at Stirling, being then under fourteen years of age. § The French Reformed Church, from which we borrowed so much, admitted children to the Communion at the age of twelve, but not earlier. Regard was paid to the fact that Jewish children at that age were examined before the congregation, and made a solemn promise to keep the law of Moses, and that the Lord, as it was believed,

* Moncreiff's "Life of Erskine," p. 72.

‡ Life, p. 7, Wod. Soc.

† Autobiog., p. 33, Wod. Soc.

§ Sel. Biog. I. 132, Wod. Soc.

conformed to this usage. It is an age when many children are brought for the first time under deep religious impressions, and when they stand on the threshold of temptations, against which the Holy Communion is the best safeguard. But without insisting on so early an age, we should certainly lay it down as the rule that young people should pass directly from the Bible Class to that for Catechumens. It is greatly to be regretted that so many young Scotsmen are allowed to leave their homes for foreign lands without renewing their baptismal vows, and are thus thrown loose on the world without that sense of personal obligation to the service of Christ by which they should be fortified.

Two communion classes in the year are sufficient, and to meet weekly for six weeks is all that in many parishes is found practicable. As soon as the classes are formed the members should be specially remembered in the public prayers of the congregation, as the catechumens invariably were in the services of the early Church.

I now proceed to indicate the subjects which, in my opinion, should be taken up at each of the six meetings, where that minimum cannot be exceeded.

I. For the first the subject should be *The Baptismal Covenant*, into which the catechumens were entered in infancy, and the personal acceptance of which they have in immediate prospect. One should begin with some instruction concerning *the Church* and their present standing as baptised members thereof. In this connection no better illustration can be used than our Lord's similitude of the vine and the branches, which brings out so completely His relation both to the whole Church and to the members individually. Christ has not two Churches, but the one Church has two parts. It consists of all who in baptism have been cut off from the stock of the first Adam and ingrafted into the second; but there are two kinds of branches—those which abide in the true vine and are knit together with Him, and bring forth fruit to God's glory, and those which reject the sap of grace and wither and die.

As to the obligations of the baptised, one cannot do better than quote and explain the words of the Directory that "Children by baptism are solemnly received into the . . . visible Church . . . and united with believers, and that all who are baptised . . . do renounce, and by their baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh."

It is advisable to call the attention of the catechumens to the questions recommended by the Committee on Public Worship and Sacraments to be put to the baptised before their first admission to the Lord's Supper, and since published by order of the Assembly for the consideration of the Church.* To these or the like questions they have to give answer, and we should do our utmost to make them realise that the renewal of their baptismal engagements is one of the most important events in their lives, and how much depends upon their doing so in sincerity of heart.

II. The questions I have referred to indicate the subsequent course of instruction to be followed. Accordingly the subject to be taken up at the second meeting should be *The Apostles' Creed*, the faith into which they were baptised, and to which they are to declare their assent. While every clause of the creed is a rich mine of truth, there is need in our day for calling special attention to such topics as the Divine Personality of our Lord and His assumption of human nature, in a sinless and impersonal form, His one sacrifice for the sins of the world, the birth of the Catholic Church on the day of Pentecost, the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit therein, and the resurrection of the body, as explained by St Paul, who teaches us that, however great the change from that which is sown in corruption, to that which is to be raised in glory, there is a nexus between them, as in nature, where the organic life and something of the substance of the plant is transmitted from age to age through a thousand deaths.

III. For the third meeting the subject that follows in order is the *Ten Commandments*, to which the catechumens

* "Public Worship and Sacraments." William Blackwood & Sons.

are to promise obedience. The Decalogue, as explained by our Lord, should be set forth as the rule of life binding upon all, and as the standard by which Christians should examine themselves from day to day, and most of all before drawing near to the Holy Table. Self-examination before communion is part of the statute law of the Church, and is, therefore, imperative; and it is important to teach the catechumens how this duty should be discharged.

The transition from self-examination to our need of redemption, and to the way of salvation, is obvious, and one cannot do better than take up in order the questions of the Shorter Catechism on these subjects.

IV. Thus for the fourth meeting the topics to be explained and enforced are the need of *constant trust in the merits and mediation of Christ, of daily repentance for the remission of daily sin, and of observing those ordinances through which our Glorified Lord and Head imparts grace and strength from His sacred Manhood to the members of His Body.* The question regarding the systematic reading and hearing of Holy Scripture with entire dependence upon the aid of the Holy Spirit may also be taken up at this meeting.

V. For the fifth meeting there is the section of the Catechism which treats of *The Sacraments.* The efficacy of the sacraments is one of the almost forgotten truths to bear witness for which the members of this Society have banded themselves together. In this we are walking in the old paths of the Reformed Church, those who differ from us being themselves the judges. The late Principal Cunningham, of the New College, Edinburgh, condemned both the Reformers and the Divines of the seventeenth century for exaggerating "the importance and efficacy of the Sacraments," and he even ventured to say that Calvin's "unintelligible doctrine of the Lord's Supper," as he characterised it, "was, perhaps, the greatest blot in the history of his labours as a public instructor."* I may say in passing,

* "Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation," p. 240.

that his colleague, the late Professor Bannerman, in his book on the Church, states and defends the old Scottish views as to the ministry and sacraments in a way that leaves little to be desired. One of the most eminent of our own broad church clergy is responsible for the following criticism:—"Many text-books issued" (*i.e.*, by Scottish Presbyterians) "for the instruction of young communicants bear a closer resemblance to the doctrine taught in the Racovian Catechism than to that of the Westminster standards."

Alas! that it should have come to this. What would Calvin, who pronounced the Zwinglian doctrine of the communion profane, have said, if he could have foreseen the day when the children of the Reformed Church would be trained up in the sacramental principles of Socinianism?

Notwithstanding an Act of Assembly forbidding any minister to publish a Catechism without the allowance of his Presbytery and of the Commission,* sacramental catechisms exist in plentiful variety. With some notable exceptions, such as that by Willison of Dundee, and the "Preparation for the Lord's Table" by one of our own members, Mr Campbell of Eastwood, they differ widely on certain crucial points from the doctrine of the Westminster standards, of the Scots Confession of 1560, and of catechisms formerly used in our Church. Let me give a few extracts from one of these, copies of which are rare, drawn up in Latin for use in the University of Edinburgh, by John Adamson, the Principal, and a leading man among the covenanting clergy.

Q. Are the earthly and sensible things of the sacrament truly the Body and Blood of Christ?

A. Thus I believe, because Christ who is truth itself has so said.

Q. You are persuaded that the bread and wine in the Holy Communion are the Body and Blood of the Lord, but

* Act xii. 1710.

are you equally certain as to the mode and reason of their becoming such ?

A. Truly this is a mystery in which it does not become us to be wise above what is written, but as far as I can learn from the Word of God . . . they are so called because by them the Lord's Body and Blood are represented, offered, and truly conferred upon the faithful.

Q. Hence therefore it appears that we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ, not only by firmly believing that His Body was broken and His Blood shed for us, but also sacramentally and mystically by partaking in the Supper of His Body and Blood ?

A. Most clearly, for the Table of the Lord is the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, partaking of which we eat His Body and drink His Blood mystically and sacramentally, so that we become one Spirit with Him and one Body, of His flesh and of His bones."

So said all our old divines, and without going too deeply into "these holy mysteries," as the Confession of Faith calls them, we should teach our young communicants that in the communion the faithful receive, to use the words of Boston, "the Body and Blood of Christ, even a whole Christ, with all His benefits, forasmuch as the Divine nature after the Incarnation was never separated from the human"; that the elements should be "used with all reverence," as the old Scots Confession says, because of the sacramental union of the signs with the things signified, and that the sin of unworthy communicating consists primarily in not discerning the Lord's Body in the sacrament. Of this we may be very sure, that there is nothing which pious Christians, young or old, more ardently crave for than to be brought into the closest possible union and conjunction with their glorified Lord, and through Him with the Eternal Father.

VI. For the closing meeting, there remains *The Lord's Prayer and the Worship of the Church*. We learn from the Didache that it was a rule among the first Christians to use the Lord's Prayer three times daily. It invariably

formed part of the Consecration prayer in the Holy Communion, and, indeed, the celebration of the Eucharist with the use of the Lord's Prayer constituted the whole worship of the Church as instituted by our Lord. From Apostolic days the Eucharist has been regarded as the pure offering which Malachi foretold would be offered to God's name in Gospel times from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. And it has ever been held that in it the Church unites herself with that shewing forth of the Lord's death which He is ever making in heaven to the end, that because of the Passion of His dear Son, God may be propitious to His people and to all mankind.

It is necessary to explain the words of Institution, and to shew how each part is fulfilled in our form of administration, that the young communicants may join intelligently and without distraction in the whole service. It is important to explain how the consecration is effected, and the need of the Holy Spirit to sanctify them as well as the elements, so that they may truly receive Him of whom the Gospels tell us that even in the days of His flesh the touch of His finger was lifegiving, and that there was virtue in the hem of His garment.

I must pass over many points, but, to mention one more, we should not omit to remind young communicants of the private prayers and intercessions which, during the silence when others are receiving, the devout have ever offered to their Lord and King when guests at His Table, and when enjoying the greatest nearness to Him out of heaven. Principal Baillie speaks of this as "both lawful and laudable, and the ordinary practice of most, if not all, pastors and people he was acquainted with." Wilson takes it for granted, and gives directions on the subject in his Catechism, but one fears that in our day this ancient and hallowed usage is not always complied with.

To conclude—the Catechumens should be made to commit to memory the Creed, the Commandments, the latter part of the Catechism, and the words of Institution; and their

attention should be directed to the portions of Scripture which bear specially upon the subjects treated of, and to suitable communion prayers. I shall only add that, besides the instruction given in the class, the minister should, if at all possible, converse privately with each member of it.

THE INSTRUCTION OF CATECHUMENS BEFORE FIRST COMMUNION.

REV. ROGER S. KIRKPATRICK, B.D.

IN this brief paper on the Instruction of Catechumens before First Communion, I shall content myself with indicating in a single word (1) the aim, (2) the position, (3) the opportunity, (4) the accompaniments, and (5) the general character of such instruction. If my paper deal with mere aspirations more than with accomplished facts, it may still, perhaps, serve some good purpose by reminding us all that there is large room for improvement in this department of our work.

I. *Aim.*—The Shorter Catechism of our Church enumerates various particulars, in which those approaching the Lord's Table ought to examine themselves, namely, "knowledge to discern the Lord's Body, faith to feed upon Him, repentance, love, and new obedience." In the preparation of catechumens for their first Communion, we sometimes, I think, confine attention too exclusively to the first of these various particulars. We make our instructions too rigid, too dry, too purely a matter of the intellect. We handle the subjects treated as though the end in view were a mere school examination, the mere passing of a standard. I have certainly no desire to utter one word in disparagement of doctrinal teaching. The enlightenment of the intellect is always, of course, the immediate object of instruc-

tion. And every teacher, who has had any moderately large experience, must often have remarked, and remarked with wonder, how Divine truth, historically and systematically unfolded, asserts its own inherent power, laying hold upon the mind, conciliating the affections, subduing the will, so that those catechumens even, who at the first seemed dull, or listless, or inattentive, become, as the instructions advance, alert and eager and impressed. The mere communication of knowledge is thus, indeed, effective far beyond its own immediate object. Still the mere communication of knowledge does not exhaust the responsibility of the teacher. Something more, and something higher, must be deliberately attempted. Instruction means *building up*. And what we have to build up in the case of those preparing for their first Communion is not knowledge only, but, by the blessing of Almighty God, faith also, and repentance, and love, and new obedience. *Edification*—edification in the widest sense of the term—the edification of the whole religious life—must be our aim, “that we may present every man” at his first Communion, as nearly as is possible, “PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS.”

II. *Position*.—The aim which our instructions should keep in view assigns to them their position. They should hold their place as the crowning effort of an entire system of well-ordered catechetical training. It is perfectly obvious that the special instruction before first Communion must always prove comparatively fruitless, unless preceded by long and careful preparation. Because instruction means *building*, instruction presupposes a *foundation*. And it is too late to be laying the foundation when one ought to be occupied with the higher courses of the edifice. I am sure that there is no minister but has often had this truth forced rudely upon his notice. The day on which we meet our catechumens before their first Communion is for us, in truth, one of those days of trial which

come to "try every man's work of what sort it is." Then all the defects of pastoral supervision, of home-training, and of school and Sunday-school instruction emerge glaringly, condemnably, into light. And one chief reason why first Communion is so often unduly deferred, why the young men and young women of our Church are so reluctant to obey the sacred ordinance, why such a night of ignorance baffles the efforts of even highly competent instructors, is that the foundation has never properly been laid, or, having been laid, has been exposed too long unused to the disintegrating forces of this world's weather. Until the whole character of the religious education of the young has been determined by the significance of Baptism, until its organisation has been drawn together into one close-knit, purposeful, and progressive system, until its reach has been so stretched forward to retain the older pupils, and the better custom of first Communion at an age considerably earlier than is at present usual, become so firmly rooted in actual practice, that the interval between the higher classes and the pre-communication instructions has been filled up altogether, every isolated attempt to improve these special instructions is predestined in the main to disappointing failure. Of course we must be thankful to receive our catechumens at whatever age they present themselves. We must rejoice to see even grey-haired men and women coming forward to fulfil a long-neglected duty. Nevertheless, it is scarcely an ideal state of matters when the Christian Church has to gather out her catechumens one by one as from the confusions of a heathen country. Should she not rather so nurture, so teach, and so protect those countless children who have been entrusted to her care in Baptism, that at appointed season she may lead forward to the Table of the Lord, with full ranks and in unbroken order, each successive company of sons and daughters, joyfully exclaiming, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH GOD HATH GIVEN ME" ?

III. *Opportunity.*—Dependent, as they thus are, upon

the efficiency of previous training, the instructions for first Communion do yet offer in themselves a singularly favourable opportunity for the exertion of religious influence. Those who come to them not only come, for the most part, at that transitional period of life when character is still plastic—the mind opening to a wider horizon, the heart responsive to generous appeals, the will easily bent under a sobering sense of new-found responsibilities—but they come, also, naturally impressed with the gravity of the step in contemplation. Its full importance, indeed, they may not understand. *That* it is the purpose of instruction to explain. Still, deep in the consciousness of almost all our catechumens there abides the serious conviction that something very solemn lies before them, and they will, therefore, concede freely to the sympathetic teacher privileges of much closer dealing with the vital questions of personal religion than in ordinary circumstances is possible or fitting. For every minister of Christ this is a priceless opportunity—a golden time. And it is brief, and swift-passing, and irrevocable. These six or eight short weeks—would that they were more!—are fateful with the issues of the future, and upon the use to which we put their talent depends, under God, if not the actual conversion, at least the religious earnestness of many lives. Our motto for the season is—“BEHOLD, I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR.”

IV. *Accompaniments.*—It is our wisdom and our duty to take full advantage of these favourable conditions for instruction. In order to do so, we must surround the time of special preparation with every circumstance of solemnity. Catechumens should be taught to consider, not the actual instructions only, but the entire period covered by these instructions as a season set apart—a season which will stand alone in the whole experience of their lifetime. They should be encouraged to hold themselves, throughout that season, as much detached as possible from incongruous and distracting interests. They should be persuaded to give themselves

throughout it with more than common attention to the study of the Bible, to meditation, to prayer. For their guidance in these private preparations, some helps ought to be provided. And it is, I think, much to be deplored that the Church of Scotland, so fruitful in many other works, should be conspicuously barren of the particular kind of literature suitable for this purpose. A manual, carefully adapted to the requirements of *Scottish* catechumens,—a manual containing special Scripture readings, special devotions, directions for meditation, and rules for self-scrutiny, along with an outline or syllabus of various courses of instruction,—is a want at present widely felt, and one which must certainly be supplied before the great majority of our catechumens will be able in any profitable degree to respond to that spiritual call which the season addresses to their souls—“COME YE YOURSELVES APART . . . AND REST AWHILE.”

V. *General Character.*—In conducting the instruction meetings, which are the heart of this solemn season, we should neglect no detail which may enhance their interest and impressiveness. They should be devotional, as well as instructive, and, whenever possible, made brighter by the singing of hymns. The instruction itself, as it has three chief purposes to accomplish—the ascertainment of what catechumens already know, the imparting of further knowledge, and the communication of religious impulse—will fall into three normal divisions—namely, (1) the examination, (2) the lecture, and (3) the practical exhortation.

1. The first of these, in consequence of the disuse of methods by which, in former days, our Church set great store, is now very generally omitted. It seems indispensable, however, that, when there is no formal examination, some substitute should be contrived to take its place. Unless teachers really know what information their catechumens already possess, unless they use means to ascertain whether

their teaching is intelligently followed, all their labour of instruction must be more or less a beating of the air.

2. So brief, in ordinary circumstances, is the period of special instruction, that the course of lectures must almost necessarily be confined to the subject of the Sacraments themselves. It must include an account of their institution, an exposition of their meaning, and a study of the order of their administration. It must exhibit sacramental truth progressively and not dispersedly, positively and not negatively, in a living and not an academic form, on some well-matured and systematic plan, and with continual reference to the Person and Work of our Blessed Saviour, from whose abiding Presence and Activity through the Pentecostal Spirit the Sacraments derive their only worth and power.

3. With regard to the practical exhortations, it is enough to say that they should be direct, pointed, searching; that they should correspond to the lecture which they follow; that they should know what they are intended to effect, and deliberately attempt it; that they should be arranged with such premeditated skill that they may fall, blow after blow, upon yielding consciences and softened hearts—quicken- ing faith, deepening penitence, arousing love, confirming resolution.

As the instructions draw near a close, the meetings should become more devotional in character, and should, if possible, be held more frequently. It is surely not too much to expect that, at a point of such unique significance in the life-history of our catechumens, arrangements might be made to secure for them the opportunity of gaining full advantage from the natural solemnity of the occasion. But, whether that be possible or not, as the decisive day approaches, our efforts should with increased anxiety be directed to this end—that our catechumens, one and all, may have wrought in them that attitude of soul in which, distinctly realising the high vocation which by Baptism is theirs already, they may stand humbly, yet fearlessly, in

the House of God to ratify their vow as soldiers of the Cross, and, deeply conscious of the duty, the honour, the blessedness of the further step to which also they are called, may advance with souls hungry and athirst after Christ into THE PEACE AND JOY OF FIRST COMMUNION.

THE INSTRUCTION OF CATECHUMENS AFTER FIRST COMMUNION.

REV. J. CROMARTY SMITH, B.D.

THE neglect of the Sacramental life is mainly responsible for our lack of definite religious earnestness and spiritual vigour. It is unpleasant to be perpetually speaking of defects and weaknesses, but we are here to take counsel with each other as to the means whereby our work may be rendered more efficient, and it would be idle to pretend that the spiritual life of our parishes, speaking generally, is such as to fill us with satisfaction, notwithstanding the tolerably satisfactory state of our statistics. Not that we are to blame our people, for when we look within ourselves, and when we call to mind our neglects, the blame must appear to rest largely with ourselves. How many of us can say with honest heart that we have "taken heed to ourselves and to all the flock . . . to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood?"

Be this as it may, the need for a more definite, methodical, Christian life is evident. The Christian life is one of order and rule: it is Sacramental, centred around the Supper of the Lord as the means of its support. Not until this is realized, and the Holy Communion is brought back to its appointed place, may we hope for true progress in the revival of Spiritual life.

It is strange that those who do not apprehend the revealed truth of the purpose and meaning of the Holy Communion should affect to deplore our too evident carelessness and lapsing, for when we have so undeniably neglected our Lord's own appointed means of feeding and strengthening His people our weakness ought not to be surprising. All our modern human inventions for quickening the life of the Church—good and useful as many of them are in their own way—are at best only helps, and the temporary success of any or all of them cannot hinder us from seeing that this one thing is needful.

Accordingly, our hopes and prayers must be directed towards a very much more frequent celebration of the Holy Communion. But this cannot come all at once, nor in all places so easily as in some, and we must therefore make the most of the opportunities we have, remembering that, in His work upon the soul, God is not limited even to His own Ordinances, or rather, let it be said, to our regulations for His Ordinances. Our duty appears to be to awaken in the hearts of our people a desire for a more frequent Communion, knowing that, when the hunger after the Heavenly Food is felt, God will supply it.

It is therefore evident that the great need of our time is a fuller instruction in Sacramental truth. We cannot be too grateful for the increasing attention which is being paid to the truth of the Incarnation, for the more firmly our people grasp this truth, the more readily will they appreciate Sacramental truth as being the necessary consequence of any right understanding of the Incarnation.

In the face of all this, surely our course is clear. Is it not to expend much more time and pains upon the instruction of our younger Communicants? Which of us, in the ministry, has not over and over again deplored the disheartening drifting away of class after class of our "Young Communicants?" We patiently gathered and taught them, and we saw, as our classes went on from week to week, how open their minds were to receive

instruction. We felt that a bond had been formed between themselves on the one hand, and between them and us on the other; and then, after that First Communion to which they, and we for their sakes, looked, so much forward, the bond appeared to be broken, and they all, save in a few exceptional cases, slipped from our grasp. One of two things happened. Either they got merged in the older body of Communicants and dropped down into that dull routine of life in which religion is a circumstance instead of a power, or the more earnest spirits among them, those who had perhaps been most touched and impressed, proved a ready prey to the various "undenominational" organisations for Christian work, just because, as I at least believe, they longed for more warmth and heartiness than we appeared to be able or willing to give them. In one of these two ways they slipped from our personal influence. Such, I venture to say, is an experience common to many of us.

We enquire as to causes. Here, in passing, I cannot but record my own conviction—I know the point is in no way involved in the constitution of this Society, and therefore I only speak for myself—that we forfeit much blessing through the absence of the rite of Confirmation, which is one of "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ." It has never altogether fallen out of use in the Reformed Churches of the Continent. But this by the way.

We cannot make too much of the occasion of First Communion. The danger is that we may make too little of it. And in what remains, I may be permitted to offer a few suggestions as to how we might carry them on after their First Communion to a fuller instruction in the way of God. Let it be said here that this is one of the most pressing problems that meets us—*how to retain our Young Communicants*. In most places, not of course in all, the difficulty of getting young people to come forward to a

First Communion is comparatively slight beside this one of retaining them afterwards, of carrying them on from first principles to growth in the divine life. Perhaps it may serve to give the subject a more practical aspect if I venture, by way of suggestion, to indicate what may be regarded as something approaching to a line of procedure that might be followed.

Let us suppose that our Catechumens have been solemnly admitted to the ratification of their baptismal vows in presence of the Congregation—to whom, by the way, a few words of exhortation should be addressed on the occasion as well as to the Catechumens. The next step is for the minister to meet the Catechumens again as soon as possible after Communion, if possible, on the evening of the Communion Sunday. He will find this a most fitting time to address to them some words of practical counsel. They specially require at this time—for it is a critical one—both direction and consolation. They require to be reminded of the completed responsibility now resting upon them, and that they are set as a city on an hill. But much more they may require consolation, for if our exhortations in the preparatory course of instruction have been efficacious, our Catechumens will have formed high and great expectations for their first Communion, and in many cases those expectations will have been to some extent disappointed. Some will be surprised that the sensible experience to which they vaguely looked forward did not come to them, and they will imagine that this was on account of insufficient preparation, or from some other serious cause. We do not, of course, forget that to very many of our Catechumens the day of their first Communion has been one of great and holy joy, that in some cases their expectations have been more than realised. They all, however, require to be reminded that every subsequent Communion ought to be more full of joy and peace, and also that the grace of God is often imparted where the soul does not feel it at the time, but realises it in after

experiences. Such things they need to be told; and the reasons for not performing this duty to them before their Communion, but waiting till afterwards, are sufficiently obvious. The occasion is a good one for giving them cards commemorative of their first Communion, and specially for commending them in prayer to God. And then they may be invited, not only collectively, but individually, to join our Communicants' class—the class of Perseverance. There is usually an initial difficulty in forming such a class, but when once it is formed, successive classes of young Communicants can be readily drafted into it. When once an organisation is set a-going, it is comparatively easy to get additions to its numbers. Yet only comparatively easy, for in few cases can we hope to succeed, unless by repeated personal invitations by word of mouth. All this means time and pains, but the results will more than compensate.

And experience soon teaches us how great is the need for special work of the kind. Our Catechumens require definite systematic instruction in Christian doctrine—instruction given in ways that are impossible in our ordinary pulpit ministrations. To be brought face to face with the minister, where he may deal with them in a manner unrestrained and yet dignified, applying the truths of religion to their daily lives in ways suited to their needs—this surely is much. And there is not a general indisposition to receive such teaching. Our people feel, unconsciously, perhaps, their need of it. They meet with their companions and fellow work-people, and are often taken at a disadvantage through not being able to give a reason for their faith. They need, therefore, not only to be grounded, but settled in their faith. And they are always open to receive instruction if it be wisely and lovingly given. I feel sure the blame rests in great measure with ourselves that our Catechumens often yield so readily to the allurements of error, or succumb to reaction and fall away. If we were more careful to teach them and

build them up there would not be so many losses to deplore.

Supposing, then, a class for further instruction of Catechumens to be a constituted parochial organisation, how should we deal with it? The advantages of having separate meetings for men and women are very great. Once a month for each will usually be found sufficient, but the meeting should be so definitely fixed that all concerned may realise its importance, and it should never be intermitted except for the gravest causes. It is often found to be advantageous that such classes should meet in one's own residence. This promotes a friendliness of feeling, the importance of which is great and helpful for the special work; and opportunity can thus be taken of detaining one and another to be spoken to personally by way of encouragement and counsel in the religious life. If the number attending be great, it will of course be necessary to have more numerous classes, for there should not be more than perhaps twelve in each of such classes; but again, let it be said that the expenditure of labour is sure to be well rewarded. The instruction should, of course, be systematic, and will demand most earnest care and preparation; but from time to time members of the class may suggest things that they would like dealt with, and it need not be said that, if they are earnest Christian people, they will often feel the need of getting help and guidance, not only for their personal religious life, but to enable them to stand their ground with others. Discussion of religious subjects prevails among our people—especially in the working classes—to an extent that some who do not know their ways of life would be surprised at. And, as a matter of fact, our young Church people are often sorely perplexed to give an answer, and welcome all the help we can give them.

And yet much of our work will be thrown away unless we succeed in getting them interested and encouraged to take part in some definite Christian work, however little.

They must be made to feel the necessity for every Communicant to be a worker. Time forbids enlargement upon this point.

I would close by saying that our constant aim with those Catechumens must be the formation of the religious habit of life. Rules, even down to details, for their guidance are not beneath our notice. When we consider how difficult it is even for ourselves to make our religion a thing of method and order, how much more so must it be for them. How to form and maintain the habit of prayer; how best to use the Holy Scripture; how to bear themselves towards the manners and customs of the world; how to fulfil their duty as partakers of a common priesthood; how to prepare worthily, and how to give thanks aright, for the Holy Communion: these and many other things will readily suggest themselves as topics for instruction.

Our young people trained in these ways will prove a source of strength to our congregations, a sanctifying influence which will assuredly permeate all ranks and classes—an influence which will redound more to the glory of God than those who have not in some way tried it can imagine. In view of the prevailing indefiniteness of faith, and consequent laxity of life, the demand for work of the kind is clamant.

It all means labour for us who are in the ministry,—but is not our labour our joy?

SPONSORS : THE OBLIGATION RESTING UPON
THEM, HOW IT MAY BEST BE FULFILLED,
AND WHAT HELP THE CHURCH SHOULD
FURNISH THEM WITH IN FULFILLING IT.

REV. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A.

IN this paper I have to deal not so much with the doctrine of Baptism as with one special form of the practical obligations which flow from that Holy Sacrament, as an established institution in the Church. I shall speak first of the true idea of Sponsorship as arising from the new relationship in which the Sponsor stands to the baptised person ; secondly, of the form in which this relation has been historically set forth in the Church generally and in the subordinate standards of our own Church ; thirdly, of the obligation of the Sponsor as to the faith and Christian character of the baptised, and of the spiritual aid which the Sacrament itself supplies for the fulfilment of that obligation.

I.—In dealing with the true idea of Sponsorship it is impossible really to define it without touching on the doctrine of Holy Baptism. The place assigned to Baptism in the divine economy of grace has already been dealt with. It is a divine ordinance full of deep and beautiful meaning, meeting the inmost need of the human soul in a manner peculiarly fitted to impress us with the tenderness of our Heavenly Father's love for his lost and erring children. It is an ordinance, however, which does not

owe its power merely to its impressiveness. Had such been the case, it could hardly have survived as it has done amid all the varieties of opinion and practice in the various branches of the Church, nor could it have been administered to children. Regarded as a divine ordinance, it is charged with a gift of divine grace—with the promise and the potency of a new life to the soul. This gift is appropriated but not created by faith, and herein lies at once the value and the responsibility of this sacrament.

Dealing with a subject which presents so many points of difficulty, one is liable to misunderstanding should he attempt an absolute definition. I think, however, we may take it that in the view of our Church, so far at least as it has ever been authoritatively declared, this conception of the sacrament as involving a gift of new life has always been regarded as alone worthy of its divine origin, and of the need felt by the human soul for some assurance, beyond its own passing feeling, of the possibility of attaining likeness to God. "By Baptism," says the Scottish Confession, "we assuredly believe we are ingrafted in Christ Jesus to be made partakers of His justice, whereby our sins are covered and remitted." "By the right use of this ordinance," says the Westminster Confession, "the grace promised is not only offered but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will in His appointed time."

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that in common with every branch of the historic Church the Scottish Church regards Baptism not merely as a ceremony of dedication, but as the sacrament of the new life. This view, however, is carefully guarded. No gift of God is separated from the use of means. The appropriation of the gift can only be by faith. The divine life depends for its full fruition upon the appropriate nurture which it demands. Even in intellectual development this holds good. Without fit training and education the noblest gift of genius may utterly fail of

its promise. It is not otherwise in the spiritual life; and in those rich provisions which have been made for the development of that life in the Holy Sacraments this principle still holds good. No man creates for himself his mental endowments; but he may by carelessness fritter them away, as he may by diligence realise the full flower and fruit of their glorious promise. Even so, no man creates for himself the new life of the soul. Regeneration is a gift of the Holy Spirit. By the mercy of God it is assured to His children in the Holy Sacrament of Baptism. They, indeed, by carelessness, may miss its power, as by diligence and fidelity they may enjoy its full fruition.

So far, however, I have dealt with Baptism in the abstract, and as bearing on the conscious life of individual souls called thereby and ingrafted into Christ being made members incorporate of His body, which is the Church. In this connection it does not present the same difficulties as when we proceed to regard it in view of the actual practice of the Church. I mean the baptism of infants. It is much more easy to realise the power of this sacrament when we think of an immediate personal response on the part of the individual. But the practical wisdom of the Church in every age has guided her, and her practice in this respect is based upon the deep principle expressed by St Paul that the children of Christian parents are "holy." "But the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

The principle which underlies this statement of the apostle is at once the justification for the baptism of children and the explanation of the right of the Christian parent to present his child in this sacrament to God.

There arises, however, from this practice of the Church a new and beautiful relation, created, so to speak, by the sacrament. It not only places the baptised in a new standing towards God, but it places the parent as Sponsor in a new relation towards the child and towards the Church,

through which, as the instrument of God's Spirit, he receives this new gift. Keble asks, in well-known words—

“Where is it mothers learn their love?”

and to that question his answer seems to be “at the baptismal font,” for he proceeds—

“In every church a fountain springs,
O'er which the Eternal Dove
Hovers on softest wings.”

It is said that Wordsworth read the poem with admiration, but stumbled at the first verse, “Where is it mothers learn their love?” as everybody must who does not crush true human feeling. “No, no!” he added; “it is from their own maternal hearts.”

The sacrament, however, is a consecration, and more than a consecration, of this natural relation of love between the parent and the child. At the dawn of life, before the shadows of this world have fallen over the infant spirit, while as yet the hidden tendencies of the nature towards evil lie dormant, the parent brings his child to the house of God; he stands up in the presence of his fellow-worshippers; he declares anew his faith in the Eternal and Invisible. In the power of that faith he presents his child to be dedicated to God—to be set apart for a life in harmony with the unseen realities—a life symbolised by the pure element of water, a life free from the stain of sin. It is a beautiful and touching spectacle; but is it not suddenly robbed of all its beauty, suddenly stripped of all its meaning, if, while he presents the child, he has no assurance that God receives it? The whole value of the sacrament is lost if this be not so. The obligation of the Sponsor really arises from the divine assurance of a gift of grace. If there be no such assurance, it is impossible to see where the obligation rests. If we do our part, God cannot fail to do His. If, then, God cannot fail, it is impossible rightly to look at Baptism merely from the human side. It is impossible, without contemning His ordinance, to suppose that His promise remains absolutely

and entirely in abeyance till our children have grown up to manhood or womanhood, and have accepted for themselves the baptismal covenant, remaining meanwhile in a state of suspended spiritual animation. Such a notion, too widely prevalent, strikes at the very root of true Christian training, and is utterly inconsistent with the nature and purpose of this Holy Sacrament. It was intended to deliver us from such a state of uncertainty, and to assure us at the very outset of God's help and guidance. Those who have been baptised have by that very act entered into a new relation with Him, and not only with Him, but with the Church, which is His body. The seed of grace in each baptised soul may or may not come to full fruition. "They are baptised," says Calvin, conditioned though he was by the extreme doctrine of Predestinarianism, "into future repentance and faith. For though these graces have not yet been formed in them, the seeds of both are nevertheless implanted in their hearts by the secret operation of the Spirit." Elsewhere he says—"The work of God is not yet without existence, because it is not observed and understood by us."

The basis of Christian education being thus laid, it naturally follows that the obligation resting upon the Sponsor is to develop the gift of grace which has been exhibited and applied in the Sacrament. His promise to bring up the child in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" is the appropriate response not to a doubtful gift, but to a real gift of divine grace. Before, however, considering further all that is involved in the relation of the Sponsor to the Baptised and to the Church, let me refer—

II.—To the form in which this relation has been historically set forth in the Church generally, as well as in our own subordinate Standards.

Of the original institution of Sponsors in the Church it seems impossible to speak with any certainty. Apparently the word first occurs in Tertullian, "*De Baptismo*" (chap. xviii.). He uses it as if it had been long familiar. There

is nothing, however, to show that it might not apply to the actual parents.

Fuller says, in his "Worthies of England," that "the Jews had a custom, at the circumcising of their children, that certain undertakers should make a solemn stipulation for their pious education, conformable to our godfathers in baptism." This may possibly have suggested the introduction of Christian Sponsors. They are not, of course, mentioned in Scripture. Tertullian adds—"If no Scripture hath determined this, assuredly custom hath confirmed it." The actual origin of Sponsorship, however, is unknown. We can easily conceive many reasons for its necessity in the circumstances of the Church in the early centuries. "The frequent persecutions during those early ages brought with them a twofold peril—the probability of the violent death of Christian parents, and the possibility of the lapse into paganism of the baptised. Hence arose a twofold necessity on the part of the Church of obtaining, independent of the parents, that the baptised infants should be brought up in the faith of the Church in case of their parents' death or apostasy, and that the real character of adults seeking baptism should be answered for by other than themselves to guard against the like spiritual calamity." * An interesting reference to the institution of the Sponsor is found in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy (chap. vii.) of the pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite. "It appeared good to receive infants in this way—that the natural parents of the child offered should hand the boy over to one of the faithful, a good teacher of divine things, under whom, as under a divine father (godfather), and a pupil in sacred saving truth the boy should be. On this man then promising that he will educate the child in holy living, the priest enjoins that he promise the renunciations and confess the faith. Mark, he does not say, I do this instead of the child, but so the child does, *i.e.*, I promise that I will train up the child by my sedulous exhortations, so that when he

* See Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," Article—"Sponsors."

grows to years of discretion he will renounce." It is interesting to compare with this the following statement from Stuart of Parlovan with regard to Presbyterian practice—"In the baptismal engagement the parent, or sponsor, is, in name of the child, to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh."

The Directory enjoins that the child to be baptised is to be presented by the father, or, in case of his necessary absence, by some Christian friend in his place. It is quite clear from this statement that, while the parent was regarded as the natural Sponsor, others in addition were not excluded. In the Book of Common Order the Rubric runs—"Therefore the infant which is to be baptised shall be brought to the church on the day appointed to Common Prayer." The practice of having additional sponsors was defended "as a provision for the Christian training of children in case of their parents being removed by death." The Act of 1712, as Dr Sprott has pointed out, though it discharged other sponsors than parents when they are communicants, "was directed rather against taking substitutes for them than against the old practice of allowing others in addition." *

To show the wider view of sponsorship thus recognised, let me read the Act:—(1) "Children born within the verge of the Visible Church, of parents one or both professing the Christian religion, have a right to baptism; (2) it being the duty of Christian parents to dedicate their children to God in baptism, and to covenant for their education in the faith of Christ, no other Sponsor is to be taken, unless the parents be dead, or absent, or grossly ignorant, or under scandal, or contumacious to discipline, such being unfit to stand as Sponsors in transacting a solemn covenant with God, in which cases the immediate parent, who is in such circumstances, is to be required to provide some fit person, and if it can be, one related to the parent of the child

* "Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland," page 62.

should be Sponsor; (3) in the case of children exposed, whose baptism, after inquiry, cannot be known, the Session is to order the presenting of the child to baptism, and the Session itself is to see to the Christian education thereof."

In our country the Sponsors are ordinarily the parents, but the Church regards them, for the purposes of this ordinance, not as *Parents*, but as *Sponsors*. Hence, although we recognise that the parents are the natural Sponsors of the child, we shall speak of them in their Church relationship, and with reference to the duties which the Church requires of them. It is not as parents that these duties fall to be done by them, but as members of the Church; it is a spiritual relationship which we are considering, not a natural.

III.—In view of what has been said, it is obvious that the true mode of conceiving the meaning of Sponsorship is to regard it as a delegation of the duty of the Church. The Church in Baptism claims the baptised soul for God. She thereby enters into a relation of spiritual motherhood, so to speak, toward all her children so received. It is her duty, as it should be her privilege and joy, to cherish the divine life, to water with the dews of heaven the seed which has been implanted, to bring to bear all the means of grace of which she is the possessor, until, in conscious faith and through the Holy Sacrament of the Supper, the union of the soul to Christ has been completely realised and the Baptised stand complete in Him.

But how can the Church fulfil such a duty to each individual soul? She can only fulfil it by delegation. It may be to the parent or to some other. The relation in which the Sponsor stands is thus one of spiritual identification for the working out of the great purpose involved in Baptism. Henceforth the burden lies upon him as much as if he had taken the vows for himself alone. Such a view of the Sponsor's obligation may seem to lay upon him a load of responsibility much more awful, and certainly much more burdensome, than if the sacrament were a mere

covenant entered into betwixt the baptised person and God, of which it was the Sponsor's duty to remind him when he had come to years of understanding. Such, no doubt, is his duty, but if he has nothing more than the memory of a dedication to use as an inducement to the baptised person to walk worthy of his baptism, it may well be that he will find the duty laid upon him heavier than he can accomplish. I believe that a great deal of the slackness on the part of Sponsors, in meeting their obligations faithfully to bring up the children in whose name they stood at the font, is due to a loose and vague conception of the sacrament, in which it is practically reduced to an empty ceremony. The only remedy for such a state of things is clear and consistent teaching. Let Sponsors be distinctly taught that their obligation springs from the promise of God, which cannot fail. Let them understand that they are entitled to assume (as the Church, unless she is to stultify herself and make nought of the ordinance of God, is entitled to assume) that every baptised person is within the Covenant of Grace, and that it has been committed to them as representing the Church, which is the channel of that grace, to see to it that by no failure on their part shall it fail to be appropriated and realised in the faith and life of those on whose behalf they asked and received what the Church is empowered to give through this holy ordinance.

The first duty, then, of the Sponsor must naturally refer to the development of true faith. And although faith itself is a gift of God, and cannot be created by us, yet faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Instruction in the doctrines of our religion is thus the first duty of the Sponsor. For this reason the Church has always rightly required from them a profession of faith. As is well known, the Directory does not expressly prescribe any definite form in which the profession of faith may be made. In the Book of Common Order the Apostle's Creed is used. When this was abandoned, the lamentable practice

arose of every minister imposing "whatever creed he pleased" — surely the most intolerable burden of all. What the Directory does require on the part of the Sponsor is a solemn promise "to bring up the child in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian religion." Where those grounds are to be found, in a form suitable for imposing such an obligation of faith as baptism seems to require, except in the historic creed of the Church, it is impossible to say. It is extremely desirable, alike in the interests of simplicity and definiteness on the part of the Church, and of freedom on the part of the Sponsor, that he should not be at the mercy of any individual minister, but should distinctly understand that he is declaring his adhesion to the historic faith into which the child is baptised, and in which he is bound to see that the child is instructed. It is astounding to hear the objections which have been recently taken to the use of this simple and venerable symbol of the Church, not merely on the part of negative critics, but on the part of those who profess to maintain the evangelical position. I received a pamphlet lately, written by a clergyman with great confidence in his own orthodoxy, gravely and elaborately seeking to prove that the Apostles' Creed was an Arian document. Attempts have also been made to prejudice the use of it by describing the creed as Roman Catholic, much in the same way as the Lord's Prayer seems occasionally to be regarded as the exclusive property of the Anglican Church. A creed which is obviously an amplification of the baptismal formula, and is certainly in harmony, not merely with the faith of the Church as a whole, but with the teaching of the Church of Scotland at every period of her history, is certainly the most fitting form in which to express the obligation of Sponsorship. It is the faith of the Church. It is the message which she delegates to the Sponsor as her representative.

The other side of the obligation of the Sponsor has to do with character. He is bound not merely to instruct the child "in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian

religion," but "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Here, again, his obligation will be illuminated and simplified by a true view of the nature of baptism and of the possibilities of spiritual life which have thereby been assured. Two extremes have prevailed in this matter—the extreme of superstition, and the extreme of revivalism. Both are to be condemned; though it is not to be forgotten that each of them has erred by taking part of the truth for the whole. The Church is bound to declare the whole counsel of God, and the ministers of Christ, as the stewards of the mysteries of God, do certainly fail in their duty when they do not make it clear to every Sponsor that, as the gift conferred through baptism is not separated from true faith and the operation of the Holy Spirit, neither is that gift to be considered of none effect because its silent influences may be unperceived by the eye of man.

One main duty of the Church is to strengthen and confirm the Sponsor by clear, simple, and consistent teaching as to the true meaning of the sacrament. The doctrine of baptismal grace, if I may venture to quote, in conclusion, the words of one of the most eloquent of English preachers, the late Canon Liddon, "really supplies the moral leverage which is essential to an effective Christian education. 'I never understood the Church Catechism,' said a very thoughtful woman to him. 'until I became a mother, and felt that I had to answer to God for the moral training of my children. I do not know how I could have even set to work unless I had been sure that He was with them, that I could count upon something stronger than anything I myself could give them, that I could appeal to His presence and to His gifts.'"

To foster in the Sponsor this conviction is the best aid the Church can give to help him in fulfilling his obligation. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

SPONSORS : THE OBLIGATION RESTING UPON
THEM, HOW IT MAY BEST BE FULFILLED,
AND WHAT HELP THE CHURCH SHOULD
FURNISH THEM WITH IN FULFILLING IT.

REV. E. M. MASSON, M.A.

IN this brief paper I desire only to call attention to the help which may be given to Sponsors by providing them with Sacramental literature of a proper kind. And Sponsors who are sincerely desirous of fulfilling the Sponsorial Covenant need all the help that can be given them. They need all the help that can be given them by the Church in her public and authoritative teaching; by the clergy when celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Baptism; and by students of the Word and Truth of God, whether in the ministry or not, whose attention has been turned to the study of Mystical and Sacramental Theology, and who know how greatly they have been enriched in their own souls by the fruits which such study has furnished them withal.

The Sacramental literature of the Scottish Church is not extensive. And portions of this literature—the plainer and more popular portions especially—cannot be recommended for use, inasmuch as they sometimes give but a shallow and one-sided exhibition of the true doctrine of the Sacraments. There is still room for a plain Manual, dealing briefly with the Sacrament of Baptism alone, which may be put in the hands of Sponsors before presenting their little ones for Baptism, and which Sponsors may in due time put in the hands of the baptised. And to the pre-

paration of such a Manual, this Society, it appears to me, would do well to address itself in the interest alike of Sponsors and the baptised.

The Manual for the present might consist of three parts.

The first part should deal with the doctrine of Baptism as held and taught by the Scottish Church. Its doctrine is that of the Word of God. It is the doctrine of the Church of the early centuries, as developed under the guidance of the informing Spirit of God, and ultimately formulated in that glorious article of the Nicene Creed—"I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: *I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins*: and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." And it is in the main the doctrine of the ancient Celtic Church, from which we derive our descent, and of which we claim to be the direct and proper representatives in these times.

The doctrine of Baptism as held in the Scottish Church is contained, I need not say, in the Westminster Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. In the Larger Catechism especially, that doctrine is stated with admirable breadth and precision. It is to our First Confession, however, that of 1560, the native and proper Confession of the Scottish Church, that we must turn for the fullest and loftiest statement of what the Church believes, and of what, when true to her best traditions, she teaches concerning the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Holy Supper of the Lord. The Sacramental teaching of this venerable Symbol, which ought never to have been laid aside for one of English and sectarian origin, is unspeakably precious. Let me quote a sentence or two from it. "We utterly condemn the vanity of them that affirm the Sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs. No; we assuredly believe that by Baptism we are ingrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of His justice, by which our sins are covered and remitted; and also that in the Supper, rightly used, Christ Jesus is so joined with us that He becometh the very nourishment and food of our souls. . . . The faithful, in the

right use of the Lord's Table, do so eat the Body and drink the Blood of the Lord Jesus that He remaineth in them, and they in Him; yea, they are so made flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, that as the Eternal Godhead hath given to the flesh of Christ Jesus (which of its own condition and nature was mortal and corruptible) life and immortality, so Christ Jesus His flesh and blood, eaten and drunk by us, give unto us the same prerogatives." I do not at all wonder at Edward Irving—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—giving to this document the highest encomium which he was capable of bestowing upon a work of fallible man, or that for several years he was in the habit of reading it twice in the year to his people.* And if this Society could induce competent men to state the doctrine of Baptism, with the First Confession of the Scottish Church before them, and beside it Book V. of "Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity" and Edward Irving's "Homilies on Baptism," that of itself would do something to redeem our Church from the arid Sacramental theology still prevalent among us, and would confer no common benefit on Sponsors, on the baptised, and on the whole Church.

The second part of the Manual might be of a practical character, and be occupied with setting forth the Duty of Sponsors to the baptised and how to fulfil that duty.

When Sponsors come to the Font and present their children for Baptism they promise and vow certain things in their name and on their behalf. And in this little volume the Church would speak to Sponsors of the reality and binding character of their promise and vow, and so stir them up to the steady fulfilment of both. For that, I need not say, is what Sponsors have to do, if they would not fail in duty to the baptised and to Christ the Lord. They must think of those for whom they stood surety. They must take a personal interest in them and render them all possible spiritual help. They must constantly remind them of their Baptism, and of their standing in the Church

* Irving's "Collected Writings," Vol. I. p. 608.

as its baptised members. They must pray for them. They must watch lovingly over them as they grow up into the estate of boyhood and girlhood, counselling them, reproofing them when reproof is called for, and encouraging them in all that is good. Finally, they must see to it that they are instructed in the principles of the Christian Faith. And regarding themselves as the servants of the Holy Ghost, and His ministers to persuade the children of Christ, they must travail over them until the germ of grace implanted in them in Baptism has flowered into the fair beginnings of a holy life, and they come to the Sacrament of Communion in the Body and Blood of the Lord, to assume the Baptismal Covenant and make an open dedication of themselves to their Redeemer, all of which should be done at a much earlier age than is ordinarily the case. With such matters of duty, the unfolding and the enforcement of them, the second part of the Manual might be occupied.

The last part might be made up of devotional matter likely to be helpful in homes where the parents are faithful Christian people, and the children have by Baptism been brought into "the great inheritance, and the equally great responsibility of the Church of Christ."

Such matter I would restrict to Hymns and Prayers. The Hymns to set forth the loftiest conceptions of the Sacrament; the Prayers, on the other hand, to be of the simplest kind, and consist of only one or two sentences. There should be a prayer for the use of the parent or Sponsor in secret. There should be a prayer for the baptised, in which they beseech the Great Almighty Father to keep them true to their Covenant, and mercifully preserve them from lapsing from the grace of Baptism. There should be a prayer to be said by the father when leaving home for his work in the morning, in which he commits his wife and children for the day to God. There should be a prayer to be said by the mother and children, in which they unite in asking Almighty God to have the father in His holy keeping while occupied with the

work and labour of the day. There should be prayers for use in the homes of the miner, the fisherman, the sailor, and persons whose work is of a dangerous kind. There should be a prayer to be said when one of the family is going on a journey, and a prayer to be said when one of the family is leaving the old home to begin the battle of life. There should be a prayer to be said in time of sickness, and a prayer to be said on the restoration of the sick to health. Finally, there should be a prayer to be said when one in the house is about to die—a prayer breathing the spirit of fullest filial trust in God and hope for the future in remembrance of the relation in which the dying one stands to God through Baptism—a prayer in which the departing soul is committed to the mercy of God which “is in the heavens,” and is laid down in the hands of the Lord of Life and of Death, to be borne by Him and His Shining Ones into the rest of Paradise, there to await the consummation and perfecting of the bliss of the Saints in the great Day of the Lord’s Appearing.

Such, in barest outline, is the Manual which I should wish to see in the hands of Sponsors, and to the preparation of which the Society would do well to set itself. With the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Nicene Creed added to the matter which I have rapidly sketched, the little volume would not cost more than a few pence. This Manual would, I believe, at once become popular, and perhaps become to devout souls in Scotland what a work such as that of Canon Carter of Clewer is to thousands of devout souls in the Anglican Church. And humble though such an instrumentality would be, we might yet cherish the hope that it might, in its place, be used by the Holy Ghost, the Gift of the Ascended and Glorified Lord Jesus, in working out the ultimate end of all services, sacraments, and ministries of the Church, which is, “**THAT WE AND ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN HOLINESS,**

AND BE PREPARED IN ONE BODY FOR THE APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; WHEN HE SHALL BE REVEALED FROM HEAVEN IN LIKE MANNER AS HE WENT UP, AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL BE RAISED, AND WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN TO HIS COMING SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

Uniform with this Volume. Vol. II., price 4s. 6d. nett.

SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY CONFERENCES

Second Series

THE DIVINE LIFE IN THE CHURCH

AN AFFIRMATION OF

The Doctrine of Holy Baptism

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS RELATING TO

The Scottish Church

Her History, Work, and Present Need



SUBJECTS OF VOLUME II.—Celtic Inheritance of Scottish Church—Church Fabrics—Hymnody, Church Music, and Choirs—Training of Candidates for Holy Ministry—Probationers—Right Lines of Lay-Work—Duty of Church to Special Classes—General Home Mission Work of Church—Special Classes—Seamen—Inmates of Hospitals—Paupers—Prisoners—Remediable Defects in Presbyterian Organization—Attitude of Church to Leading Phases of Modern Thought and Criticism—Revival of Churemmanship in Scotland.

CONTRIBUTORS TO VOLUME II.—Rev. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D., Linton; Rev. Professor ROBERTSON, D.D.; Rev. Professor FLINT, D.D., LL.D.; Rev. G. W. SPROTT, D.D., North Berwick; Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, D.D., Govan; Rev. JAMES COOPER, D.D., Aberdeen; Rev. M. P. JOHNSTONE, B.D., Fraserburgh; Rev. EVAN M. MASSON, M.A., Dull; Rev. DUNCAN MACGREGOR, Inverallochy; Rev. JOHN H. CRAWFORD, M.A., Abercorn; Rev. HENRY M. HAMILTON, D.D., Hamilton; Rev. E. L. THOMPSON, D.D., Hamilton; Rev. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A., St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh; J. M. NISBET, Esq., Aberdeen; Rev. W. H. MACLEOD, B.D., Buchanan; R. ROWAND ANDERSON, Esq., LL.D., Edinburgh; Rev. H. J. WOTHERSPOON, M.A., Edinburgh; Rev. JOHN PARKER, Glasgow; PATRICK COOPER, Esq., M.A., Aberdeen; DAVID PATRICK, Esq., Hamilton; J. H. MILLER, Esq., Advocate.

Edinburgh

J. GARDNER HITT, 37 GEORGE STREET

GLASGOW: JOHN SMITH & SON, 19 RENFIELD STREET

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW

Demy 8vo, cloth. Price 4s. 6d. nett.

SCOTTISH CHURCH SOCIETY CONFERENCES

First Series

"Ask for the Old Paths, . . . and walk therein."

Edinburgh

J. GARDNER HITT, 37 GEORGE STREET

GLASGOW: JOHN SMITH & SON, 19 RENFIELD STREET

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW.

EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

Times.—"This volume will be found very interesting."

Saturday Review.—"Publications of considerable interest. . . . The aim of the Society is to uphold the catholicity of Presbyterianism. . . . We cannot but rejoice that the glory of the Divine Household and the priceless heritage of the past should kindle men's minds anywhere and everywhere. These ideas are the bulwark against laxity and the true road to freedom. We fear to say more, because the chief difficulty these good men have to encounter is the charge that they are trying to bring the Church of Scotland into bondage to Anglican ideas. What they preach was not invented at Canterbury. It comes from a much higher source, and this consciousness will be their strength in the day of trial."

Scotsman.—"The writers are no opportunists; they are men who know what they mean, and express it well. . . . Some of the papers are extremely interesting."

Herald.—" . . . These papers deserve to be widely read. . . . The S.C.S. has one great advantage. It knows what it would be at."

Scottish Review.—"These papers 'will have the effect of placing the Society clearly before the public, and dissipating a number of mistakes which are afloat in respect to its character and aims.'"

London Quarterly.—"The papers 'are devout, and often insist upon truths which all fully-organised Churches need to recognise.'"

Guardian.—“When we turn to the record of the Society’s Conferences we are struck at once with two characteristics—the frank confession of manifold imperfections in the Presbyterian Communion, and the boldness of the remedies proposed for their removal. . . . There is much to interest in these Conferences. . . . After the manner of their countrymen, they advocate a root and branch reformation.”

Church Times.—“These papers cover a good deal of ground, and touch subjects of the deepest importance. . . . We can promise those who care to purchase the volume ample return for their money. We congratulate the Society upon its first important publication. The members clearly have the courage of their opinions, and have exercised praiseworthy skill in the selection and handling of their subjects.”

Aberdeen Free Press.—“Some of the papers are really admirable, and all too brief—Professor Flint’s, for instance.”

Inverness Courier.—“This volume deserves careful attention. Many readers will find the contents an agreeable surprise. . . . It will help them to understand how it is that the Church of Scotland has made such rapid progress in recent years. The reverence, the earnestness, the profound attention bestowed on the fundamental elements of the Christian faith, as displayed in these papers, could not fail to win their way to the hearts of the people.”

Philadelphia Presbyterian Journal.—“The papers are all ably written, though, of course, of different degrees of merit, and are worthy of preservation, in this volume of 200 pages, as voicing a sentiment that is strong in this branch of the Church.”

Christian Union.—“Professor Flint’s paper on the Church’s Duty and Attitude towards Social Problems is well conceived, and quite in touch with the spirit of the times. Indeed, it is a calm and dispassionate presentation of what is true and what untrue in Socialism. . . . The work should be read by every Christian minister, as the papers compass the question that concerns the Church’s Duty.”

PAPERS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT—

The Very Rev. Professor WILLIAM MILLIGAN, D.D., University of Aberdeen.

OPENING ADDRESS—

Rev. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D., Minister of Linton Parish.

DEVOTIONAL LIFE: COMMUNION WITH GOD AND COMMUNION IN GOD—

Rev. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A., Minister of St Cuthbert’s Parish, Edinburgh.

Rev. H. J. WOTHERSPOON, M.A., Minister of Burnbank Parish, Hamilton.

NATIONAL RELIGION : ITS PRINCIPLES AND POSSIBLE EMBODI-
MENTS—

The Very Rev. GEORGE HUTCHISON, D.D., Minister of
Banchofy-Ternan Parish.

Rev. R. S. KIRKPATRICK, B.D., Minister of Dalbeattie Parish.

THE PRESENT CALL TO WITNESS FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL
TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL—

Rev. JAMES COOPER, D.D., Minister of the East Parish, Aber-
deen.

Rev. GEORGE CAMPBELL, Minister of Eastwood Parish.

THE CHURCH'S CALL TO STUDY SOCIAL QUESTIONS—

Rev. Professor ROBERT FLINT, D.D., LL.D., University of
Edinburgh.

THE DIVINE ORDER OF CHURCH FINANCE AND OTHER
SYSTEMS—

Rev. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D., Minister of Linton Parish.

Rev. M. P. JOHNSTONE, B.D., Minister of Fraserburgh Parish.

THE OBSERVANCE IN ITS MAIN FEATURES OF THE CHRISTIAN
YEAR—

Rev. E. L. THOMPSON, D.D., Minister of Hamilton Parish
(2nd charge).

Rev. W. H. MACLEOD, B.D., Minister of Buchanan Parish.

THE TRAINING OF THE CLERGY—

Rev. Professor JOHN DOBIE, B.D., University of Edinburgh.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION AND THE DAILY
SERVICE—

Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D., Minister of Govan Parish,
Glasgow.

Rev. A. W. WOTHERSPOON, M.A., Minister of Oatlands Parish,
Glasgow.

THE CHURCH AND THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG—

Rev. J. HOWARD CRAWFORD, M.A., Minister of Abercorn
Parish.

THE HISTORICAL CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—

Rev. G. W. SPROTT, D.D., Minister of North Berwick Parish.

Rev. THOMAS LEISHMAN, D.D., Minister of Linton Parish.

EVANGELISTIC WORK AND ITS PROPER BASIS—

Rev. H. J. WOTHERSPOON, M.A., Minister of Burnbank Parish.

Rev. J. CROMARTY SMITH, B.D., Minister of Alexandria Parish.

APPENDIX—Programme of the Conference.

Constitution of the Scottish Church Society.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

This day is published, Price 4s. 6d. net; per post, 4s. 10d.,

The Greek Tenses in the New Testament. Their Bearing on its accurate Interpretation, with a Rendering of the Gospels, and Notes. By the Rev. P. THOMSON, B.D., Minister of Dumfries.
"An exceedingly able and interesting volume, . . . well done, and deserves success."—*Scots Magazine.*

"This highly useful and admirably planned book."—*Glasgow Herald.*
". . . Chapter on the force of the tenses clearly expressed and cleverly illustrated."—*The Expository Times.*

"A scholarly contribution to the textual literature of the New Testament. . . . The work is well worthy the attention not only of scholars, but also of the general Bible-reading public."—*The Christian World.*

A New Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Crown 8vo. Price 2s.

Handbook of Scottish Church Defence. By CHRISTOPHER N. JOHNSTON, Advocate. Prepared at the request of the Church Interests Committee.

"It will be found a most useful and compendious book of reference on the Church question, and its information may be regarded as guaranteed by the author's name. . . . The inquirer will readily find the facts or explanations he is in search of on any Scottish Ecclesiastical topic, from tithes, missions, and other weighty matters down to banis and bethereils."—*Scotsman.*

"As a treasure-house or mine of arguments in favour of the Church of Scotland it will be found extremely valuable, and, being arranged alphabetically, eminently convenient for purposes of reference and quotation."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"The work is almost encyclopædic in scope, and contains much serviceable information to all interested in, or dealing with Scottish ecclesiastical questions."—*Dumfries Advertiser.*

Crown 8vo. Price 2s. Cloth, or 1s. 6d. Paper.

The Story of the Burning Bush: A Simple Narrative of the Church of Scotland. By the Rev. J. C. CARRICK, B.D., F.S.A. Scot., Minister of Newbattle.

"A most readable little book. . . . Narrated in a most interesting style."—*Scotsman.*

In Crown 8vo. Price 2s.

Church Establishments; or, The Bible and the Nation: With a Special Reference to the Church of Scotland. By Rev. DANIEL FRASER, A.M., Author of "The Decalogue," &c.

Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.

Scottish Liturgies of the Reign of James VI. Edited by G. W. SPROTT, D.D., North Berwick.

Fala and Soutra: Including a History of the Ancient "Domus de Soltre," &c. By JAMES HUNTER, F.S.A. Scot., Minister of the Parish. With Portraits and Illustrations of Historical Buildings, Antiquarian Relics, &c. In Crown 4to, Beautifully Printed and Handsomely Bound. Price 15s.

A few Large Paper Copies, Numbered and Signed, on Hand-made Paper, with the Illustrations on Indian Paper. Price 31s. 6d.

"An interesting account of this venerable halting-place of armies and travellers. . . . Mr Hunter's book is handsomely brought out and profusely illustrated."—*Scotsman.*

"Mr Hunter's volume will be read with interest and profit by lovers of antiquities, and may even be of some service to the historian."—*Glasgow Herald.*

The Decalogue. Grievous Mistakes about it Corrected, and its Truth Opened up. A Tract for the Times. By the Rev. DANIEL FRASER, Author of "The Bible and the Family," and of "The Bible and the Nation."

Crown 8vo. Price 2s. 6d.

The God of Reason and Revelation. By the late Very Rev. W. R. PIRIE, D.D., Principal of Aberdeen University.

"A singularly acute and clearly reasoned book."—*Glasgow Herald.*

EDINBURGH: J. GARDNER HITT, 37 George Street.

Parish Church Tracts.

BY MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

Issued monthly and supplied in quantities for distribution at 1/- per 100; with space left for filling in name of Parish, &c.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Why don't you go to Church? | 22. Matrimony. |
| 2. What shall I do with my Sunday? | 23. Are you a communicant? |
| 3. That a father should pity his own children. | 24. Worship in spirit and truth. |
| 4. Baptism. | 25. Thrift. |
| 5. Preparing the Saviour's way. | 26. Are there few that be saved? |
| 6. Where do the lapsed come from? | 27. Superstition or Godliness. |
| 7. The penitent man. | 28. Proper pride. |
| 8. The price of a glass. | 29. I wish that I was converted. |
| 9. Whose are you? | 30. Whether women have not souls. |
| 10. Where's your hurry? | 31. Substitutes for conversion.—1. |
| 11. Christ has come—Christ will come. | 32. What do you mean by a <i>Saviour</i> ? |
| 12. Putting by the time. | 33. Substitutes for conversion.—11. |
| 13. The calling of Baptism. | 34. To give or to get. |
| 14. Your ministry in Church. | 35. The blessed hope. |
| 15. Family Religion. | 36. A good new year. |
| 16. "Only a habit." | 37. Always begging. |
| 17. The use of Prayer. | 38. Not happy in Heaven. |
| 18. Second-hand religion. | 39. Thoughts for a mother and father. |
| 19. What is your life? | 40. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit. |
| 20. Betting. | 41. Christian giving. |
| 21. The piety of times of affliction. | |

OTHERS IN PREPARATION.

PARISH CHURCH TRACTS (First Series); Being the first two years' issues neatly bound in cloth limp, price 9d.

"They are short, direct, definite, and thoroughly good. They can also be localised by a heading containing the name of the Parish, the hours of service, meetings, &c. This is a specially valuable feature."—*Life and Work*.

"They are pointed, earnest, and scriptural, and we can warmly recommend them for parochial distribution. They might well be adopted for general use."—*Mission Record*.

"Would do well for distribution by Church District Visitors."—*Guardian*.

Church Pamphlets.

A National Recognition of Religion. Illustrated by an account of the Form and Order of the Coronation Service, with some Remarks on the Ecclesiastical Position in Scotland. By JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D., Minister of Govan Parish. This Pamphlet contains a Full Description of the Coronation Service, which furnishes the most magnificent example, in the sphere to which it relates, of an act of national acknowledgment of the Majesty of God. Price 6d.

The Present Duty of the Church of Scotland and its Limits. By JOHN MACLEOD, B.A., D.D., Minister of Govan Parish. Price 4d.

Parish Councils in Country Parishes and the Church of Scotland in relation to them. By Rev. JOHN KERR, M.A., F.R.S.E., Dirlton. Price 6d.

The Future of the Church in Scotland. A Paper read at a Conference of the Scottish Episcopal Church at Aberdeen on the 9th of October 1894. By the Rev. COSMO GORDON LANG, M.A., Fellow and Dean of Divinity of St Mary Magdalene College, and Vicar of St Mary's, Oxford; Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Lichfield. Price 6d., per post, 7d.

"Praises with Understanding." Being a Practical Guide for the use of Ministers and others in the selection and arrangement of the service of praise in the Church of Scotland. By H. M. CHARTERS MACPHERSON. Price 6d. cloth; 3d. paper; postage, 1d.

St Cuthbert and St Cuthbert's: Two Historical Sketches, with numerous Illustrations. By Rev. J. C. CARRICK, B.D., F.S.A. Scot., Minister of Newcastle. Price 6d.

The Links. An Auld Kirk Allegory. By R. A. S. In Feap. 4to, Price 6d.

EDINBURGH: J. GARDNER HITT, 37 George Street.

BW5525 S43 1895 v.1
The Lumina in the North an

...



1 1012 00038 5650