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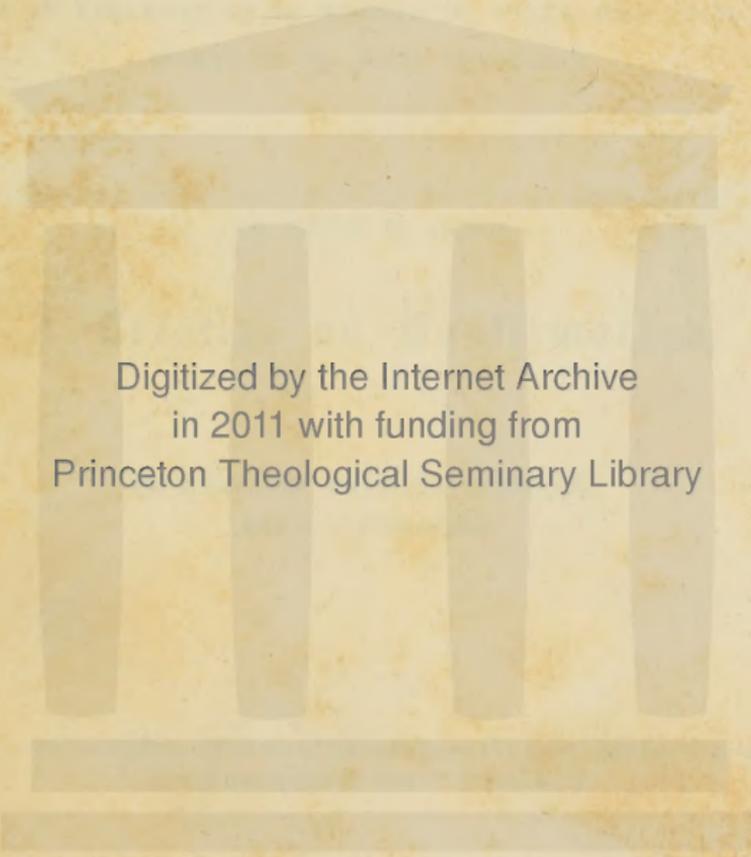
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A TREATISE
ON
BAPTISM;

WITH AN EXHORTATION TO RECEIVE IT, TRANSLATED FROM THE
WORKS OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A Treatise on Confirmation,

BY FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK,
Bishop of Philadelphia.

“ Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers
of the mysteries of God.” 1 Cor. iv. 1.

PHILADELPHIA :
M. FITHIAN, 61 NORTH SECOND STREET.

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To The Right Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bishop of Louisville.

RIGHT REV. SIR,

The permission received from you several years ago, to publish, with your sanction, some discourses then recently delivered by me on baptism, in your Cathedral, emboldens me to dedicate to you the treatise on this sacrament, of which those sermons form the rude materials. Although my relations to you have changed, I entertain the same profound veneration for your character, and the same devoted attachment to your person.

I have the honor to be, Right Rev. Sir,

Your devoted brother in Christ,

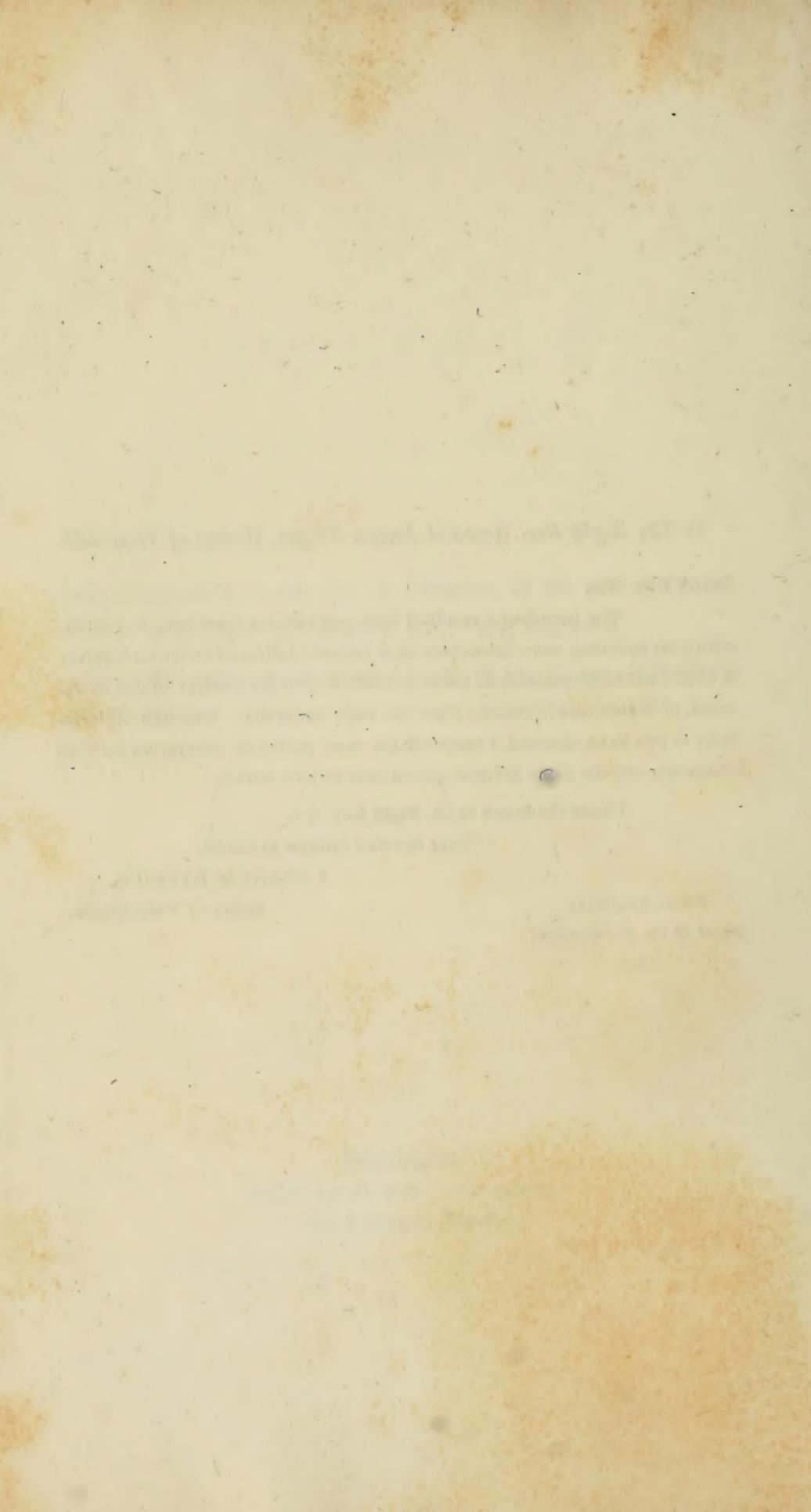
† FRANCIS PATRICK,

Bishop of Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA,

Feast of the Purification,

1843.





P R E F A C E .

SOME years ago, when I was a Missionary in Kentucky, an invitation or challenge given me by a Baptist Minister, to preach in his Meeting-house on the subject of baptism, which I declined, induced me to deliver in the Cathedral of Bardstown, four sermons on baptism, which I subsequently published. I have been frequently urged to reprint them ; and have, at length, determined to throw the materials of them into a new form, better suited to the critical nature of the investigations which they embrace. My present position, in a city wherein the Society of Friends is numerous, has led me to treat in this work of the institution of water-baptism, which was not called in question by those who invited the original controversy. The learned tract on this subject from the pen of Dr. Pusey has so abundantly established the efficacy of this Sacrament, that I have been less solicitous to multiply proofs of it, although I have treated of it at some length. The necessity of

baptism, and the lawfulness of baptizing infants, and the validity of the various modes of baptism are the chief points on which I dwell. To immersion we are by no means opposed, although we maintain the sufficiency of other modes, and the necessity to respect the established immemorial usage of particular places. In a controversy between Charles Blackwood, an Anabaptist, and Thomas Blake, a Presbyterian, the former having alleged in his behalf the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas, Blake replied: "Aquinas was a man zealous for the use of dipping, as is generally the popish party and popishly inclined."* The practice of sprinkling, which prevails among Presbyterians, is exposed to so great danger of nullity, from the light manner in which it is performed, that Catholics are not favorable to it; although they hold such aspersion as may be reasonably deemed an ablution, to be valid baptism.

In maintaining Catholic truth, I have had occasion to notice the opposite errors, held by various sects, and advocated in the writings of individuals still living. This I have done without respect of persons, yet, as I hope, without forgetting the courtesy and charity which become the apologist of religion. To give pain to others affords me no gratification, but I dare not dissemble the awful departure from the ancient and unchangeable principles of

* *Infants Baptisme freed from Antichristianisme, by Thomas Blake, Minister of the Gospel.* London, 1645, p. 10.

faith, which is perceived among the professed ministers of
CHRIST.

I have subjoined to this Treatise the translation of a discourse of ST. BASIL THE GREAT, in which he exhorts the many who in his age delayed baptism, although convinced of the truth of Christianity, to hasten to receive it. The readers will no doubt be gratified to hear, as it were, this venerable Doctor of the East, after fifteen centuries, explaining the nature and effects of baptism, enforcing its necessity, and pointing to the vain pretexts on which it was by many postponed. His discourse will be particularly felt by some, who in our day likewise postpone, from time to time, the reception of this most necessary Sacrament.

I take this opportunity of correcting a mistake into which I fell, in my work on Justification, concerning the view given of the nature of justifying faith in a work then recently published by Mr. Vanbrugh Livingston. It appeared to me similar to one of the views presented by Luther: but as this very respectable gentleman immediately on the appearance of my book assured me that he rejected altogether the theories of Luther on this subject, I cheerfully retract my assertion. Since that time the estimable author has abjured every error opposed to Catholic truth, and has taken refuge in the ark.

I have annexed a short Treatise on Confirmation, as it is meet that these sacraments should not be separated,

whenever they may be conveniently received at the same time, according to the ancient discipline of the Church. Controversy on this latter subject being rare, although it be cancelled by the sects generally from the number of the sacraments, I have not thought it necessary to enter very deeply into the examination of the proofs and objections.

To my readers I earnestly recommend devout and humble prayer, to prepare their minds for the strong Catholic truths which they will meet with in this work. The institutions of our Divine Redeemer are to be regarded with the eye of enlightened faith; and with an entire acquiescence in the justice and wisdom of His laws. It is weakness to attempt to soften down what may appear harsh in the divine teaching, and to present the revealed truths in a garb that may suit the capricious fancy of erring man.



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ON BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

BAPTISM OF JOHN.

BEFORE I treat of the baptism instituted by Christ our Lord, I am under the necessity of considering the nature of the baptismal rite which John performed. The "Friends," or "Quakers," as they are popularly called, whose Society derived its origin from George Fox, an English Anabaptist,* discarding all external rites, say that

* He was by trade a shoemaker, and gave rise to this Society about the year 1650. The appellation of Quakers was given them, as some say, because George Fox bade a magistrate tremble at the word of the Lord, or as others explain it, from their trembling in their meetings occasionally, when inwardly struggling with the enemy: "As they come to be sensible of this power of his that works against them, and to wrestle with it by the armour of light, sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such inward travail, while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers, like the going of two contrary tides, every individual will be strongly exercised as in a day of battle; and thereby trembling, and a motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all." Barclay Apol. Prop. xi. §. 8.

the baptism of Christ is no other than an interior operation of the Divine Spirit, and is thus distinguished from the baptism which John performed, which was in water. The Catholic Church maintains the distinction of the two baptisms, and anathematizes whosoever asserts that the baptism of John had the same virtue as the baptism of Christ: but holds that water is to be used in Christian baptism, as it was in that of John.* Calvin, with his adherents, was aimed at by this canon, since he taught that the difference between them lay in the accompanying instruction, rather than in the rites themselves, or their effects, inasmuch as John taught that Christ was about to come, whilst the Christian rite supposes Him already manifested.† Dr. Miller, however, although an ardent Calvinist, says, “It is certain that John’s baptism was not Christian baptism.”‡ The members of the society called *Baptists* speak to the same effect, and consider their name as identifying them with John, who is styled THE BAPTIST, because he baptized the multitudes that approached him, confessing their sins and professing repentance. Their confession of faith, however, is silent as to the Baptism of John, and speaks only of baptism as an ordinance of the New Testament appointed and ordained by Jesus Christ. Isaac Taylor Hinton, a recent Baptist writer, says: “I regard the baptism of John as Christian baptism

* Conc. Trid. Sess. vii. de Bapt. can. 1. Dr. Pusey has well shown the harmony of the Fathers, in acknowledging the excellence of Christian Baptism, notwithstanding some difference of views as to the effects of the baptism of John. Tract on Baptism. p. 208.

† Inst. l. iv. c. xv. 7. This error is triumphantly refuted by Dr. Pusey, in his learned Tract on Baptism, p. 193. et seq. Am. ed.

‡ Miller’s Tract on Baptism, p. 38, cited by Hinton, p. 68.

in an incompletely developed state; yet with all its elements of character strongly marked.”* He glories in the idea that he has been baptized with the same baptism of which his Great Master and Teacher personally partook.† This, I believe, may be considered as the general sentiment of Baptists.

Whether the rite of baptizing was practised among the Jews previously to the time of John, is a subject of dispute among the learned. Maimonides and other Jewish writers state that it was used on occasion of admitting to Jewish privileges the Gentiles, who sought to be incorporated with the nation; but many maintain that the Gentile converts merely bathed, to express by the act that they cleansed and put away all the defilements of idolatry. Various purifications were prescribed in the Mosaic law, wherein the priest sprinkled with blood, or water, those who had contracted legal uncleanness. The washing of the whole body was also, in some instances, enjoined, yet it was to be performed by the individual himself;‡ and was therefore a bath rather than a baptism, as this term is now understood.

In the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Moses was directed to wash them with water;§ which is the only instance of the ablution of the whole body performed by a person different from the individual washed. Whatever resemblance may exist between this rite, or the legal aspersions, and the baptism of the multitudes by John, it was peculiar to him to baptize on a profession of repentance, and as a means of preparation for the immediate coming of the Redeemer. His baptism was consequently

* A History of Baptism, p. 65, by Isaac Taylor Hinton, Philadelphia, 1840.

† Ibidem, p. 68.

‡ Lev. xv.

§ Exod. xl. 12.

different from the legal purifications, or other Jewish usages, and differed likewise from the rite subsequently instituted by Christ.

Of John Christ had spoken by the prophet Malachy: "Behold, I send my Angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face."* His father Zacharias, under divine inspiration, had declared the preparatory character of his ministry: "'Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way: to give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of their sins.'"†

We are not authorized by any expression of the sacred writers, to consider the baptism of John as a rite of divine institution. He certainly was "a man sent by God," and he acted under the influence of the Divine Spirit, both in his fervent exhortations to penance, and in his adoption of this rite, the natural emblem of the purification of the penitent. It is on that account called *purification*, where mention is made of a dispute between the disciples of John and the Jews on this subject.‡ It does not, however, appear that any grace was imparted by it, although it is styled "the baptism of penance for the remission of sins."§ God, no doubt, granted pardon to the penitent; and therefore the rite of baptism, which, with the preaching of John, was intended to awaken sentiments of penitence, and to excite those baptized to make to themselves a new heart and a new spirit, is properly so designated by the Evangelist. We know of no form of words accompanying the ablution; but it was preceded by the announce-

* Malach. iii. 1.

‡ John iii. 25.

† Luke 1. 76.

§ Mark i. 4.

ment of Him who was to come, that is Jesus, in whom he taught them to believe.

The baptism of Christ by John was intended to give a public sanction to the ministry of the Precursor; whereby all might be encouraged to hearken to his preaching, and every appearance of rivalry between him and Christ might be taken away from the minds of the Jews.* It was at the same time the occasion of a public and solemn testimony of John to Christ, confirmed by heavenly evidences of his divine character; and it was, as it were, to consecrate the waters by the contact of the Incarnate God, that they might thenceforward be the instrument of human sanctification. He, holy and undefiled, needed not "the baptism of penance for the remission of sins;" but when the Precursor hesitated, and acknowledged his own need to be washed and purified by Christ: "I ought to be baptized by thee: and comest thou to me?"—"Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice."†

That the baptism of John was a mere preparatory rite, emblematic of penance, is most evident from the divine

* Among the reasons which Witsius, as quoted by Booth, gives for the baptism of Christ by John, one is "to declare by his voluntary submission to baptism, that he would not delay the delivering up of himself to be immersed in the torrents of hell, yet with a certain faith and hope of emerging." *Miscel. Sac. I. II. Exer. xv. §63.* In reply to Adam Clarke, who affirms that Christ was baptized as High Priest, Hinton observes: "As a Jew, it would have been criminal, instead of praiseworthy, for our Lord to have appropriated to himself any of the ceremonies belonging solely to the tribe of Levi." *A History of Baptism, p. 81.* It is thus that men rashly speak of our Divine Lord!

† *Mat. iii. 14.*

scriptures.* Had it been the same as the baptism of Christ, no one would have been baptized anew, who had received the ablution of the Precursor: yet we find that persons who had been baptized by John were not considered members of the christian church, until they afterwards received the baptism of Christ. “There went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”† In less than five years afterwards, Peter, in Jerusalem itself, addressed the multitude that had gathered together to witness the miraculous manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. Many, who had come from distant nations to worship in the Jewish temple, were present on the occasion: but it is highly probable that the vast majority were of Jerusalem, or of some part of Judea. Peter addressed them as guilty of crucifying Jesus, and putting him to death by the hands of wicked men: and as they were moved to compunction, and inquired what they should do, to obtain forgiveness, he told them: “Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.”‡ He urges each one of them to seek christian baptism, although doubtless many, perhaps most of them, had been baptized by John. “They therefore that received his word were baptized: and there were added in that day about three thousand souls.”§

* Enoch Lewis, having quoted the words of John to our divine Master, observes: “From this account it is obvious that John did not consider his baptism as a part of the christian system.” *Essay on Baptism*, Philadelphia, 1839, p. 21. This is quite true; but the inference the author draws thence, that baptism by water is no part of the christian system, does not follow.

† Mark i. 5.

‡ Acts ii. 38.

§ Ib. 41. It is wonderful with what *sang froid* Hinton, contrary

In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles a fact is recorded, which establishes most clearly the distinction between the baptism of John and that of Jesus. "It came to pass when Apollo was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper parts, came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples. And he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. And he said: In what* then were ye baptized? Who said: In John's baptism. Then Paul said: John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying, That they should believe in him who was to come after him; that is to say, in Jesus. Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."† We need no clearer evidence of the distinction of christian baptism from that of John, and of the necessity of baptizing anew, with the christian rite, those whom John had baptized. These disciples were supposed by the Apostle to have received christian baptism, and were therefore interrogated by him whether they had received the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands; he being solicitous to strengthen them by this new gift, in case they had not already received it. To his surprise they were ignorant

to the plain import of the sacred text, observes: "I have always considered this number to include those who had been baptized either by John, or by the disciples of Christ during his lifetime, who availed themselves on the first public appearance of the church in its organized capacity to unite with it." A History of Baptism, p. 92.

* "Εἰς here, and often, does not denote *purpose*,—but εἰς with the accus. is put for ἐν (by) with a dative, as in forms of swearing, e. gr. Matt. v. 35, εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, which is just after followed by ὀμνέειν ἐν τῇ γῆ." Bloomfield *in locum*.

† Acts xix. 1.

of the rite of which he spoke, and of the gift imparted by it. They said that they had not even heard that there was a Holy Ghost. The question put by the Apostle, "In what then were you baptized?" supposes that express belief in the Holy Ghost was required of applicants for christian baptism, and that He was solemnly invoked in its administration; and consequently that no adult could be baptized without a knowledge of His divine influence and gifts. The baptism of John was accompanied with no such invocation: and although the Divine Spirit, in the shape of a dove, descended on our Redeemer when baptized, it was not the effect of the rite, but the testimony of the Father to His beloved Son, and the pledge and token of the grace to be annexed to the baptism which He was to institute. The baptism of John was a penitential rite, emblematic of the purification of the repentant sinner; and it served as a preparation for Him who was to come, who should baptize in the Holy Ghost. The explanation given by the Apostle was followed by the administration of christian baptism: "Having heard these things they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."* The attempt of some to refer this to the baptism of John, as if they were the words of Paul, rather than of the sacred historian, is too destitute of all plausibility to deserve refutation; especially as the sacred writer immediately adds, that Paul imposed hands *on them*, thus identifying the persons baptized with those who received the imposition of hands.†

* Acts xix. 5.

† Gilbert, in his excellent Tracts on Baptism, p. 21, handles this argument with great ability. Dr. Pusey happily exposes the absurdity of the exposition of the text invented by Marnix, and adopted by

It may be useful to show how the ancients understood the words of the sacred text.

TERTULLIAN observes: "In the Acts of the Apostles we find, that those who had the baptism of John, had not received the Holy Ghost, of whom they had not even heard: therefore it was not heavenly, since it did not impart heavenly things."* ST. OPTATUS says: "No one had been baptized in the Trinity: no one had yet known Christ: no one had heard of the Holy Ghost: the baptism of John was different from the baptism of Christ. Paul said: In what baptism have you been baptized? And they said: John's. He persuaded them to receive the baptism of Christ."† The motive of the second baptism is justly stated by ST. AUGUSTIN to have been no other than the difference between that of John and that of Christ: "We read," he says, "in the Acts of the Apostles, that those were baptized by Paul who had already been baptized by John for no other reason but because the baptism of John was not the baptism of Christ."‡ These testimonies show

Beza, and many reformed and Lutheran writers: "When scripture says, '*they* were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on *them*, the Holy Ghost came on *them*, and *they* spake with tongues, and prophesied. And *all* the men were about twelve:' '*they*' in the first place means all who in Judea received John's baptism, and in the second, the twelve only who were at Ephesus; so that scripture does not mean that St. Paul laid his hands on the same persons who had been baptized, for these were, according to this exposition, all John's disciples, but that it does mean, that St. Paul laid his hands upon these twelve, as having been some of those formerly baptized by John: and this though scripture adds, '*And all the men were about twelve.*'" *Tract on Baptism*, p. 214.

* *Lib. de Bapt.*

† *L. v. contra Parmenian.* ‡ *L. v. de Bapt. c. ix.*

the sense which the sacred text naturally presented to minds unbiassed by the controversies of modern times.

The distinction between the two baptisms is broadly stated by these ancient writers, on the authority of the divine scriptures: "The baptism of penance," TERTULIAN observes, "was given as the disposition for the forgiveness and sanctification which were to ensue in Christ: for the baptism of penance for the remission of sins which he preached, was announced for the future remission: since penance precedes, remission follows; and this is to prepare the way: he that prepares, does not himself perfect, but leaves the perfecting to another."* ST. JEROM calls attention to the preparatory and imperfect character of the baptism of John, and appeals to the divine writings: "Hear what the scriptures teach: the baptism of John did not remit sins, but was a baptism of penance for the remission of sins, that is the future remission, which was afterwards to come by the sanctification of Christ."† ST. ATHANASIUS, explaining the words of the Baptist, observes: "That expression, 'He will baptize you in the Holy Ghost,' means that He will purify you: inasmuch as this could not be effected by the baptism of John, but by that of Christ, who has power even to forgive sins."‡ ST. BASIL, urging catechumens to hasten to the font, puts before them the anxiety of the Jews to receive the baptism of John as an example worthy of their imitation, and shows how much more excellent christian baptism is: "John preached a baptism of penance, and all Judea went forth to him: the Lord proclaims a baptism, whereby we are adopted as children of God, and who is there that hopes

* *Lib. de Bapt.*

† *Dial. adv. Lucifer.*

‡ *Ex. Serm., sive Comm. in Matth.*

in Him, who will refuse to receive it? That baptism was of an introductory character: this perfects the receiver; that separated from sin: this unites with God. The preaching of John was of one man, and yet it drew all to penance: you are taught by the prophets: 'Wash yourselves, be clean;' you are admonished by the psalmist: 'Come ye to Him, and be enlightened;' you hear the glad tidings from the Apostles: 'Do penance and be baptized each one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you will receive the promise of the Holy Ghost;' you are invited by the Lord himself: 'Come to me, all you that labour, and are burthened, and I shall refresh you;' and yet you tarry, and deliberate, and delay."*

The grace of the Holy Ghost is declared by the Fathers, on the divine authority of scripture, to be peculiar to christian baptism. TERTULLIAN, speaking of the baptism of John, observes, that though it was heavenly, inasmuch as he was divinely sent, it was not heavenly in its effects, since "it would give the Holy Ghost and the remission of sins, if it were heavenly. He declares that he baptizes unto penance only, and that there would shortly come one who would baptize in the Spirit."† ST. CHRYSOSTOM says: "The grace of the Holy Ghost is in the baptism of Christ: but the baptism of John is destitute of this gift."‡ ST. GREGORY, of Nazianzum, writes: "John baptized, no longer indeed after the manner of the Jews, for it was not merely in water, but unto penance: and yet not altogether spiritually; for he does not add: *in the Spirit*. Jesus also baptizes, but in the Spirit: for this is the perfection."§

* Hom. xiii. in *S. Baptisma*.

† De Bapt.

‡ Hom. xi. in c. iii. Matt.

§ Orat. xxxix.

Calvin confesses that the Fathers distinguish the two baptisms, and contemptuously rejects their authority, on the pretext that it is opposed to scripture: "Let no one be disturbed at the attempt of the ancients to distinguish one from the other, since their opinions should not be looked on of such importance as to weaken the certainty of scripture."*

The proper view of the baptism of John is that given by ST. JOHN DAMASCENE: "The baptism of John was introductory, and it led the persons that were baptized to penance, that they might believe in Christ. For I, said he, baptize you in water; but he that shall come after me, shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire. Therefore John purified previously for the Spirit: but we are baptized with the perfect baptism of Christ, by water and the Spirit."† The same view is constantly presented by TERTULLIAN: "We recognize John as a kind of limit established between the old and new dispensations, in whom Judaism should terminate, and from whom christianity should begin."‡

In thus appealing to the Fathers I ask nothing but what must be conceded by every rational inquirer. I rest not on their *authority*; but in examining the nature of this ancient rite, and its relation to the initiatory rite of christianity, the judgment and testimony of ancient christian writers, most of whom held high stations in the church, must have weight. They had in their hands the sacred books, and were acquainted with the public doctrine of the church. Their proximity to the apostolic times, and their utter estrangement from the controversies which are now agi-

* Inst. l. iv. c. xiv. 7.

† L. iv. de fide orthodoxa.

‡ L. iv. contra Marcian, c. xxxiii.

tated, must recommend their calm testimony to our serious consideration. "In what depends on testimony," the learned critic George Campbell observes, "they are in every case wherein no particular passion can be suspected to have swayed them, to be preferred before modern interpreters or annotators. I say not this to insinuate that we can rely more on their integrity, but to signify that many points were with them a subject of testimony, which with modern critics are matter merely of conjecture, or, at most, of abstruse and critical discussion. It is only from ancient authors that those ancient usages, in other things as well as in language, can be discovered by us, which to them stood on the footing of matters of fact, whereof they could not be ignorant."*

According to the Fathers there is a manifest distinction made in the scriptures between the baptism by John and that which Christ instituted. Both are in water; but christian baptism is the instrument of the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of the soul, and is made in the name of the three Divine Persons, whilst the baptism by John was an incentive to penance, and a symbol of the purification of the penitent, without the express invocation of the Trinity. Nor need we be moved by the observation of Enoch Lewis: "It is strange," says he, that nothing appears in their (the Apostles) history to show that they accompanied the act with a declaration that it was done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."† For us

* *The Four Gospels translated from the Greek, with Prelim. Diss. by George Campbell, D. D., Principal of Marischal College, and one of the Ministers of Aberdeen.* Diss. iv. p. 112.

† *Essay on Baptism*, p. 29.

it is sufficient to know, that they were commanded to baptize in this way: for surely they fulfilled the injunction.

To confound things so clearly distinguished in the divine scripture is to set at naught its authority, whilst professing to revere it. The christian who adheres to its teaching, regards the baptism of John as a preparatory rite, adopted for a time, to express the purity of soul with which Christ should be received when He should publicly manifest himself. When He came, John gladly saw the multitudes flock to Him to receive His baptism. "This my joy, therefore," he said, "is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."* From the time of its institution it alone was to be sought after, and its nature, qualities, and effects are to be determined, not by reference to the baptism of John, but by those divine testimonies which specially regard the christian institution.

* John iii. 29.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THE “Friends,” as I have already stated, maintain that Christian baptism is the interior purification and sanctification which the Spirit of God effects, without any external ablution. Barclay, the celebrated Apologist of the Quakers, states their principles on this head in the following terms: “As there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is one baptism: which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the Spirit and fire, by which we are buried with Him, that being washed and purged from our sins, we may walk in newness of life, of which the baptism of John was a figure, which was commanded for a time, and not to continue for ever.”*

Inasmuch as “the Friends” appeal to the inward revelations of the Spirit as the formal object of faith, and refuse to subject them to the test of the outward testimony of the Scriptures, although they contend that these divine revelations neither do, nor even can, contradict this outward testimony;† there is little ground for hoping to convince them by an appeal to the Sacred Writings. Yet must we not on this account abandon the proofs which are abun-

* Prop. xii. *Theses Theologicæ.*

† Prop. ii.

dantly furnished us in the pages of the New Testament, of the divine institution of baptism by water. These passages will confirm the faith of believers, and may enlighten many, who have never considered them with attention, and serve to show how great is the delusion of those who resist evidence so striking. Barclay himself lays down the Scriptures as a ground whereon the Friends are ready to meet their adversaries, and admits the maxim that “ whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil.”* “Strange reasoning!” justly exclaims Frederick Lucas, the distinguished convert: “The Scripture is too uncertain and doubtful to be the rule itself, but it is, nevertheless, the test of the application of the more perfect rule.”†

The literal and obvious meaning of the term “baptize,” is acknowledged to be, *to plunge in water*, or, in its modified acceptation, to wash in some way: but, like other terms, it is sometimes used figuratively. Thus to be overwhelmed with affliction, is in Scriptural style to be baptized: “I have a baptism,” said Christ, to represent the greatness of his sufferings, “wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.”‡ It is used also to express the pouring out and communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost: “You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,”§ said He to his Apostles, consoling them with the assurance of the communication

* Prop. iii. §. 6.

† “*Reasons for becoming a Roman Catholic, addressed to the Society of Friends, by Frederick Lucas, Esq., of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law, London.*”

‡ Luke xii. 50.

§ Acts i. 5.

of the divine gifts on the day of Pentecost. It naturally expresses a washing with water: yet figuratively it was said by John of Christ: "He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire:"* to indicate the divine influence on the heart, whereby the love of God is excited, and earthly affections are consumed: the external emblems whereof were seen in the tongues of fire reposing on the Apostles when the Holy Ghost descended. "What means," cries ST. CHRYSOSTOM, "*in the Holy Ghost and fire?* Call to mind that day whereon tongues as of fire appeared divided on the Apostles, and sat on each one of them."† These figurative meanings being acknowledged, it becomes important to know, by what rule the signification of the command to baptize is determined. "The Friends" say, that the baptism of the Spirit, and not any external ablution is meant in the commission, and that the precursor declared that his external washing of the body was to give place to this invisible baptism: "I baptize in water"—said he to the multitudes:—"he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."‡ We, on the contrary, maintain, that as to baptize, in its natural and usual meaning, is, to wash with water, it must be so understood in a solemn commission, since words are used in their obvious sense on occasions of this character. The humility of the Precursor leads him to declare, that he only performs a mere external ablution, whilst all sanctifying influence comes from Christ. The grace received by the penitent whom he baptized, was the gift of Him who baptizes in the Holy Ghost. Thus in the very baptism of John the external rite was distinguished from the grace granted to penitence on occasion of its

* Matt. iii. 11.

† *De Bapt. Christi hom.*

‡ John i. 26, 33.

ministration. Between that baptism and the baptism instituted by Christ, there exists an immense distance, since John's baptism was a mere ablution with water, having no inherent efficacy; whilst Christ baptizes in the Holy Ghost, using the water only as the emblem and instrument of his grace. In contrasting the two rites, water is mentioned in the first place as constituting altogether the rite which John performed; and is afterwards omitted, that the excellence of the baptism of Christ may alone be considered in the divine effects which it produces. This by no means excludes water, which is elsewhere positively specified, and which is naturally included in the idea of baptizing. Had we nothing to argue from but this text, we might hesitate; but it is fair to supply what is here omitted by the many other texts wherein water is mentioned as the element used in Christian baptism.

Christ is said to baptize with the Holy Ghost, because his power is invisibly employed in sanctifying the soul; but he cannot be supposed to command the Apostles to baptize in this way, since they can exert no divine power. They can only perform some external act, to which a certain virtue may be divinely annexed: but they cannot directly operate on the soul; so that to order them to baptize, in the sense of purifying the soul by an immediate invisible influence, is to enjoin that which is utterly beyond their power, and which is the exclusive prerogative of the God-man, whose ministers they are. The words, then, in which he addressed the apostles cannot be so interpreted: Go, teach all nations, sanctifying them by the Holy Spirit. This cannot even be referred to a divine influence attending their preaching; since this influence was not theirs, and they could not be ordered to impart it. It must neces-

sarily proceed immediately from a divine source. There is no parity in the example of miraculous operations; because the external act is done by the agent, and the Divine power makes it efficacious; but baptizing in the Spirit is a purely internal act, necessarily Divine, and cannot be enjoined on men. They might be directed to instruct men, and a divine blessing might be promised to their labors: but they could not be called on to give the Holy Ghost, by internally communicating His influence, which must wholly depend on God. Had Christ meant to employ the term "baptize" to express the operation of the Holy Ghost on the mind, he might have said: "Go, teach my doctrine in all nations, and I will baptize them unto the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" but he could not direct them to baptize in this sense. No where is it said that the Apostles baptized in the Holy Ghost, although Cornelius was thus baptized whilst Peter was speaking. The natural force of the term employed in this solemn commission must, then, be retained, since the figurative application of it is totally inconsistent with the circumstances in which it was used, and the persons to whom it was addressed. In its obvious sense every thing is plain and harmonious. The Jews were accustomed to divers washings with water.* John had baptized with water on receiving to penance the multitudes that flocked to his preaching. The disciples of Christ, in accordance with his will, had been accustomed for some time to perform the same ablution to such of their countrymen as applied for it. When, then, He said, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them," they were necessarily led to understand Him as ordering them to wash in like manner all, without

* Heb. ix. 10.

discrimination of nations, and thus to initiate them into his Church. The command is to do unto the nations generally, what they had hitherto performed within the limits of Judea : to instruct them, and to baptize them : and the rite of baptism, as well as the teaching, is to continue to the end of time.*

Whenever the term "baptize" is qualified by other words, a secondary, or figurative, meaning may be attached to it, as when John says of Christ: "He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire;"† and Christ promises to his Apostles: "You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."‡ All occasion of mistake is removed, and the secondary meaning is fixed and de-

* Barclay objects that the washing of the feet is neglected, although enjoined apparently in stronger terms than baptism ; and Judge Rush admits the force of the objection, and complains that "the Catholics and nearly all the Protestant churches in Christendom have conspired to lay it (*the washing*) aside." *An Inquiry into the doctrine of Christian Baptism, by Jacob Rush, Presiding Judge of the first judicial district of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1819.* But there is no foundation for the reproach to Catholics, nor for the objection. The rite is practised at Rome on Holy Thursday, by the Sovereign Pontiff, who washes the feet of thirteen Priests ; in many dioceses, as at St. Louis, by the Bishop ; and in religious communities generally by the Abbot, or other Superior. It is prescribed in the Roman Missal among the rites of Holy Thursday, and may be practised in every church. Yet there is no divine command for this ceremony. The words of our Saviour are evidently meant to insinuate and recommend mutual kindness and humility ; and the persuasion and practice of the Church are sure guarantees that the act was not commanded. On the contrary, the declarations concerning baptism are explicit ; and the practice of the Apostles, and of the Church, leaves no room for explaining away their force.

† Matt. iii. 11.

‡ Acts i. 5.

finied by the terms added: but when the word is simply and absolutely used, every just rule of interpretation requires that we should understand it in its natural and ordinary meaning. The Apostles were led by the promise of Christ to expect the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit, to be exercised on them in an extraordinary manner: and the miracles of Pentecost surpassed their expectations. The communication of the divine gifts to others may also be styled a baptism of the Holy Ghost, since Peter applies the promise to Cornelius and his family, who were supernaturally sanctified.* But what pretext can be derived from expressions thus qualified in order to force on the term, when used alone, a meaning which is foreign and figurative?†

Barclay contends that the spiritual character of the baptism of Christ is declared by the words subjoined: “εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, that is, into the Name: now the Name of the Lord is often taken in scripture for something else than a bare sound of words, or literal expression even for his virtue and power, as may appear from *Psalm* liv. 3, *Cant.* i. 3, *Prov.* xviii. 10, and in many more. Now that the Apostles were by their ministry to baptize the nations into this name, virtue and power, and that they did so, is evident by these testimonies of Paul, where he saith, that as many of

* Acts xi. 16.

† Smith Travers says, that the baptism of which Christ speaks is the gift of tongues! “Multum examinans, multum conferens, iudicavi τὸ χάρισμα γλωσσῶν, baptisma esse, de quo locutus erat Dominus; atque alia χάρισματα, etiam postea comprehendi.” *Disquisitionem de Sac. S. de Baptismate.* Philadelphia, 1820. Such is the capricious mode of interpretation adopted by those who reject Catholic authority.

them as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* This observation, however, does not affect the necessity of the ablution with water, which is implied in the command to baptize; for waiving the literary inquiry whether the accusative form be a Hebraism,† or designate the end for which the ablution is made, it is certain that christian baptism is a work of divine power, consecrating to the adorable Trinity those who receive it, and clothing them with Christ, by the communication of his merits. This interferes not with the ablution, or the invocation of the three Divine Persons, whose name is invoked, that their power may effect the sanctification indicated by the external act. The end, or effect, of the act being declared, necessarily presupposes the reality of the act itself. No parallel passage can be alleged, wherein the name of God is added to take away the natural and obvious meaning of a preceding term. The baptizing with the Holy Ghost is nowhere called a baptizing unto the name of God: so that this is a forced and gratuitous wresting of the words. The interpretation of some moderns, who explain the whole passage of a mere initiation into christianity by instruction in its truths, is

* Apol. Prop. xii. p. 376.

† *Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα μὲν* is used to express the assembly convened under the invocation of Christ. Matt. xviii. 20. Alexander Campbell, in *Christian Baptist*, vol. vi. p. 522, maintains that there is a great difference between immersing in the name, and into the name, the former mode of expression denoting the authority whereby the act was performed, the latter the object for which it is performed: but the example just adduced shows that these prepositions are not always used with this nice discrimination. In the narrative of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, it is said that Peter ordered them to be baptized *in εἰς* the name of the Lord, Acts x. 48, which surely is equivalent to what is said elsewhere of the disciples at Ephesus, who were baptized *into εἰς* the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts xix. 5.

equally unsupported by parallel passages, and does equal violence to the text, which points out baptism as the means of initiation. The liberty which the sacred writers use in speaking of baptism as conferred in the name or unto the name of the Lord Jesus, only shows that baptism makes us His disciples, as well as worshippers of His Father and of the Holy Ghost, and that it is conferred by His authority, and in virtue of His institution. There is nothing to warrant us in regarding the baptism as a mere internal operation; but on the contrary the external act is plainly and positively declared. It is said of the Samaritans that they were baptized in the name of Jesus,* by Philip, who no doubt used water for that purpose, as well as in the case of the eunuch, which baptism was received even by Simon Magus: and the disciples at Ephesus are stated to have been baptized in the name of Jesus,† after they had been instructed by Paul, who, afterwards, by the imposition of hands and prayer, communicated to them the Holy Ghost.

When Nicodemus approached Christ, to learn from Him the truths of salvation, our Redeemer at once solemnly declared the necessity of a new birth, in order to enter into the kingdom of God: “Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”‡ This excited the astonishment, and provoked the curiosity of the Jewish ruler. Attaching himself to the most literal meaning of the words, without having regard to the style of the Jews, who were wont to call the baptism of a Gentile proselyte a new birth,§ inasmuch as he became a mem-

* Acts viii. 16. † Ibidem xix. 5. ‡ John iii. 3.

§ See Calmet, *Dissertation sur le baptême de Jean*; also Wall's *History of Infant Baptism, Introduction*.

ber of the Jewish nation, Nicodemus asked, how could a man in old age be born anew ; and as it was naturally impossible for him to be so born, he intimated that even a new birth, by an entire change of sentiment and conduct, was morally impracticable. In reply our Lord said : “ Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* The manner of the new birth is here specified: it is *by water*, even as that was which, in an enlarged sense, was styled a new birth, the incorporation of a Gentile with the Jewish nation: but it is also by the Holy Ghost, and therefore it is truly a new birth, because His divine influence purifies and sanctifies him who is washed, and makes him truly a child of God. He was before a carnal man, born in a natural way of earthly parents: he is now a spiritual being, living by faith: “ that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Wonder not, that I said to thee, you must be born again.”† The sanctifying influence of this Divine Spirit is the free exercise of His sovereign bounty; and is oftentimes experienced by those who are unconscious of the divine source of their sentiments and feelings: “ The Spirit breatheth where he will; and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh or whither he goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”‡ The child of God, born of the Spirit in the bap-

* John iii. 5.

† Ibidem 6, 7.

‡ Ibidem 8. The Protestant version renders this: “ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof.” According to this a comparison is instituted between the uncertain and changeable motions of the wind, and the secret operations of the Spirit of God. The Fathers understand the whole of the Divine Spirit him-

tismal laver, continues to receive the divine inspirations, without knowing their origin, in a sensible and manifest manner. In this context there is nothing to warrant a departure from the obvious meaning of the term water, used in speaking of the new birth; or to establish a birth of the Spirit, so as to exclude water, as the instrument and sign of regeneration.

Nevertheless, not only the followers of George Fox have interpreted the words of Christ without reference to baptism; but Calvin himself, although admitting the use of water in baptizing, has employed his ingenuity in explaining away their obvious meaning. He maintains that water is mentioned in connexion with the Holy Spirit, as fire in another passage in similar connexion, to indicate His effects on the soul, which He purifies and inflames.* But the passages are not parallel. In the text which we bring forward, Christ is explaining to Nicodemus the new birth, the necessity whereof He had already declared. When Nicodemus had addressed Him, professing his conviction that He was a teacher divinely sent, Christ said: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus asked how a man could be born again: "How can a man be born when he is

self, which is in harmony with the whole context. The wind cannot be said to will.

* Inst. l. iv. c. xvi. n. 25. In this, as well as in many other respects, this bold innovator has undermined the foundations of christianity. Mr. McLean, a Baptist writer, admits that this text has reference to baptism: "*Water* here undoubtedly means the water of baptism, for it is distinguished from *the Spirit*; so that to be *born of water* is to be baptized."—"Thus this passage, John iii. 5, and Tit. iii. 5, were universally understood till the days of Calvin." *Commission*, p. 131.

old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?" The answer of our Lord is explanatory of this difficulty: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water is distinctly and emphatically mentioned, when the object manifestly was to explain the manner of this birth: it is not mentioned after the Holy Ghost, as the emblem of his purifying influence, in the way fire is elsewhere connected with him: "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:" but it is distinctly and primarily mentioned as the obvious and external means of the second birth, which is effected by the power of the Holy Ghost. The mention of water in this place was useless, and calculated to lead into error, if no such instrument of regeneration was meant. The subsequent verses, as we have already seen, do not weaken the force of this explicit declaration.

It should suffice to put to silence the authors and supporters of this new interpretation, to know, as Hooker testifies, "that of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place, than as implying external baptism."* Dr. Pusey observes: "However men may think that the words do not *require* this interpretation, they will readily admit that it is *an* obvious, perhaps (apart from other considerations) *the more* obvious meaning; add, then, to this, that the christian church uniformly, for fifteen centuries, interpreted these His words of baptism; that on the ground of this text alone, they urged the necessity of baptism; that, upon it, mainly, they identified regeneration with baptism. If, then, this be an error, would our Saviour have used words which

* L. v. c. 59.

(since water was already used in the Jews' and John's baptism) must inevitably and did lead His church into error? and which He, who knew all things, must, at the time, have known would lead His church into error; and that, when, according to Zuingli's or Calvin's interpretation, His meaning had been as fully expressed, had it stood, 'born of the Spirit,' only."*

Unless, in the interpretation of the sacred scriptures, we admit, I shall not say the authority of the church, but the ordinary rules of explaining books from the context and parallel passages, they become of no use whatsoever, since their most evident testimony may be rejected, on the plea that it does not harmonize with the internal teaching of the Spirit. The appeal to this immediate revelation throws open the gate for enthusiasm and fanaticism of the wildest and worst character, and deprives us of every standard for discriminating between the teaching of God, and the vagaries of a disordered imagination. For the man who fancies himself internally enlightened and instructed in the revelation of God, all proof and argument are powerless and vain: and the only hope left is in humble prayer, that God would vouchsafe to remedy that delusion, and make him sensible of the need in which he stands to be taught by those to whom the divine scriptures and the whole deposit of revelation have been entrusted.

* *Tract on Baptism, p. 39, Am. ed.*

CHAPTER III.

APOSTOLIC PRACTICE.

WHEN the meaning of a commission is called in question, the public acts of those who received it, must have great weight in determining its nature and character: and when the authority of the commissioners is vouched for by him who gave the commission, their acts are decisive evidence. Christ ordered his disciples to baptize. An attempt is made to explain this of a mere internal work of the Spirit, towards which the Apostles could co-operate no further than by preaching. Did the Apostles themselves so understand it? Did they not rather conceive themselves authorized and commanded to wash with water those who professed faith in the Gospel preached by them? When the Jews felt compunction for the death of Christ, and asked of Peter what they should do to be saved, he exhorted them to be baptized; and three thousand persons on that occasion were added by baptism to the Church. From the baptism of three thousand persons in one day, it might be pretended that it was only figurative, and consisted in the grace of the Spirit being poured out on them, when they received the words of Peter; but they were already touched with compunction, when they inquired of him what they should do that they might be saved, and when told: "let every one of you be baptized," they were necessarily led to understand the command of a washing with

water, since this was the received acceptation of the term. The use of water by the Apostles on several occasions is admitted by the opponents of baptism: "It is freely admitted," says Enoch Lewis, "that the Apostles, after our Lord's ascension, did sometimes baptize their converts with water:"* but any possibility of cavil on this point is precluded by the positive declaration of St. Peter, when Cornelius was to be baptized: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."† On this fact, ST. CYRIL, of Jerusalem, remarks: "Cornelius was a just man, favored with angelic visions, whose prayers and alms were like a high pillar erected in the heavens reaching unto God; Peter came, and the Spirit was poured out on the believers, and they spoke with strange tongues, and prophesied, and after the gift of the Spirit, the Scripture says, that Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ: that the soul being born anew by faith, the body also might receive grace by the water."‡ The Eunuch learned from Philip the necessity of this ablution with water. "See, here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized?"§ Ananias called to Saul: "Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."|| The Apostle himself constantly speaks of baptism as a laver. Christ loved the Church, "cleansing it by the laver of water."¶ It was, then, the persuasion of those who received the commission, and of those who were associated with them in its execution, that they were empowered to

* *Essay on Baptism*, p. 35.

† Acts x. 47.

‡ Cat. iii. de Bapt.

§ Acts viii. 36.

|| Acts xxii. 16.

¶ Eph. v. 26.

perform an ablution with water. To say, as Barclay insinuates, that the Apostles mistook the meaning of their Master, is destructive of the certainty of Christian faith, and is irreverent to Him, who, in that supposition, ill provided for the correct manifestation of his will to men. Who can read without horror the language of this Apologist? "Although it should be granted, that for a season they did so far mistake it as to judge that water belonged to that baptism, (which, however, I find no necessity of granting,) yet I see not any great absurdity would thence follow. For it is plain they did mistake that commission, as to a main part of it."*

Joseph John Gurney, a recent writer on the same subject, has not hesitated to say that the Apostles were unprepared for the perfect spirituality of the Christian dispensation, although the germs of it were in their hearts: "As long as they observed the ceremonies of the law in their own persons—as long as they continued unprepared for a full reception of the doctrine, that the ordinances and shadows of the law were now to be disused, and that God was to be worshipped in a manner entirely spiritual—so long would they, *as a matter of course*, persevere in the practice of baptizing their converts *in water*."†

The practice of the Jewish ceremonies by the Apostles, and the doubt raised as to the admissibility of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Church, and their subjection to the Mosaic ceremonial, are alleged by Barclay and by Gurney, in proof of their having mistaken the commission, and not understood fully the spiritual character of the Christian dispensation: but there is no evidence whatever of such

* Prop. xii. *Object*.

† *Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of Friends*, p. 100.

misconception. The renitence of Peter to eat of meats legally unclean, when presented to him in vision, was a natural result of long habits of legal observance, and the command given him not to designate as unclean what God had sanctified, was not so much to enlighten him with regard to the admissibility of the Gentiles to the Church, as it was to enable him to defend their admission against the converts from Judaism, whose prejudices might lead them to condemn it: whence he appealed to those who accompanied him: "Can any one forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"* In observing the legal ceremonies, the Apostles conformed to the will of their Divine Teacher, who himself observed them, and wished them to be respected, although they were to be discontinued as soon as the amalgamation of Jews and Gentiles in one Church suffered their discontinuance, without prejudice to their original institution. The Gentiles were authoritatively declared by the Apostles to be free from the yoke of the law, both in the council of Jerusalem and in the epistles of St. Paul; and the conduct of Cephas, in withdrawing from the common table, was an act of condescension to Jewish prejudice, unattended with any false teaching. The retention of some ceremonial observances for a time did not arise from any imperfect conception of the spiritual character of the Christian dispensation, much less from any positive error; but from considerations of prudence, and a necessary regard to their divine origin. It is impossible to consider water baptism as one of them, since it is no where prescribed in the Mosaic law. Whatever may be thought of the baptism of John, baptism is simply and absolutely an institution of

* Acts x. 47.

Christ himself, since he commanded it, and prescribed the form of words that should distinguish it. His promise to be with the Apostles, baptizing and teaching, is a pledge and guarantee that they should be directed by Him for the proper performance of each duty, and does not suffer us for a moment to think that they should have administered a baptism which He did not institute. As then the fact is manifest from the Scriptures, and conceded by the Friends, that the Apostles did baptize with water, the conclusion is irresistible that water baptism is of divine institution. Whosoever says that they misunderstood the intentions of Christ, or that they were unprepared for the full development of the spiritual character of the New Covenant, makes void the promise of Christ to be with them, to send them the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to teach them all truth; and thus overturns the whole fabric of Christianity.

The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are alleged, to show that baptism with water is no part of the Christian dispensation, and that if permitted for a time, and useful to lead the Jews, who had been accustomed to external rites, to the knowledge of the mysteries of faith, it was in no way suited to the Gentiles, and but rarely practised, and that the Apostle regretted having adopted the practice even for a time: "I give God thanks, that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Caius: lest any should say that you were baptized in my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."* The inferences drawn from this passage are altogether unwarranted. The Apostle spoke in reference to their personal partialities for their teachers,

* 1 Cor. i. 14.

which were an occasion of schism ; and he reminded them, that they were disciples of Christ, and not of the individual who brought them to the knowledge of salvation, or received them into the Church by baptism. “Is Christ,” he asks, “divided? Was Paul then crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”* He rejoices that he had baptized but few of them, because there was so much the less reason to fear that they would cling to him as a leader, to the detriment of the unity which they should cherish in Christ: and he states that the chief object of his vocation was to preach the gospel, to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, and their kings, and the children of Israel. In calling him to the faith, Christ wished the converted persecutor to become an illustrious witness of his divinity, that Jews and Gentiles might be led by his testimony and example to believe and to adore. He was, doubtless, commissioned to baptize, as all the Apostles were positively ordered by Christ himself; and he actually baptized several among the Corinthians; but he generally left the performance of that duty to others. It was not a rite of rare performance, since it was the gate of the Church, and all who bore the Christian name had entered thereby. The Apostle addresses all the Corinthians as baptized persons, and reminds them that they had not been baptized in his name: “Were you baptized in the name of Paul? “In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free.”† This cannot be wrested to signify a mere internal baptism, as by it all were made “one body,” being aggregated to the Church. All foundation for the assertion that the rite was used in condescension to the Jews, is taken

* 1 Cor. i. 13,

† 1 Cor. xii. 13.

away by this passage, which is directed to Gentile converts, and declares that all of them had been baptized. In vain is it pretended that baptism with water is not implied in the term *baptize*. The Apostle evidently speaks of their unity as a body, which is effected by baptism, wherein they are born of water and of the Holy Ghost.

But we are asked where is the proof that the Apostles themselves were baptized with water? If they were, it must have been, it is said, with the baptism of John, since Christ baptized no one. Of the baptism of Paul himself we have positive testimony. That the other Apostles were baptized, we have reason to presume from the fact, that they were chosen to be the first ministers and heralds of Christ, and the first priests of the new dispensation, although, if Christ so pleased, he could no doubt have dispensed them from this necessity. That He himself baptized some, is stated in the Gospel;* and when it is said in another place, that not He, but His disciples baptized, this is manifestly meant of the ordinary and frequent performance of this rite.† “Whether,” says Tertullian, “they were baptized in any way, or continued without baptism, so that what was said by our Lord to Peter concerning his being already washed, should be referred to us only, it is altogether rash to doubt of the salvation of the Apostles, since the prerogative which they enjoyed in being first chosen by Him, and afterwards continuing in intimate familiarity with Him, could supply the place of baptism.”‡

The proof, then, of the meaning of the divine commission, derived from the practice of the Apostles, is nowise weakened by the silence of the sacred writers as to the fact of the baptism of most of them. Admitting that they were

* John iii. 22.

† Ib. iv. 2.

‡ De Bapt. n. 12.

not baptized, it does not follow that the command of Christ was not to be executed by them in regard to others. But as no book of scripture professes to be a full record of all the acts of Christ, it is not wonderful that we should not have positive testimony of facts, which may well be presumed from the general rule established for initiation into the church. We have positive statements that the Apostles baptized with water those who sought admittance into the church, and these justify us in maintaining that the command given them must be so interpreted.

CHAPTER IV.

OBJECTIONS OF "THE FRIENDS."

THE ingenuity of the adversaries of baptism has been displayed in evading the very clear proofs of its institution, and in gathering objections from every quarter against it. They say, that according to St. Paul, there is but "one baptism"* under the new dispensation, as there is but one Lord, and one faith: and therefore they reject water-baptism, as the admission of it, they pretend, implies two baptisms, namely, one with water, the other by the Spirit. This objection is too subtle to be weighty. There is in reality but one baptism under the christian dispensation, an ablution with water, in the name of the Divine Trinity, and accompanied with the regenerating virtue of the Holy Ghost. The grace which is imparted, does not constitute a distinct baptism, since it is attached to the rite. There is no contrast made in scripture between the ablution with water in christian baptism and the sanctifying influence of the Spirit: since all the passages alleged to establish it, have manifest reference to the baptism of John. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom the divine and human nature are united, the fulness of the Divinity dwelling corporally in Him: there is one faith, the supernatural assent of the mind to all revealed truth, which is, nevertheless, manifested by the external profession: since "with the heart we believe unto

* Eph. iv. 5.

justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* So also there is one baptism, the external act being the sign and instrument of the internal operation.

It is insisted on, that the one baptism is the mere internal work of the Spirit, whereby we are clothed with Christ, since St. Paul says: "as many of you as have been baptized, have put on Christ."† But the context plainly shows, that the Apostle speaks of their having by baptism been adopted into the family of God, and having received the privileges of children, which Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, imparted to them, by means of this sacrament. Jewish teachers had endeavoured to induce the Galatians to adopt the ceremonial observances of the Law, and the rite of circumcision: wherefore the Apostle pointed out that such observances were adapted to the infantile and servile state in which men were before the coming of Christ, but not at all obligatory on those who by baptism had become children of God, being clothed, as it were, with Christ, partaking of His Sonship, and of His merits and privileges: "After the faith is come," he says, "we are no longer under a pedagogue. For you are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ." This is literally true of all who had been baptized with water, because the effect of this sacrament is regeneration, adoption, and incorporation into the mystical body of Christ: and although the unworthiness of some candidates may prevent their enjoying all the effects, yet their state is that of children, and they bear the christian character; wherefore even they are taught to address God as a Father, and to implore pardon of their sins.

* Rom. x. 10.

† Gal. iii. 25.

A passage of St. Peter is often objected, wherein speaking of the saving of eight persons from the deluge by the ark, he adds: "Whereunto baptism being of the like form, now saveth you also: not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the examination of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* The original text calls baptism the "antitype" of the waters of the deluge, that is, the corresponding object to that type, the reality shadowed forth by that figure. No ground would exist for this comparison, were not the waters of baptism the instrument of salvation, as the waters of the deluge buoyed up the ark of safety. It is not, however, the putting away of the filth of the flesh which saves us, since the ablution is not directed to cleanse the body, but rather to signify the purification of the soul, for which the dispositions of faith and repentance prepare the adult receiver, and which must be followed by a life corresponding with our baptismal engagements.

The examination of a good conscience towards God seems to refer to the ancient apostolic rite of questioning the candidate as to faith, and demanding of him the renunciation of Satan, and of his works and pomps. The sincere answer of the applicant to these interrogations prepares him for that salvation, which, in its principle, is given in baptism; and a life in conformity with his baptismal engagements secures to him its final attainment. ST. GREGORY, of Nazianzum, speaking of water-baptism, applies to it the same terms: "The illumination," which, in the writings of the Fathers, means baptism, "is the splendour of souls, the change of conduct, *the interrogation of conscience unto God.*"† It is indeed strange that

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

† Orat. xl.

from a passage which expressly treats of baptism by water, occasion should be taken by any one to exclude water altogether; especially as the same Apostle is known to have urged the use of water in the case of Cornelius, whose conscience already was good towards God.

It is objected by some that baptism supposes conversion from infidelity, or from a worship entirely opposed to that which by this rite is adopted: wherefore those converted from Heathenism or Judaism were baptized, as proselytes had been under the previous dispensation: but those who have always professed christianity cannot be baptized, since they need no change; and the command evidently regards a different class of persons.* This is a gratuitous supposition: the words of the commission are as general as can be conceived, and although the command to teach, and form to the christian rule, precedes that of baptizing, there is nothing to warrant us to put any limit to either precept, which does not arise from the very nature of the duty enjoined. Teaching is directed to instruct the mind, and is specially necessary for those who are unacquainted with the Gospel: baptizing, being a washing with water, regards all who are defiled, and must, therefore, embrace all who are stained with sin, whatever be the religious profession of their parents, or whatever principles they themselves may have professed. If professors of christianity, they still need the teaching of the apostolic ministry, to advance in saving knowledge, and learn the practical influence of its maxims. They must be baptized, in order to wash their robes white in the

* This is maintained by Judge Rush in his *Inquiry*, as also by the Friends. It was one of the errors of Socinus. *Epist. de Baptismo apud Vossium, de Baptismo disp. xiii.*

blood of the Lamb, and to put on Jesus Christ. No argument can be drawn from the practice of the Jews towards proselytes from Heathenism, whose descendants enjoyed Jewish privileges without any baptism; for the christian rite is not borrowed from the Jews, nor regulated by principles of analogy; but is wholly dependant on the divine authority of Jesus Christ, who made it a necessary condition for entrance into his kingdom. His law is universal, and the practice of the church, during all ages, is a satisfactory evidence that it regards the posterity of believers, as well as those who grew up amidst the darkness of infidelity.

Without any semblance of justice, it is alleged that baptism is a relic of Judaism, one of those divers washings observed under the law, an ablution like that of John, and one of those observances which were tolerated for a time in condescension to Jewish prejudices. It certainly cannot be viewed in this light. Although divers purifications by washing were prescribed in the Mosaic law, they were totally different from Christian baptism. In place of many ablutions, we have one: they were performed by the individuals themselves; this must be performed by another: they were accompanied by no solemn invocation, such as is made in Christian baptism, in the name of the three Divine Persons: they were types; baptism is an instrument and means of grace. Even conceding what many learned men deny, that the Jews baptized proselytes, as some of their writers testify,* and that this practice was anterior to Christianity,† and was apparently supported by passages of

* See the testimonies in the *Introduction to the History of Infant Baptism*, by W. Wall, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent. London, 1707.

† Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebraic.* Grotius, in Mat. iii. 6.

the law ;* their custom, however ancient, cannot be identified with the divine institution which Christ has so distinctly marked as his own, by the invocation of the Trinity, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. For the same reason it is not the baptism of John ; but it is that perfect baptism to which, as John testified, his ablution should give place. "The Jewish purification," it is observed by ST. CHRYSOSTOM, "did not free from sins, but only from corporal defilements : ours is not such, but much greater, and full of much grace : for it frees from sins, and cleanses the soul, and imparts the gift of the Spirit. The baptism of John was far more sublime than that of the Jews, but inferior to ours, and as a kind of bridge between both baptisms, leading from theirs to ours : for he did not invite them to the observance of corporal purifications ; but drawing them off from such things, he exhorted and persuaded them to pass from vice to virtue, and to place their hope of salvation in the amendment of their conduct, not in divers baptisms and purifications by water."† Baptism is not a rite merely tolerated, but specially commanded by Christ himself ; pointed out by Peter to the Jews as the necessary means for the remission of sin ; and administered to Cornelius, even although already baptized with the Holy Ghost ; and enjoined by Ananias on Saul as a positive duty, after his miraculous conversion.

An ablution with water appears to some to be too material a rite to belong to the Christian dispensation, wherein God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and his gifts invisibly descend on the children of men. But shall we judge of the divine institutions by abstract ideas of per-

* Comp. Numb. xv. 15. and Exod. ix. 10.

† *Hom. de Bapt. Christi.*

fection, rather than by the positive testimony of God himself? He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; that is, spiritually and truly, with the homage of the mind and of the affections, and in conformity with the great principles which he has revealed. His gifts invisibly descend, and the sanctifying influence of his grace is not visible to the carnal eye: yet it is no wise inconsistent with his spiritual nature, as it is not certainly unworthy of his goodness and bounty, to exhibit, even to the eye of flesh, the token and seal, nay, the very instrument of his grace; that faith and hope may be excited and sustained, and that we may be made sensible, by the external exhibition, that an interior work of grace is performed, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and of which the conceptions of the mind are necessarily imperfect. It becomes us not to be more spiritual and wise than suits our present state of being, but rather to recognize with gratitude the spiritual and divine character of the gift conveyed under the external form. "It is not," says ST. CHRYSOSTOM, "a mere sensible gift, which Christ has left us: under sensible forms we receive gifts which the understanding alone can contemplate. Thus in baptism in the external rite water is perceptible: but the effect is present to the mind, namely, the birth, and regeneration or renewal of the soul. If you were without a body, he would doubtless have bestowed on you spiritual gifts without any envelop: but since your soul is united with the body, he bestows on you spiritual gifts under sensible forms."* "Since we consist of two parts," ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN observes, "that is soul and body, the one visible, the other invisible, the purifica-

* Hom. lxxxii. alias lxxxiii. n. 4.

tion is also twofold, namely, by water and the Spirit, the one visibly and corporally received, the other incorporeally and invisibly concurring therewith; the one typical, the other true, and purifying the depths of conscience."* ST. CYRIL, of Jerusalem, speaks to the same effect: "Since man is formed of two substances, soul and body, the purification is twofold, incorporeal for the incorporeal substance; corporeal for the body: the water cleanses the body, the Spirit seals the soul; that our heart being sprinkled by the Spirit, and our bodies washed with water, we may approach God."†

Not only the express institution by Almighty God of external worship by sacrifice and ceremonies, but the whole conduct of our Divine Redeemer warrants us in expecting that the communication of his gifts should be externally manifested. He used external forms in the cure of the deaf and dumb, and of the blind: the touch of his garment was the occasion of virtue going forth from him to dry up the fountain of blood: the walking home of him who had been palsied, was the evidence of the pardon of sin. Why, then, shall we imagine that every external rite is banished from the new dispensation? "There is," as Lucas has well observed, "nothing unspiritual in the belief that Christ established as a perpetual ordinance in his Church a particular outward act as a means or instrument of grace, and it seems to me a fearful thing for men in the pride of human reason, to reject an ordinance most clearly commanded, because we cannot perceive the reason why the ordinance and grace are conjoined. Let it be remembered that if baptism is commanded by Christ, it is a fearful thing to disobey his commands."‡

* Orat. xl.

† Catech. iii. de Bapt.

‡ *Reasons for becoming a Roman Catholic.*

Need we be surprised that in baptism the purification of the soul by the Divine Spirit should be externally displayed, when the whole Christian teaching is the promulgation of truth as revealed and manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ? "That which was from the beginning," says St. John, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us: that which we have seen, and have heard, we declare unto you."* Barclay reproaches us with preferring the shadow to the substance,† because we retain a rite which is at once the external exhibition and the efficient instrument of a divine work wrought in the soul. The ablution with water is not a mere shadow. It represents and effects the invisible purification of the soul. Lucas justly observes, that the objections of Gurney, a recent writer, are founded on entire misapprehension: "His interpretation of the texts in which there is an allusion to baptism, depends wholly upon the unfounded notion that an outward ceremony conjoined with and made the means of conveying the grace of God is the same in principle with an outward ceremony connected with no grace whatsoever, but merely used as a sign; and that a system of ordinances for the transmission of spiritual influence is unspiritual in the same manner as a system of ordinances for the transmission of no spiritual influences whatever."

If the practice and persuasion of the whole Christian world, from the earliest times to the latest, can afford any aid in understanding the nature of the institutions of Christ,

* 1 John i. 1.

† Prop. xii. proof 3.

no doubt can be entertained as to baptism by water, which has been always deemed the primary and essential rite of Christianity. In the ancient epistle, ascribed to St. Barnabas by Vossius, and other learned critics, and which all must acknowledge to belong to the Apostolic age, it is said: "Let us inquire whether the Lord was pleased to forewarn men of water and the cross. As to the water, it was written concerning Israel, that they would not embrace the baptism which leads to the remission of sins, but that they would form to themselves another."* The writer interprets mystically the text wherein the Psalmist speaks of the tree planted near the streams of water: "Observe how he mentioned at the same time the water and the cross: for this is what he means: blessed are they who hoping in the cross, descend into the water."† TERTULLIAN speaks of the mystical appellation of fishes given to Christians, with reference to the Greek initials expressing, in their combined form, a fish, and separately: Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour: "We little fishes in regard to Jesus Christ our ΙΧΘΥΣ are born in the water."‡ The testimonies of all the ancient Christian writers could be quoted, and I shall have occasion to quote many of them hereafter; but for the present I shall merely remark, that the Christian doctrine and practice was notorious even to the heathens, by whom they were surrounded. A pagan writer, in the decline of the second century, introduces a Christian speaking of the Divine Author of his religion, and says: "He renovated us by water."§

* §. xi.

† Ibidem.

‡ *De Baptismo.* n. 1.

§ δι' ὕδατος ἡμᾶς ἀνεκαίνισεν. In *Philopatris*, a dialogue by some ascribed to Lucian; by others said to be of a contemporary, or of a more ancient writer.

There were, indeed, some of the various sects separated from the church, who denied baptism; but they were few, and they were regarded as the enemies of the Christian name. Quintilla, a woman of the sect of Caianites, is mentioned by Tertullian as destroying baptism; viper-like, he remarks, for vipers and asps love dry places. She sought to allure Catholics to her sect, knowing, as he also observes, that to take fish out of water was certain death.* St. Augustin states that the Manicheans declined baptizing their proselytes, since they acknowledged no saving virtue in the water.† The Seleucians also rejected baptism.‡ In the twelfth century the Bogomili and Albigenses, being infected with Manicheism, assailed the same sacrament.§ But the vast body of those who claimed the Christian name, whatever errors particular sects may have otherwise broached, retained it.

The distinguished convert whom I have more than once quoted, thus compresses the proofs of the divine institution of baptism, giving us the result of his own investigations: "I found that Christ sent out His disciples to baptize, and they baptized with water under His immediate superintendence. His last command to them is to baptize, and they believe, and act upon the belief, that He meant baptism by water. The words of Christ and His Apostles, speaking of baptism, contain, as J. J. Gurney admits, allusions to baptism by water, and the Apostles continued all their lives the practice of water baptism, and transmitted it as an ordinance to the church, by which it has been preserved in an unbroken descent."||

* *De Baptismo*, n. i. † *L. de haeres*, n. xlvi. ‡ *Ib.* n. lix.

§ Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations*, l. xi. *passim*.

|| *Reasons for becoming a Roman Catholic*.

CHAPTER V.

ORIGINAL SIN.

BEFORE treating of the necessity of baptism, it becomes necessary to explain and defend the faith of the church in regard to original sin. A fundamental truth of christianity is that all men are naturally children of wrath, being conceived and born in sin. On this foundation reposes the belief of the need which the whole human race had of a Redeemer; and of the necessity of grace to work out our salvation. It was denied by Pelagius, a British monk, in the early part of the fifth century; but triumphantly maintained by St. Augustin, and solemnly proclaimed in various councils of Africa, and from the chair of Peter, by Popes Innocent and Zosimus. The General Baptists were said by Wall to deny original sin: "Many, (but it seems not all) of the General men are Pelagians in the point of original sin. They own nothing of it. The other do, as appears both by the confession of faith of seven churches of 'em, and also by their present profession."* The American Baptists, in the confession of faith published in 1742, express their belief in original sin, and its consequences in terms much stronger than the Catholic doctrine on this subject: "Our first parents by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them: whereby death came upon all, all becoming dead in sin,

* *Hist. of Infant Baptism*, p. 2, ch. viii.

and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root, and, by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind; the guilt of sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free."* The substance of this doctrine, and for the most part, the words, are taken from the Westminster Confession.† The Anglican articles contain similar sentiments: "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."‡ The Catholic doctrine may be learned from the anathemas pronounced at Trent against the contrary errors. Adam himself in body and soul was changed for the worse by his prevarication, and we forfeited in him sanctity and justice, and incurred the penalty of death, contracting sin, which is the death of the soul: "If any one say that the prevarication of Adam injured him alone, and not his posterity, and that he forfeited for himself alone, and not for us also, the sanctity and justice which he had received from God, or that he being defiled by the sin of disobedience, transfused death and corporal afflictions only to the whole human race, and not sin, which is the

* Ch. vi. 2, 3.

† Ch. vi.

‡ Art. ix.

death of the soul, let him be anathema; since he contradicts the Apostle who says: 'By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned.'''* In the following canon it is said, that the sin of Adam is one in its origin, and being transfused into all, by propagation, not by imitation, is in each one of us. The difference between the Catholic faith and the Calvinistic error has been well pointed out by Mohler in his celebrated work.† Catholics believe in the spoliation of human nature, which has lost in Adam the supernatural graces wherewith divine bounty had adorned it: they believe that the soul is dead to God, because deprived of grace which is her life: they believe that she can never see God, unless raised from her fallen state: but they do not believe that nature itself is corrupted, although it be weakened and despoiled.

Man bears in himself the evidence of his fallen condition. The miseries and infirmities of his body, but still more the disorders of his mind, and the weakness and evil propensities of his heart, are melancholy proofs of his degradation. Whatever effort may be made to account for our numerous and grievous corporal afflictions by natural causes; who will suppose that man originally came forth from the hands of his Creator with a mind so clouded, and liable to err, and with passions so violent? The mystery of moral weakness united with theoretical admiration of virtue, and an habitual determination to practise it, can only be explained by admitting, that, although God created man free from any moral imperfection, he is now imperfect and defiled: and this defilement cannot otherwise be accounted for, than by reference to the sin of the parent of the human

* Sess. v.

† Symbolik, l. i. ch. ii.

race, whereby grace being forfeited, interior disorder and revolt ensued.

The doctrine of original sin has been insidiously attacked by Albert Barnes, a Presbyterian minister of this city, in his Notes on the Epistle to the Romans, which occasioned his suspension from the ministry, to which, however, he was subsequently restored, when the New School prevailed in the General Assembly. On the pretence that the Apostle did not mean to deliver any theory, but from admitted facts extolled the benefit of the atonement, Barnes bends to his own views the clear and strong testimonies which declare that all had sinned, and thus incurred the penalty of death. Gratuitously assuming that the doctrine of original sin is a metaphysical speculation of later ages, he explains what is said of the effects of Adam's sin on the human race, as indicating its influence, but not any communication of guilt or punishment. Yet by the same rule of interpretation every revealed doctrine may be rejected as a theory which the sacred writers did not deliver. The Apostle testifies a fact when he declares: "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned."* If the sin of Adam did not directly and as a cause induce the guilt of the human race, there was no ground for stating that "so death passed upon all men;" for in many of them it would not be the effect of sin, since a vast portion of our race die before the age of reason, and consequently without any actual sin. In this theory, which may be traced to the days of Pelagius, death is not the effect of Adam's sin, even as to the adult, but it is caused by personal sins, to which Adam contributed no further than by the perverse

* Rom. v. 13.

example of his disobedience. The connexion then between Adam's sin, and the necessity of death which embraces all, adults and infants, is destroyed by this interpretation, which further contradicts the positive testimony: "in whom all have sinned."* Whether this version be admitted, or the text be rendered, as some will have it, "inasmuch as all have sinned," the fact of sin being common to all who die, equally results from it, death being in all caused by sin: wherefore, as infants are manifestly incapable of actual sin, it must be admitted that they are sinners, in consequence of the act of the first man, whereby he and his posterity fell from original justice and innocence. "Death," says the Apostle, "reigned from Adam unto Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of the transgression of Adam."† Before the promulgation of the law on Sinai, and the transgressions consequent thereon, death held its sway over the whole human race, even over infants who had not sinned actually, as Adam sinned. There must be a cause for this universal necessity: there must be a sin common to all, of which death is the punishment. Barnes endeavours to confine the Apostle's words to actual transgressors of the natural law; but the empire of death was not confined to them. It extended to the tender infant, because it entered into the world by the sin of the father of the human family, in whom all sinned, being all involved in the guilt and punishment of his transgression. But how can this be? Is it not a manifest absurdity to say that those sinned who had no existence? It were absurd to assert it in its ordinary meaning, because it implies actual prevarication: but it is not absurd to say that all fell from the unmerited elevation

* ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον.

† Rom. v. 14.

which Adam forfeited by his disobedience: that all lost, through his act, the gratuitous gifts which had been bestowed on him, as the head of his race: that all were thenceforth estranged from God, children of wrath, stained with sin, which is the death of the soul. There is indeed much that is mysterious in this economy of Divine Providence, but nothing absurd: of it we have a faint image in some legal enactments, which subject to penal disabilities the descendants of traitors even to the twentieth generation.* It behoves us to recognize and adore a truth of which the evidence presents itself constantly to us in the moral infirmities which we suffer. The gloomy reign of death over all men, for which so many evils prepare us, is as inexplicable without the admission of a general sin, of which it is the punishment, as the communication of the sin of Adam to the whole human race. Let those who say that the Apostle means only that death is universal, because men generally prove transgressors, show how this accounts for the pains, and sufferings, and death of millions of children before the use of reason.

The alternate use by the Apostle, in this chapter, of the words *many* and *all*, shows that when he says, "by the offence of one many died;" he means that "all were dead," as he elsewhere says; and "the offence of one *was* unto all men to condemnation:" and when he says, "by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners," he means that "in him all have sinned." The comparison which he makes between the consequences of the sin of Adam and the fruits of the sacrifice offered up by Christ, shows that as "Christ died for all, all were dead," and that as all who are sinners are such in consequence of the

* Blackstone's Comm. l. ii. n. 252, and l. iv. n. 389.

sin of Adam, so all the just owe the gift of grace to Christ their Redeemer. The actual communication of the justifying grace of Christ is not indeed made to all, but it is offered to all, and its superior efficacy is manifest, since, whilst the sin of Adam brought with it necessarily the general fall of the human race from original justice, the grace of Christ suffices to cancel not only that stain, but the innumerable prevarications of men, and is accompanied with great gifts, and followed by life eternal: "Judgment, indeed, was by one unto condemnation; but grace is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through one Jesus Christ."* If Adam influenced the human race merely by his example, and thus gave occasion to their sins, so should we consider, as Unitarians do, Christ leading men to justice by example, rather than by any actual communication of grace; and the pernicious results of Adam's fall would so outweigh the fruits of Christ's offering, that there would be scarcely any plausibility in the reasoning of the Apostle: whence Rosenmuller, following this rationalistic view, ventured to state that the Apostle argued conformably to Jewish prejudices, rather than to facts.†

The Apostle, in clear terms, affirms that all were dead to God, wherefore Christ offered himself up a victim for the sins of all men. "If one died for all," he says, "therefore all were dead. And Christ died for all."‡ The argument loses its force, if the death of all by sin be denied. Since, then, all have not committed deadly sins, their death

* Rom. v. 16, 17. † See my *Theologia Dogmatica*, vol. ii. ch. iii.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 14.

must be the consequence of the sin of him from whom all derive their origin. Christ died for all: His divine heart embraced children as well as adults: His blood flowed to obtain for both pardon and salvation. "Therefore all were dead," void of the life of grace, and subject to the decree of eternal death. The harshness of this language is considerably mitigated, when it is considered, that, according to the prevailing sentiment of divines, it implies no more as to infants than the privation of supernatural beatitude.

Is it likely, it may be asked, that a dogma like this should have been unknown until the days of Paul, and that no trace of it should appear in the inspired narrative of the fall of man? The penalty of disobedience intimated to him was death, and "we have no reason," observes Mr. Barnes, "to think he would understand it as referring to any thing more than the loss of life, as an expression of the displeasure of God. Moses does not intimate that he was learned in the nature of laws and penalties; and his narrative would lead us to suppose that this was *all* that would occur to Adam. And indeed there is the highest evidence that the case admits of that this was his understanding of it. For in the account of the *infliction* of the penalty *after* the law was violated; in God's own interpretation of it, in Gen. iii. 19, there is still no reference to any thing further. 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' Now, it is incredible that Adam should have understood this as referring to what has been called 'spiritual death,' and to 'eternal death,' when neither in the threatening, nor in the account of the infliction of the sentence, is there the slightest recorded reference to it."*

* In Rom. v. 12. Alexander Campbell maintains, that not even Adam himself incurred the penalty of eternal death by his transgres-

This reasoning goes to overthrow not only the transfusion of original sin, but the moral guilt and eternal punishment of Adam's personal prevarication, so that it savors of Universalism. It was not, indeed, necessary that Adam should be 'learned in the nature of laws and penalties,' in order to understand that by violating the law of God he should fall under the divine displeasure, and deserve to be cast away for ever. It was sufficient to have the most common share of intellect to perceive, that by transgressing the law, he should cease to enjoy the divine favor, the loss whereof is the death of the soul. The penalty of corporal death intimated to him, was an assurance that God must be obeyed; and without deep reflection he might know, that having incurred His anger, he should lose for ever all claim on His bounty. The threat and its execution were the immediate significations of divine displeasure, and as the command was an addition to the natural law, so likewise the penalty was added to the necessary guilt and punishment which every grievous transgression produces. Can Mr. Barnes mean to deny that Adam by his prevarication lost the grace of God, and forfeited all claim to Heaven, nay, incurred the penalty of eternal death? If he deny it, the Universalist may insist that grievous sin does not ne-

sion, but that he lost by his fall a certain splendor which before encompassed his person, and lost likewise a true idea of the image of his Creator, and the actual moral likeness he before had to him; with this he lost his favor also, and was thereby not only obnoxious to all the punishment annexed to his original transgression, but was as far as in him lay, utterly disqualified to regain either a true idea of God's moral character, conformity to him, or the enjoyment of his person. See *Christian Baptist*, vol. vi. p. 485. Such is the strange view presented by this antagonist of creeds, and advocate of general union, grounded on the sole admission of the Bible.

cessarily draw after it these consequences. If he admit it, notwithstanding the silence of the sacred text, he cannot argue from that silence that the guilt of that transgression was confined to our first parents. When we consider that the gifts with which Adam was adorned, and the glory for which he was thereby prepared, were supernatural, we shall perceive no need of an express declaration on the part of God, that in case of his prevarication, they would be forfeited for his race, as well as himself, since this must appear to be a natural consequence of the position which he occupied as head and source. In vain does Mr. Barnes observe, that “the word representative implies an idea which could not have existed in the case—the consent of those who are represented.”* Adam was the head, the father, and fountain, and consequently the natural representative of the human family, which was to spring from him. He was not chosen, as delegates are elected to represent constituents, but his creation placed him at the head of his posterity. It is unnecessary to conceive a compact between God and him, or a divine decree whereby he was constituted the representative of all; much less need we presume the implied consent of his posterity that he should represent them. It suffices that he was the first man, and the first transgressor, and that all come from him a fallen and guilty head.

The doctrine of the communication of the sin of Adam to each member of the human family was not unknown to the Jews, although not declared in the history of the fall. Job makes reference to it, when in extenuation of his weakness, he asks: “Who can make clean him that is conceived of unclean seed?”† or in the concise lan-

* In Rom. v. 14.

† Job xiv. 4.

guage of the original text: "Who can make clean of unclean?"* or as the Septuagint rendered it: "There is no one free from stain, not even though his life be of one day."† Each one comes into the world, defiled and unclean, wherefore he is also prone to personal prevarication; nor can he be purified unless by God. David declares this truth more explicitly, when imploring pardon for the crimes into which passion had betrayed him: "Behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins hath my mother conceived me."‡ To understand this of the sin of his parents, would be to favor the Manichean heresy, which condemns the use of marriage: to explain it of the imperfection sometimes attendant on what in itself is lawful, would be to wrest the terms from their obvious signification: wherefore we must avow that David himself was conceived in sin. The use of the plural number in the Latin version can create no difficulty, since the original text is in the singular, and the plural may be used considering the consequences of original sin.

The ancient faith of the church is evident from all the Greek fathers, from St. Clement of Rome downwards, who quote the words of Job according to the Septuagint: "No one is free from stain, even though his life be but of a day." The infant can have no personal stain, and consequently there must be an hereditary stain common to all. ST. JUSTIN says that Christ went to the Jordan, through no necessity, "but on account of the human race, which by the sin of Adam had fallen under the power of death, and

* מִי יִתֵּן טָהוֹר מִטְּמֵא לֹא אֶחָד

† 'Ουδεις καθαρός ἀπό βυττα εδὲ ἐν μιᾷς ἡμέρας ἢ ζωῆς αὐτου. Clement Romanus, in his first letter to the Corinthians, ch. xvii. and the Greek Fathers generally, quote it in this way.

‡ Ps. l. 7.

the deceit of the serpent; besides the particular cause which each of them by his own evil doing presents.”* **TERTULLIAN** says: “every soul is reckoned in Adam until it be newly enrolled in Christ; and it is unclean until this enrolment; and it is sinful, because unclean.”† **ORIGEN** quotes the above passage from the Septuagint: “The Scripture declares of every one who is born, whether male or female, that he is not clear of defilement, although his life be but one day.”‡ “Hearken to David, who says: ‘I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bring me forth;’ whereby he shows that every soul which is born in the flesh, is defiled with iniquity and sin.”§ **ST. CYPRIAN** urges as a reason for the baptism of infants, without awaiting the eighth day, that pardon is granted in baptism to the worst sinners: “how much greater reason,” he asks, “is there for not rejecting the infant, that being lately born has committed no sin, but being carnally born according to Adam contracted at its first birth the contagion of the ancient death?”||

On this point, as on a vital doctrine of religion, the fathers, councils, and pontiffs of the fifth century particularly insisted. It cannot be questioned without destroying the necessity of grace,¶ and overturning the mystery of redemption. If all are not conceived and born in sin, then

* *Dialog. cum Tryphone.*

† *De anima*, c. xl.

‡ *Hom. viii. in Lev.*

§ *Ibidem.*

|| *Ep. ad Fidum*, lxiv. ed. Pamelii lix.

¶ Alexander Campbell considers grace as the preaching of the Gospel, and not an internal operation of the Holy Spirit. See *Christian Baptist*, vol. ii. p. 138, et passim. He expresses his wish that “original sin,” with many other terms, should be expunged from the christian vocabulary. P. 159.

Christ is not the Saviour of all men, since unnumbered infants attain to salvation independently of His atonement: then also man by his mere natural energy can observe the whole moral law, and needs only the application of the sufferings of Christ, when by his personal act he has become a prevaricator. Justly did the church at that early period regard these errors advanced by Pelagius, as contrary to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, and utterly subversive of christian faith. After so solemn declarations of ancient belief in Africa, and at Rome, and throughout christendom, it is surely just to regard the dogma of original sin as a fundamental doctrine of religion, which cannot, under any pretext, be denied. It was so judged repeatedly by the highest tribunals of the church at that period; and in that judgment the christian world acquiesced, and for eleven centuries it was regarded as an unalterable dogma of revelation. Whatever authority centres in the sacred ministry by the promises of Christ, gives sanction to this their solemn teaching: whatever guaranties against error have been divinely given to the church, must here afford security. She would cease to be "the pillar and ground of truth," had she incorporated with the revealed doctrines a human error, and made it for centuries the basis of her teaching and practice.

I shall not at present dwell more at length on this divine warranty of our faith; but will simply remark that the Council of Trent opposed the errors of the sixteenth century, by repeating the anathemas which in the fifth and sixth centuries had been hurled at Carthage, Mela, Rome, Orange, and elsewhere, against Pelagius, Celestius, and other ancient innovators.

CHAPTER VI.

NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

BESIDES “the Friends,” who deny altogether that water-baptism is a christian rite, many, who admit that Christ instituted it, deny its absolute necessity. This, however, is firmly maintained by the church: “If any one,” say the fathers of Trent, “shall say, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary for salvation; let him be anathema.”* The Anglican articles are silent in regard to this point, and Anglican divines are divided in sentiment. Featley, who wrote about two centuries ago, stated that there was no real difference with us on this subject: “All that can be inferred from both,” he says, speaking of the texts in John iii. 15, Mark xvi. 16, “is that baptisme is the ordinary means of salvation, and that baptisme is so far necessary as well *ratione praecepti*, as *ratione medii*, no orthodox understanding Protestant ever denied; neither is there any reall controversie between the Protestants and Papists in this point, but only verball, as Doctor Reynolds excellently clearly proveth in his lectures *de censura apocryphorum*.”† Others however speak differently. Hopkins, bishop of Raphoe, writes: “Baptism is not of such absolute necessity as a means, that none can be saved with-

* *Conc. Trid. Sess. vii. de Bapt. can. v.*

† *The Dippers dipt, or the Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and eares, at a disputation in Southwark, by Daniel Featley, D. D., London, 1646, p. 7.*

out it; neither doth our Saviour so assert it. For we must distinguish, between being inevitably deprived of the opportunity of baptism, and a wilful contempt of it. And of this latter must the words of Christ be understood. He that contemns being born again of baptism, and out of that contempt finally neglects it, shall never enter into the kingdom of God; but for others, who are necessarily deprived of that ordinance, the want of it shall not in the least prejudice their salvation; for it is a stated rule: ‘*Non absentia, sed contemptus sacramentorum reum facit.*’”* This language is quoted and adopted by Bishop McIlvaine.† Bishop Onderdonk does not recede from these sentiments: “Baptism, as well as moral regeneration, is required for our admission into the celestial kingdom—is ordinarily necessary—incapacity, ignorance, involuntary error, and want of opportunity being perhaps the only known exceptions to the rule so plainly enjoined by our Lord himself.”‡ “Infants dying unbaptized, persons ignorant of the Gospel, or not having access to baptism, or omitting it through involuntary error, are exceptions, we doubt not, to the requirement to be born of water.”§

The Presbyterian confession speaks in terms evidently designed to deny the absolute necessity of the sacrament: “Although it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or

* *On the Doctrine of the Sacraments.*

† *Oxford Divinity*, p. 446.

‡ *Essay on Regeneration*, by the Right Rev. Henry U. Onderdonk, D. D., Bishop of the Prot. Episcopal Church in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1835, p. 69.

§ *Ibidem*, p. 105.

saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.”* The Baptists say that “baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only Law-giver, to be continued in His church to the end of the world.”† In admitting the command, they do not suppose an obligation to execute it, when it cannot be done by immersion, whence they suffer the sick to depart from life unbaptized: nor do they consider the want of it an obstacle to salvation, unless when disobedience to the divine mandate is wilful.‡ Judge Rush gives a peculiar view: “In the present state of the christian church, baptism is necessary for persons of four descriptions, the Jew, the heathen, the Mahometan, and the avowed infidel.”§

The necessity of baptism for salvation is chiefly proved by the words of our Lord to Nicodemus: “Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”|| A new birth had been already declared necessary, and the inquiry of Nicodemus as to the manner in which it could take place, is now answered, by affirming the necessity of being born of water and the Holy Ghost. Water is to be the instrument of this new birth: the Holy Ghost is to be

* Ch. xxviii. 5.

† Confession of Faith, ch. xxix.

‡ Hinton observes that pedobaptists are deprived of the blessings associated with the ordinance of baptism, but adds: I rejoice, indeed, that however much it deprives them of happiness, and Christ of His honour, now, it will not, unless it be a case of known and wilful disobedience, deprive them of a place in heaven.” *History of Baptism*, p. 158.

§ *An Inquiry into the Doctrine of Christian Baptism*, p. 43.

|| John iii. 5.

its author: and until it take place, entrance into the church of God on earth, and into the glorious kingdom of God above is impossible. The necessity of this new birth arises from the supreme will of Christ, and is founded on the defiled state of the children of Adam, and the supernatural quality of the glory of Heaven. In Adam all have sinned: each one is conceived in iniquity: all are children of wrath: the defilement must be washed away, for nothing defiled can enter heaven: the child of Adam must be made a child of God, by the regenerating influence of the Divine Spirit. This is the simple obvious force of the text. The sentence is general, and imports the absolute necessity, that each one be born of water and the Holy Ghost, in order to enter into the heavenly kingdom.

We have already considered the vain attempt of Calvin and of Barclay to interpret this text of a mere spiritual birth, independently of water. It may be proper here to notice the interpretations given by Baptist writers: "That both water and the Spirit," says Mr. Gale, "are necessary in the case our Lord is speaking of, is plain from the words themselves, and that regeneration really consists but in one, and the other is only used as a means, or the like, is, I think, full as plain."* "If our Lord speaks only of adult persons, who have heard the word of God preached; then *any one* in the text can mean only any one such adult hearer."† To be born of the Spirit, in this view, is to conceive faith in the divine promises, and the assurance of one's own justification in Christ, through the operation of the Spirit of God. When horror for sin committed has seized the soul, and despondency preyed on it, the sudden conviction of forgiveness obtained in Christ, according to

* Letter xii. page 483.

† Letter xi. p. 414.

this system, is regeneration. This would confine the necessity of baptism to adult hearers, and would deny it to be the new birth. To this we object that it is a novel and fanciful interpretation, not sustained by the context or by any parallel text, and entirely unknown to all christian antiquity. It is not allowed thus capriciously to detract from the means divinely chosen for this new birth, and to ascribe all to that change of feeling, which is oftentimes produced by impassioned declamation, or is the mere play of imagination. The early Baptist writers rely on this passage to prove the use of water in connexion with regeneration, or in reference to it, rather than as its instrument, whereas the obvious force of the terms exhibits it as an instrument and cause.* “Not only,” as Dr. Pusey well remarks, “is there nothing in Scripture to sever regeneration from baptism, but baptism is spoken of as the source of our spiritual birth, as no other cause is, save God: we are not said, namely, to be born again of faith, or love, or prayer, or any grace which God worketh in us, but to be born of water and the Spirit, in contrast to our birth of the flesh;† in like manner as we are said to be born of God.”‡ The attempt of Baptist writers to appropriate the new birth to the Spirit, and regard the water as not concurring to it efficiently, though not equally bold, is as unwarrantable as the attempt of Calvin to deny the natural meaning of the term water in this place. It is even more inconsistent, since the connexion of water and the Spirit being immediate in the text, the natural meaning being admitted, its

* γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος. John iii. v.

† τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκός. Ib. v. 6.

‡ οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων—ἀλλ’ ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. i. 13. See Dr. Pusey, on *Baptism*, p. 25.

efficiency as an instrument in regeneration necessarily follows. It is equally opposed to the consent of all antiquity, on which Baptists rely against Calvin; for all understood baptism to be the instrument and means of regeneration, through the grace of the Spirit: and no one ever thought of that work of imagination which is now called regeneration, being indicated by this birth of the Spirit. There is no reason to suppose that Christ spoke only of adult hearers, although he addressed Nicodemus; for the Greek term *τις*—any one—is the most general that could be used, and there is nothing in the context to restrict it. On the contrary, by saying: “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;”* Christ teaches us that by our natural birth we are all without any title to beatitude, and must be born anew in order to enter into the kingdom of God. The Baptists allege that regeneration can suit only those who discern the operations of the Spirit: but is it wonderful that a new and supernatural birth should in some cases take place without co-operation, whilst we are altogether passive in our natural birth? It is surely worthy of the power and goodness of the Holy Spirit, who breathes where He willeth, to create, as it were, anew, to His own image, by His mercy, those who cannot by the exercise of free will prepare for this new birth. This was always believed to take place in baptism. It was reserved for later times to explain the new birth of a state of mind, in which presumption follows remorse and despair. Alexander Campbell observes: “The popular belief of a regeneration previous to faith, or a knowledge of the Gospel, is replete with mischief. Similar to this is a notion that obtains amongst many of a ‘*law work*,’

* John iii. 6.

or some terrible process of terror and despair through which a person must pass, as through the pious Bunyan's slough of *Despond*, before he can believe the Gospel. It is all equivalent to this; that a man must become a desponding, trembling infidel, before he can become a believer."*

It is popularly believed that men must experience the pangs of struggling conscience until the soul is born anew. "Enthusiastic teachers," says Bishop Onderdonk, "dwell much on the necessity of violent pangs, in order to the accomplishing of the new birth, and not only justify on this ground many improper excesses, but require the calmer Christian to force himself into a similar excitement, under the penalty of being accounted void of true piety."† "Although Christians of a calm disposition judge chiefly by the life and conversation whether that act has occurred, enthusiasts appeal rather to the feelings, and require in these a *token*, usually of strong agitations, often of terrors, ending in rapture, before they allow a person to be considered as regenerate. And this token once perceived, the individual is unreservedly classed among the pious, and Calvinists add, that he is now, to human judgment, marked for final perseverance."‡ Those who thus understand regeneration, do not deny that water should be employed to associate the regenerate to the visible church, although they apply the term itself to the work of the Holy Spirit exciting and agitating the heart, and creating the new man. Hinton, however, perceiving that the admission that baptism is at all referred to in the discourse to Nicodemus, is fatal to this explanation, abandons the former Baptist wri-

* Christian Baptist, vol. i. p. 49.

† *Essay on Regeneration*, p. 106.

‡ *Ibidem*, p. 96.

ters: "The passage plainly means, of water 'even of the Spirit;' the former being the figure of the purifying influence of the operation of the Divine Spirit. I am well aware that Baptists even have been misled by the early Fathers on this point. Of late, however, the incorrectness of this interpretation and its *formalizing* tendency have been more generally acknowledged. Certain it is, that the reference is to the heavenly state; for any one can see that men can and do enter the visible 'kingdom of God' without the 'Spirit'; and 'God forbid' we should follow the Fathers in entertaining the idea that none can enter heaven without the water."* Such is the most recent improvement in scriptural interpretation! It is difficult to reason with enthusiasts: but to the calm inquirer it must appear clear that the new birth spoken of, by our Lord, bears analogy to the natural birth, not in the pangs which precede it, but in the dignity of children of God to which it elevates us. We are born of the flesh, flesh: we are "by nature children of wrath:" but we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, unless we be born of the Spirit, to a spiritual life, and thus made the children of God's adoption.

Bishop Onderdonk offers an interpretation, in harmony with his peculiar views of twofold regeneration. He supposes that our Lord, in speaking of a new birth, at first merely meant a thorough change of mind and affections, and was so understood by Nicodemus, who objected to Him, that such a change was as difficult as a second natural birth. "Our Lord then replies more fully, that he must not only be thus morally born again, but also, by the

* *History of Baptism*, p. 300.

new birth of baptism, assume the Christian covenant, and enter the Christian church, which was henceforth to be the especial channel of the grace producing and furthering moral regeneration—he must be born again of water, as well as born again of the converting influence of the Spirit, in order to an entrance into the kingdom of God. Then our Lord returns to the subject of the moral new birth. “This is the key,” the bishop says, “we prefer for this highly important conversation. The necessity of the change of character was the first, and is throughout the principal topic. But the necessity of baptism also is declared.”* To this novel interpretation, which separates what Christ unites, water and the Spirit, and makes two regenerations where one is plainly spoken of, we demur; and plead the congruity of the ancient and unanimous interpretation of the Fathers. Christ declared to Nicodemus, in the first instance, the necessity of a new birth, which Nicodemus did not understand, and was therefore reproached with his dulness by our Redeemer. He explained to him afterwards the nature of this birth, pointing to the instrument whereby the Holy Spirit would effect it.

It may be useful to notice another interpretation, given by Judge Rush, which shows how fancy perverts the sacred volume. He adduces many passages of Scripture, in which waters are used as a figure of tribulations; and insists that the birth by water is the patient endurance of affliction by which we are prepared for the kingdom of God: “A man born of water,” says he, “is a man that has passed through much trouble. Having escaped through the waters of affliction, he is like one new born. The sentiment contained in the passage is simply this: unless

* *Essay on Regeneration*, p. 69.

a man be overwhelmed with a sense of sorrow for sin, like one overwhelmed in water—unless the waters of repentance compass him about even to his soul, accompanied with operations of the blessed Spirit, he can never enter into the kingdom of God.”* The learned Judge failed to observe that in the passages which he conceived to be parallel, the plural form occurs, the rush of many waters being an apt figure of overwhelming affliction, whilst water in the singular is not so understood.

From the confused and incoherent interpretations of modern writers, I turn to the venerable ancients. Their minds being unbiassed by our disputes, they can best attest the obvious meaning of the sentence, and the belief and practice of the church in her earliest days grounded on it. In addition to the testimonies already adduced, I shall take leave to quote others more directly bearing on the necessity of baptism. St. Justin the Martyr, who lived in the decline of the second century, gives a statement of our celestial and new birth by baptism, and to prove its necessity adds: “for Christ says, ‘Unless you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”† “Salvation,” writes Tertullian, at the commencement of the third century, “appertains to none without baptism, especially on account of this sentence of our Lord, who says: ‘Unless one be born of water, he hath not life.’ The law of baptizing is enacted, and the form prescribed: ‘Go,’ said He, ‘teach nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’

* *An Inquiry into the doctrine of Christian Baptism, by Jacob Rush, Presiding Judge of the first judicial district of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1819.*

† Apol. i. 61.

With this law, this definitive sentence being compared: ‘Unless one be born again of water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God,’ has imposed on the believer the necessity of receiving baptism.”* He insists on this in order to show that although salvation might be obtained before our Lord’s death and resurrection by faith, without this rite, since its institution it became altogether necessary. St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, thus addresses the Catechumens: “Whosoever thou art who art about to descend into the water, do not look to the mere water, but accept salvation in the power of the Holy Ghost: for without both it is impossible to be initiated. It is not I who say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, on whose will it depends: for He says, ‘Unless a man be born again,’ and He adds, ‘of water and the Spirit,’ he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”† St. Chrysostom is in strict harmony with the other Fathers, in his interpretation of these words of Christ: “He that is not born of water and the Spirit, cannot, He says, enter into the kingdom of heaven, because he wears the mantle of death, and malediction, and corruption, and has not yet received the symbol of the Lord: he is a stranger and foreigner, and has not the king’s badge: ‘Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’”‡ St. Ambrose writes: “No one ascends into the kingdom of heaven without the sacrament of baptism, for ‘unless one is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’”§ St. Basil says, “The Jew

* *De Baptismo*, n. 13. “Obstrinxit fidem ad baptismi necessitatem.

† *Cat. iii. de Bapt.*

‡ *Hom. xxiv. in Joan.*

§ *L. ii. de Abraha*, c. ii.

delays not circumcision on account of the threat, that ‘every one that shall not be circumcised on the eighth day, shall perish from among his people;’ and you put off the circumcision, which is not made by hands, and does not consist in the stripping of the flesh, but is perfected in baptism, though you have heard the words of the Lord: ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”* I forbear for the present other quotations, and content myself with observing, in the words of Wall, a celebrated Anglican divine: “All the ancient Christians, (without the exception of one man) do understand that rule of our Saviour, John iii. 5, of baptism.” This writer denies the charge of the abandonment of this doctrine by those of his communion. In reply to Mr. Stennet, who asserted that Protestants had justly abandoned it, he observes: “If he mean the principle of an impossibility of salvation to be had, according to God’s ordinary rule and declaration, any other way than by baptism, I shall by and by show, that not all the Protestants, if any, have abandoned it.”† That some have abandoned it is apparent from the words already quoted of Bishops Hopkins, McIlvaine, and Onderdonk.

To this celebrated passage in our Lord’s discourse to Nicodemus, we may add the words of the commission given by Him to the Apostles: “Go into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”‡ Baptism is clearly marked as a condition for salvation in regard to all those to whom the gospel is preached: and although such as have

* Hom. xiii. *de Bapt.* † *History of Infant Baptism*, p. ii. ch. vi.

‡ *History of Baptism*, by Isaac Taylor Hinton, p. 166.

§ Mark xvi. 15.

not the use of reason are not capable of hearing preaching, yet as the terms are so emphatic, it is not a great stretch of reasoning to maintain that every creature—every child of Adam—is embraced by the Gospel, and may be made partaker of its benefits. But if the rigour of scriptural exegesis will not allow us to maintain the universal necessity of baptism, by an inference of this kind, the obligation of receiving it at least must be admitted to be co-extensive with the preaching, which embraces all capable of hearing. It has been observed, that our Lord menaces the unbeliever with perdition, and omits any penalty for the non-reception of baptism: but the reason is obvious. Unbelief supposes a rejection of baptism, the duty of receiving which, in obedience to the principles proclaimed by the preachers of the Gospel, had been already clearly stated. There was no just reason for speaking of baptism in connexion with faith as a condition for salvation, if the believer neglecting it could be saved. Hence all the illustrious christian writers of antiquity have proclaimed in unqualified terms its absolute necessity. “Without baptism,” says **ST. CHRYSOSTOM**, “we cannot obtain the heavenly kingdom.” “It is impossible we should be saved without it.”* The martyr alone, or other who desired the laver, but could not receive it, was excepted. Of the soldier who took the place of a weak apostate, and filled up the glorious band of forty martyrs, **ST. BASIL** remarks: “he was baptized in Christ, not by another, but by his own faith; not in water, but in his own blood.”† “If any one receive not baptism,” says **ST. CYRIL**, of Jerusalem, “he is void of salvation, unless the martyrs alone, who without water receive the kingdom: for the Saviour having ransomed the world by his cross,

* Hom. iii. in I. Ep. ad Cor. c. i.

† Hom. xl. Martyr.

and his side being pierced, water and blood issued from it, so that in time of peace some are baptized in water, and others, in time of persecution, are baptized in their own blood: for the Saviour calls martyrdom baptism, saying: ‘Can you drink the chalice which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?’ ”*

What then must we believe to be the lot of those who die without baptism? If they have obstinately refused it, when sufficient proofs had been presented to them of its divine institution, there can be no doubt of their having sinned grievously, and incurred the penalty of eternal death. Whether the prejudices of education united with a disposition to know and do the will of God may plead for others, who, in virtue of this disposition, may be considered as having implicitly desired it, even when under the delusion of false principles they expressly refused it, it were rash to affirm. We can entertain greater hope for such as never heard of its institution, if with all their heart they sought God, under the influence of His grace, and with an earnest desire to accomplish His will in all things.† But for such

* Cat. iii. de Bapt.

† Bishop M'Ilvaine charged the Council of Trent with teaching “that baptism is the ‘only instrumental cause’ of justification; so absolutely necessary thereto, that without it justification is obtained by none,” and quoted to this effect these words of the council: “Instrumentalis causa—sacramentum baptismi sine quo nulli unquam justificatio contingit.” In my work on justification, p. 133, I pointed out the gross errors in the quotation, whereby the text and its meaning were entirely perverted. The council does not say, that baptism is the *only* instrumental cause, or that without it no one was ever justified, but it declares it to be the instrumental cause, and styles it the sacrament of faith—*sacramentum fidei sine qua nulli unquam contigit justificatio*—without which no one was ever justified, since

as may be guiltless in not having received it, because they were ignorant of its divine institution, salvation is not secure. Their delinquencies against the natural law are a just subject of condemnation: "for whosoever have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law."* It is not for us to excuse, or to condemn, but simply to recognize baptism as a necessary means of salvation. This article of our belief does not lead us to deny salvation to such as have desired it sincerely, although they did not actually receive it; and it does not force us to scrutinize the divine counsels in regard to those in whom the desire may be deemed implicit.† It must, however, be remembered that salvation,

according to the Apostle, "without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6. Mr. Livingston has since adverted to the misquotation, in a treatise "on the salvability of the Heathen:" but I am not aware that the Bishop has pointed to the source of his error, as in defence of his literary honesty he seems bound to do.

* Rom. ii. 12.

† Several Catholic divines hold that the explicit belief of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation is only required as a condition for salvation of those to whom the Gospel has been preached. But a wish to appear liberal and charitable may easily betray men into latitudinarian expressions not consonant with the language of scripture and the Fathers on the necessity of baptism. In what Father of the church can we find a sentence like this of Bishop Onderdonk? "The hopes of the Heathen, of Mahomedan and like infidels, and of all who are not baptized into the visible body of Christ, are vague and general; for they do but *argue*, or we in their behalf, that God may be merciful to them." *Essay on Regeneration*, p. 61. Compare this with the language of AUGUSTIN. Whatever hope may be entertained of the salvation of those who have not heard the name of Christ, it must always be limited to such as, through the inspiration of divine grace, conceive supernatural faith in the existence of God, and the rewards of a future life; for without such faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6.

and the means of attaining it, are the gratuitous gifts of divine bounty, and that the judgments of God, though just, are unsearchable. When a condition of salvation is proclaimed on divine authority, it is rash to indulge in speculation; it is impious to arraign the decree at the tribunal of our erring reason. Our duty is to obey, to fulfil the condition, and await in futurity the full manifestation of its justice: "O! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!"* What madness is it not, to deny a condition of salvation so clearly stated in Scripture, and so fully admitted by the christian world for eighteen centuries!

But what shall we believe in regard to infants who die without baptism? We must hold, according to the words of our Lord, that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Catholic church dare not add or take away from the divine sentence. Their exclusion from the glory of heaven is the privation of supernatural bliss to which no one can have the remotest title unless from the gratuitous bounty of God. They bear the penalty of the sin of the first parent, which was the common act of the human race represented by him as their head and source. They are children of wrath, not admitted to the sight of their heavenly Father. The wicked, who by their wilful prevarications have provoked the divine justice, are punished with eternal torments: but even the harmless infants, who knew no guile, and violated no law, by their own act, are excluded by a just decree of God from his beatific presence. "Believe not," said Augustin, speaking the language of ancient faith, "assert not, teach not that infants seized by

* Rom. xi. 33.

death before the reception of baptism can obtain the forgiveness of original sin, if you wish to be a Catholic.”* “Whosoever shall say that even infants departing from this life without partaking of this sacrament, shall receive life in Christ, truly opposes the apostolic preaching, and condemns the whole church, in which they hasten and run with children to have them baptized, because it is believed without doubt that they cannot otherwise at all live in Christ.”† This truth, maintained by the Catholic church in the fifth century, against the errors of Pelagius, was expressed in the thirteenth by Innocent III. in these words: “The punishment of original sin is the privation of the vision of God; and the punishment of actual sin is the torment of hell-fire.”‡ What then will the condition of infants be? If we listen to ST. GREGORY, of Nazianzum, he will tell us: “They will neither be glorified nor punished by the just Judge; because although not baptized, they have no personal malice, and are rather ill sufferers than ill-doers. Not every one that does not deserve to be punished, deserves to be honoured, and he who is not worthy of honour, does not always deserve punishment.”§

* L. iii. de anima et ejus orig.

† Ep. clxvi. alias xxviii. ad Hier. How different is the language of Bishop Onderdonk, who grants heaven to unbaptized infants—unregenerated either *ecclesiastically*, or *morally*, according to his favourite distinction: “Infants dying unbaptized . . . are exceptions, we doubt not, to the requirement to be born of water. And we further believe that dying infants, as they are not subjects for the moral change we are describing, enter the kingdom of heaven without it: at least, we account this a just view of that part of Scripture—without entering on the mysterious question, how original sin, ‘the infection of nature,’ is in them expunged.” *Essay on Baptism*, p. 105.

‡ Dec. l. iii. t. xlii. de Bapt.

§ Orat. xl. 23.

The church does not teach authoritatively any thing save their privation of all supernatural beatitude. On this the Scripture is clear, as the Fathers unanimously testify: "Whilst, however," says Hinton, "the Fathers of the fourth century differed respecting the exact condition of infants dying unbaptized, they generally agreed that they missed of heaven."*

Some recent writers have indulged in speculation as to the condition of infants, and supposed that they would enjoy natural happiness. This opinion might at first seem like that which St. Augustine brands as Pelagian heresy: "Let no one promise unbaptized children as it were a middle place of rest or happiness of any kind or any where, between damnation and the kingdom of heaven;"* but he is answering Vincentius Victor, who taught that they could attain to the pardon of original sin, and be in paradise, as the penitent thief, although they could not reach the kingdom of heaven. This fanciful opinion, which promised such infants a kind of supernatural happiness, was justly rejected, and their state was called by the strong term of *damnation*, because they are totally deprived of all supernatural felicity: but the opinion which supposes them to be naturally happy, is not to be confounded with that which Augustin rejects, since he elsewhere intimates that existence may still be for them a favor. Although occasionally dwelling in strong terms on their unhappy lot, in order utterly to explode the Pelagian error, he does not venture to assert that it may not be better for them to exist in that state of privation than not to exist at all: "Who can doubt," he says, "that unbaptized infants, who have only original sin, and

* *History of Baptism*, p. 313.

† L. i. de anima, c. xix.

are not loaded with sins of their own will, will be in the gentlest condemnation of all? Which, as I am not able to define, what or how great it will be, so I dare not say, that it would be better for them not to exist at all, than to exist in that state.”*

From the strong language which St. Augustin sometimes employs, some have thought that he literally held unbaptized infants to be with the devil, in hell-fire; which sentiment is put forward by Hinton, to throw odium on the doctrine of original sin, and of the necessity of baptism to salvation; but the comparison of the various passages in which he treats of the future state of unbaptized infants, warrants the mildest interpretation of the severe language which he sometimes uses. St. Thomas of Aquin, his great admirer and disciple, explains him as meaning utterly to exclude the Pelagian error, which ascribed to infants supernatural beatitude.† St. Bonaventure understands him in the same manner;‡ and the general sentiment of Catholic theologians harmonizes with this interpretation, so that, as Sarpi himself confesses, the contrary belief of the first Reformers narrowly escaped condemnation in the Council of Trent. Wall says: “Upon the Reformation, the Protestants generally have defined that the due punishment of original sin is in strictness damnation in hell.”§ “Father Paul mentions their (the Fathers of the council) disputes among themselves, whether they should condemn as heretical that proposition of the Lutherans, that the punishment for original sin is hell-fire, and says it missed very narrowly being anathematized.”||

* Contra Julian. l. v. c. ii.

† Qu v. de malo art. ii. ad i.

‡ In ii. dist. xxxiii. art. iii. qu. i.

§ Hist. of Infant Baptism, ch. vi. §. 8.

|| Ibidem, §. 6.

Is not this, however, even in its most mitigated form, a gloomy dogma? So many millions of harmless infants necessarily excluded from the kingdom of God; so many millions of adults, for the want of a washing with water, involved in eternal perdition. Let it be remembered that the glory of heaven is a gratuitous supernatural favor: and that the pains of hell are the just punishment of voluntary actual transgression. Having explained the limits of the dogma, I have nothing to offer in mitigation of its severity, but the proofs of its revelation. God is just and merciful, and if His dispensations seem severe, we must nevertheless adore them, and await with patience the full manifestation of their justice in the light of glory. We cannot, against the express authority of Christ, promise entrance into His kingdom to such as are not born of water and the Spirit. We cannot question a condition for salvation recognized by the whole church of God during so many ages. Charity suggests that we should urge our fellow-men to comply with it, and leave to God the vindication of His own justice and goodness.

Is it not a lamentable proof of the unbelieving spirit of our age, that whereas, in ancient times, as Augustin testifies, they ran with the new-born infant to the Baptistery, fearing lest it should die without this divine laver, and believing that it could not be saved without it, large bodies of professing Christians now utterly discard the practice, and large numbers of those who theoretically admit it, are indifferent and negligent in respect to it. It were esteemed cruelty to withhold from the delicate infant a remedy for some malady, or necessary nourishment to support life; yet without remorse baptism is denied it, which all ancient Christianity believed to be the remedy of the primeval sin,

and the indispensable means for attaining to life eternal. I would fain appeal to the human sympathies of the maternal breast, and implore, from the tenderness of a mother's love, what is denied to the authoritative command of religion. Take pity on your infants, and even if you disbelieve, or doubt of the necessity of baptism, procure it for them, lest you should, by following a false conscience, be the occasion of their losing the sovereign happiness of enjoying God's glorious presence for eternity.

CHAPTER VII.

EFFECTS OF BAPTISM.

“BAPTISM,” according to the Baptists, “is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Him in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Him; of remission of sins; and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.”* This definition is borrowed from the Westminster confession, the word “ordinance” however being substituted for sacrament, and the words, “not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church,” being omitted: as also the concluding words, “which sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in His church until the end of the world.”† In neither definition is any efficacy ascribed to baptism, which is regarded as a mere sign. Presbyterians make its efficacy dependent on divine predestination, so that “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.” Baptism in this system imparts no grace, although one of God’s elect may receive grace on that occasion, or at some other time, since its “efficacy is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered.” The reprobate receive no

* Confession of Faith, ch. xxx.

† Ch. xxviii.

grace whatever. "Some of them," says the learned Anglican divine, Wall, when speaking of Predestinarians, "have used such expressions, as that they seem to think that even among the infants of faithful parents, some are so reprobated by the eternal decree of God, that though they be baptized and die in infancy, yet they will be damned."* Many Predestinarians are found among the Baptists, and are called Calvinist Baptists, whilst others are styled Arminian Baptists. Among those who hold the predestination of the elect, some reject the reprobation of the wicked, by the mere decree of God. Hinton, having declared his most cordial belief that "all who are grafted into Christ, will be found in him at the last day," observes: "I repudiate, however, with feelings of strong aversion, not to say disgust, Calvin's doctrine of some being foreordained to everlasting death; a doctrine pardonable, indeed, even in a great man, living in the age in which Calvin's lot was cast, but for the perpetuation of which ecclesiastical bodies in the present day are utterly inexcusable."† Calvin speaks of baptism in these terms: "At whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified for the whole of life: whenever we have fallen, therefore, we must recur to the remembrance of baptism, and arm our minds with the consideration of *it*, that we may be always certified and assured of the remission of sins."‡

Alexander Campbell maintains that immersion is a divine institution, designed for putting the legitimate subject of it

* History of Infant Baptism, p. 11. ch. vi. §. 9.

† History of Baptism, p. 343.

‡ Instit. Allen's transl. v. 3. p. 327, cited by Bp. Onderdonk. This, especially taken in connection with the inamissibility of justifying grace, surpasses the most extravagant idea given by our adversaries of indulgences—a pardon of sins past, present, and to come.

in actual possession of the remission of his sins; and that to every believing subject it does formally and in fact convey the forgiveness of sin.* Faith, however, is considered by him as necessary to obtain forgiveness: "He that goes down into the water to put on Christ, in the faith that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and that he has appointed immersion as the medium, and the act of ours, through and in which he actually and formally remits our sins, has, when immersed, the actual remission of his sins."†

The Anglican article approaches more to the Catholic doctrine, although its wording is such as may be accommodated to the Calvinistic view: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God."‡ The ambiguous wording of this article, intended probably to convey the views of Calvin, and yet to present a semblance of Catholic language, to satisfy those who retained something of Catholic belief, has given rise to two classes of divines in the Anglican communion, differing altogether in their doctrine on the nature and effects of baptism.§ Hop-

* See Christian Baptist, vol. v. p. 401. Jan. 7, 1828. See also p. 415, p. 421.

† Ibidem, p. 436.

‡ Art. xxvii.

§ In a curious little work written by Elis, in 1660, entitled "Articulorum xxxix. Eccl. Anglic. Defensio," with the imprimatur of

kins, Bishop of Raphoe, says: "Baptism is a means of our external and relative sanctification unto God; because, by it, we are separated from the visible kingdom of the devil, and brought into the visible kingdom of Christ, and are devoted by vow and covenant unto the service of God."* Other testimonies to the same effect are alleged by the modern representative of the Calvinistic sentiment, Bishop McIlvaine. Dr. Pusey represents the other class of Anglican divines; but is more unequivocal than most of them in his admission of the Catholic doctrine of the regenerating and sanctifying influence of this sacrament. In an elaborate treatise on this subject, he has presented an admirable array of Scripture and traditional testimony in support of this doctrine, and avowed that baptismal regeneration was the doctrine of the universal church of Christ in its holiest ages.

Bishop Onderdonk distinguishes two kinds of regeneration, namely, *ecclesiastical* and *moral*, and ascribes to baptism the former, whereby the baptized are constituted members of the visible church, and in this sense children

Oxenden, Montagu, Beaumont, and Johnson, the Calvinistic view is expressed, yet in language somewhat favorable to the efficacy of the sacrament. In reply to the objection that the eunuch of the Queen of Candace, and Cornelius the centurion, were members of the church before the actual reception of baptism, it is said that for infants baptism is the gate of the church, and that the faith of adults is thereby confirmed, and that it is the means which God employs to bestow salvation. "Quoniam Deus salutis sit causa princeps, hoc non impedit quo minus baptismus sit medium, quo Deus in salute conferenda utatur; deinde baptismus infantibus primus est in Ecclesiam ingressus, licet non adultis, de quibus in exemplis allatis; nec tamen suo caret fructu baptismus in adultis, quippe fidem confirmans." p. 98.

* Cited by Bishop McIlvaine, in *Oxford Divinity*, p. 444.

of God: but the moral regeneration, which consists in a change of *character*, is considered by him to be independent of baptism. "The change of *state*, which is the transition from being out of the visible church to being within it, is, in the Christian church, effected in baptism, and by the Holy Spirit, the minister being His agent. And this operation of the Spirit, is, in Scripture, called regeneration." "That change of *character*, which is recovery from the dominion of sin to victory over it, and when combined with baptism, from its curse to pardon, is ordinarily effected in the use of the means of grace, yet by the Holy Spirit, by His power only; and the change is gradual and progressive. . . . In baptism, as one of the sacraments, devoutly received by an adult, piety is furthered; and, in both adults and infants, 'grace is increased by virtue of prayer unto God;' this, however, being an element of the change of character, is not to be confounded with the change of state then effected."* These views are acknowledged by the bishop to be the result of his own reflections and at variance with his earlier impressions. The terms sound strangely. We believe they are most easily reconcilable with the opinion of those divines of his communion, who deny the sanctifying and regenerating power of baptism. They are certainly opposed to the teaching of the Fathers, as the bishop ingenuously states: "It is not uncommon for the Fathers to regard the moral and the baptismal as one regeneration, and connected with the sacrament of the font."†

It is easily perceived that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration found little favor with the American Protestant Episcopal Convention, that in 1789 remodelled the Book

* Essay on Regeneration. Introduct. p, 8.

† P. 47.

of Common Prayer, for although they suffered it to be said that a baptized "child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church,"* they took care to expunge those passages wherein regeneration is expressly ascribed to baptism, as Bishop Onderdonk testifies; "In the English form of receiving into the congregation infants that have been privately baptized, it is declared, 'that this child is *by baptism* regenerate,'—and in a previous part of the office, 'is now *by the laver of regeneration in baptism*, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.' These passages are not in our Prayer-book; and the omission is judicious—1. because while the connection of baptism with regeneration is sufficiently declared elsewhere, there is avoided too close and rigorous a definition, which furthers contrariety, rather than unity in doctrine—and, 2. because it is not quite correct to say that a certain predicate 'is *now*,' or may 'now' be made, which was true at a previous time."† Many will dissent from the views of the bishop on this point, and think that the omission severed another link of the chain that bound together the American Episcopalians with their Anglican brethren, effaced one of the remaining memorials of Catholic doctrines, and opened the way to the spread and increase of what Dr. Pusey terms low, rationalistic and carnal views of the sacrament. "We deny," says Bishop Onderdonk, "that any deposite is given in baptism, such as may be figuratively called a seed, germ, or leaven of a moral grace, as essentially connected with the rite."‡

* The English book of Common Prayer says, "is *regenerated*." The change seems intentional.

† *Essay on Baptism*, p. 52. Note.

‡ *Ibidem*, p. 64. Note.

The general sentiment of all the Protestant sects in America seems to be, that baptism is a mere rite of association to the visible church, imparting no grace—impressing no character, and producing no internal effect whatever. “One text misquoted,” as Dr. Pusey remarks, “in order to disprove the *absolute* necessity of baptism, has ended in the scarcely disguised indifference or contempt of an ordinance of our Saviour.”* Bishop Onderdonk indeed protests against *ecclesiastical* regeneration being regarded as a mere outward grace, and asks: “Is not the covenant title to moral grace, itself a grace—is not the title to forgiveness of sins, and to heaven, a grace—and is it not conferred on the soul—and is not this gift to the soul ‘an inward grace,’ truly and properly—an inward spiritual grace, ‘given unto us’ by the ‘one Spirit who baptizes us all into the one body?’”† Notwithstanding these interrogations, most persons will consider ecclesiastical regeneration as an outward relation to the visible church, which, though it be supposed to give a title to grace, actually gives no grace whatever. With the exception of such divines of the High Church party as have embraced the Oxford views, I believe the actual communication of sanctifying grace in baptism is generally denied by Episcopalians, as well as by other Protestants.

According to the Catholic belief, baptism, like every other sacrament, contains an inherent efficacy. It washes away the stain of original sin, and whatever actual stains may have been contracted by the adult receiver: it regenerates the child of Adam, and makes him a child of God: it imparts grace and sanctity, and so thoroughly and perfectly

* *Tract on Baptism*, p. 39.

† *Essay on Baptism*, p. 64. Note.

purifies and sanctifies, that where no obstacle is presented by the receiver, no cause of condemnation remains in him, so that if summoned immediately out of life, nothing whatever would withhold him from the kingdom of heaven.* This grace is said to be inherent in baptism, inasmuch as it is attached to it by the divine institution of our Redeemer; and is infallibly imparted, unless when the incredulity or perverseness of the receiver opposes an obstacle to its operation. There is no virtue, however, ascribed to the sacrament, except as a means divinely chosen to apply to our souls the merits of the sufferings and death of our Lord. The power of God, and the merits of our Redeemer are the sources of sacramental efficacy, and a proper state of mind in adults—faith, repentance, hope, and a commencement of love—are required to receive the grace which the sacraments convey.

The passage already quoted which declares the necessity of a new birth of water and the Spirit, proves that regeneration takes place by means of this sacred ablution. The Spirit cleanses the defiled child of Adam, gives him a supernatural birth, and a title to an everlasting kingdom. He is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and therefore can enter the kingdom of God. Thus he who was conceived in iniquity and was naturally a child of wrath, is cleansed and made a beloved child, in whom God takes complacency. "Our birth," Dr. Pusey well remarks, "(when its direct means are spoken of,) is attributed to the baptism of water and of the Spirit, and to that only."† All actual sins which the soul had committed are at the

* See Council of Trent, Sess. v. *decr. de pecc. orig.*, quoted at large in my work on *Justification*, ch. xi.

† *Tract on Baptism*, p. 27.

same time cancelled—even deicide itself was expiated by the baptismal waters: “Do penance,” said Peter to the Jews whom he had reproached with crucifying the Lord, “and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins.”* Ananias, addressing Paul, pointed to baptism as the means of obtaining remission of sin: “Now, why delayest thou? Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon his name.”† The Apostle St. Paul ascribes to this laver this purifying, regenerating, and saving virtue: “We ourselves also,” he says, “were some time unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice, and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of our Saviour-God appeared: not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to hope, of life everlasting.”‡ Salvation, in its principle and commencement, is given in the laver, which gives us a new birth, and a new supernatural existence, by the divine operation of the Holy Ghost. He is

* Acts ii. 38. *Μετανοεσθε agile poenitentiam.* The vernacular versions made on the Vulgate generally retain the turn of the Latin phrase. This has been the more strictly adhered to, because the original term is used in Scripture to denote compunction manifested by external acts, whereof the innovators of the sixteenth century sought to despoil it, thus denying and making void its influence. George Campbell, feeling that *to repent* but feebly expresses its force, has substituted the term *reform*: but the simple phrase of the Vulgate is far more suitable.

† Acts xxii. 16.

‡ Tit. iii. 5.

poured on us abundantly, and the infusion of water is but the emblem and instrument of this abundant communication. By His grace we are justified from all our past sins, and made heirs of life eternal in hope; the actual possession of our inheritance being still dependant on the preservation of the saving grace bestowed on us. This text considered in connexion with the words of Christ concerning the new birth by water and the Spirit, harmonizes so admirably, that each illustrates the other. "One is almost ashamed," says Dr. Pusey, "to go about to prove that a text so plain applies to baptism, or that the Holy Church Universal always so held it. The proof which one person can bring, can be but a sample of what remains behind. The proof is the same in kind as before, and may be useful to those who, (because they have never examined,) doubt even whether there be such a thing as catholic consent and agreeing interpretation in christian antiquity. First, then, no passage from any Father can, or has been pretended to be adduced, which shall imply any other explanation; next, there is the large body of Fathers from every church, who do interpret the text as a matter of course, of baptism; thirdly, all the liturgies, in all the different ways in which it is possible to apply it."* The souls washed in baptism are those for whom Christ offered up in a special manner His death, that they might come forth from the water, renewed, regenerated, without any trace of their former defilements: "Christ," says the Apostle, "loved the church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water, in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but

* *Tract on Baptism*, p. 51.

that it should be holy, and without blemish.”* Hence, after enumerating the vices of the Heathen, the Apostle observed to the Corinthians: “Such some of you were: but you are washed; but you are sanctified; but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”† The washing of the body in this sacrament is accompanied with the ablution of the soul from the defilements of sin: sanctification and justification are imparted. The power of Jesus Christ operates: His merits plead for the sinner: the grace of the Holy Ghost descends; and the baptized person becomes a tabernacle in which He dwells. “He that believeth, and is baptized,” says Jesus Christ, “shall be saved.”‡ In baptism salvation is granted him in its germ, which cherished by the genial warmth of charity, will mature into a tree of life.

With such divine testimonies before us declaring the virtue of baptism, it is astonishing that men should fancy it to be but a sign and token. The passage of St. Peter which furnishes “the Friend” with an argument against the use of water, serves the Baptist and others, to prove that water does not purify the soul, but faith, which may be styled the examination of a good conscience towards God. The text, however, says, that *baptism saves us*, that is, imparts grace unto salvation; and when it is added, that it is not the cleansing from corporal defilement, but the answer of a good conscience, the necessary disposition to receive this saving grace is indicated, together with the consequence of its reception, whereby the soul is directed to God, and placed in intimate relation with Him.

The affected spirituality of those who deny the divine

* Eph. v. 25.

† 1 Cor. vi. 11.

‡ Mark xvi. 16.

efficacy of baptism was unknown to the ancient Fathers, who, it is admitted by Taylor, Hinton, and other adversaries of sacramental grace, “did constantly speak of baptism as intrinsically holy, and as conveying holiness.”* Bishop Onderdonk admits that they considered regeneration as connected with the font.†

The evidence of the scriptural testimonies does not strike some minds so forcibly as the difficulty of believing so great efficacy in a rite so simple. Yet this, as TERTULLIAN remarks, is a motive for admitting it, since it more plainly marks a work of divine power. “O wretched unbelief! that denies to God his perfections—simplicity and power! What then must we not be astonished that death should be destroyed by the laver? It is on that account the more worthy of belief, if it be disbelieved because it is wonderful. For what does it become the works of God to be, unless such as surpass all admiration? We ourselves are astonished, but because we believe it.”‡ ST. BASIL never tires describing the effects of baptism: “Baptism,” he cries, “is the prisoner’s ransom, the debtor’s release, the death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, the splendid garment, the inviolable character, the chariot of heaven, the assurance of the celestial kingdom, the gift of adoption. . . Now that it is declared that your soul, which you have defiled with every crime, can be renewed and regenerated by baptism, you disregard so great a benefit.”§ Hinton admits that from the third century regeneration was generally ascribed to baptism. “That the doctrine of the regeneration of the soul by baptism, in the case of infants especially, was held by all the Fathers from the third cen-

* *Ancient Christianity*, p. 535.

† *Essay on Baptism*, p. 47.

‡ *De Baptismo*, n. 2.

§ *Hom. in S. Bapt.*

ture, is too well known to admit of a doubt.”* Those who deny the efficacy of baptism, urge for the most part rationalistic objections, and direct their efforts to weaken and destroy the force of the scriptural testimonies. Had not the principle of justification by faith alone been cherished by Protestant interpreters, they could never have thought of questioning the efficacy of baptism, which is so strongly and clearly declared in the sacred writings: but the error being once admitted, every scriptural passage was bent and wrested, to make it fit the system. Happily the leading error is now exploded by a large body of Anglican divines, and is proclaimed by them to be a heresy, destructive of christian morality, and subversive of all revelation; whence we may hope that the obvious meaning of the passages in Scripture regarding baptism will soon be by others also unhesitatingly acknowledged. It is impious to ask, what can avail a washing with water to the purification of the soul? The sovereign power of God can make the simplest things instruments for effecting the greatest ends. When Naaman, the Syrian general, received a message from the prophet Eliseus, who ordered him to bathe seven times in the Jordan, in order to be cleansed of his leprosy, he felt indignant, as if the remedy were too simple to be efficacious. He had expected that the prophet would have waited on him, and invoked divine power in his behalf, and by the touch of his holy hand cleansed him from his leprosy. Disappointed in his hopes, he hastened his departure, spurning the waters of Jordan, as having no healing virtue, above the Abana and Pharpar, rivers of his own country. At that moment his servants approaching said to him: “Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some

* *History of Baptism*, by Isaac Taylor Hinton, p. 306.

great thing, surely thou wouldst have done it; how much rather what he now hath said to thee: Wash, and thou shalt be clean?"* The haughty soldier yielded to the remonstrance, and after he had bathed seven times, according to the directions of the man of God, he found himself entirely cleansed. It is pride and incredulity that make men regard the water of baptism as inadequate to produce the purification of the soul. They should consider the infinite power of God, and His goodness equally boundless, which prompt Him to bestow His gifts, by this channel, on the children of men. We address each one of them in the words of ST. BASIL: "We call you, O man, to life: why do you shun our invitation? You are invited to partake of good things: why do you spurn so great a favour? The kingdom of heaven is prepared. He who calls you does not deceive: the path is easy: there is no need of length of time, expense, or toil: why do you tarry? why do you turn away?"†

The critical examination of the various texts of Scripture, according to the general principles of interpretation, will fully sustain the Catholic doctrine: but again I appeal to the ancient witnesses of the faith, who whilst they testified what they believed, and what was the doctrine of the church in their time, will manifest the meaning which the sacred text naturally presented to minds unsophisticated and unbiassed. The very ancient author of the epistle ascribed by some to ST. BARNABAS, explaining a passage of the forty-seventh chapter of Ezechiel, says: "He means, that we, indeed, descend into the water full of sins and defilement, and come up from it, bringing forth fruit, having in our heart the fear and hope in Jesus,

* 4 Kings v. 13.

† *Hom. xiii. in S. Bapt.*

through the Spirit.”* ST. JUSTIN, the Martyr, having spoken of the preparations of the applicants for baptism, adds: “they are then conducted by us to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated, after the same mode of regeneration, wherein we ourselves were regenerated, for they then are washed in the water, in the name of the Father and Lord God of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.”† The repetition of the term *regeneration* might seem a studied effort to inculcate the virtue of the sacrament, did not the passage occur in a simple narrative of christian practices. It is plain then that the washing with water in the name of the Divine Trinity, in the mind of Justin, and of the faithful generally, was identified with regeneration. “This passage indeed,” says Isaac Taylor Hinton, “appears to indicate that the identification of baptism and regeneration was gaining ground in the time of Justin.”‡ In another place he writes: “Since unconsciously and of necessity we were born in our first generation . . . in order that we may not continue to be children of necessity, or of ignorance, but of election and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of the sins which we previously committed, the name of the Father and Lord God of all is invoked on him who wishes to be born anew, and who repents of his transgressions.”§ ST. IRENAEUS says: “Committing to His disciples the power of regeneration (to God,) He said to them: ‘Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:’”|| and he elsewhere complains of heretics who “frustrate the

* § xi.

† Apol. i. sub finem.

‡ Hist. of Bapt. p. 239.

§ Apol. 1. n. 61.

|| L. iii. *adv. haer.* c. xix.

baptism of regeneration unto God.”* I may be allowed to adduce TERTULLIAN once more: “Blessed is the sacrament of water,” says he, “wherewith being washed, we are freed from the sins committed during our former blindness, and are prepared for life eternal.”† The whole book of this very ancient writer on baptism is a splendid monument of the faith of its efficacy which had come down from the Apostles.

Without calling up in regular succession all the witnesses of the ancient faith on this subject, I shall summon only a few more of the most distinguished. ST. CHRYSOSTOM, explaining the address of St. Paul to the Corinthians, wherein he styled them *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, asks: “What is sanctification? THE LAVER, the purification. He reminds them of their uncleanness from which it freed them.”‡ Elsewhere he says: “This purification is called the laver of regeneration: for ‘he saved us,’ says the Apostle, ‘by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.’”—“Although one be effeminate, although he be a fornicator, although he be an idolater, although he have perpetrated any enormity whatever, and be defiled with any iniquity which man can contract, when he has fallen into this vase of water, he comes forth from these divine streams purer than the rays of the sun. . . . Hear the Apostle: ‘Such indeed you were, but you have been justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.’—He did not merely say: ‘you have been washed,’ but also: ‘you have been sanctified, you have been justified.’”§

St. Gregory Nazianzen says: “The illumination (by

* L. i. c. xviii.

† De Bapt.

‡ In i. ad Cor. c. i. hom. i.

§ *Ad illuminandos*, cat. i.

this he understands baptism) is a help of our infirmity. The illumination is the putting off of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, the communion of the Word, the rectifying of the creature, the deluge of sin, the communication of light, the dispelling of darkness. The illumination is the approach to God, the pilgrimage with Christ, the support of faith, the perfection of the mind, the key of the kingdom of heaven, the change of life, the end of servitude, the loosing of chains, the transformation into another state of being. What more shall I add? It is the best and most splendid gift of God: for as the Holy of Holies and the Canticle of Canticles are so called to denote their comprehensive and excellent qualities, so this is the holiest of the illustrations which are given us. . . . We call it a gift, a favor, baptism, unction, illumination, the garment of incorruption, the laver of regeneration, the seal, and every honorable name. It is a gift, because bestowed on those who contribute nothing: it is a favor granted to debtors: it is baptism, sin being buried with them in the water: it is an unction, because a sacred and royal rite: for priests and kings were anointed: it is an illumination, because splendid: it is a garment covering our shame: it is a laver washing away sin: it is a seal, to preserve us and mark to whom we belong. The heavens rejoice at it: the angels glorify it, on account of its kindred splendor; it is the image of their beatitude: we wish to praise it with hymns, but we cannot equal its excellence.”*

The harmony of the ancient Fathers in interpreting the sacred oracles in regard to the regenerating and sanctifying influence of baptism, is an evidence of the clear and strong character of the Apostolic teaching, the echo of which still

* *Orat.* xl.

remained in the church. There is no text of Scripture whereby the obvious meaning of the passages already adduced, and on which the Fathers dwell with emphasis, can be rendered questionable: but all concur to show that sin is washed away, and the soul is clothed with Christ in this sacrament. "The doctrine of baptism (Heb. vi. 2)" says Dr. Pusey, "is declared as explicitly, as incidentally, and as variously, as that of our blessed Lord's divinity, or the saving truth of the Holy Trinity, with which its administration is inseparately blended, the belief in which it very chiefly upholds. For both, we have the same uniform testimony of the Church Catholic; in both cases alike, those who have refused to listen to the church, have failed to find the truth in Holy Scripture. . . . They who say, that 'water and the Spirit' means 'the Spirit only,' or that 'the washing of regeneration' means 'spiritual regeneration independent of any actual washing,' however they may commiserate the misguided people, who assail other Catholic truth, have nothing assuredly to allege against them for forced interpretations of Holy Scripture. It was in their own school that these systems of interpretation were learnt."*

How, we are asked, is an unbeliever, or obstinate sinner regenerated, who, with hypocritical professions, submits to the baptismal rite? The efficacy of the sacrament is not taken away, because an individual deprives himself of its benefit. Fire has the property of burning, even though a moist substance resist its power: water can cleanse, although it may fail to remove deep stains: medicine can heal, although the restlessness and rashness of a patient may frustrate its application. Every thing sublime and holy

* *Tract on Baptism*, p. 58.

proclaimed concerning baptism in the Scriptures, and by the Fathers is verified, provided such be the inherent efficacy of the laver, although many, through their own vicious dispositions, fail to experience these happy effects. It is not necessary to have recourse to a distinction of two species of regeneration in order to meet this difficulty, since the Fathers, who confessedly knew not the distinction, satisfactorily accounted for the different results; and the Scriptures speak of but one regeneration, the new birth of the soul, whereby she becomes a child of God, and heir of heaven. The latitude with which the terms "children of God" are used, do not warrant us to give to the term "regeneration" a like extension. When, by her perverse disposition, the soul remains in sin, although externally washed with the purifying stream, she receives indeed the character of a child, although she be not lovely, because destitute of sanctifying grace: when, through weakness, a regenerated soul violates her baptismal engagements, she forfeits the privileges of a child, without ceasing to bear the impress: wherefore, as Dr. Pusey observes, "men are not taught to seek for regeneration, to pray that they may be regenerate; it is nowhere implied that any Christian had not been regenerated, or could hereafter be so."* In a general sense all baptized men are children of God, because they have received that character by means of the sacrament of regeneration: but their final acceptance depends on their correspondence with the grace by which they have been raised to that dignity. The distinction between the character impressed by the sacrament and sanctifying grace, is the proper solution of the difficulty which

* Tract on Baptism, p. 27.

has led Bishop Onderdonk to conceive a twofold regeneration.

Baptism was believed by the ancients to impress a spiritual character, even on the unworthy receiver, whereby the baptized person was distinguished from one who had not been baptized, and which never could be effaced; wherefore it was deemed sacrilege to attempt to baptize anew such as had been previously baptized. St. Basil, addressing the believer in Christianity, who neglected baptism, tells him that for want of this mark, the angels will not recognize him as a disciple of Christ. "No one will know whether you belong to us, or to the enemy, if you do not manifest, by the mystic symbols, that you are of the household; if the light of the countenance of the Lord be not signed upon you. How shall the angel claim you? how shall he rescue you from the enemies, unless he recognize the seal? how shall you say: I am of God; when you bear not the distinctive marks? Do you not know that the destroying angel passed by the houses that were marked, and slew the first born in such as wanted the mark? A treasure which is not sealed up, can easily be laid hold on by thieves: a sheep without a mark may be taken away with impunity."* St. Augustin compares the spiritual character which baptism impresses, with the mark or brand, whereby soldiers were anciently distinguished: "Do the Christian sacraments," he asks, "remain less impressed than this mark on the body, whilst we see that not even apostates lose baptism, who therefore do not receive it anew, when they return penitent, because it is judged inamissible?"† "That the wicked have, and give, and receive the sacrament of baptism appeared sufficiently evident

* *Hom. xiii. in S. Bapt.* † *L. ii. contra epist. Parmen. c. xiii.*

to the pastors of the Catholic church spread throughout the world, by whom the original custom was subsequently confirmed by the authority of a plenary council: also that the sheep which strayed without the fold, and had received the impress of the Lord from deceitful plunderers, when it comes to the salvation of Catholic unity, its wandering should be stopped, its bondage terminated, its wound healed, but the Lord's character should be recognized in it, rather than reprobated, since many wolves impress that character on other wolves."* This belief of the ancient church is supported by various passages of Scripture, wherein Christians are declared sealed in Christ.† The passages may be referred to confirmation, rather than baptism, but there is no incongruity in supposing both to be embraced. Dr. Pusey has eloquently expressed the force of the several passages: "We are declared to be 'sealed by the Holy Spirit,' being taken out of our state of nature, and marked, guarded, conformed to our Lord;—marked by the sprinkling of His blood, that the destroyer may pass over us, and Satan have no power upon us; guarded as his purchased possession and peculiar treasure, whereon He has affixed His seal; conformed, in that it places again upon us the Creator's image, renewing us after His likeness, and impressing His cast, and to speak the high truth, His features upon our souls, as a seal gives its stamp to the body, whereon it is impressed. And not a present gift only, but an earnest also of larger gifts, proportioned to our youth, since the Holy Spirit was then first imparted to us as Christians, and as His Temple, and the 'earnest'

* L. vi. de Baptismo contra Donatistas, c. l.

† 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13, 14; iv. 30.

then given us is a pledge, that unless we wilfully break off the seal, we shall be carried on to eternal life, with larger instalments of our promised possession, until ‘the possession purchased’ for us, by Christ’s precious blood-shedding, shall be fully bestowed upon us, and God’s pledge be altogether ‘redeemed.’”* The ancient Liturgies, as Pusey has shown, agree in declaring baptism to be a seal whereby we are marked as consecrated to God. “East and West agree in calling baptism a seal, an impress, a guardian mark to those baptized; the baptized themselves (in the language of the Revelations) ‘the sealed.’ The Liturgies, variously as they use the term, still harmonize wholly with the Fathers, using it in exactly the same references, and thus the more evince how Christian antiquity was of one mind, the agreement of the Fathers attesting the antiquity of the Liturgies, the consent of the Liturgies proving the more that we have, in this consent of the Fathers, not an accidental agreement of the opinions of individuals, but the voice of their respective churches.”† In our time, the ignorance and disbelief of this spiritual character is such that without hesitation many preachers baptize anew those who join their sect; and what was once regarded as an enormous sacrilege, has become a matter of daily occurrence, and is perpetrated without a feeling of remorse. Even the bold Reformers themselves, could they re-appear on earth, might weep for the frequent profanation of this divine rite; and could they send messengers from the world of spirits to those who call them brethren and fathers, they would no doubt warn them not to trifle with the institution.

The necessity of faith and other dispositions for the due reception of baptism, in no way interferes with the intrinsic

* Tract on Baptism, p. 112.

† Ibidem, p. 114.

efficacy of the sacrament itself. "As in His bodily miracles," Dr. Pusey remarks, "He *could* not do many mighty works because of their unbelief, and He required in them who would be healed, faith in Him the Saviour of all, and telleth them, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' yet was it not faith alone which healed them, but rather His 'virtue,' which 'went out of Him,' and faith was only a necessary condition, which, in the fitness of things, He required in those upon whom He should exercise His goodness; so, in this His spiritual miracle of our new birth, faith removes the obstacle which sin presents to our receiving the divine influence; it turns us to God, who by Adam's fall were turned away from Him; it replaces us in a condition of dependence upon Him; it presents us willingly before Him to receive that life, which He is and communicates (according to their measure) to all His creatures, who depend upon Him. By one universal law, from the highest angel, or dominion, or power, who 'always beholdeth the face of our Father which is in heaven,' to the 'young ravens which cry unto Him,' or the 'young lions,' who, 'roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God;' (yea, and the 'thirsty land,' which gapeth for the dew and rain from heaven, expresses the same law,) He hath appointed dependence upon Him to be a condition of receiving His gifts. Yet is not our dependance the gift for which we depend upon Him; the raven's cry is not the raven's food; the archangel's fixed, unvarying gaze on our Father's countenance is not 'the Light which in His light he seeth;' our faith is not our baptism, nor God's gift in it."*

* Tract on Baptism, p. 69.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORIGIN OF THE BAPTISTS.

SHORTLY after the revolt of Luther from the Catholic church, Thomas Muncer, one of his adherents, a native of Zwickau, in Misnia, pursuing to their legitimate consequences the principles of his master, denied the propriety of infant baptism. Luther had taught him that the personal persuasion of the individual of his justification in Christ was the means or condition of justification, and that the sacraments are destitute of all inherent efficacy. Muncer justly concluded that infants, being incapable of this personal disposition, could not be fit subjects for baptism. In conjunction with Nicholas Storek, John Leyden, and others, he declaimed against infant baptism, and baptized anew such as consented to his teaching; whence his followers were called *Anabaptists*, from the Greek terms corresponding to re-baptizers. It does not appear that the mode of baptism was as yet made a matter of dispute; but before the middle of the following century, a Friesland peasant of the name of Uke Wallis gave rise to a sect, or branch of Anabaptists, who received the name of *Dompe-lers*, i. e. *Dippers*, from their plunging into the water all who sought baptism at their hands.* About the same time the English Anabaptists, who claim to be derived from the Mennonists, or Minnists of Holland, a milder branch

* See Encyclopædia Americana. Art. *Anabaptists*.

of the original stock,* in a profession of faith which they published in 1644, declared: "The way and manner of dispensing of this ordinance the Scripture holds out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water."† Featley, an Anglican divine, who wrote in 1646, speaks of this as a novel tenet recently ingrafted on the sect: "This article is wholly sowed by the new leaven of Anabaptisme. I say the *new leaven*, for it cannot be proved that any of the ancient Anabaptists maintained any such position, there being three wayes of baptizing, either by dipping, or washing, or sprinkling, to which the Scripture alludeth in sundry places."‡ Stephen Marshall, also, a Presbyterian divine, who in the same year combated the English Anabaptists, represents this as a novelty, whilst he reproaches them with retaining all the obnoxious errors of their German brethren: "Verily," he says, "one egge is not more like another than this brood of new opinions, (lately hatched in England, and entertained among them who are called Anabaptists) is like that spawne which so suddenly grew up among the Anabaptists in Germany."§

In Holland the Anabaptists still use infusion: "The candidate kneels, the minister holds his hands over his head, the deacon pours in water, which runs through on the top of the head."|| Many of the obnoxious tenets of the German Anabaptists are utterly discarded by the Bap-

* See Gilbert on Baptism, Tract ii. p. 115.

† *The Confession of Faith of those churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists,* London, anno 1644. Art. xl.

‡ *A Censure of a Book printed anno 1644, intituled the Confession of Faith, &c.*, p. 118.

§ "A Defence of Infant Baptism," p. 74.

|| See Robinson's *History of Baptism*, ch. xxxviii

tists of the present day, though some of them were professed by the early English Anabaptists, if we believe Marshall, or if we may argue from their being held by "the Friends," whose founder was originally of their body. Immediate revelation was claimed for each individual, the lawfulness of bearing arms and of taking oaths was denied, and the power of the civil government not fully admitted. In these respects "the Friends" follow on their footsteps, although they repel as a slander the imputation of disaffection to the constituted authorities, and assert "that such of them as keep true to their principles, are as good members of civil society as any other people, and have never been found in any plots or combinations against the governments which in the course of providence have been set over them."* The Baptists bear arms and take oaths; and as well as the Quakers reject polygamy, which was a favorite tenet of the German Anabaptists. The *Encyclopædia Americana* says, that the Baptists are not to be confounded with the Anabaptists, whose principles they formally disclaimed. It dates the rise of the Baptists from the year 1620. It would appear that they were originally Arminians, who adopted the practice of immersion, and rejected the baptism of infants, and formed thereby a new sect. Their first confession of faith, published in 1644, was charged with the tenets of Arminius.† In it they complain of the appellation of Anabaptists commonly given them: "In their confession printed this year," says Featley, writing at that time, "they find themselves agrieved

* See *Vindication of the Quakers*, signed on behalf of the Society at Philadelphia, 22d of 11th month, 1799, and inserted in Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. ch. iv.

† *A Tractate against the Anabaptists*, p. 24.

with the name of Anabaptist, saying, they are falsly so called. . . . if Anabaptists be their nickname, what is their right name, whereby they may be distinguished from other Christians, Catholike or Hereticks? They have hitherto been known in general by no other names then of Anabaptists, or Catabaptists, and never a barrell better herring.”* The strict followers of Calvin were soon found in their ranks, and accordingly in 1689 a confession of faith was published by a hundred congregations in England and Wales, which is for the most part a transcript of the Presbyterian confession, sanctioned by the Westminster Assembly in 1647. This is the general standard of American Baptists, who formally adopted it in an assembly held at Philadelphia, September 25, 1742; but several Baptist congregations in the western part of Pennsylvania, and in Ohio and Kentucky, have abandoned it, and adopted the latitudinarian plan of Campbell, who rejects all creeds. In England, in the reign of Queen Anne, a large body of Baptists differed from the established church, chiefly on the subject of infant baptism, as Wall informs us: “In the first year of her present majesty, is published a draught of articles by some Antipædobaptists (the same I guess) to manifest their nearness in union with other of her majesty’s Protestant subjects. There are 36 of ’em. They are verbatim (except 2 or 3 clauses of no moment) the same with 36 of the 39 articles of the church of England; save that in the article of baptism they leave out that clause about infants’ baptism.”†

Some Baptists claim a much higher origin, and assert

* *Remarkable Histories of the Anabaptists*, by Daniel Featley, D. D., p. 124.

† *History of Infant Baptism*, p. ii. ch. xi.

that they have existed ever since the days of the Precursor ; which they attempt to prove by the admitted fact that baptism by immersion was practised in all ages : but this does not at all establish their claims to antiquity ; since the question is not confined to that practice, but to the tenets which constitute them a distinct society, or sect. They have, therefore, deemed it necessary to point to several sects which from time to time are noticed in the annals of the church, especially the Vaudois, and Albigenses, and Brethren of Bohemia ; but hitherto they have never been able to show any society whose tenets harmonize with theirs. The Brethren of Bohemia were a branch of the Calixtins, who, in 1457, separated themselves from the other followers of Huss.* They indeed rebaptized those who came to their sect, because they had not been baptized by their ministers ; but they practised infant baptism and admitted the seven sacraments, as appears from their confession of faith, presented to King Ladislaus in 1504. The Albigenses in the twelfth century were Manicheans, who denied baptism in water, and the lawfulness of marriage, and of oaths, and considered the Trinity and Incarnation as allegories.† The Vaudois in the same century were originally rather schismatics than heretics, although subsequently they fell into several errors, but not such as the Baptists profess. They baptized children, admitted the seven sacraments, and other doctrines which these deny.‡ The attempt to show the existence of a sect holding the tenets of the present Baptists, must always prove

* Bossuet, *History of Variations*, l. xi. n. 374.

† *Ibidem*, n. vii. to xlviii.

‡ *Ibidem*, n. 72. See also Gilbert. *Tract ii. Infant Baptism*, p. 31 to 80.

abortive, since history is utterly silent; and it is in vain to say that the church was hidden in the wilderness during a long lapse of ages, for such an assertion is gratuitous, and merits no attention. Public credulity is sported with, when men are called on to believe a fact unsustained by the least evidence, and asserted merely in support of an hypothesis otherwise untenable. Isaac Taylor Hinton, after an awkward attempt to trace the history of the Baptists, and several apologies for the want of documents, says, "That there has been, since the days of our Saviour, an uninterrupted succession of Baptists, if not of Baptist churches, I have not a moment's doubt." His conviction, however, may not satisfy all his readers, especially as he frequently betrays an anxiety for "documentary evidence which may yet throw additional light on this point."* "The name of Baptist," as is observed by Adams, in his *History of the Religious World*, "is only of modern date and of local application. Anabaptists and Antipaidobaptists have been the usual epithets by which Christians who believed that the immersion of believers was baptism, had been called by their opposers."† At present, according to the testimony of Alexander Campbell, "the Baptist society exhibits a greater variety than any other society in Christendom."‡ This writer seeks to unite all in religious communion, by discarding all creeds and formularies of faith, and taking the Bible alone as the basis of union: and large bodies of Baptists throughout the Western states have embraced his views.

* *History of Baptism*, ch. vii. §. viii. p. 295.

† *The Christian Baptist*, vol. iii. p. 192.

‡ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

So manifest was it in the twelfth century that there had existed no body of professing christians which had rejected the baptism of infants, universally practised throughout the church, that the novelty of the system, for the first time avowedly advocated by Peter de Bruis and Henry the Monk, called forth the animated remonstrances of the venerable Peter of Cluny: "Were all past ages," he asked the innovators, "so senseless, as to give a mock baptism to so many thousand infants, during more than a thousand years, and from the days of Christ down to you, to make not real but fantastic christians? Has the universe been so blinded, and wrapt in such darkness down to this time, that to open its eyes, and dissipate the obscurity of so long a night, after so many fathers, martyrs, pontiffs and rulers of all the churches, it has waited so long for you; and to correct its long continued error, has it chosen Peter de Bruis, and Henry his satellite, as recent apostles? Was the world thus lost until it brought forth its new reformers; and even with the children of light and truth were all things carried on in darkness and falsehood; so that since all those of our age, or within our memory have been baptized, and have received the christian name in infancy, and have been promoted at suitable times to the various dignities of the church, no bishop of bishops, no priest, no deacon, no clerk, no monk, not one (I say) of such a numberless multitude was even a christian? For he that was not baptized with the baptism of Christ was not a christian. If he was not a christian, he could not belong to the clergy, nor people, nor church. If so, it is manifest what an absurdity follows: *For since all France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and all Europe, during three hundred years, or*

*almost five hundred years, has had no one who was not baptized in his infancy, it had no christian. If it had no christian, it had no church. If it had no church, it had not Christ. If had not Christ it was utterly lost.”**

** Tract. contra Petrobrusianos.*

CHAPTER IX.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

OPPOSITION to the baptism of infants may be considered as the original distinguishing tenet of the Baptists, although they are now more remarkable for the practice of immersion. They teach, in their profession of faith, that “those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.” The Presbyterians, on the contrary, say: “Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized;” thus virtually excluding the infants of parents, neither of whom claims to possess justifying faith.* The Anglican articles declare:

* Calvin and his followers ground the practice of baptizing infants on the principle, that the covenant of God is with the faithful and their posterity: whence they restrict it to the children of believers, who being embraced in the covenant, have a right to receive the sign of association with the visible church. See a Discussion on Christian Baptism, by W. L. McCalla, Philadelphia, 1828. This partial covenant, however, is gratuitously supposed, and cannot be inferred from the ancient covenant made with Abraham and his seed. Gen. xvii. 7. The Gospel of salvation is directed to every creature; the blessings of the new covenant are proffered to every individual of the human family; and children are capable of baptism, independently of the dispositions of their parents. By this sacrament they are made partners of the new covenant. The text of the Apostle concerning the children of a Heathen parent and a convert to christianity, whose

“The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”* The Catholic church holds that all infants are capable of baptism, independently of the piety or faith of their parents, although the children of unbelievers are not to be baptized, against the will of their parents, or in circumstances that expose the sacrament to manifest profanation.

The necessity of baptism for salvation being established, the admissibility of infants to this divine rite naturally follows. All of us are by nature children of wrath, being stained by sin: baptism is the laver wherein sin is washed away: it must, then, be applicable to the infant, unless it be maintained that the blood of the New Testament was not shed for the remission of the hereditary sin. The child of earth needs a heavenly birth: he must be born anew to God of water and the Holy Ghost; for the sentence is most express: “unless a man be born again of water and

children he declares holy, gives no countenance to the error of Calvin. The Apostle forbade the christian to dissolve the marriage relation, which had previously existed, and declared it lawful, and likely to prove the occasion in many instances of the conversion of the unbeliever, and the christian education of the offspring: “for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: otherwise your children should be unclean; but now they are holy.” 1 Cor. vii. 14. This holiness implied the legitimacy of the marriage connexion, and the opportunity afforded of sanctification by the christian sacraments, and christian education. “Hinc enim et Apostolus ex sanctificato alterutro sexu sanctos procreari ait, tam ex seminis prærogativa, quam ex institutionis disciplina.” Tertullianus de anima, c. xxxix. See this text afterwards quoted and explained: see also St. Augustin, l. i. de Serm. Dom. c. xxvii.

the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* The term *τις* has been already shown to imply any one, and to regard every member of the human family. Infants then must be capable of baptism, unless they be incapable of salvation. Who would venture to deny that they can be saved of whom Christ has said: “Suffer children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God?”† This argument was urged with much force by Peter, Abbot of Cluny, against the followers of Peter de Bruis, in the twelfth century: “Jesus embraced them. Jesus laid his hands upon them. Jesus blessed them. Will you any longer, not with manly constancy, but with pertinacious malice, dare repel infantile innocence from Christ? Will you, against the will of Christ himself, snatch the children from Christ who embraces children, from Christ who lays his hands on children, from Christ who blesses children?”‡ Baptists contend that our Lord meant such persons as resemble children in simplicity and innocence: yet as children were the subject of His observation, they must at least be comprised in His words. Besides, Baptists hold that children attain to the kingdom, even without baptism, and reproach us with establishing a condition for salvation, whereof our Lord made no mention, in circumstances which seemed to demand it.§ Had He not on other occasions declared the necessity of the new birth by water and the Spirit, for each one who is born of flesh, we should not surely allege such a condition: but in the face of His positive declaration, we dare not promise it on any other terms: and the

* John iii. 5.

† Luke xviii. 15. *τα βρεφη infants.*

‡ Tract adv. Petrobrusianos.

§ See Booth's *Paedobaptism Examined*, ch. xi. § iv.

manifestation of His condescension and love towards children, is evidence of His will that they should be thus born anew, and find entrance into His kingdom. The occasion did not require that our Lord should then state this condition: and the omission is no plea against His positive law elsewhere recorded.

All the scriptural texts which speak of baptism as a washing, a renovation of the Holy Spirit, warrant the baptism of infants: they must be washed in the blood of the Lamb from the hereditary defilement: they must be renewed by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, that bearing the image of God, they may be associated with the blessed spirits of His kingdom. "Where the language of Holy Scripture is unlimited," says Dr. Pusey, "we are not to restrain it. But Holy Scripture speaks universally; it says 'the washing of regeneration and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost,' 'born of water and the Spirit;' how then are we to say, that because our infants are not in like way decayed, through actual sin, as were those adults to whom St. Paul wrote, therefore they are not regenerated and renewed? This would involve the very error of Pelagius, that they needed no renewal, no 'new birth,' having no 'birth sin.'"* Christ loved children, and delivered Himself up for them, that He might sanctify them, in the laver of water. They therefore come forth from the font purified, justified, sanctified, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. They are objects of the gratuitous bounty of God: they are fruits of the plentiful redemption of Christ, and in them is fulfilled the prophecy of the Psalmist: "Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."†

The words of the commission given by Christ to the

* *Tract on Baptism*, p. 55.

† Psalm viii. 3.

Apostles, appear to some to confine baptism to those who, being taught, believe the gospel, "go teach all nations, baptizing them:" "preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." But candor would avow that both texts are at least inconclusive against the baptism of infants: for as Christ was then sending the Apostles to preach His gospel to the world, the mention of baptism must naturally follow instruction and faith, since it is only thus men could be prepared for its reception. Whether infants should be baptized, cannot be inferred with certainty from the words of the commission, although their universality warrants their application to every one who needs to be washed from the hereditary defilement. It is bad logic to say, that because the gospel is to be preached to adults, and their faith in its truth is to be required before baptism be administered to them, infants are to be treated after the same manner.

The objections usually taken from the requisition of faith and repentance in adult candidates for baptism, are of no avail whatever with regard to infants: they only prove the necessity of these dispositions in adults without at all indicating that infants are not capable of the sacrament, because they cannot conceive faith or repentance. Peter justly exhorted the Jewish converts to cherish the sentiments of compunction which they began to experience, that so they might be disposed to receive the remission of sins in baptism.* Philip required the sincere faith of the eunuch, that he might be made partaker of the sanctifying sacrament. But in neither instance was it declared that these dispositions were so essential as to confine the administration of baptism to adults capable of faith and repentance.

* Acts ii. 33.

We, no less rigorously, require faith and compunction in the adult candidates for baptism, though we constantly administer the sacrament to the tender infant.

But, then, it may be asked, on what authority can they be baptized? If the commission do not regard them, they are necessarily beyond its reach, and the attempt to baptize them is an unauthorized measure. I care not to answer with some that the term rendered “teach,” may be understood of making disciples,* and initiating into the school of Christ. Neither shall I allege, as a matter of mere inference, the divine command that each male infant on the eighth day after his birth should be circumcised, and thus incorporated with the people of God: whence, it is said, the Apostles must have understood that infants should be admissible to the Christian rite which supersedes circumcision, especially inasmuch as the children of proselytes

* Rosenmuller *in locum*, contends that μαθητευσατε, which means to *make disciples*, may be understood of taking into the number of followers of Christ infants, who are afterwards to be instructed. I do not, however, choose to rely on this verbal criticism, as the most obvious meaning of the term is to instruct effectually, so as to bring over to the number of disciples and believers those who were strangers to the truth. It is used of a scribe thoroughly instructed in heavenly truth, μαθητευθεις, Mat. xiii. 52, and of Joseph of Arimathea, who was instructed by our Divine Master, and believed in him. Matt. xxvii. 57. Protestant writers have been led to forced explanations of words of Scripture, to sustain the principle that all things necessary for salvation can be proved from it. Without the aid of tradition, the practice of baptizing infants cannot be satisfactorily vindicated, the Scriptural proofs on this point not being thoroughly conclusive: yet we do not, on this account, neglect the arguments which it furnishes, and which have considerable force. See *Gilbert on Baptism*, tract. ii. Preface, p. vi.

are said to have been washed with water, when their parents were admitted to Jewish privileges.* I do not at all allow that the Apostles were left to guess their Master's will from any such circumstance, but I maintain that they were instructed by Him in the sacred functions entrusted to them, and were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that they might not err. The divine ordinance on this point must be learned from their teaching and their acts, as recorded in Scripture, or in the want of decisive evidence of this sort, from the teaching and practice of the church which they founded.

That circumcision, indeed, had yielded to baptism, is evident from the teaching of St. Paul, who addresses the faithful as circumcised spiritually, by their death and burial with Christ in baptism: "In whom also you are circumcised with circumcision not made by hand, in despoiling of the body of the flesh, but in the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism."† It would be easy to exhibit a series of ancient witnesses, who, following the Apostolic teaching, speak of the Christian rite as a spiritual circum-

* Rosenmuller remarks; "For since the Apostles well knew that the infant children of proselytes from among the Gentiles were not only styled proselytes and circumcised, as the *Mischna* informs us, but were also baptized, (as Wetsten fully proves from the *Gemara*, when writing on Matt. iii. 6,) it could not occur to them to expunge children and infants from the list of disciples, or to repel them from baptism, unless they were expressly excepted and excluded by Christ, of which we find no mention.

† Col. ii. 11. Some cavil because circumcision was practised for a time among Jewish converts: but it is plain that baptism for the Gentile converts held its place; and the simultaneous practice of both by the Jews, through a wise economy, does not show that circumcision was not finally to yield to baptism.

cision, freed from the limitations which circumscribed the carnal observance. St. Justin,* St. Cyprian, with the fathers of the council of Carthage,† St. Gregory of Nazianzum,‡ St. Epiphanius,§ St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin,|| in a word, all the Fathers point to baptism as to Christian circumcision. I shall only recite the testimony of St. Chrysostom: “Our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, is a remedy which gives no pain, and is to us the instrument of numberless blessings, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit. And it has no determinate time as circumcision had; but it is lawful to receive the circumcision which is not made with hands, at the tenderest age, and in manhood, and even in old age itself. There is no labor to be endured, but we have only to cast off the burthen of our sins, and accept the pardon of all our transgressions in our past life.”¶

We are challenged to show that the Apostles baptized infants. Had we a detailed enumeration of their ministerial acts, the challenge would be reasonable; but the book styled their Acts contains only some of the chief facts which marked the origin, and proved the divine authority of the Christian church. Yet even there it is said that Lydia “was baptized and her household,”** and the jailor “was baptized and presently all his family;”†† and St. Paul testifies that he “baptized also the household of Stephanas.”‡‡ It cannot indeed be proved that infants were in these families; but the presumption is that there were, and the general expressions naturally lead us to con-

* Dial. cum Tryph. † Ep. ad Fidum. ‡ Or. xl. in S. Bapt.
§ Contra Cerinthianos.

|| L. iv. de Bapt. contra Donat. c. xxiii. ¶ Hom. xl. in Gen.

** Acts xvi. 15. †† Acts xvi. 33. ‡‡ 1 Cor. i. 16.

sider the baptism of all the children as following the conversion of the parent.

The ancient practice of baptizing infants, of which the origin at any period subsequent to the Apostolic age cannot be pointed out, is the strongest presumptive evidence of their practice.

St. Justin the Martyr speaks of “many persons of both sexes, sixty or seventy years old, who from childhood had been devoted to Christ, and persevered in virginity unto that age.”* Although the terms employed do not express their baptism in infancy, they certainly afford ground for believing it, for their early instruction in the doctrines of Christ, and their enrolment among his disciples, are easily understood on this hypothesis. Besides, Justin elsewhere calls baptism circumcision: “We have received circumcision, not that which is according to the flesh, but spiritual, such as Enoch and such like had; but we have received it by baptism, since we had been sinners, and have obtained mercy from God, and all can obtain it in like manner.”† St. IRENAEUS, who flourished not long after, is more express on this point: “Christ,” he says, “being our Master, sanctified every age by the similitude which was after His own model: for He came to save all through Himself, all, I say, who are BORN ANEW to God through Him, infants and little ones, boys and youths and aged persons.”‡ Infants, then, in the middle of the second century, were believed to be BORN ANEW to God, and sanctified in Christ.

* Οἱ ἐκ παίδων ἐμαθητεύθησαν τῷ χριστῷ. *Literally:* “who from children were disciplined to Christ,” or were taught the doctrines of Christ. Apol. i. prope ab initio.

† *Dial. cum Tryphone.*

‡ L. ii. adv. haer. c. xx. alias xxxix.

These terms were already consecrated to express the effect of baptism, since Ireneus calls the Apostolic commission to baptize *the power of regenerating*, and Justin speaks of it as regeneration: both writers evidently alluding to the new birth of water and the Holy Ghost, the necessity whereof our Divine Redeemer had declared to Nicodemus. ORIGEN, speaking of original sin, observes: "Of it David must be considered as speaking when he says: 'in sins hath my mother conceived me:' for no sin of his mother is recorded in history. For it also the church received the tradition from the Apostles to give baptism even to infants. For they to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were entrusted knew that there was in all real defilement of sin, which should be washed away by water and the Spirit, on account of which the body itself is called the body of sin."* This positive evidence given by a writer not much more than a century distant from the Apostolic age,† is strengthened by the fact that every where throughout the church the practice of baptizing infants then existed, and that no

* *Orig. in Ep. ad Rom. l. v. ad cap. vi. n. 9, p. 565, tom. iv. ed. P. Caroli de la Rue.*

† Attempts have been made to call the authenticity of this passage in question, because the original is lost, and Rufinus is blamed by St. Jerom for having veiled and corrected the errors of Origen; but the conformity of the passage with another in the commentary on Luke, (Hom. in Luc. xiv.) translated by St. Jerom himself, leaves no room for doubt. The same text from the book of Job is quoted in both places, and the practice of baptizing infants is plainly attested, although the source of it, namely, the tradition of the Apostles, is only pointed out in the commentary on the Romans. This, however, takes nothing from the testimony, since no one has accused Rufinus of making additions to the text, and the fact of the universal practice of infant baptism at that early period is itself a full voucher of its Apostolic origin.

vestige appeared of its introduction subsequently to the time of the Apostles. Two centuries later, St. Augustin urged this argument with considerable effect.*

A splendid testimony was given in the middle of the third century to the expediency of the earliest possible administration of baptism to infants. Fidus, a prelate of the African church, regarding circumcision as its type, thought it desirable that it should not be conferred before the eighth day, that thus the reality might correspond with the figure. He communicated his views to St. Cyprian, who with sixty-five other bishops held a council at Carthage. Hear the answer of CYPRIAN and his colleagues: "As to what regards the cause of infants, who, you said, should not be baptized on the second or third day after their birth, but that the law of ancient circumcision should be considered; so that you did not think, that the child should be baptized before the eighth day: far different was the judgment of all in our council: for no one assented to that which you thought expedient; but on the contrary we all judged that the mercy and grace of God should be denied to no human being from the moment of his birth. . . . If even to the greatest delinquents, who have previously

* Featley thus presses the same argument: "All Apostolicall traditions (which are truly such) ought to be had in reverent esteem, and retained in the church. For what the Apostles delivered, they received from Christ himself, either by word of mouth, or the infallible inspiration of his Spirit: such things are part of that *sacrum depositum*, which Timothy is charged so deeply, (*O Timothy keep, that which is committed unto thee*) and the Thessalonians to keep, *Stand fast and keep παραδοσεις*, word for word, *the traditions, which you have been taught either by word or by our epistle*. But the baptism of children is an Apostolicall tradition. *Ergo*, it ought to be had in high esteem and retained in the church." "*The Dipper dipt*," p. 37.

sinned much against God, the remission of sins is granted, when afterwards they believe, and no one is repelled from baptism and grace; how much less should the infant be repelled, who being recently born, has committed no sin, but being carnally born according to Adam, has contracted at his first birth the contagion of the ancient death? He the more easily approaches to receive the remission of sins, for this very reason, that not his own sins, but the sins of another are forgiven him.”* In this decision St. Augustin observes that St. Cyprian made no new decree, but maintained most firmly the faith of the church.”† “The matter was not determined or established in the council as something new, or as something that suffered any contradiction on the part of any one. . . . It was judged in the council that on any day aid should be given to man after his birth, lest he be lost for ever.”‡

So manifest was the tradition and faith of the whole church in regard to infant baptism, that Pelagius and his abettors, whilst they denied original sin, did not venture to call in question the propriety of baptizing infants: “They granted,” says St. AUGUSTIN, “that children should be baptized, not being able to run counter to the authority of the universal church, delivered beyond doubt by Christ and his Apostle.”§ Pelagius, in a letter addressed to Pope Innocent, complained that “he was slandered as denying to infants the sacrament of baptism, and promising the

* *Ep. ad Fidum.*

† “Cyprianus non novum aliquod decretum condens, sed Ecclesiae fidem firmissimam servans.” *Ep. ad Hieronym. olim. 28 in PP. S. Mauri edit. 167, c. 8. n. 23.*

‡ *De peccat. mer. et rem. l. iii. c. 5, alias n. 10 and 11.*

§ *De pecc. mer. et rem. c. 26.*

kingdom of heaven to some without the redemption of Christ" . . . and said "that he had never heard any heretic, however impious, affirm such things concerning infants."* They contended nevertheless that it was administered, not to wash away any hereditary defilement, but to give the infant a title to the kingdom of heaven. Augustin, and with him the whole church, maintained that the sacrament was necessary for the forgiveness of original sin, as well as to entitle us through Christ to supernatural beatitude.

The practice of the Africans was so uniform on this point, that in the great schism of the Donatists, they, as well as the Catholics, continued to baptize their infants, and no doubt was ever excited as to the validity of the act, or the propriety of the practice. Various canons were made in the councils of Carthage, celebrated at the close of the fourth century, and beginning of the fifth, concerning the ordination of persons baptized in infancy by the Donatists, which was sanctioned.†

Pope SIRICIUS, writing to Himerius, Bishop of Aragon in Spain, reproves the custom of baptizing adults on many festivals of the year, and orders the general practice of baptizing only at Easter and Pentecost to be observed: but declares it to be his will that infants, and persons in danger be baptized at any time without delay: "As we affirm that the respect for the Paschal solemnity should be in no respect lessened, so it is our will that infants, who on account of their tender age cannot yet speak, and all who for any necessity may have need of the sacred waters of

* *Apud Aug. de pecc. orig. c. xvii. xviii.*

† Conc. Carth. iii. anno 397, can. xlvi. Conc. Carth. iv. anno 401, can. lvii. *Codex Canonum Eccl. Africanæ.*

baptism, should be assisted with all speed: lest it tend to the injury of our souls, if having denied the sacred fountain to those who desired it, each one going forth from the world lose both the kingdom and life.”*

The known practice and faith of all christian antiquity led the council of Carthage in 418, to anathematize whosoever assailed the baptism of infants, or denied that it was conferred for the remission of sin. The council decreed that “whosoever denies that infants newly born should be baptized, or says that they are baptized indeed for the remission of sins, but that they derive nothing of original sin from Adam, which should be expiated by the laver of regeneration, (whence it follows that the form of baptism for the remission of sins is understood to be not true, but false, in their regard) let him be anathema. Since what the Apostle says: ‘By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed on all men, in whom all have sinned;’ is to be understood no otherwise than as the Catholic church every where diffused has always understood it. For an account of this rule of faith, even infants, who as yet could commit no sin themselves, are truly baptized for the remission of sins, that what they have contracted by generation, may be cleansed by regeneration.”†

It is satisfactory to find the argument drawn from tradition urged by Anglican divines, although inconsistently with their opposition to the teaching and practice of the church on other points. Featley says: “this argument, if it be well weighed, is of very great moment, and may convince the conscience of any ingenuous christian. For no christian doubteth, but that the Apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and Christ promised his Spirit to leade

* C. ii.

† Conc. Carthag. can. ii.

his church into all truth; which promise he hath hitherto made good in such sort, that it cannot be proved that ever the whole church of Christ universally erred.”* The qualifying terms thrown in cannot weaken the force of the authorities and reasoning. He elsewhere recurs to the same argument on another point, observing that it is not the mere antiquity and universality of the practice on which we rely, but the promises of Christ to his church by which she is guaranteed from error: “The strength of the argument lyeth not in bare antiquity, and the universality of this practice, (for we know many errors are ancient, and some abuses very spreading) but in the nature and condition of the catholike christian church, to whom Christ hath promised his perpetual presence, and the guidance of his Spirit into all truth; in which regard the Apostle styleth it ‘the pillar and ground of truth.’”†

The Anglican Bishop Taylor observes: “Since the efficacy of the sacraments depends upon divine institution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects independently upon man, in them that do not hinder their operation; since infants cannot, by any acts of their own, promote the hope of their own salvation, which men of reason and choice may, by acts of virtue and election; it is more agreeable to the goodness of God, the honour and excellency of the sacrament, and the necessity of its institution, that it should in infants supply the want of human acts and free obedience: which the very thing itself seems to say it does, because its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man’s part, but that its efficacy be not hindered.

* *The Dippers dipt*, p. 13.

† A confutation of A. R. his tractate intituled the Vanity of Children’s Baptism, p. 63.

And then in infants the disposition is equal, and the necessity more; they cannot *ponere obicem* and by the same reason cannot do other acts, which, without the sacraments, do advantages towards our hopes of heaven, and therefore have more need to be supplied by an act and an institution divine and supernatural."* To suppose, as some do, that a wrong is done to infants in subjecting them by baptism to the observance of the laws of God and of His church, is not rightly to appreciate the privileges it confers. Man cannot withdraw himself from the authority of God, and it is therefore an inestimable happiness to find himself by baptism placed in close relation to the Deity, with a title to receive through Christ all necessary aid for the fulfilment of the divine commands. "Who can tell," writes Dr. Pusey, "to how many thousands, or tens of thousands, this same doctrine has been the blessed means of a continued child-like growth in grace, who have been silently growing up, supported by the inestimable privilege of having been made God's children, before they themselves knew good or evil; who have on the whole been uniformly kept within Christ's fold; and are now 'heartily thanking their heavenly Father for having called them' thus early to this state of salvation, into which, had it been left to their frail choice, they had never entered; who rejoice with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' that they were *placed* in the ark of Christ's church, and not first called, of themselves to take refuge in it out of the ruins of a lost world."†

Against the weight of testimony, by which the general practice of baptizing infants, in the fourth, third, and second centuries, in virtue of the precept and examples of the

* *Discourse on the Liberty of Prophecy*, sect. xviii.

† *Tract on Baptism*, p. 13.

Apostles, is established, Baptist writers struggle in vain. Sometimes they contend that no proof exists of it, save the solitary testimony of Origen: but they forget that he does not speak of the practice of a particular place, much less of a fact known only to himself, but of the general practice of the church derived from the tradition of the Apostles; and that his testimony is fully sustained by St. Cyprian and his colleagues in council, who not long after, maintained the usage, and rejected a slight modification of it. Before him Tertullian avowed the practice, whilst following the natural severity of his disposition, he endeavoured to modify it, by suggesting that the children of unbelievers should not be admitted to baptism, until they were instructed in the christian mysteries, lest they might prove recreant to the engagements made in their names by their sponsors. "Therefore," says he in his book on baptism, "according to the condition and disposition, and even age of each one, the delay of baptism is more useful, particularly with regard to children. For what necessity is there,* *unless it be altogether necessary*, that their sponsors should be even involved in danger, who themselves dying may leave their promises unaccomplished, and may be deceived by the event of a perverse disposition. The Lord indeed says: *Forbid them not to come to me*. Let them, therefore, come in youth: let them come when they learn: let them come when they are instructed whither they come: let them become christians, when they can know Christ. Why does the innocent age hasten to the remission of sins? Greater caution is used in worldly affairs, so that

* Tertullian's obscure phrase, "Si non tam necesse," I have thus translated, according to the sense attached to it by a learned commentator.

the divine substance is intrusted to him, to whom all earthly substance is not intrusted. For no less reason the unmarried should also be delayed, in whom temptation is ready, for virgins on account of their maturity, for widows on account of their wandering, until they are married, or fortified in continence. Those who understand the importance of baptism, will fear rather its reception, than its delay.”*

It may be said that there is nothing in the text to confine the suggestion of delay to the children of unbelievers; † but the danger on which he grounds it, and the circumstances of the times warrant this interpretation; and Tertullian himself, explaining the words of St. Paul, that the children of a believing parent yoked with an unbeliever are holy, observes that the Apostle “gives us to understand that the children of the faithful were designed for holiness, and thereby for salvation: that the pledges of this hope might sanction those marriages, which he had judged should

* Ch. xviii.

† Pamelius thus understands him. Hinton says that “these children were probably taken, from benevolence, from parents who were pagans.” *History of Baptism*, p. 249. A Presbyterian divine, Stephen Marshall, in 1646, wrote thus: “But before wee part with Tertullian, give mee leave to ask the question, whether the dissuasion may not reasonably bee interpreted of the infants of infidells? because in that chapter Tertullian speakes of the baptisme of such as were not born of Christian parents, (such as the Eunuch and St. Paul,) and therefore hee desires that the baptism of such infants bee deferred, till they came to yeares, and were able to make confession of their sinnes, and profession of their faith, their parents being infidells, and their sponsors mortal; for what (saith hee) though these infants may have some sponsors to undertake for their Christian education, yet their sponsors may die before they are capable of instruction.” *A Defence of Infant Baptism*, p. 36.

remain inviolate. Otherwise he was mindful of the sentence of the Lord: 'Unless one be born of water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God,' that is, he shall not be holy. Therefore every soul is considered in Adam, until it be numbered in Christ, and it is unclean until it be so numbered, and it is sinful because it is unclean."* Since then Tertullian acknowledges that even the children of the faithful are destitute of holiness, and of Christian privileges, nay, defiled and sinful, until born of water and the Holy Ghost, we are authorized to believe that he would not have them left in that condition, on account of the remote danger of their violating their baptismal engagements, a danger which parental care might almost entirely remove. He himself expressly directs that laymen should baptize in case of extreme necessity, lest the infant, for want of this sacrament, be deprived of life eternal: "Let it be sufficient for you to use the right, if the circumstance of the place, or of the time, or of the person compel you to do so. For the boldness of him who succours is excused when the circumstance of danger is impending. Since he must be held guilty of the loss of a human soul who omits to do what he might have freely performed."† He did not doubt of the validity of baptism administered to infants, even in cases wherein he deemed it inexpedient because of the danger of subsequent apostasy, since he said that for the same reason the baptism of young maids and widows should be delayed, to whom certainly it could be validly administered.

Hinton, perceiving the proof of the practice of infant baptism afforded by the opposition of Tertullian to it in those special cases, dissents from the Protestant German

* *L. de anima*, c. xl.

† *De Bapt.* c. xvii.

critics, and from all theological writers generally, to follow Robinson, who considers Tertullian as disputing the propriety of baptizing grown children, not babes.* This new discovery is sustained by supposing that Tertullian speaks of children who come and ask for baptism; whereas, he suggests the delay that they may come and ask for it. The mere inspection of the text, which Hinton has strangely mistranslated, takes away all semblance from this curious hypothesis. Tertullian expressly speaks of little ones in the age of innocence, and willingly agrees that they should be admitted to baptism in adolescence.†

That Tertullian speaks of a practice generally prevailing, which he only sought in a slight degree to modify, in regard to a certain class of infants, is sufficiently clear: and the testimonies of Origen and Cyprian, following within less than half a century, show that the baptism of infants was common to the whole church. Besides, let it be observed, that Tertullian held those principles with which infant baptism is closely connected, according to the avowal of Baptist writers. He held baptism to be a means of cleansing the soul from the defilement of sin, an incorporation with Christ, a new birth of water and the Holy Ghost, and a necessary condition for salvation: whence it would be fair to infer, even if we had not positive testimony affirming it, that he admitted the baptism of infants. Hinton points out “the *doctrines always found* in direct connection with the fact of infant baptism. First, then, we find the idea that the administration of the outward ordinance to the infant, is invariably attended with immediate

* *History of Baptism* p. 250.

† “Veniant ergo, dum adolescent.” *L. de Bapt.* n. 18. The whole passage is incorrectly rendered by Hinton.

and concurrent spiritual blessings of the highest consequence.”* “The doctrine of the fathers of infant baptism,” it is thus he brands those who merely acted on the precedents of the Apostles, “was, that the soul was regenerated in the act of baptism. When it came to be believed that regeneration could, except in very particular cases, (of which infancy was not deemed one,) be had only in baptism, it became clearly an act alike of duty and benevolence to baptize babes, and in cases of danger, at the earliest possible opportunity.”†

St. Gregory, of Nazianzum, proposed the delay of baptism until the age of three years, that the infant might have some perception of the rite; but in cases of danger he willed that the infant should be at once baptized, judging it “better that he should be sanctified unconsciously, than that he should depart from life unsealed and uninitiated.”‡ “Have you an infant?” he asks: “let not malice be beforehand; let him be sanctified from infancy: let him be consecrated to the Spirit from tender age.”§ And he proceeds to show that the fear of their future misconduct is not a ground for withholding the sanctifying sacrament from them: so that on this point he explodes the reasoning of Tertullian. In a subsequent part of his discourse he returns to the same point, and explains himself as favorable to the delay of baptism until children attain the age of three years; when no danger is imminent: “What do you say of infants, not yet sensible of their lost condition, or of the

* *History of Baptism*, p. 298.

† *History of Baptism*, p. 306.

‡ Κρείσσον γὰρ ἀναισθητως ἀγιασθῆναι, ἢ ἀπελθεῖν ἀσφράγιστα καὶ ἀτελεστα. Orat. xl. in S. Bapt.

§ Orat. xl. 17.

baptismal grace? Shall we baptize them likewise? By all means, if any danger impends: for it is better that they should be sanctified unconsciously, than that they should depart unsealed and uninitiated: and for this practice circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day, affords us a reason, inasmuch as it was a typical seal, and was applied to those destitute of the use of reason. . . . As to others, I give my opinion, that the age of three years, or a shorter or longer time, should be awaited, when they may hear something of the mysterious rite, and may answer, although not perfectly understanding, yet being imbued therewith, may be sanctified in soul and body by the great mystery of perfection.”* He observes that they are not accountable, until they attain to the full use of reason, but that they should, nevertheless, be sanctified by baptism, at least at this period: “for the faults committed through ignorance they are not responsible, on account of their tender age, but it is altogether desirable that they should be protected by the laver, on account of the sudden attacks and dangers, and the strong aid which it affords.”† He expressly refutes the objection taken from the age at which Christ was baptized, by observing that he did not need baptism. Hinton acknowledges that Gregory deemed baptism necessary to infants.‡

Some particular instances of baptism, received in adult age, are usually objected against us, but which in no way establish the general principle, that it cannot be validly or lawfully administered in infancy. The only grounds for delay among ancient Christians, were the great sanctity of

* Orat. 28.

† Ibidem.

‡ *History of Baptism*, p. 307.

the sacrament, and the purity of disposition with which it should be received, the desire of receiving its full benefit in death, and the dread of forfeiting the grace bestowed by falling from the baptismal engagements. These motives were not sufficient to justify delay, wherefore the Fathers uniformly inveighed against it as an abuse. "That baptism," says Jeremy Taylor, "was amongst the ancients sometimes deferred, was not always upon a good reason, but sometimes upon the same account as men now a-days defer repentance, or put off confession and absolution, and the communion till the last day of their life; that their baptism might take away all the sins of their life."*

The peculiar circumstances of some families easily account for the delay which sometimes occurred in presenting children for baptism.

It is indeed alleged, that St. Gregory of Nazianzum was baptized in adult age, although his father was a bishop: but learned critics maintain that at the time of his birth the father was not even a Christian.† St. Jerom, when adult, received at Rome the garment of Christ, not by baptism, but by ordination. Patricius, the father of St. Augustin, was a heathen, and the delay of the baptism of Augustin may have been, in the first instance, owing to his opposition, and subsequently to the anxiety of his pious mother to preserve him by precious instruction from the danger of forfeiting baptismal grace. It does not appear that in any case the baptism of children was delayed under the persuasion that an infant might not lawfully be baptized; but solely in consequence of the peculiar circumstances of the

* *Discourse on the liberty of Prophecy*, sec. xviii.

† A clerical celibacy is admitted by Taylor, and other Protestant writers, to be far more ancient. See *Ancient Christianity*, p. 105.

parents, or through fear of the violation of the baptismal engagements.

But was not the Eucharist anciently given to infants, and the necessity of receiving it sustained by an appeal to Scripture, and urged in terms equally strong as those which are applied to the baptism of infants? Infants were made partakers of the precious blood of Christ: children were feasted with His divine flesh: but not through a belief that this was equally necessary as baptism. It was considered their privilege and blessing, because they had been baptized; nor could it ever have been thought of were not the custom of baptizing infants universal. Afterwards circumstances being changed, it was deemed advisable to withhold from them the gift, which was acknowledged not to be essential to their salvation; and in exercising her discretionary power, the Church has abandoned no principle, and no wise weakened the force of the proofs drawn from her uninterrupted practice in baptizing infants. The Scriptural and traditionary evidences of the necessity of baptism for children are of a far different kind from the arguments which ingenuity might devise for vindicating the practice of affording them the Eucharist.

In favor of infant baptism we have the most solemn declarations of councils and pontiffs in the fifth century, and the universal practice of Christians loudly proclaimed by Augustin, and fully admitted by Pelagius: we have the practice of the Christian world in the fourth century, attested by Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose, Basil, and a host of others: we have the solemn judgment of sixty African bishops in the third century, with the clear testimonies of Cyprian and Origen, to say nothing of Ter-

tullian: we have the incidental reference to it of Ireneus and Justin in the second century. This is such evidence as should satisfy the inquirer after Christian truth. Considering the paucity of the writings, which remain from that ancient period, and the subjects whereof they treat, it is not wonderful that we should have no more than incidental references to this practice. Like most Christian usages and principles, it was chiefly brought to view, when assailed by the temerity of some one, who sought to modify it, conformably to his own fancy. Tertullian, in the first instance, disputed its expediency in particular cases, and Fidus subsequently sought to reduce it to an affected conformity in point of time with the ancient rite of circumcision.

The baptism of infants is known to be practised by Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Abyssinians, Cophts, and other nations, comprising Nestorians, Eutychians, and various other sects: who all regard it as a practice coeval with the Christian church. It is likewise admitted by the vast majority of Protestants in Germany, England, Denmark, and other countries; so that if those, who oppose it constitute the church, the number of the followers of Christ would be exceedingly small.

The early, constant, universal practice of baptizing infants, presupposes and manifests Apostolic precedent and teaching, and the texts which declare the baptism of individuals with their whole household, correspond admirably with this presumption. The general terms of the Apostolic commission, which extends to all nations, and embraces every creature of God, capable of grace and salvation, are most rationally understood to include infants;

especially when the divine decree is present to our minds, that without the new birth by water and the Spirit, entrance into the heavenly kingdom is not granted.— On these grounds we may safely rest our cause, and follow on the footsteps of our ancestors, baptizing the tender infant, to make him a child of God and heir of life eternal.

CHAPTER X.

MODES OF BAPTISM.

ALTHOUGH opposition to the baptism of infants originally distinguished those who are now called Baptists, nevertheless as it is common to the "Friends," and as the neglect of baptizing infants widely prevails among Protestant sects generally, the practice of immersion, and the tenet of its being the only true baptism, may now be considered the popular characteristic of this sect. The practice itself might be considered their distinctive mark, were it not occasionally, at least, adopted by others, since preachers of various sects are sometimes known to suit the taste of their proselytes, and sprinkle, or immerge them, as they may prefer. Immersion is also practised by those called "Campbellites," the followers of Alexander Campbell,* who nevertheless are disowned by regular Baptists. The Mormons, likewise, have adopted the same usage. The tenet that immersion alone is baptism is held by Baptists generally, who therefore regard infusion and aspersion as vain and nugatory.

The Baptist Confession of Faith says: "Immersion or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due

* An Irishman, originally a Presbyterian, who separated from the Synod of Ulster, and coming to this country, settled in Virginia. He subsequently got himself immersed, and has become the founder of a sect widely spread throughout the Western states. He engaged in controversy a few years ago with the Bishop of Cincinnati.

administration of this ordinance.* It may be doubted whether this excludes the validity of other modes of baptizing; but the prevailing sentiment is adverse to it; although from the two great divisions of the sect into *close-communication Baptists* and *open-communication Baptists*, the other opinion seems not without advocates. The close-communication Baptists admit none to the communion table who have not been immersed; whilst the open-communication Baptists invite all, without regard to the manner in which they have been baptized, to come forward and partake of the Lord's Supper. These may be supposed to admit the validity of baptism administered in any way, since they cannot be thought to invite unbaptized persons to partake of the other sacrament.

Hinton, a strenuous defender of immersion, remarks: "There are clearly circumstances, however, in which *overwhelming* is truly baptism; when, for instance, baptizing in the sea, or lake, as the candidate is laid down by the administrator, a wave rolls over him; by no means an unfrequent occurrence."† This seems like an abandonment of the contest. The laying down of a man in a dry channel, or on the sea shore, is not literally an immersion, even though the opening of a sluice or the rushing of a wave should be immediately expected to cover with water the prostrate individual: and if such be truly baptism, it is vain to clamor about dipping. A man standing under a shower bath may be said to be baptized with at least equal plausibility. According to Catholic principles, the man thus laid down by a preacher to be covered by the approaching wave, would not be baptized, although the

* Ch. c. xxx. 4.

† History of Baptism, p. 22. Note.

water should completely envelop him, for the application of the water by the minister of the sacrament is required, that he may say with truth: "I baptize thee, etc." As it seems this mode is of frequent occurrence, it follows that many are not at all baptized, who imagine they have been immersed.

With equal injury to the sacrament, the words accompanying the immersion were changed by some of the early Anabaptists: "One sort of them," says Wall, "do count it indifferent whether they baptize with these words: 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:' or with these: 'In the Name of the Lord Jesus:' and do in their public confession* allow either of these forms. And I have heard that some of 'em do affectedly choose the latter."† In the Baptist confession, adopted in America, it is said: "the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."‡ In some places the preacher premises: "In obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ," to the ordinary form. As individuals consider themselves judges of what is most suitable to the original institution, and the whole stress is generally laid on the act of plunging, it is to be feared that little care is used to pronounce the form prescribed, simultaneously with the immersion: and yet without that form there can be no baptism.

The Presbyterian Confession, in reference to the mode of baptizing, says: "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person."§

* *Confess. of Anabapt. reprinted* London 1691.

† *History of Infant Baptism*, p. 11, ch. viii.

‡ ch. xxx.

§ Art. iii. on Baptism.

The English Book of Common Prayer directs, that “if the sponsor certify that the child may well endure it, the minister shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily : otherwise it shall suffice to pour water upon it :” but since the days of Elizabeth, the practice of dipping has been discontinued. The American edition of the Book of Common Prayer leaves it entirely optional to dip the child, or pour the water on it : whence the latter practice has prevailed. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop in Kentucky has lately avowed his conviction, that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism, and has immersed his infant child, having previously declared it advisable to send some Episcopalians to Greece, that they might obtain immersion from those who had practised it in regular succession from the Apostles, and on their return restore the practice quietly and without noise throughout his communion. It is not necessary to show the extravagance of this suggestion, which is, I believe, original, although several Anglican divines have expressed a like opinion as to the irregularity of the modes of baptism prevailing among them. Wall contends that persons holding opposite views on this subject should still remain externally united in religious communion.*

The Episcopal Methodist discipline directs that the minister shall sprinkle or pour water on the infant, or if desired, immerse it in water. It is right to remark that the disbelief of the inherent virtue of the rite of baptism has led to a most deplorable carelessness in its administration by Protestant preachers generally. Some merely fillip a wet finger and thumb over a child’s head ; some shake a wet finger or two over the child ; some dip the hand in a

* See *History of Baptism*, p. ii. ch. xi.

bowl, and then lay it gently on the forehead; some sprinkle lightly towards the person's face, the head being covered with a bonnet, so that a well-founded doubt arises in many cases whether an ablution of any kind can be said to have been performed. Hence it has become customary to baptize under condition, converts from Protestant sects.

The practice of immersion of the head is continued in the Catholic Church at Milan; and in various parts of the East some kind of immersion is practised. Elsewhere infusion most generally prevails, which is alone used in America. The Roman Ritual directs that either infusion or immersion be used, according to the local custom, but recognises aspersion likewise, as one of the modes of baptizing.

To establish the principle that immersion alone is true baptism, the testimony of St. Paul is adduced: "Know ye not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? For we are buried with him by baptism unto death."* All then, it is said, presented in baptism the image of sepulture, by sinking under the water. Such is the inference usually drawn from this text by Baptist writers, which, were it confined to the general mode of baptizing, I should not care to combat. But it should be observed, that in connexion with the allusion to burial, St. Paul speaks of the crucifixion of our old man, and of our being planted together with Christ; which warrants the belief that he urges rather the duties implied by baptism, than the mode in which they had been baptized. As we, however, admit that immersion was generally practised,

* Rom. vi. iii.

we can have no objection to any moral instruction connected with that mode: and although the image may not appear so manifestly in other modes of baptizing, yet as baptism is essentially the same, all may be said to have been buried with Christ by baptism unto death, because all, in whatsoever way they may have been baptized, by the act were deemed to die with Christ to sin, and to be buried with Him. "In immersion," ST. THOMAS, of Aquin, well remarks, "the image of the burial of Christ is more strikingly exhibited . . . but in the other modes of baptism, it is also, in some respect, represented, though not so expressly, for in whatever way the ablution be made, the body of the individual, or some part of it, is under the water, as the body of Christ was under the earth."*

It is dangerous to endeavour to establish a principle of doctrine on a mere allusion: but those who rely on such proofs should not forget that similar arguments can be adduced to sustain the other modes of baptism. Isaias, describing the triumphs of Christ, says: "He shall sprinkle many nations."† David imploring pardon of his sin, makes

* 3 p. qu. LXVII. art. VII.

† Is. lii. 15. The Hebrew term רָזַף used in this passage is elsewhere employed to signify the act of sprinkling with the finger dipped in blood and oil, for the expiation of leprosy, Lev. xiv. 16, or in blood mixed with running water, ib. 51, or in water simply, Num. viii. 7. Professor Conant maintains that it means here to *astonish, startle, or surprise*, as when a man has water suddenly dashed in his face. See *Hinton's History of Baptism*, p. 159. The scriptural examples and the authority of lexicographers are not favourable to this meaning. It is more natural to conceive that allusion is made to the expiatory rites of the Mosaic dispensation, and that the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, by which the nations are cleansed from sin, is here pointed

allusion to the legal purification by aspersions with a branch of hyssop, and in the Hebrew style of poetry, in the corresponding member, identifies it with an entire washing: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."* It were not rash to suppose that prophetically this regards the christian rite. "I will *pour upon you* clean water," says the Lord by Ezechiel; "and you shall be cleansed."† "Let us draw near," cries the Apostle, "with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water."‡ "According to his mercy he hath saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath *poured forth* upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."§ By the alternate use of these allusions, the indifference of the mode is sufficiently insinuated, whilst its essence is declared by styling it a laver.|| How unsafe it is to argue from figurative expressions, such as all these manifestly are, may be gathered from the words of the Apostle: "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him."¶ Must we seek in baptism an image of the crucifixion? "As many of you

out, according to the words of St. Peter, "unto the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Ep. i. 2. I do not, however, rest on this testimony of the prophet, as a proof that the rite of sprinkling is here referred to, but merely use it to rebut the argument drawn from allusions.

* The Hebrew text does not express the sprinkling, but it is included in the idea of hyssop.

† Ezech. xxxvi. 25. זָרַקְתִּי "I shall sprinkle."

‡ Heb. x. 22. § Titus iii. 5.

|| Eph. v. 26. ¶ Rom. vi. 6.

as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.”* Must we again look for a mode of baptism like the putting on of clothes? Where the essence of a christian sacrament is to be determined, we must decline admitting allusions as proof, since the evidence should be clear and unequivocal. On grounds so slight the received modes of baptism, sanctioned by the usage of ages, and by the authority of the church, cannot be called in question. That each of them was used according to circumstances by the Apostles and their fellow labourers cannot be reasonably doubted, since in many instances the use of immersion must have been absolutely impracticable: “Doubt not, beloved,” says St. CHRYSOSTOM, “for the grace of God is perfect: the place is no obstacle, whether you baptize here, or in a ship, or on a road: Philip baptized on a road: Paul in prison.”† What the Apostle had in view in the various passages which have reference to baptism, was not to derive an argument from the mode of baptizing, but to inculcate the duties that resulted from the reception of this sacrament, and to point out the conditions on which the attainment of its ultimate effects depended. Baptism is death to sin, burial and crucifixion with Christ, a putting on of Christ, a resurrection to a new life, because whosoever is baptized is bound to renounce sin, and embrace the law which Christ delivered. “For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.”‡

The Apostle St. Paul having styled baptism in more than one place “a laver,” we are justified in regarding it as essentially requiring an ablution: but the mode of the laver is not thereby determined. A bath corresponds most

* Gal. iii. 27.

† *Hom. de regressu.*‡ *Rom. vi. 7.*

fully with the term; yet we find Christ addressing Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me;"* when He meant only to wash his feet. He used the same term in directing the blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloe, although from the term employed when the order was fulfilled, it would seem that the man washed only his hands and eyes.† The washing of the head, usually practised by Catholics, may with still greater propriety be called a washing of the person, since it is the noblest part of the human body, and in it the soul seems enthroned.

To understand the essence of a rite divinely instituted, the object had in view should be specially considered. Had baptism been instituted for corporal purification, a copious ablution should be made. Had Christ declared that it was intended to represent in a striking manner his descent into the grave, and his resurrection, the descent of the body beneath the water, and its subsequent elevation above the water, should be held necessary: but as an ancient Greek canon, styled Apostolic, observes: "Jesus did not say: 'baptize in my death:' but: 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"‡ The end had in view was to wash, to renovate the soul; and the external exhibition of this divine work is presented, strikingly indeed in the entire washing of the body by immersion, but also, in a manner highly expressive, by the infusion of water, emblematic of the Holy Ghost, who is poured out on us abundantly; or by copious aspersion, which reminds us of "the sprinkling of the blood of Christ."§

ST. THOMAS, of Aquin, has well remarked: "water is

* John xiii. 9.

† Ibidem ix. 7.

‡ Can. Apost. l.

§ 1 Peter i. 2.

used in the sacrament of baptism for the purpose of corporal ablution, by which the interior ablution from sins is signified: and ablution with water can be made, not only by immersion, but by aspersion, or infusion.”*

The practice of the church in the earliest ages is deservedly looked up to as an evidence of the genuine nature of the institutions of Christ. To it an appeal is made with the utmost confidence by the advocates of immersion. They recite the testimonies of Justin, Tertullian, and others, wherein the catechumens are represented as descending into the water, and coming forth from the laver, and they insist that no other mode of baptizing was known or practised, or at least indubitably held as legitimate. In this, however, they are not sustained by the authorities to which they appeal. It is undoubted that immersion was used in solemn baptism, although the mode of immersion was different from that now practised. The applicant descended into the font, and when the priest at its verge pressed his hands on his shoulders, he sunk beneath the waters; or the priest plunged his head, or poured the water on him. Thus Severus, patriarch of Alexandria, describes baptism: “The priest lets the person to be baptized down into the baptistery, looking to the East, and puts his right hand on his head, and with his left hand raises up the water thrice, from the water in front, behind, and at either of his sides, and says these words: ‘N. is baptized in the name of the Father, Amen, and of the Son, Amen, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen, for life eternal.’”† But in the less solemn administration of the sacrament other modes were used.

Tertullian intimates that aspersion was sometimes used,

* §. 3, *art. vii. qu. lxxvi.*

† *In rituum baptismi rubrica; cit. a Beveridge in can. L. Apost.*

since speaking of penance, he says: "The sinner, before obtaining pardon, should mourn over his state, for the time of penance is a time of danger and fear. I do not deny that the divine favor, that is, the abolition of sins, is altogether secure for those who enter into the water; but diligence must be used to prepare for it. For who will vouchsafe to you, so faithless a penitent, a single sprinkle of any water?"* He nevertheless is cited to prove that the Apostles, like John, baptized in rivers, by immersion; yet his testimony only proves that all water is fit matter for baptism, being made the instrument of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. He, indeed, supposes some to have been baptized by Peter in the Tiber; but he does not insinuate that a river is the only suitable place for this function: "The virtue," he says, "imparted to the genus redounds to each species: and therefore it matters not whether one be washed in the sea, or in a pool, in a river, or fountain, in a lake, or channel: nor is there any difference between those whom John baptized (*tinged*) in the Jordan, and whom Peter baptized in the Tiber; unless, perchance, that eunuch whom Philip baptized on the road with water presented fortuitously, received more or less of saving grace. Therefore all waters, when God is invoked, receive the mysterious virtue of sanctification, in consequence of the ancient privilege imparted at the commencement. For the Holy Ghost immediately comes from heaven, and is over the waters sanctifying them of himself, and being thus sanctified, they imbibe the power of sanctifying."† He also mentions the manner in which some

* *De Poenitentia*, c. 6. p. 144. edit. Lutetiae.

† *De Bapt.* n. 4.

attempted to account for the baptism of the Apostles: "Some, in a manner quite forced, pretend that the Apostles underwent a kind of baptism, when in the boat they were sprinkled and covered with the waves; and that Peter himself, walking on the sea, was sufficiently immersed."* This idea, however far fetched, could scarcely have occurred, if sprinkling or partial immersion were altogether foreign to the practice of the church.

Sprinkling must have been used on some occasions to afford ground for the remarks of Tertullian; probably even in cases where the catechumen actually entered the water, as the mode of baptizing was not always to plunge the head, but sometimes to pour the water, or sprinkle it on the individual already standing or kneeling immersed in it.† It is certain that aspersion and infusion were generally used in regard to persons applying for baptism when at the point of death, or in dangerous sickness. In the middle of the third century, Magnus, probably a layman, consulted St. Cyprian, the illustrious Bishop of Carthage, concerning persons so baptized, to know whether they should be regarded as legitimate Christians, entitled to the same privileges as their brethren, who in health had been baptized by the more solemn method of immersion. He did not speak of the practice as recently introduced: he did not inquire whether the baptism should be considered as of no account: but fully convinced, according to the general persuasion of the whole Christian church, that they obtained the grace of God, he asked only, whether considering the

* *De Bapt.* n. 12.

† Very ancient pictures of baptism represent the priest with a vessel in his hand at the side of the font, whilst the catechumen is on his knees in the water. See *Robinson's History of Baptism.*

circumstances in which they sought it, after long and culpable delay, and the manner in which they obtained it, by an abridged rite, they should share equal privileges with their more diligent brethren: “Thou hast inquired, most beloved child,” says Cyprian, in reply, “what I think of those who in their infirmity and languor obtain the grace of God, whether they are to be esteemed as legitimate Christians, because they have not been washed with water, but received it by infusion.” The holy prelate unhesitatingly answered, that the effect of the sacrament was the same, in whatever way it was conferred: “The divine favors can in no degree be mutilated and weakened, for the defilements of sin are not cleansed in the salutary sacrament in the same manner as the defilements of the skin and body are washed away in the carnal and worldly bath. In the sacraments of salvation, necessity urging, and God granting his indulgence, THE DIVINE COMPENDIUM confers all on believers. Nor should any one be moved, because he sees that the sick are sprinkled, or receive infusion, when they obtain the grace of the Lord, since the holy Scripture, by the prophet Ezekiel, speaks and says: ‘I will sprinkle on you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your uncleanness, and I will cleanse you from all your idols, and I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you.’”* He proceeds to quote various passages of Moses, wherein legal purification is attached to the sprinkling of the water prepared for that purpose; and regarding this as the type of baptism, he infers: “whence it appears that the sprinkling of water has the same force as the saving laver.” He reproves those who sarcastically styled *clinics* such as had been baptized on their beds in

* Ep. lxxvi.

sickness: and he challenges them to rebaptize them on their recovery, if they call in question their perfect sanctification. As no one attempted to rebaptize them, he shows the absurdity of questioning the degree of grace which they had received. "If any one supposes that they have obtained no advantage, but are empty and void, inasmuch as they were merely perfused with the saving water, let them not be deceived, but if they escape the danger and recover, let them be baptized:* but IF THEY CANNOT BE BAPTIZED, WHO ARE ALREADY SANCTIFIED BY BAPTISM administered in the church, why are they molested to the scandal of their faith, and in derogation of the divine indulgence? Have they, indeed, obtained the grace of the Lord, but with a more sparing communication of the divine gift and of the Holy Spirit, so that they are to be reckoned Christians, and yet not placed on an equality with others? Yea, rather the Holy Ghost is not given by measure, but is wholly infused on the believer. For since the day dawns for all alike, and the sun sheds his light with equal brilliancy over all, how much more does Christ, the true sun and day, shed the light of eternal life over all in his church? We see a type of this equal distribution of grace in Exodus, when the manna fell from heaven, and prefiguring future events, pointed out the nourishment of heavenly

* Bingham, with others, has mistaken the meaning of this passage, which he gives in these terms, "Yet, if any bishops were otherwise persuaded that it was not lawful baptism, and upon that ground gave such persons a new immersion, he professes that he prescribes to none, but leaves every one to act according to his own judgment and discretion." l. ii. c. vi. *Antiquities of the C. Church*. The argument of St. Cyprian is grounded on the known fact, that no one attempted to rebaptize them.

bread, and the food which Christ, when He should come, would give. For there the measure of a *gomor* was alike gathered by all, without distinction of sex or age. Whence it appeared that the indulgence and heavenly grace of Christ, which was afterwards to ensue, is equally divided to all without difference of sex, without distinction of years, without acceptance of persons, and the gift of divine grace is poured out on the entire people of God. Truly the same spiritual gift, which is equally received in baptism by believers, is afterwards either lessened or increased in our conduct, and acts, as in the gospel the divine seed is equally sown, but according to the difference of the soil some is wasted, some produces fruit thirty fold, sixty fold, a hundred fold.”

Although St. Cyprian gives his sentiments with the modesty which usually marks great and holy men, it is clear from his statement, that the validity of baptism conferred by infusion, or aspersion, was an undisputed point, and that the equality of the grace imparted by these modes with that attached to immersion, was deducible from the certain and avowed principles of the Church. In his day a circumstance occurred, which appeared most likely to induce the denial of the validity of aspersion, or infusion. Novatian had received baptism in sickness by infusion, as he lay on his bed.* Having subsequently recovered, he neglected to seek the gift of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the bishop's hands in confirmation. Yet he contrived to advance to sacred orders; and his ambition finally led him to usurp the chair of Peter. Cornelius, the legiti-

* Εν αὐτῇ τῇ κλίνῃ ἣ ἐκειτο περιχυθεις Cornelius, *ad Fabium Antioch.*, apud Eusebium, *hist. Eccl.* l. vi. c. xliii.

mate Pope, opposed his pretensions, upbraided him with his having delayed to receive baptism until terrified by the approach of death, and with his neglect to receive confirmation on his recovery : but he did not deny the validity of the baptism, as he most certainly would have done, were there any grounds for calling it in question, since this would utterly destroy all the pretensions of the schismatical usurper.* It is fair to conclude thence, that its validity was indisputable.

The canons of the ancient councils prohibit the promotion to sacred orders of persons baptized in sickness, because their neglect to receive baptism previously, supposes criminal delay : but they make an exception in favor of such as may be especially fervent;† and thereby clearly recognize the validity of the baptism. The ancient council of Laodicea manifestly admits it, since it teaches, that “it behoves such as receive baptism in sickness, and afterwards recover, to learn fully the faith, and know that they have been made worthy of the divine gift.”‡ And the council of Elvire declared it lawful for the laity to baptize catechumens in danger of death, if no Priest be at hand.§ The Council of Arles, not long after, directed persons baptized in sickness to be presented, on their recovery, to the bishop, to receive the solemn imposition of hands. Thus

* Vide Eusebius *Ecl. hist.* l. vi. c. 35. Some have cavilled on the expression of the Pontiff: “if Novatian could be said to have received it,” but it evidently means, that he had not willingly sought it, until terrified by the approach of death.

† *Council of Neocæsarea, Can. xii.*

‡ *Can. xlvii. apud Labbe tom. 1. col. 1505.*

§ *Conc. Elib. can. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. apud Labbe tom, 1. conc. col. 974.*

the validity of baptism administered in this way, was recognized by numerous assemblies of Christian bishops in the East and in the West, in the commencement of the fourth century.

Besides the express testimony of St. Cyprian in the third century, we have on record particular instances of baptism conferred in circumstances which clearly show that immersion was not used. Eusebius, speaking of Basilides, who was cast into prison for the name of Christ, says: "the brethren gave him the seal of baptism, and the next day, having confessed our Lord, he was beheaded."* This took place in the year 211. In the martyrology of Ado, it is related of Pope Callistus, who died in 222, that after enjoining fasting, and catechizing a candidate, water having been brought, he baptized him.† In the acts of St. Lawrence, who suffered martyrdom in the year 250, it is related that Romanus, one of the soldiers, being suddenly converted, brought *a pitcher of water* to the martyr, asking him to baptize him.‡ This baptism is represented in an ancient picture preserved at Rome, wherein St. Lawrence appears pouring water on the head of Romanus. The acts of St. Cornelius speak of Sallustia, who, being converted, presented to the Pontiff a vessel with water, wherewith he might baptize her. Five martyrs of Samosata, in the year 297, when in prison for the faith of Christ, sent for the priest James, entreating him to come, and bring with him a vessel of water to baptize

* Eccl. hist. l. vi. c. 5.

† Allata aqua baptizavit. Ad. iii. idus Maji.

‡ See acts cited by Walafrid Strabo.

them.* If any one is skeptical as to the authenticity of these acts, which, however, have passed unscathed through the ordeal of criticism, he must at least acknowledge that the persuasion of the validity of the baptism thus administered was prevalent at the time the acts were composed: otherwise the writer would not have made the statement. The testimony of Eusebius admits of no dispute; and we cannot doubt that many similar instances of baptism in prison occurred, which it is utterly improbable were performed by immersion.

The baptism of the sick, which was confessedly by infusion or aspersion, is constantly spoken of by the Fathers of the Church generally, no less than by St. Cyprian, and the councils already quoted, as conferring the same grace as solemn baptism by immersion.

St. Chrysostom, addressing those who were preparing for baptism, praises their zeal in seeking it in health, and contrasts it with the torpor of those who delay until their last moments: "Although," he remarks, "the same gifts of grace are bestowed on you, and on those who are initiated at the close of life, your free choice and preparation are different: for they receive it on their bed, you in the bosom of the Church, the common mother of us all; they sorrowing and weeping, you rejoicing and exulting; they sighing, you giving thanks; they in a lethargy from fever, you full of much spiritual delight."†

Whilst inveighing against the delay of baptism, the Fa-

* See their authentic acts published in Chaldaic, by Stephen Assemani, Act. Mart. tom. II. p. 123. See also Martene de antiquis ritibus.

† Ad Illuminandos, Catech. 1. See also hom. II. in Ep. II. ad Corinth.

thers dwelt on the danger to which this delay exposed the catechumen not to receive it even in the extremity of life ; but never threw a doubt on the efficacy of the rite thus performed, when immersion was impracticable. ST. GREGORY, of Nazianzum, delivered a discourse on baptism, in which he reviewed and refuted all the pretexts by which sinners excuse themselves for delaying to receive it. He cautions them lest they be suddenly cut off, or be without the necessary sense of the baptism itself, when it may be administered in their last illness ; but he nowhere insinuates that it will be impossible to administer it because immersion will then be impracticable.* This, which would be so conclusive an argument against delay, he would surely not have passed over, if the matter even lay open to doubt. ST. BASIL uses similar arguments against delay, and warns sinners that they may be in their last moments unable to express a wish ; and perhaps at night there may be no one at hand to baptize them : “ Take care,” he cries, “ lest putting off from year to year, and not providing yourself with oil to feed the flame, that day arrive which you do not expect, when the means of prolonging life shall fail, and on all sides doubt and inconsolable distress shall torment you ; the physicians, and even your own family despairing of your recovery. Frequent and dry breathing will oppress you ; a violent fever will burn and consume you ; from your very heart you will heave forth deep sighs, and you will find none to comfort you. If you utter something in a faint and faltering manner, it may not be understood : every thing you say will be disregarded as the raving of a dying man. Who will give you baptism then ? Who will remind you of it, when you will be sunk in deep

* *Orat. xl. n. ii. in Bapt.*

lethargy? Relatives are in affliction: strangers take no interest: friends are loath to alarm you by the warning. Perhaps even the physician deceives you: and you do not know your situation, being blinded by the love of life. It is night, and there is no one to succour: there is no one at hand to baptize you.”*

Should the sinner who delayed to receive baptism be fortunate enough to receive it in death with proper dispositions, ST. BASIL expressly admits that he obtains its immediate advantages, although he depart void of the merits, which he might have secured, had he been baptized at an earlier period of life, and employed with zeal the baptismal grace: “Why do you await to be seized with a fever, to receive baptism? Then, perhaps, you may be unable to utter the saving words, scarcely may you hear them distinctly, the disease affecting your head especially: it may not be in your power to raise your hands to heaven, to stand on your feet, or to bend the knee in adoration; you may not be able to receive instruction profitably, nor to confess diligently, nor to enter into covenant with God, nor to renounce the enemy of salvation, nor perhaps to follow up with consciousness the mystic rite, whilst it is performed, so that the bystanders may doubt whether you are conscious of the grace, or are insensible to all that is done. And although you may understand the gift you receive, you have indeed the talent, but you do not bring with it the increase.”†

The Fathers generally extol the effects of baptism independently of the mode of its administration, and the quantity of water. ST. AUGUSTIN expressly admires the divine virtue of the word accompanying the water, whereby the

* *Hom. xiii. in S. Bapt. n. 7.*

† *Ibidem, n. 5.*

little infant is wholly cleansed from the original stain, however slight may be the ablution of the body: "This is the word of faith which we preach, whereby baptism also is doubtless consecrated that it may cleanse. 'For Christ loved his church, and delivered himself up for her.' Read the Apostle, and see what he adds: 'that he might sanctify her,' says he, 'cleansing her with the laver of water in the word.' This purification would by no means be attributed to the liquid and transient element, were it not added, 'in the word.' This word of faith is so powerful in the church of God, that by means of her believing, offering, blessing, tinging even in a slight degree, it cleanses the infant."*

ST. AMBROSE applies to baptism the words of the Psalmist, wherein he speaks of purification by aspersion: "You took afterwards the white garments," says he, addressing the neophytes, "to indicate that you cast away the cloak of sin and put on the spotless robes of innocence: whereof the prophet said: 'Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.' For he that is baptized, seems to be cleansed both according to the Law and the Gospel: according to the Law, since Moses with a bunch of hyssop sprinkled the blood of the lamb: according to the Gospel, because the garments of Christ were white as snow, when in the Gospel he showed the glory of his resurrection. He whose sins are forgiven, is made whiter than snow."†

GENNADIUS, a writer of the fifth century, remarks that: "the catechumen after his profession of faith is either sprinkled with water, or dipt in it: and the martyr is either sprinkled with his own blood, or dipt in fire."‡

* *Tract. lxxx. in Joan.*

† *L. de initiandis, c. vii.*

‡ *De Eccl. dogm. c. xli.*

These testimonies and facts prove, that baptism by aspersion and infusion was practised in the primitive times, and recognised as valid by the Fathers and councils of the church. The solemnity of immersion was dispensed with, when danger impended; whilst it was observed, in general, to signify to the catechumen the entire change which became him, and the entire purification which the sacrament effects. The death with Christ to sin, and the resurrection to a new life, and the washing away of sins, were strongly impressed on his mind, by the rite of immersion: and he rose from the font a new man, having put on Christ, and adopted his maxims as the rules of his belief and conduct. The same grace, nevertheless, was received, even when the rite was less solemn and impressive, and the same obligations were contracted: because neither the quantity of the water determined the measure of grace, nor the mode of its application limited its efficacy. It was still an ablution made in the name of the three Adorable Persons; and it regenerated, by the power of the Holy Ghost, those whom it touched even slightly.

The absolute necessity of baptism, which is apparent from the words of our Divine Redeemer, and the perpetual belief of all Christian antiquity, warrants the presumption that a mode generally so difficult, and in numberless instances absolutely impracticable, has not been established as essential.* The prisoner in his dungeon, the sick man

* Hinton observes: "Wherever the doctrine of the absolute necessity of baptism to salvation, even in the case of babes, was admitted, it became contrary to nature to maintain that immersion, alone, was baptism; for in that case many dear little infants, and others, must be lost." *History of Baptism*, p. 191. This doctrine he admits to have generally prevailed from the time of Cyprian.

on his death-bed, the tender infant about to give up life, just after it has commenced to live, and innumerable others, in an endless variety of cases, cannot be immersed. We must then admit that Christ established as a necessary means of salvation, what can be rarely and with difficulty applied : or we must, against the obvious force of his emphatic language, and the solemn testimony of the ancient church, deny that baptism is necessary for salvation. This alternative has been embraced by those who advocate immersion. Without remorse they suffer not only infants, but even adults to die, and refuse them this laver of regeneration ; and even boast of the refusal as a proof that they do not attach over-much importance to forms, whilst they clamor incessantly about plunging : “ A case,” says Hinton, “ occurring under my own ministration is in point. I visited a young lady who lay at the point of death ; she gave evidence of piety, and expressed some desire to be baptized. I assured her that it could make no possible difference to her acceptance with God, whether, in her circumstances, she was baptized or not.”* Let this language be compared with that of Cyprian, Basil, Chrysostom, Augustin, and the other lights of antiquity. The decree of Pope Siricius, at the close of the fourth century, harmonizes with the teaching of these ancient doctors : “ Whosoever is in danger of shipwreck, or of hostile attack, or of siege, or whose life is despaired of on account of any corporal disease, and demands to be succoured by the sole aid of faith, let him obtain the favor of regenera-

* *History of Baptism*, ch. vi. §. ii. p. 166. Dr. Pusey gives a similar instance, not quite so barefaced. *Tract on Baptism*, p. 128, *Note*.

tion which he desires, the very moment at which he desires it.*

If immersion of actual believers be the only valid mode of baptism, as Baptists affirm, none are really baptized who have not been immersed: and whatever Catholics may say, who believe that baptism administered by an unbaptized man is valid, I know not whether Baptists are ready to maintain that baptism was utterly lost by the immense majority of the professors of Christianity, until unbaptized men, discovering the fatal error, restored it by giving, one to the other, that rite of which both were destitute. Yet this must plainly have been the case.† At the time when Storeck, Muncer, and others, called Anabaptists, cried out in Germany against the baptism of children, all the Christian world for ages had been baptized in infancy: and if

* *Ep. ad Himerium, c. ii.*

‡ This difficulty occurred likewise in the formation of the Baptist Society in the American colonies, A. D. 1636. "Twelve persons," says Alexander Campbell, "among whom was the famous Roger Williams, the first settler and founder of Rhode Island, desirous of forming a church, and first of being immersed in the primitive style—did meet together to deliberate on these topics. How to obtain a suitable administrator was a point of some difficulty. 'At length,' as Benedict said, 'when they understood the Scriptures, the candidates for communion nominated and appointed Mr. Ezekiel Holliman, a man of gifts and piety, to baptize Mr. Williams; and who, in return, baptized Mr. Holliman and the other ten.'" See *Christian Baptist*, Oct. 4, 1824. This fact is also testified by Cooke and Towne, who add: "But Mr. Williams soon made the discovery that he had unchurched himself, and frankly confessed to his church that he had misled them, and was not competent to administer baptism." *Hints to an Inquirer*, p. 61. The Baptists do not controvert this fact, but insist that large numbers of Baptists came from England, so that few trace their origin to Roger Williams. *Review of Hints*, p. 36.

infant baptism was null, baptism had utterly perished. The Anabaptists, for a century after their rise, regarded the sprinkling of the head as sufficient. However, then, their authors may have contrived to supply the defect of their own baptism, they certainly neither received nor transmitted immersion. Is any one prepared to say, as he must necessarily do, if he deny the validity of infant baptism, as well as of the modes of infusion and aspersion, that the visible Church of Christ had utterly vanished from the earth for a long series of ages, until some unbaptized men restored it in the seventeenth century? Roger Williams “was driven by his views of consistency to his immersing principles, to declare that Christian ordinances had been lost, and there was no church in the world, and could not be until other apostles should come with miraculous powers.”*

The custom of the Greeks who baptize by immersion, does not establish the necessity of this mode, even were it shown that they believe it to be essential: which cannot be shown, since they made no difficulty about it when reunion with the Latins was in question, however individuals may taunt the Catholics on this and other points. Their mode of immersion is, however, such as partakes of infusion, and may be designated in either way. The infant is placed in the baptismal vase with its face downward, supported by the left arm of the Priest, who, with his right hand, pours the water on it.†

The cause of the variety of mode in the solemn administration of baptism is not to be sought for in any positive

* *Hints to an Inquirer*, p. 61.

† See *Euchologium, with Goad's Notes*.

enactment of such a change by the Roman Pontiffs, or any other Church authority. To this day there exists no ecclesiastical law forbidding the use of immersion; but on the contrary, the Roman Ritual directs, as I have already stated, that immersion, or infusion, be used according to the established usages of the particular portions of the Church wherein the sacrament is administered. In Milan the Catholic Priest observes the Ambrosian rite, by the slight dipping of the head: in Greece, not only the followers of Photius, but the faithful ministers of religion united in communion with the successor of Peter, conform scrupulously to the rite prescribed in the Euchology: in this country, as most generally throughout the world, the mode of infusion is observed, in conformity with usage long established. To depart from the peculiar rite sanctioned by the authority of the Church, would be a violation of order; and consequently the individual Priest or layman, that in this country would practice immersion, would indeed validly baptize, but incur the guilt of insubordination and temerity, by favoring the error of those who allege that infusion is insufficient.

When religion had consummated her triumphs over Paganism in the various countries of Europe, and the regenerated parents were diligently instructed in the duty of presenting their children to be baptized at the earliest period possible, ages passed away without scarcely an instance of the baptism of adults. Hence the necessity of receding from the mode of immersion became still more frequent, since the tender infant oftentimes could not be immersed without peril to its life. The cases thus multiplying, the more solemn method fell into gradual disuse, until it has, in most places, been entirely superseded.

Another cause contributed to render universal the mode of infusion. A class of females formerly existed in the church, under the name of Deaconesses, who, amongst other exercises of piety, instructed and prepared for baptism, the catechumens of their sex, and performed some of the ceremonies preparatory to its administration. They particularly accompanied the proselyte to the font, that when she had entered into the water, they might give the sacred minister notice to approach to its verge, and perform the ablution. This, and several other precautions were employed by the piety of our ancestors to guard the holy institution from the slightest indecorum. This class of females, from a variety of causes having ceased, it became expedient to abstain from the immersion of females.

In the present mode of immersing, this difficulty may seem obviated: but such is not the case. The manners of our age are different from those in which immersion was practised; and although we may not surpass our ancestors in purity of morals, there is a delicacy of feeling peculiar to us which revolts at the public exhibitions which are now made in the presence of congregated multitudes.* It

* It is certain that the applicant entered the font in a state of entire nudity, (S. Cyr. Hier. cat. ii. v. 2.) to represent the entire purification of the soul, and the abandonment of all earthly attachments, which might interfere with the service of Christ. The necessary precautions were, however, taken to preserve decorum, and the assistance of deaconesses was used in the baptism of females, whereby the presence of the Priest was not called for until the female to be baptized was already in the water. At the rise of the Anabaptists these precautions were neglected, if we may believe cotemporary writers: "They strip themselves starke-naked, not only when they flocke in great multi-

was worthy of the divine wisdom of Jesus Christ, to leave with his Apostles and their successors, a discretionary power, to be exercised according to the difference of times and places, as to what regards the mode of administering this necessary sacrament.

tudes, men and women, together, to their Jordans to be dipt; but also upon other occasions, when the season permits: and when they are questioned for it, they shelter this their shamelesse act, with the proverb, *Veritas nuda est*, the truth is naked, and desires no vaile, masque, or guise." *Remarkable histories of the Anabaptists, by Daniel Featly, D. D.*, p. 124. At present they use a bathing gown: nevertheless the ascent of females from the water in the sight of a multitude of spectators, is shocking to our sense of decorum.

CHAPTER XI.

MEANING OF THE TERM: BAPTIZE.

THE chief argument of Baptists is that the term "*baptize*," in its obvious meaning, implies immersion, and that it can be understood in no other sense in the solemn commission of Christ to his Apostles. This presents a subject of inquiry very ill suited to the mass of mankind, and on which learned men themselves may not easily pronounce with certainty, since words have generally secondary as well as primary significations, which vary by the usages of nations, and with the revolution of time. As George Campbell well remarks: "In process of time, words in every tongue vary from their original import, in consequence of the gradual influence of incidental causes, and the changes in manners and sentiments which they occasion."*

In entering on the critical examination of the term *baptize*, a sophism must be guarded against, which frequently occurs in Baptist writers. They say that the Greek and Hebrew languages had distinct terms for sprinkling, pouring, dipping, and that the term which naturally means dipping having been employed, the others are necessarily excluded. This, however, is not a fair consequence; for whatever term might be employed, it would remain to be seen, whether that term should be taken in its strictest

* Dissert. iv. p. 119.

sense, and whether so taken it excluded the others. We do not contend that Christ specially instituted aspersion as the essential mode of baptism: for in such case we should show that to baptize means to sprinkle, and cannot receive any other signification. The same may be said as to infusion. We simply say, that He instituted an ablution with water, which may be made by immersion, conformably to the primary signification of the term employed by the Evangelists to designate it; but which may also be made in a less solemn manner, since the popular use of the term admits much latitude, and there is no solid reason for believing that our Divine Redeemer determined the precise mode of the ablution.

The learned author of the Greek Lexicon, Henricus Stephanus, gives as the primary meaning of the term *baptize*, *to dip, or immerge, as we dip things for the purpose of dyeing them, or immerge them in water to wash them.** He gives an example from Plutarch's work on *Superstition*, where speaking of the vain phantoms wherewith the imagination of the superstitious is troubled, he represents impostors as counselling a man to baptize himself, that is, *to plunge himself into the sea,*† and then to sit during an entire day on the land; as if this could serve to avert impending calamities. Lucian also uses the term to express the violent plunging of another, in order to drown him. In his dialogue concerning Timon, he represents him, after having found the treasure, resolving to live entirely for himself, and to repel all others, who might desire his assistance. If an unfortunate man carried away by

* Βαπτίζω "Mergo, seu immergo (ut quæ tingendi aut abluendi gratia aquæ immergimus.)"

† βάπτισον σεαυτον εις θαλασσαν. Plutarch, *De Superstitione.*

a flood, stretched forth his hands for relief, this misanthrope resolves rather to push him off, and plunge him head downwards* into the water, lest he should by any possibility escape. In the second book of True Histories, Lucian relates that voyagers discovered men with feet of cork, and saw them running on the waters, and were surprised that they were not baptized,† that is, did not *sink*, but kept above the waters. In this sense it is frequently used by classical, Jewish, and ecclesiastical authors. Josephus speaks of the ship in which the prophet Jonas was, as on the point of being baptized, that is of sinking, or being overwhelmed by the waves,‡ when the mariners resolved to throw him overboard. ST. GREGORY, of Nazianzum, says, that Christ sustains and lightens those who are about to sink, which he calls to be baptized.§ In most of such examples either meaning will suit, since a ship may sink between two waves, which open to swallow her up, or may be overwhelmed by a rushing billow. In many passages it is manifestly taken by the classic authors for the being sunk in water, the water coming over and covering, either partially, or entirely, the object thus said to be baptized. Diodorus Siculus describing the overflowing of the Nile, says that “many of the land animals overtaken by it are destroyed, being baptized,” that is *overwhelmed* and sunk in the water.|| In a book “concerning wonderful narra-

* ὠδειν καὶ τοντον ἐπὶ κεφαλῆν βαπτίζοντα. Hunc quoque demerso capite propellere. *Timon*, or the Misanthrope.

† ἐθανμαζόμεν ὄν ἰδόντες ὄν βαπτίζομένους. *Ver. hist.* l. ii.

‡ μελλοντος βαπτίζεσθαι τον σκάφον. *Antiq. Jud.* l. ix. c. x. p. 285. ed. Basil. an. MDXLIII.

§ κομφίζει βαπτίζομένους. *Orat.* xxiv. § x.

|| των δὲ χειρταίων θηριων τὰ πολλα μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ποταμου περιληφθέντα διαφθείρεται βαπτίζομεια. *Biblioth. hist.* l. a. p. 23, edit. Henrici Stephani.

tives," published among the works of Aristotle, and supposed by Erasmus, to have been compiled from different authors, it is said: "They relate concerning the Phenicians who inhabit Gadeira, that sailing beyond the pillars of Hercules with an east wind, they came in four days to certain desert places, full of bulrushes and sea-weeds; which, on the reflux of the tide, are *baptized*; but when it is full tide are covered over."* The term seems here to mean the being left uncovered, although somewhat sunk in water; or if the negative be supplied, as the text is commonly cited, it means covered over with water. In neither passage can it mean plunged into the water. It is plain that without any violence to the term, according to classic usage, it may be applied to a person sunk in water, or covered with it, although he may not have been plunged, or dipt into it.† In the life of Theseus, founder of the city of Athens, Plutarch mentions a line of the Sybil, in which Athens is compared to a blown bladder, that may be somewhat pressed down, but cannot sink. This, which is called to be baptized, does not imply total immersion.‡ Lucian, as Henricus Stephanus assures us, uses the noun for a laver.§ It is very often taken figuratively for being overwhelmed with affliction, as when Heliodorus says: "thy

* ὅς ὅταν μὲν ἀνέπνοις ἢ βαπτίζεσθαι, ὅταν δὲ πλημύρα κατακλιζέσθαι. L. de mirabil. *prope finem*.

† This is admitted by Hinton: "it may be safely affirmed . . . that the general meaning of *baptizo* is to *dip, plunge, immerse*; and its secondary or occasional signification, to *overwhelm* literally, or figuratively." *A History of Baptism*, by Isaac T. Hinton, p. 21.

‡ Ἀποκός βαπτίζη, δύναι δὲ τοι οὐ θεμις ἐστί. "Thou art dipt, O bladder; but thou can'st not go down."

§ βαπτισίς ex Luciano affertur pro lavaero. See Lexicon Henric. Stephan.

misfortunes *baptize* thee.* It also frequently signifies intoxication, as many examples quoted by Henricus Stephanus plainly show. Lucian speaks of a river in India, whereof he who drinks, becomes like a man thoroughly baptized, that is totally intoxicated.† The pouring in of liquor to excess is here styled baptizing.

The force of the term as employed in the New Testament, is not however to be determined by the use of the classic authors of Greece, so much as by reference to the corresponding term in Hebrew, and to the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament, and to the Jewish books composed in Greek. George Campbell justly observes: “Though the New Testament is written in Greek, an acquaintance with the Greek classics (that is, with the writings of profane authors in that tongue in prose and verse) will not be found so conducive to this end, as an acquaintance with the ancient Hebrew Scriptures.”‡ “It must be remembered,” says he afterwards, “that all the penmen of the New Testament were Jews, the greater part Hebrews, not Hellenists; but whether they be Hebrews, or Hellenists, as they wrote in Greek, the version of the LXX. would serve as a model in what concerned propriety of expression on religious subjects.”§ “In a language spoken, as Greek was then, in many distant countries, all independent of one another, there inevitably arise peculiarities in the acceptations of words in different regions.”|| It must be manifest that the inference drawn from classic usage is

* Cited by Mr. Booth apud Gilbert, Tract. iii. Mode of Baptism, p. 131.

† βεβαπτυσμενῶ ἔοικει. Allocutio, seu *Bacchus*.

‡ *Preliminary Dissertation* i. n. 2.

§ *Ibidem*, n. 8.

|| *Ibidem*, n. 9.

not conclusive. "Classical use," Campbell remarks, "both in Greek and Latin, is not only in this study sometimes unavailable, but may even mislead. The sacred use and the classical are often very different."*

As we have not the Syriac original of St. Matthew, we must learn the corresponding Hebrew term,† by having recourse to the version of the Old Testament by the Septuagint, where the Greek term is found, and then consulting the Hebrew text. In speaking of Naaman, the Syrian general, who, by order of the prophet Eliseus, bathed, or washed himself seven times in the river Jordan, the Septuagint use this term, so that it might be literally rendered, "he was *baptized* seven times."‡ Here the classical signification of dipping to wash himself is sustained; and the usual classical term for bathing or washing is employed in the same narrative to express the order of the prophet.§ The Hebrew terms vary accordingly, the one expressing simply the order to *wash*;|| the other its fulfilment by bathing or *dipping* himself.¶ This, however, it may be insisted on, proves the assertion of Baptists, because the meaning plainly is, that he dipped himself seven times in the Jordan.** Yet let it not be forgotten, that the two He-

* *Diss.* ii. *part* ii. p. 71.

† From the language of some Baptist writers, it might be thought that our Saviour himself used the Greek term, "Has not," asks Hinton, "our Saviour employed that every word which was employed by all the writers of the Greek language, when for any purpose they directed immersion?" *Hist. of Bapt.* §. 6. p. 45.

‡ ἐβαπτίσσατο. 4 Kings v. 14. (*in Prot. version*) 2 Kings v. 14.

§ λουσαι. *Ibidem*, v. 10.

□ || רָחַץ

יָטַבַּל

** Lev. xiv. 8. Numb. xix. 19, and *passim*.

brew terms which express washing and dipping, are here used as synonymous,* and the Greek terms in like manner: whence it is fair to conclude, that in giving the term baptize the meaning of bathing, or washing, the manner of washing by dipping was not necessarily implied, since a bath can be had by infusion, or even by copious aspersion. Many prescriptions of the old law require the washing of the body, which they always express by the term washing, without assigning the mode of doing so. In general this washing was to be the act of the individual himself: but even when Aaron was ordered to wash his sons in water, previous to their consecration as priests, the same term was used, without any reference to the manner.† It does not appear that any importance was attached to the mode of ablution.

In the book of Judith it is related, that she went out by night from the camp of Holofernes, for the purpose of prayer, and washed at a fountain of water in the valley of Bethulia. The Greek text may be literally rendered: “she was *baptized* in the valley on, or at, the fountain of water.”‡ This does not necessarily suggest the idea of bathing, and still less the peculiar mode of dipping; but I shall leave the reader to his own conjectures, and hasten to a more decisive example. In the book of Ecclesiasticus, the term baptized is used to express the purification from

* I have conceded what some call in question. Hay, in his treatise on Baptism, says: “Even this instance seems to be doubtful: for the law prescribed that the leper should be ‘sprinkled’ seven times for his cleansing. Lev. xiv. 7. And as the prophet desired him to wash seven times in Jordan, he must have had respect to the law for the cleansing of lepers.” p. 18.

† Exod. xxix. 4. and xl. 12.

‡ ἐβαπτίζετο ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος. Jud. xii. 10.

the legal uncleanness contracted by touching a corpse. The Greek text is literally rendered: "He that is baptized after touching a corpse, and toucheth it again, what hath he profited by his washing?"* From reference to the law prescribing the mode of expiation, we have reason to conclude that *baptized* here means sprinkled with the water of expiation.† It was ordained that a red heifer should be immolated, and burnt, and water thrown on her ashes, to serve for legal purifications. If a man touched a corpse, he was considered unclean for seven days, and on the third day, and on the seventh, he was to be sprinkled with this water: "Every one that toucheth the corpse of a man, and is not sprinkled with this mixture,‡ shall profane the tabernacle of the Lord, and shall perish out of Israel, because he was not sprinkled with the water of expiation, he shall be unclean, and his uncleanness shall remain upon him."§ The washing of the body on the seventh day was enjoined on the person who made the aspersion, not on the person who had contracted the defilement: whence the purification is uniformly referred to the aspersion, and is thus spoken of by St. Paul: "the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh."||

In connexion with this, I may refer to Josephus, the

* βαπτίζομενος ἀπό νεκρῶ καὶ πάλιν ἄπτομενος αὐτῶ, τί ὠφελῆσε τῷ ψυχρῷ αὐτῶ. Eccl. xxxiv. 25. in *Vulgate*, v. 30.

† Hinton passes over this passage artfully, by referring to his observations about to be made on Luke x. 5—8. See *History of Baptism*, §. iii. p. 31.

‡ The text does not here specify the mode of purification which the Latin interpreter expressed on the authority of the words which follow, and of the 19th verse, in both which places it is specified.

§ Numbers xix. 13.

|| Heb. ix. 13.

famous Jewish historian, who was contemporary with the Apostles, and who speaks of this ceremony of purification on occasion of touching a corpse, as consisting in an aspersion made on the third and seventh day. He uses also the term baptize, not indeed to express the act of aspersion, as some maintain, but rather the dipping of a branch of hyssop into the water wherein the ashes lay, to sprinkle therewith the defiled person.* This preparatory act being most frequently designated by the corresponding Hebrew term, there is such a connection between it and the aspersion which follows, that it would not be strange if one term should be popularly and *consequently* used for the whole rite. It is certainly manifest that baptize, as used by Josephus in this place, has a meaning widely different from total immersion. Carson, a Baptist writer, pretends that it means plunging the ashes into the water: but this can scarcely be admitted, since the casting of the ashes into the font had already been expressed.

The word baptize is used in a figurative meaning by the Septuagint, in the translation of Isaiah, where the terrors which seized on Balthassar, and overwhelmed him, are described. “My heart is astray, and iniquity baptizes me, my soul has been struck with fear.”† The meaning here is to *overwhelm*, in which sense baptize is frequently used by the classic and ecclesiastical authors.

No other examples are afforded us, in the Septuagint, to determine the meaning in which to baptize was understood.

* τους ἔν ἀπό χειρὸν μεμιασμένους, τῆς τέφρας ὀλίγων εἰς πηγήν ἐνιέντες καὶ ὕσσωπον, βαπτισαντές τε καὶ τῆς τέφρας ταύτης εἰς πηγήν ἔβραινον τρίτῃ τε καὶ ἑβδόμῃ τῶν ἡμερῶν καὶ καθάρσιον τὸν λοιπὸν ἦσαν.
De Antiquit. Judaic. l. iv. c. iv. p. 96. edit. Basil. MDXLI. III.

† Isaiah xxi. 14.

These, however, prove that it meant to bathe, or wash, and that it sometimes was taken for a partial ablution or aspersion.

Waiving this latter point, if it be granted that it was the popular term among Hellenistic Hebrew writers for bathing, as the examples adduced must at least be admitted to show, the employment of it by the sacred writers, when recording the Apostolic commission, and when speaking of this rite, would only prove that a bathing, or washing, was prescribed.* No proof could be fairly drawn from the original force of the term, that a peculiar mode should be observed in this bath, or washing. The passages in which it is actually called a bath, or laver, would harmonize with this view, and the question then would simply be, what could be esteemed such; not, after what manner it should be given.

From St. Mark it is apparent that the term baptize was used among the Jews in the time of our Saviour, for an ablution customary before meals, on returning from the market-place: "when they come from the market, unless they be *baptized*, they eat not."† It can scarcely be imagined that this was the immersion of the whole body. Rosen-

* It is with reference to the received meaning of the term that Gousset, a learned Protestant author of a Hebrew Lexicon says: "Sacro baptismo melius congruit **רָחַץ**." This term, as before observed, expresses simply washing, and although, when absolutely used, it generally signifies the washing of the whole body, it does not imply any peculiar mode of washing it. In conjunction with other words, it frequently expresses the washing of a particular part of the body, such as the hands, face, and feet. Gen. xviii. 4, xix. 2. xliii. 31. Ex. xxx. 21. Deut. xxi. 6.

† εαν μη βαπτίζονται. Mark vii. 4.

muller supposes it to have been the mere dipping of the hands in water.* Spencer, in his learned treatise on the ritual observances of the Jews, explains it of the dipping of the hands up to the wrist.† Bloomfield thinks that it implies the washing of the bodies, “in which, however, is not implied immersion.”‡ The evangelist applies the term *baptisms* to express the Jewish purificatory rites derived from ancient tradition, namely, “the washings of cups and of pots, and of brazen vessels and of beds.”§ The learned lexicographer Henricus Stephanus, refers to this passage, and to a similar one from St. Luke, as presenting the meaning of washing, or making an ablution.|| St. Paul calls the various ablutions of the old law, many of which were by aspersion, *divers baptisms*:¶ in contradistinction to the one baptism of Christ. Thus it appears manifest that the term was, in his time, used indiscriminately for all kinds of ablution.**

Baptize is used in a figurative sense, when it is said: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”†† As figurative language has always some reference to the literal force of terms, it is obvious that baptize cannot mean exclusively to dip, or plunge, since it would be absurd to say: He shall dip you in the Holy Ghost and

* In Mark vii. 3. βαπτίζεσθαι manus aquae immergere.

† “Judæis solemne erat nunc χερσίνπτειν aqua affusa manus abluere, nunc βαπτίζειν manus carpo tenus aquis emergere.” Spencer, de legibus Hebræorum ritualibus. l. iv. c. xii. §. ii. See also Parkhurst’s Lexicon, Poke’s Miscell. Lightfoot’s Horæ Hebraicæ.

‡ Bloomfield, in Mark vii. 4.

§ Mark vii. 4.

|| Abluo, Lavo. Marc. vii. 4. Luc. xiii. 38.

¶ διαφοροῖς βαπτισμοῖς. Heb. ix. 10.

** Matt. ii. 11.

†† Matt. iii. 2.

fire. The communication of the Holy Spirit is uniformly represented in the Scriptures as an infusion,* and tongues of fire sat on each of the disciples when he descended into their hearts. However abundant the communication of this Divine Spirit may have been, it is clear that it is signified in Scripture by infusion, rather than by immersion. Taking to wash or cleanse, as the popular signification of the term, its figurative use can be understood, since fire serves to cleanse and purify.

An attempt is made to determine the Scriptural acceptance of the term, by reference to its application to the rite performed by John. As to the mode in which John baptized, many circumstances favor the opinion that it was by some kind of immersion. It was performed at, or in, the river Jordan,† into which, if the instance of our Saviour be considered an example of the mode generally observed, the candidate descended, and thence came up to the bank. The place Enon, near Salem, was chosen, because there were many streams,‡ or, as others will have it, much water

* Acts ii. 17. x. 44, 45. xix. 6.

† St. Cyril, of Alexandria, observes of John: "In that he baptized not in the same fountains as Christ, but near Salem, and in some of the neighboring fountains around, he pointed out, in a way, the difference of the baptisms, showing, as in a figure, that his baptism is not the same as that from our Saviour Jesus Christ, yet was near it, and around it, bringing in a sort of preparation and introduction of the more perfect." In Joan. iii. 22. This ancient and venerable writer does not appear to have thought, that the sacred text implies, that John generally baptized in the bed of the river.

‡ ὕδατα πολλά. John iii. 22. I attach no importance to these minor points. It is curious to read the observations of some writers. "It is certain that he could not have chosen such a place for immersion. The simple fact that the word is *plural*, (*many streams or springs*),

there. Yet the manner of baptizing is by no means beyond question, since the vast multitudes that thronged from Jerusalem and Judea generally, could not, without difficulty, be immersed by John; especially as he necessarily devoted considerable time to their instruction, and to receive the confession of their sins.* It is not to be forgotten, that the legal purifications of great multitudes were all performed by aspersion;† which renders it not improbable that this mode was followed by the Precursor, at least when a number was to be baptized. As to the particular instance of the baptism of our adorable Saviour, His descent into the water shows rather His partial immersion by Himself, inasmuch as a great part of his body may be presumed to have been under water; but His immersion by John is not thence safely inferred, unless the term “baptize” can be

decides *this* point. One man could not immerse in *many* places at once, nor could he need *many* rivulets or springs for that purpose. Why, then, must this *field preacher* go to Enon, a place well supplied with springs? Because it was no easy matter to find water in that region, to accommodate the thousands that came to him, with their camels and other beasts. Enon, furnished with many springs, afforded rare conveniences for a camp-meeting, assembled to remain many days.” *Hints to an Inquirer on the subject of Baptism*, by Parsons Cooke and Joseph H. Towne, Boston, 1842. p. 38.

* It is amusing to read some of the calculations of those who deny that John immersed: “The passage of Scripture which I have quoted,” says one of the parties in a dialogue, “interpreted by the circumstances, cannot import less than 500,000. Suppose that he immersed one every minute—to have immersed 500,000, he must have stood breast high in the water, twelve hours every day, for nearly two whole years. But his ministry was little more than a year and a half, and during part of that time he was in prison. *Ibidem*, p. 37.

† Exod. xxiv. 8. Numb. 8. 7.

proved to imply it. It is worthy of observation, that the most ancient paintings, some of which are traced to the fifth century, represent John pouring the water on the Saviour already immersed above his waist:* which shows that even in times when immersion was practised in solemn baptism, it was not thought that the sacred narrative implied the plunging of the whole body of our Saviour by the hands of the Precursor. Such an action is scarcely reconcilable with the reverence due to his Divine Person, and seems never to have occurred to the ancients.

I have no difficulty however in granting that those baptized by John may have been immersed; but I should think this to be true, if they advanced into the water to a considerable depth, and there were either sprinkled, as their number may lead us to suppose, or received the infusion of water from the hands of the Baptist; their position in deep water being a real, although not a total immersion. As the washing of the body in the Old Law was not prescribed to be done in any peculiar way, I can see no reason for supposing that John attached any importance to the mode: his object being to indicate by the rite itself, the washing of the soul from sin, by the tears of repentance.

* The inside of the dome of the Baptistery at Ravenna, contains a representation of this kind, and it is thought by learned antiquarians to have been put in its present form in the year 451, by Neon, Archbishop of Ravenna. See Gilbert on *Mode of Baptism*, p. 156. Mamachi gives us the copy of an ancient medal preserved in the Victorian Museum at Rome, in which our Redeemer is represented as standing in the water, and St. John pours the water on his head from a shell. The learned antiquarian does not venture a conjecture as to the age of the medal, but thinks that its antiquity does not admit of question. *Originum et Antiquitatum Christianarum*, l. ii. c. iv. §. iii. p. 238.

Some examples from the Fathers will show that washing was considered the force of the term, and little attention was paid to the primary meaning of dipping.

ST. JUSTIN, in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, shows that the prophecies do not regard the mere legal purifications, but christian baptism, which when received with a knowledge of divine truth, and with penitence, serves for the expiation of sin. He asks what is the use of their baptism, except to cleanse the flesh: "Let your soul be baptized," he says, "from anger and avarice, envy and hatred, and your body will be pure."* This use of the term, although figurative, shows that its popular signification was to wash, or cleanse; since as the body was washed by the Jew in various circumstances, so he directs the soul to be purified from passion and vice.

CLEMENT, of Alexandria, speaking of the ablutions used by the Gentiles, preparatory to prayer and sacrifice, considers that they present an image of baptism, and supposes the poets to have derived the idea of them from Moses. Thus "Penelope, with clean garments covering her body, being purified by water, approached prayer; and Telemachus, after having washed his hands in the foaming sea, offered his vows to Minerva. Like to this was the Jewish usage, as also frequently to be *baptized* after coition."† Although the term baptized seems here used for the washing of the body, it does not appear to refer necessarily to the act of dipping, but to be taken in a sense equivalent to bathing, expressed by classic authors by the term *λουομαι*. The examples adduced show that even the dipping of the hands, and the various Heathen lustrations before sacrifice

* βαπτίσθητε την ψυχην από ὀργῆς. Dial. cum Tryph.

† Stromat. l. iv. p. 628, edit. Ven. 1757.

or prayer were considered images of baptism. It is known that these ablutions sometimes were mere sprinklings; sometimes the washing of the hands, or of the head, and sometimes of the whole body.*

ORIGEN thus addresses the Pharisees: "Whence were you led to think, that Elias when he should come, would *baptize*, who, in Achab's time, did not *baptize* the wood upon the altar, which required a washing, in order that on the Lord's appearing in fire, it might be burnt? For he ordered the priests to perform that. He, therefore, who did not himself then *baptize*, but assigned that work to others, how was it likely that he should *baptize*, when he was to come according to the prediction of Malachy?"† The pouring of water on the wood is here expressed by the term baptizing. ST. BASIL considers the same action as the type of baptism, which unites us to God.‡

The impartial examination of the Fathers will, I am persuaded, show that the term baptize with them was equivalent to the classical term for bathing, or washing the body, and that this use of the term was derived from the Hebrew Hellenistic writers. It will be easily perceived that no stress whatever was placed by them on the manner in which this might be done; although with reference to the solemn mode then generally observed, they dwelt, as occasion offered, on the instruction conveyed by their representative burial with Christ,§ beneath the baptismal waters: but they likewise dwelt, with no less emphasis, on their entire spoliation of all earthly impediments and attachments, and their return to the state of primeval innocence,

* See Rees's Encyclopædia. Art. *Ablution*.

† *Comm. in Joan.*

‡ *Hom. xiii. in S. Baptisma.*

§ St. Cyril, *Jer. Cat. Myst.* ii. 4, 5.

and their conformity with their Saviour exposed naked on the cross, by their entire nudity on entering the purifying stream.

I trust it is now evident, that as the Hebrew term which originally signified to dip slightly before aspersion, was in a secondary sense used to signify bathing, so the corresponding Greek term, which in its origin implied dipping, was by Hebrew Hellenistic usage taken for washing, and that the *consequential* signification was retained in cases where the manner which gave rise to it was not observed. When Christ, therefore, ordered his Apostles to baptize, he was necessarily understood to enjoin a washing with water, but there was no sufficient reason for supposing that any stress was laid on the manner in which it was to be performed. Can we suppose the christian institution to be more formal than the Mosaic, which left the mode of such ablutions of the body undetermined? Was there any peculiar virtue attached to the manner of performing a rite, the obvious end whereof was to exhibit externally that purification of the soul which divine grace interiorly effected? Washing with water represents this internal purity; but plunging has no necessary connexion with it.

I am aware how difficult it is for persons not conversant with the Hebrew and Greek languages to perceive the justice and force of these remarks: and this shows the absurdity of leaving a christian rite to be determined by each individual according to his idea of the meaning of a Greek word. Christ cannot have left an institution of such universal necessity dependant on a critical inquiry of this kind: but as He appointed ministers to perform it, so must He have guarantied their acts, and imposed the duty of receiving it from their hands. Otherwise not only the unlet-

tered, who form the immense majority of mankind, but the learned themselves would be in interminable doubt from the great latitude and variety of the meaning of words: and even were its classic import clear, they could not satisfy themselves, that a term employed to designate a christian rite, should be taken in the sense which it bore before it was applied to this new and sublime purpose.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XI.

IN order to simplify the investigation, I have confined my remarks to the term βαπτίζω. It is proper, however, to observe that the Hebrew term טָבַל, which in 4 Kings v. 14, is rendered by βαπτίζω, is generally rendered βαπτω, and that most writers, both among Baptists and their opponents, agree that the terms are equivalent. William Hague replying to Towne, says: "they are, as Mr. T. observes, both from one root, and so nearly identical in meaning as to allow our speaking of them as one word." *Review of Hints to an Inquirer*, p. 11. The ordinary meaning of the Hebrew term, and the corresponding Greek, is to dip the finger, or some instrument in a liquid for the purpose of aspersion. Hence they are used to express the dipping of the finger in blood, or the dipping of a bunch of hyssop in water to sprinkle therewith. See Lev. iv. 6. xiv. 6; Num. xix. 18. It sometimes expresses the dipping of food in vinegar, or sauce, to give it relish. See Ruth ii. 14. The dipping of the tip of the rod of Jonathan in honeycomb is expressed in the same way, 1 Kings xiv. 27. The Greek term is used in the New Testament to express the

act of Judas dipping the bread in the dish, John xiii. 26 ; and the dipping of the tip of the finger of Lazarus in water, which the condemned glutton prayed for, to mitigate the burning of his tongue. Luke xvi. 24. The setting of the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark, in the waters of the Jordan, is expressed by the same Hebrew verb, and rendered by the Greek verb in a compound form. Josue iii. 13. The dipping of the feet in oil is used to express the abundance of olive plantations in the territory of Aser. Deut. xxxiii. 24. Nabuchodonosor is said to have been thus dipped in the dew of heaven, that is wet as if dipped, in a sense analogous to an actual dipping, Dan. iv. 30. This is imitated in Milton's *Comus* :

A cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er.

From both these examples, it is apparent that a certain resemblance in effect led to the employment of the term, where no kind of dipping had taken place. The dipping of the coat of Joseph in the blood of a kid, in order to present it besmeared with blood to his father, is expressed by the same Hebrew term, but rendered in Greek *ἐμολυναν*, "*they defiled.*" Gen. xxxvii. 31. The warrior, returning from battle with his blood-stained garment, as described by Isaiah, is said by St. John to have his garment *βεβαμμένον αἵματι* sprinkled or stained with blood. Apoc. xix. 13. "It is obvious," Hague acknowledges, "that a thing may be coloured by being sprinkled, but," he adds, "*bapto* does not designate that act, and could never be used in connection with it in a literal sense, unless it were to express the idea that the substance had become thoroughly drenched,

or wet, as if it had been dipt.”* This is an acknowledgment that it may be used by analogy where no dipping has taken place; and the examples show that even a thorough drenching is not required.

It appears clear, from the passages quoted, that the Scriptural use of the Hebrew and Greek terms generally denotes dipping, but mostly of a slight kind, preparatory to sprinkling, and quite different from total immersion: and that it sometimes is taken, by analogy, or as some would say, *consequentially*, for an effect bearing some resemblance to what would be the consequence of dipping, although the person or object was in no way dipt.

The classical use of the Greek term is to dip, generally for the purpose of dyeing, as wool or other material is dipt: whence it is frequently used to signify dyeing, or colouring, without any regard whatever to the process of dipping. Aristotle, treating of colours, applies the term to flowers: *τά βαπτόμενα τῶν ἀνθῶν*. L. *De color*. Lucian describes courtesans as painting their cheeks, and uses this term to express it. See *Tryphæna et Charmides*, also, *Cynicus*, *De moribus philosophorum*. The tinging of the clouds with blood in a battle which the same author has fancifully described, is called by this term. *Lib. 1. Ver. hist.*

βαπτω, from signifying to dip for the purpose of dyeing, signifies by implication *to tinge, to dye*, as Robinson, in his *Lexicon* remarks; and as a vessel is dipt for the purpose of drawing up water, it in like manner signifies to *draw up water*. Callimachus says: “To-day, ye bearers of water draw none” *μη βαπτετε*. Nicander says: *ἀντην ἀλα βαπτε*, draw the sea water itself. Hence Donegan’s *Lexicon* says that the verb means, “to draw out water by

* Review of Hints, p. 12.

dipping a vessel into it." By analogy it might be used where a vessel is filled with water without dipping it.

In the same way, it being conceded that βαπτίζω means originally to dip, or immerse the person; yet as the immersion is for the purpose of washing, to signify by the external act the purification of the soul, it may be applied to any kind of washing, without regard to the manner which gave occasion to the term. It is in this sense Beza said: "βαπτίζω does not signify to wash, except by consequence."* Turretin speaks to the same effect.† Schleusner, in his Lexicon, states, that as immersion and dipping in the water is usually done for the purpose of washing, βαπτίζω secondly signifies *to wash, or cleanse with water.*

* Ep. ii. ad Thom. Filium.

† Turretin observes: "Quia vero fere aliquid mergi et tingi solet, ut lavetur, qui immerguntur solent abluī; hinc factum, ut quemadmodum apud Hebræos טבַל quod lxx vertunt βαπτίζω, 2 Reg. v. 14, etiam accipiatur pro רָחַץ quod est lavare: *Ibid.* ita apud Graecos το βαπτίζειν, per melalepsim, pro eodem usurpetur. Marc. vii. 4." *De Baptismo.*

CHAPTER XII.

APOSTOLIC PRECEDENTS.

IN order to decide the question of what is essential to christian baptism, it were of great importance that we should know the practice of the Apostles, who, doubtless, acted in perfect accordance with the will of their Divine Master: yet it has pleased the Holy Spirit so to guide the pen of the inspired writers, that we are left, in most instances, to conjecture the mode that may have been adopted. In the first most solemn instance of its administration, when three thousand souls were added to the church on the day of Pentecost, at the preaching of Peter, no details are furnished us of the manner of their baptism: "They therefore that received his word were baptized: and there were added in that day about three thousand souls."* The most obvious inference from this statement is, that they were not baptized by immersion: whence ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN refers to it as an instance of baptism by aspersion, although he wrote when immersion was practised: but the sacred writer being silent as to the mode, nothing can be affirmed with certainty. I am content with referring to

* Acts ii. 41. Whoever wishes to be amused at the trivial difficulties objected by sectarian writers, may take in hand the *Hints to an Inquirer* already cited: "It would require miraculous despatch to get through with all the essential preliminaries in less than half a day."—"Who provided them with immersing gowns?" etc. etc. p. 47.

this case as calculated to check the confidence with which immersion is asserted to be essential. 'The circumstances of the baptism of the jailor and all his family in the night, in his own house, which was doubtless immediately connected with the prison, lead to a like inference. Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord to him and all that were in his house. And he taking them in the same hour of the night washed their wounds, and he was baptized, and presently all his family."* Cornelius and his family were baptized, after Peter had instructed them; but as to the mode, we are again left to conjecture: yet the language of the Apostle and the circumstances in which he spoke, being in the house of Cornelius, do not present the idea of immersion: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"† The baptism of the disciples at Ephesus immediately followed the instruction of Paul, and was succeeded by the imposition of hands, and no intimation is given of the delay which immersion might require: "having heard these things they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke tongues and prophesied."‡ The baptism of Saul himself was performed by Ananias, who visited him then blind, in the house of a private individual: "He received his sight, and rising up he was baptized."§ The only instance favourable to the supposition that immersion was used, is that of the eunuch baptized by Philip: in which case the occurrence of water by the road-side, as they journeyed along, gave occasion to the baptism. The tradition of the country

* Acts xvi. 32.

† Acts x. 47.

‡ Acts xix. 5.

§ Ibidem ix. 18.

testified by Eusebius, St. Jerom, and by modern travellers, states that it was a spring near Bethsoron, whose waters are forthwith drunk up by the earth.*

It is remarkable that in no instance of the administration of christian baptism, is it stated, that a river, or stream, was sought out for the purpose. Without affirming any thing positively where positive proof does not exist, we can fairly say that the sacred narrative is highly favourable to the belief that immersion was not exclusively adopted.

Although from the descent of our Lord into the water, when He was baptized by John, and from the descent of the eunuch into the water, in order to receive baptism from Philip, and from the most obvious meaning of the term *baptize*, presumptions may arise that the Apostles ordinarily baptized by some kind of immersion, yet candour should admit that there is no conclusive proof of it in

* See *Hints to an Inquirer*, p. 52. The farcical scenes which are exhibited by preachers endeavouring to make facts of Scripture subservient to their sectarian views, are calculated to render christianity ridiculous in the eyes of unbelievers, whilst they must bewilder the ignorant. A Baptist preacher in Kentucky, when about to immerse a negro slave in a creek, called to the spectators, and observed: This looks very like Philip and the eunuch. Cooke and Towne relate that in Charlestown, two preachers, a Baptist and Methodist, were baptizing at the same time by the water's side. The Baptist with his candidate went down into the water, saying on his way: "And they went down into the water; both Philip and the eunuch;" and after the immersion, they returned, the preacher repeating in triumph the words of the sacred text: "And they came up out of the water." The Methodist did in like manner, save that instead of immersing his proselyte, when they both stood in the water, he poured water on his head: but the going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, were verified in both cases, and the words were repeated in a like tone of triumph. *Hints to an Inquirer*, p. 51.

Scripture : the greatest argument in favour of it being the acknowledged fact that immersion was the ordinary mode used by their successors, who must doubtless be presumed to have adhered to their example. Those who rely on the Bible alone, may well be bewildered with the various inferences drawn from the facts there recorded, and the testimonies in which reference is made to baptism ; but with the light of ancient tradition, derived from the Apostles, we can attain to a high degree of probability as to their ordinary practice, which, in those circumstances, added to the solemnity of the rite itself, and which in no way disproves the validity of the less solemn modes, which in later ages have so generally prevailed.

In giving the commission to baptize, our Divine Redeemer added His warranty for the integrity and efficacy of the rite : “ behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” No stronger or more solemn assurance could be given, that the Apostolic ministry would always baptize, teach, make disciples, and perform the other sacred functions in the spirit of their Divine Master. The terms : “ I am with you ;” in scriptural style express the effectual assistance of God ; and if Christ effectually assist his ministers in baptizing, who can suppose that they can pervert the institution, and generally adopt and solemnly approve a method at variance with His will ? He is with them when they teach ; and by His grace He disposes the minds of their hearers to receive with docility the words of salvation which they announce in His name : He is present with them, enlightening them that they may be the light of the world. He is with them baptizing, communicating His grace, and baptizing in the Holy Spirit those whom they wash with water in the name of the three

Divine Persons. He guards them against any corruption of so sacred an institution, which would deprive His disciples of the benefit which He meant should be imparted by it. It is impossible, consistently with so solemn a promise, that that ministry could ever adopt and sanction a mode of baptizing contrary to His institution. The promise embraces the successors of the Apostles to the consummation of the world. It does not regard each individually, unless inasmuch as he is a member of the ministry, and acts in union with it: but it manifestly embraces the ministry itself, the body, of which the Apostles were the first members, and which received a charter of perpetuity from the Sovereign who called it into existence. To them Christ gave the authority: on them He imposed the charge: and He pledged His own effectual presence, not merely to encourage and animate them, but to give us an unfailing voucher of the integrity and efficacy of their ministry. "Let a man," says St. Paul, "so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the ministers of God."* It is the duty of the faithful to receive the sacraments from their hands: and Christ is surety that they shall be properly administered. He has not left us to ascertain the means of salvation by literary investigations, wherein the mass of mankind must necessarily depend on the authority of a few, who themselves are discordant; but He has authorized a class of men to administer, and promised His effectual co-operation. How absurd, then, is it to find thousands who know not how to read, and thousands who barely can read, and are utterly unacquainted with the learned languages, determining for themselves the nature of this important rite, by reference to the term by which it is expressed

* 1 Cor. iv. 1.

in Greek! How presumptuous is it even for learned men to decide a point of this character by the etymology, or primary signification of a term, which, in its transition from the classic writers of Heathenism to Jews and Christians, may easily have suffered a modification and change of meaning!

By lodging in the same persons the power of teaching and baptizing, Christ has left us to learn from the Apostolic ministry what is to be considered true baptism, and to receive it from their hands. If a question be mooted as to the nature, manner and effects of baptism, their sentence must be final, for they alone are constituted our instructors. This is the warranty of Christ, against which no exception can be advanced. If we receive baptism from the hands of those whom He has commissioned to baptize, how can we be held responsible for the mode in which it is administered? They are the public officers, with the most solemn vouchers for their acts: it cannot be the first duty of a believer to sit in judgment on the ministers of religion; and before he is initiated into christianity, to determine whether they may not have utterly mistaken the nature of its primary institution.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISPOSITIONS FOR BAPTISM.

INFANTS are cleansed in baptism from original sin and adorned with sanctifying grace by the mere mercy of God, through the merits of Christ, without any disposition or co-operation on their part. It was one of the bold paradoxes of Luther that they were divinely enlightened at the moment to conceive justifying faith: to whom Catholic divines replied in the words of St. Augustin: "They certainly cannot believe with the heart unto justice, and confess with the mouth unto salvation . . . on the contrary crying and screaming, whilst the mystery is celebrated in them, they drown the mystical words: although no christian would venture to say that they are baptized in vain."* Bishop Onderdonk says: "they are not subjects for the moral change;"† which is true of that change of disposition to which he gives the name of moral regeneration: but the Scriptures and Fathers leave no doubt of their capacity to receive that divine gift of grace whereby they are born of God. "Salvation is perfected in them, as the entire church holds:" "the grace of the Almighty fulfils in them what their tender age renders impossible."‡ Those who attain to maturity without the development of the intellectual

* *De Baptismo contra Donat.* l. iv. c. xxiii.

† *Essay on Baptism*, p. 105.

‡ *Augustin ubi supra*, et c. xxiv.

faculties, such as absolute idiots, are justly considered admissible to baptism, in the same way as infants, since they are naturally incapable of any personal preparation.

All who enjoy the use of reason, even children who have just attained to it, must be instructed, in a manner suited to their age and capacity, before they are admitted to baptism. The divine command to teach, and by teaching make disciples, must be fulfilled: the Gospel must be made known to them: the whole counsel of God must be declared: all things whatsoever Christ delivered to the Apostles, and the Apostles to the church, must be propounded; and the assent of faith must be given to all, at least in the principle by which all are embraced, before they are admitted to the sacred laver.* The mystery of Three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, under whose invocation, and by whose authority, baptism is administered, must be in the first place believed; for it is only in the faith of this Divine Trinity that sin can be washed away. The Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, our Lord and Redeemer, must be explicitly professed: "This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent."† "He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting: but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."‡ "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."§ Hence full unreserved belief was required by Philip of the eunuch demanding to be baptized: "If thou believest with thy whole heart, thou mayest: and he answering

* The proposition in detail of various mysteries, especially the Eucharist, was according to ancient discipline postponed to baptism.

† John xvii. 3.

‡ Ibidem iii. 36.

§ Acts iv. 12.

said: I believe that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of God.”* When the jailer demanded of his holy prisoners what he should do to secure his salvation, Paul answered: “Believe in the Lord Jesus:” and Paul and Silas “spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all that were in his house.”† It was only on assenting to this teaching, that he and all his family were baptized. The Samaritans, in like manner, “when they had believed Philip preaching the kingdom of God, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, men and women were baptized.”‡ This faith in Christ is the captivity of the understanding in obedience to His divine authority, and the levelling of every height of human pride that raiseth itself up against the knowledge of God.§ It recognizes Christ as the Son of the living God, to whose declaration of high mysteries every created intellect must bow. It adores Him as the Only-begotten of the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, and has revealed all things whatsoever He learned from the Father to be communicated to man: and it receives, on His testimony and teaching, all things whatsoever He revealed. It contemplates Him always present with the Apostolic ministry, teaching all truth, and by His light, grace, and power, making the church the pillar and ground of truth.

The practice of scrutiny, or examination, on seven different days, observed in the primitive church,|| was grounded on the necessity of instruction and faith. The catechumen was interrogated as to his belief in the leading articles of religion, in which he was specially instructed at stated times: and he was taught the ancient symbol, styled of the

* Acts viii. 37.

† Ibidem xvi. 32.

‡ Ibidem viii. 12.

§ See 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

|| Trombelli, diss. v. de bapt. t. i. §. 9, p. 207.

Apostles, which he recited as he approached the laver. In this preparatory process was literally fulfilled “the examination of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

The adult applicant for baptism is also required to pledge himself to the observance of the whole Divine Law; wherefore he is taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ our Lord commanded. His obedience, as well as his faith, must be unreserved. He must abjure all that is contrary to the maxims and law of Christ: he must renounce Satan, his works and pomps. He must cast away from him all his iniquities whereby he has transgressed, and, with a new heart and spirit, enter on a course of virtue, conformable to the standard of the Gospel. The false maxims of the world—the depraved customs of society—the vices and disorders to which most men are enslaved, must be forsaken; since he is told that his entrance into life depends on keeping the divine commandments: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”† The ceremony of renouncing Satan is mentioned by Tertullian‡ and Origen,§ and explained in detail by ST. CYRIL, of Jerusalem, in his discourses to neophytes: “In the first place,” he says, “you entered into the vestibule of the baptistery, and standing towards the west, you listened, and were ordered to stretch forth your hand, and you renounced Satan, as if he were present. . . . You hear the command given to say with outstretched hand, as if addressing him: I RENOUNCE THEE, SATAN. In the second formulary you are taught to say: AND ALL THY WORKS. The works of Satan are all kinds of sin, and must be renounced, as one fleeing from

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

† *Roman Ritual.*

‡ *De Spectac.*

§ *In Ps. xxxviii. hom. ii.*

a tyrant, seeks to be beyond the reach of his weapons. Every kind of sin is numbered among the works of the devil. And know ye that whatever you utter in that awful moment is recorded in the book of God. Should you, then, do any thing to the contrary, you will be condemned as a prevaricator. You renounce the works of Satan—all thoughts and deeds contrary to reason. Afterwards you add: **AND ALL HIS POMP.**”*

Sorrow for past offences is a necessary condition for receiving their forgiveness in baptism. Without it, it is impossible they should be cancelled. When the Jews “had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: What shall we do, men brethren?” “Peter said to them: Do penance, and be baptized.”† This implied that they should cherish the feeling of compunction which they had begun to experience, and weep over the enormity of their crime. The applicants for the baptism of penance, which John administered, were wont to testify their compunction by confessing their sins; and of christian converts we read: “Many of those who believed came confessing and declaring their deeds.”‡ As an evidence of their sincerity, they committed to the flames the superstitious writings by which they had been previously led astray. I do not undertake to decide whether the persons here spoken of were applicants for baptism, or neophytes: but although sacramental confession cannot be made previously to baptism, and no kind of confession is enjoined by divine precept on unbaptized persons, it was certainly a part of ancient discipline to prepare catechumens for the remission of sins in baptism by the humiliating exercise of confession, and by penitential works. **ST. JUSTIN**

* Cat. xix. Myst. i.

† Acts ii. 37.

‡ Ibidem xix. 18.

mentions fasting: "Such as are persuaded and as believe the truth of the things taught and said by us, and promise to live after this manner, are instructed to pray and ask of God, with fasting, the forgiveness of their past offences, and we unite with them in prayer and fasting."* **TER-TULLIAN** specifies confession: "Those who are about to receive baptism should prepare themselves by frequent prayers, fasts, genuflexions, and vigils, accompanied by the confession of all their past sins, that they may even exhibit the baptism of John. 'They were baptized,' he says, 'confessing their sins.' We may feel happy, that we are not publicly to confess our iniquity, or turpitude. For at the same time we satisfy for our former offences, by the humiliation of the flesh and of the spirit, and we fortify ourselves against the temptations that will follow."† **ST. GREGORY**, of Nazianzum, exhorts catechumens to confession: "Do not deem it unworthy of you to confess your sin, knowing how John baptized."‡ **ST. CHRYSOSTOM** explains the end of all these penitential exercises to be, "that after the performance of penance, they might come to the sacred mysteries."§ Although the present discipline of the church does not require any confession whatever before baptism, yet it behoves the candidate seriously to review his life, in order to discover what obligations he may be under, in consequence of past transgressions—what reparation of injuries is due—what debts of justice are to be discharged—what reconciliation with enemies is to be sought—and in case of doubt, to consult confidentially his spiritual adviser. Besides this, he should review, in

* *Apol. i. prope finem.*

† *De Bapt. n. 20.*

‡ *Orat. xl. n. 27.*

§ *Hom. x. in Matt. n. 5, p. 145, t. vii. edit. Montfaucon.*

the bitterness of his soul, the misspent years of life, and weep before God for having so long neglected to love and serve Him, and for his many and grievous sins. It is thus humbled and penitent he can approach with confidence to the sacred laver: there to be washed, justified, and sanctified in CHRIST JESUS.

CHAPTER XIV.

CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM.

THE essence of baptism consists in an ablution made with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with a view to perform the rite instituted by Christ, which is practised in His church. Hence we say: "I baptize thee, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Every thing else is ritual, or ceremonial, and may be omitted without injury to the sacrament, although not without sin, in its solemn administration. It is usual to speak of the simplicity of worship in the Apostolic age; and were we to admit the usual negative argument as proof, namely, that which is derived from the silence of the sacred writers of the New Testament, the primitive worship must have been extremely simple. But we cannot fail to observe that the Gospels are the compendious history of the life of our Lord, and could not be expected to furnish details of the worship of the church after her formal organization and establishment, and that the Epistles are instructions on specific subjects directed to local churches already organized. The Acts of the Apostles might be expected to furnish details; but a careful perusal of them will convince the impartial reader that the sacred historian had chiefly in view to place on record the chief facts that marked the origin of the church, and the leading points in the history of St. Paul, his beloved mas-

ter. Nothing could be expected in such a book, but indirect or slight notices of liturgical practices, so that the want of detailed statements does not warrant the conclusion, that no ceremonies were used in the administration of baptism.

It is an incontrovertible fact that a variety of ceremonies employed on this occasion are mentioned by the christian writers of the second century, and that they are not spoken of, as recently introduced, but as the established ceremonial, of which the origin is justly referred to the age of the Apostles. In the baptism of the three thousand first converts, if it took place on the day of their conversion,* as the sacred narrative most naturally suggests, not many accompanying rites could have been employed. The eunuch was baptized by Philip, probably without any additional ceremony, although conjecture is free on this point: but at a very early period of the church, much time was devoted to prepare catechumens for baptism, and a great variety of rites were used for that purpose. The form prescribed in the Roman Ritual, and used by us, far from being encumbered with modern rites foreign to ancient simplicity, is a very brief compendium of the solemn ceremonial, which was performed at stated intervals preparatory to baptism. Seven scrutinies preceded the administration of this sacrament on Easter Saturday; three of them were made on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday of the third week of Lent; three others on the same days of the fourth week, and the last on Easter Saturday itself, immediately before the ablution. Three scrutinies only were made previous to solemn baptism on the Saturday before Pentecost; one a week before, the second on Thursday, and the third on the day of baptism.

* Calmet *in locum* thinks otherwise.

The questions which the priest now puts to the candidate, are taken from the ancient form of scrutiny, and are directed to ascertain the object had in view by him, which should be no other than his eternal salvation: "What dost thou ask of the church of God? Faith. What doth faith procure thee? Life everlasting." The questions concerning the renunciation of Satan, and all his works and pomps, and the belief in the Three Divine Persons, and in the Holy Catholic Church, were proposed in the ancient scrutinies in the precise terms used at this day.* They were repeated at each scrutiny, the better to test the sincerity and fixed resolution of the catechumen; and the Apostolic symbol was likewise recited.

The propriety of these questions when addressed to adults is obvious: but it surprises some, that they should be used in the case of infants, who cannot answer, or understand the reply made in their name by their sponsors. The reason of this practice is to preserve a correspondence in the rite of baptizing adults and infants, and to express the conditions on which baptism is imparted, so that on coming to the use of reason the child may learn at once his obligations and his privileges. "Not from perversity of will," says ST. AUGUSTIN, "but from the incapacity of age, they can neither believe with the heart unto justice, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation. Therefore, when others answer for them, that the solemnity of the sacrament may be celebrated in their regard, it certainly serves to consecrate them, since they themselves cannot answer."† They are justly styled believers, because they, as it were, profess the faith, by the words of those who

* Trombelli, t. i. *de Bapt. diss.* v. p. 244.

† *De Baptismo contra Donat.* l. iv. c. xxiv.

present them.”* The custom of using sponsors for this purpose is most ancient: and although they stood forward to vouch for the sincerity and fidelity of adult candidates, it is clear from Tertullian that they were also used in the baptism of infants. The responsibility which they contract, in answering for the infant, is among the reasons which he offers to induce the delay of baptism.

The breathing thrice on the face of catechumens is an ancient rite mentioned by the first council of Constantinople.† It is likewise mentioned in a manuscript of above a thousand years antiquity.‡ It is accompanied by words which attest the faith of the church, that all unbaptized persons are under the power of darkness, and that in baptism the Holy Spirit regenerates the soul unto life. “Go forth unclean spirit from her, and give place to the Holy Ghost the Paraclete.”§ St. Augustin speaks of the rite, and proves from it original sin against the Pelagians. He states, that “it is not since the rise of the pestilence of Manicheism, that it has become customary in the church of God, to exorcise infants and breathe on them, to show, by the mysteries themselves, that they cannot be transferred to the kingdom of Christ, unless they be delivered from the power of darkness.”|| Those who feel disposed to ridicule this significant rite, should remember its high antiquity, and its reference to the mysterious action whereby the mould of clay was first quickened into life, and to the breathing of our Lord on His Apostles, to express the communication of the Holy Ghost.

* L. i. *de pecc. merit. et remiss.* c. xix.

† Can. vii.

‡ *Cod. Bobiens. apud Mabillon, Musæo Ital.* l. i. *præf.* n. 8. p. 175.

§ Roman Ritual.

|| L. ii. *de nuptiis et concupiscentus*, c. xxix. n. 50.

The sign of the cross was also made on the forehead, and on the breast, as appears from the ancient manuscript above referred to, and the rite was accompanied with these words: "Receive the sign of the cross on thy forehead, and on thy heart: be always faithful." In the sacramental work attributed to Pope Gelasius, to the last words these are substituted: "take the faith of the heavenly commandments: and be such in thy morals that thou mayst be the temple of God." This is the form now used. St. Augustin, in several places, speaks of the catechumen as receiving the sign of the cross in the rites preparatory for baptism: "he bears the cross of Christ already on his forehead, and he is not ashamed of the cross of the Lord."* "It was a noble thing," observes Wall, "that they designed by this badge of the cross. It was to declare that they would not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, never be abashed at the flouts of the heathens, who objected to them that the person in whom they trusted as their God, had been executed for a malefactor; never be scandalized, if it came to be their fortune to suffer it themselves."†

The imposition of hands with prayer was also used in the reception of catechumens, as we learn from St. Augustin: "Sanctification is not of one kind only, for I think that even the catechumens are in some measure sanctified by the sign of the cross and the prayer of the imposition of hands."‡ Constantine was thus received into the number of catechumens.§ To this corresponds the rite now performed, to signify that the candidate is devoted to God.

* Tract. xi. in Joan, n. 3.

† *History of Infant Baptism*, p. ii. ch. ix.

‡ L. ii. *de pec. meritis*, cap. 26, n. 42.

§ *Const. Vita*, l. iv. c. 61, 62.

The rite itself is familiar to all that have read the New Testament, and is adopted for far higher purposes in the sacraments of confirmation and holy orders.

The blessing of the salt, and the words pronounced in giving it, are the same as in the sacramental book ascribed to Gregory the Great.* The ceremony naturally reminds us, that we are to be “the salt of the earth,”† by our wisdom in Christ, and that our “speech should be always in grace, seasoned with salt.”‡

The exorcisms, or adjurations of the demon, are of high antiquity, since their use was so firmly established throughout the whole church in the days of St. Augustin, that he proved thereby the ancient faith concerning original sin. He calls “the tradition of the church most ancient,” “by which children are exorcised and breathed on, that being rescued from the power of darkness; that is, of the devil and his angels, they may be transferred to the kingdom of Christ.”§ Wall strangely mistakes the meaning of the exorcisms when he says: “The requiring these obligations of the baptized person, was called the exorcising him, or putting him to his oath.”|| The reaching of the stole to the candidate, with an invitation to enter into the church, is an ancient rite, performed after several preparatory ceremonies, as the catechumen was led by the bishop, or priest, to the font. It is as expressive as it is simple. By baptism, those who were afar off, come near, and being admitted into the church on earth, receive a title to the everlasting kingdom.

The recital of the Apostolic symbol and the Lord’s

* Trombelli, diss. vi. p. 18. † Matt. v. 13. ‡ Col. iv. 6.

§ L. ii. *de nuptiis et concup.* c. 29. n. 31.

|| *History of Infant Baptism*, p. 11. ch. ix. §. ix.

prayer immediately follows. These were explained to the catechumens in the primitive church on distinct days, and were recited by them after a proper interval: the symbol in some places on holy Thursday, the Lord's prayer on holy Saturday.* The creed has been in use from a very early period of the church. St. Irenæus seems to make reference to it:† as also Tertullian.‡ The marking of the ears and nostrils with saliva, and the pronouncing of the Syriac word: "EHPHETA," be thou opened, are spoken of by St. Ambrose, and their mystical signification explained. Addressing the Neophytes, he says: "Open, then, your ears, and take the good odour of eternal life which you have inhaled through the sacraments, as we signified to you, when celebrating the mystery of the opening, we said to you: 'Epheta, that is, be opened:' that each one coming forward to baptismal grace, might understand the questions put to him, and remember the answers which he should make. Christ celebrated this mystery, as we read in the gospel, when he cured the deaf and dumb man."§ The reference of the rite to the mysterious actions of our Redeemer, in the cure of the deaf and dumb man, and of the blind men, whose eyes he touched with clay mixed with spittle, is sufficiently obvious. The pronouncing of the very word which fell from his divine lips, in the very language in which he uttered it, cannot but recall to our minds the miraculous cure of the deaf man, effected by it; whilst it teaches us that our ears also are to be opened to the truths of eternal life. The marking of the nostrils "for

* Trombelli, diss. vi. c. 11. tom. i. p. 300.

† L. iii. c. 3, 4.

‡ L. *de præscript.* c. xiii. *et de velandis virginibus*, c. i.

§ L. *de mysteriis*; c. i. n. 3.

an odour of sweetness," instructs us that we are to be drawn by divine grace to run after the odour of his ointments, and to become "the good odour of Christ,"* by our edifying conduct. God is represented as breathing into the nostrils of the first man the breath of life; and holy Job expresses his determination to avoid sin to the end by saying: "As long as breath remaineth in me, and the Spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, neither shall my tongue contrive lying."†

The anointing of the breast and shoulders with oil, is a very ancient rite in the Roman church: the Greeks make the unction of the whole body. The book of sacraments, ascribed to St. Gregory the Great, makes mention of it, as well as several other Liturgical books of high authority.‡ St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, speaks of the unction of the whole body,§ and St. John Chrysostom observes, that the catechumen is anointed like the wrestlers before entering on the arena,|| that he may struggle successfully against his spiritual enemy. The Latin rite also has an apt signification, that "in the unction of the breast and shoulder, the firmness of faith and perseverance in good works may be designated."¶ The grace of the Holy Spirit is expressed in the Scriptures by unction: "his unction teacheth us of all things."** Anglican writers admit the antiquity of the rite.††

It was the custom at Rome for the catechumens to re-

* 2 Cor. ii. 15. † Job xxvii. 3 and 4.

‡ Trombelli, diss. vi. tom. ii. p. 52.

§ Cat. ii. n. 2, 3.

|| In c. ii. Epist. ad Coloss. hom. vi. n. 4, p. 369. tom. xi. ed. Mont.

¶ Maxent Aquil. n. 7. par. ii. tom. ii. Anec. P. Bernardi Pez.

** 1 John ii. 27.

†† Wall, *Hist. Infant. Bapt.* p. ii. ch. ix. n. 8. *Pusey, Tract on Bapt.* p. 125.

peat the symbol from a high place. St. Augustin informs us of Victorinus, a celebrated Roman rhetorician, who, having become convinced of the truth of Christianity, for a time postponed the public profession of it, but at length, disregarding all human considerations, sought for baptism, and declining to avail himself of the indulgence offered him by the priests, to make his profession secretly, ascended the platform, and there, in the presence of the faithful, recited aloud the Apostolic symbol, to the amazement of his pagan friends and admirers, and to the unspeakable edification and joy of all the faithful. "As he made his appearance on the rostrum, there was a suppressed expression of joy, one whispering to another, VICTORINUS, VICTORINUS. Their exultation at seeing him was quickly manifested, and silence immediately ensued, through eagerness to hear him. With admirable composure he pronounced the symbol of the true faith: and all eagerly desired to press him to their heart."*

"Afterwards," says St. Cyril, addressing the Neophytes, "you were led to the holy font of baptism, as Christ from the cross to the sepulchre. And each of you was asked, if he believes in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and you made a saving confession of faith, and you went down thrice into the water, and came up from it thrice: and then you enigmatically represented the burial of Christ during three days. At the same moment you died, and were born, and the saving water was at once your tomb, and your mother. . . . O! strange and wonderful event! We did not die in reality; we were not really buried; we did not undergo a real cru-

* Conf. l. viii. c. ii.

ifixion, to rise again: but an image of these things was exhibited, and salvation was really imparted.”*

The catechumens, whether male or female, descended into the font without the least covering: “As soon as you entered,” says St. Cyril, “you laid aside your mantle, which was a symbol of putting off the old man with his acts. You were stript, you were naked, imitating in this respect CHRIST exposed naked on the cross: who, by that exposure, stripped principalities and powers, and on the wood gloriously triumphed over them. Since the adverse powers lurked within your members, you can no longer wear that old garment: I mean not that which is seen, but the old man who is corrupted in deceitful desires. May it never be put on again by a soul that has once cast it away: but may she say, with the spouse of Christ, in the Canticle of Canticles: ‘I have put off my garment: how shall I put it on?’ O! amazing thing! you were naked in the sight of all, and you were not ashamed. Truly you bore the image of your first parent Adam, who was naked, and was not ashamed.”† Although this rite has ceased with the use of immersion, it were rash to condemn what was once sanctioned by the practice of the church, as it would be unjust to judge generally of the usages of ancient times, by the standard of modern sentiment and feeling.

As the Neophytes ascended from the font, they were received by their sponsors, who threw large white sheets around them. The bishop afterwards gave them a white garment, emblematic of the innocence which they had received in Christ, and bade them carry it without stain before

* Cat. Myst. ii. n. 4.

† Ibidem, n. 1.

His tribunal.* The same address is still made, when the white cloth is laid on the head of the infant, or when the adult in solemn baptism is clothed in a white robe.

St. Ambrose speaks of the white garments wherewith the Neophyte was clothed: "You received afterwards white robes in token of your having cast off the mantle of sin, and put on the chaste veil of innocence, of which the prophet said: 'Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.' He that is baptized appears to be cleansed according to the law and the gospel: according to the law, since Moses with a bunch of hyssop made an aspersion of the blood of a lamb: according to the gospel, since the garments of Christ were white as snow, when He manifested the glory of his resurrection, in the gospel. He also whose sins are forgiven is whiter than snow: wherefore the Lord says by Isaiah: 'If your sins be red as scarlet, I will make you white as snow.'"[†] It is thought by some that the ceremony of laying a white cloth on the head, may have more direct reference to the chrismal bandage formerly used, through reverence of the chrism wherewith the crown of the head had been anointed.[‡]

The unction with sacred chrism on the crown of the head, immediately after baptism, is mentioned in several ancient Liturgical and Ritual books. The prayer which we use is found in an ancient Sacramentary of the Roman church.§ It is also found, almost word for word, in the

* *Ordo de Sal. S. apud Trombelli*, diss. xvi. c. iii. See also Wall, *History Infant Baptism*, p. ii. ch. ix. 3. 7. † *De Mysteriis*, c. vii.

‡ *Ord. xiv. ex M. S. codic Gladbac. Monast. relat. a Martene*, col. 204. t. 1.

§ III. *Lib. Sac. Rom. Eccl. l. i. §. 44*, apud *Thomasium*, t. vi. *Operum*.

work on the Sacraments, ascribed by some to St. Ambrose.* Tertullian mentions the ceremony: "Having come forth from the laver, we are anointed with blessed unction, according to the ancient rite, whereby they were to be anointed for the priesthood by oil from a horn."† The anointing of the head signifies the wisdom which we have in Christ, who is to be our crown and happiness, as it is explained by St. Ambrose, from whom it appears that the unction flowed freely: "Consider what followed. Was not that done of which David spoke? 'Like the ointment on the head, which ran down on the beard, the beard of Aaron.' Understand why this is done, because the eyes of a wise man are in his head: it flows down on the beard, for the sake of the young, on the beard of Aaron, that you may become a chosen, priestly precious race: for we are all anointed with the spiritual grace of the kingdom and priesthood of God."‡

Protestant writers for the most part confound the unction after baptism with the rite which we call the sacrament of confirmation, and contend that this was originally no more than a ceremony annexed to baptism. It is certain that on many occasions the confirmatory unction was performed at that time, in order to perfect the Christian character: but its distinction from the mere rite of anointing the crown of the head, is apparent from the importance given it by St. Cyril, who compares it even with the Eucharist, and from its separation in many instances from baptism: wherefore it was customary for bishops to travel, in order to confirm those who had been baptized by priests or deacons.

The light placed in the hand of the Neophyte is men-

* L. ii. de Sac. c. vii. † De Bapt. n. 7. ‡ De Myst. c. vi.

tioned by St. Gregory of Nazianzum, and is explained of the light of faith and works, with which the soul is to prepare for meeting the heavenly spouse, like the wise virgins.*

Thus all the rites which are used in the administration of baptism are full of signification, and are derived from venerable antiquity. Some of them, such as the interrogations, exorcisms, imposition of hands, signing with the cross, and unctions, may, without temerity, be considered of Apostolic origin. To censure them, would be to condemn the whole Christian church in the earliest and brightest ages, and, indirectly at least, the Apostles themselves, to whom they may be fairly ascribed.

* Orat. xl. p. 672.

EXHORTATION TO BAPTISM.

BY ST. BASIL THE GREAT.

THE wise Solomon, distinguishing the times for the various affairs of life, and assigning to each one what is suitable, said: "There is a time for all, and a time for every thing; a time to be born, and a time to die." But, making a slight change in the sentence of the wise man, in proclaiming to you the saving Gospel, I say to you; there is a time to die, and a time to be born. What reason is there for this inversion? Solomon treating of birth and dissolution, in conformity with the nature of bodies, spoke of birth before death, (for it is impossible to die without being born): but as I am about to treat of spiritual regeneration,* I place death before life: since it is by dying to the flesh, that we come to be born in the Spirit; as even the Lord says: "I will kill, and I will make to live." Let us then die, that we may live. Let us mortify the carnal feeling, which cannot be subject to the law of God, that a strong spiritual affection may arise in us, through which we may enjoy life and peace. Let us be buried together with Christ, who died for us, that we may arise again with Him, who proffers new life to us. For other matters there is a time peculiarly appropriate: a time for sleeping and for waking, a time for war and for peace: but the whole period

* Baptism. The efficacy of this sacrament is clearly stated throughout this discourse.

of man's life is the time for baptism.* For as the body cannot live unless it breathe: neither can the soul live unless she know the Creator: for ignorance of God is death to the soul: and he that is not baptized, is not enlightened; and without light neither can the eye perceive sensible objects, nor the soul contemplate God.† All time, then, is opportune to receive salvation through baptism—night or day, hour or minute, even the least conceivable space of time. But it is just to regard as more suitable, the time which is more nearly connected with it: and what time is more closely connected with baptism than Easter day, since the day itself is a memorial of the resurrection, and baptism is the powerful means for our resurrection?‡ On resurrection day, then, let us receive the grace by which we rise again. On this account the Church with a loud voice calls from afar her catechumens, that as she already has conceived them, she may at length usher them into life, and weaning them from the milk of catechetical instruction, give them to taste of the solid food of her dogmas. John preached a baptism of penance, and all Judea went forth to him: the Lord proclaims a baptism whereby we are adopted as children; and which of those who hope in Him, will refuse to obey his call? That baptism was introductory: this is perfective: that separated from sin: this unites with God.§ The preaching of John was of one man, and he

* Baptism can be received at any time: in infancy, throughout life, and at the point of death.

† The necessity of baptism is strongly affirmed.

‡ Easter Saturday, and Saturday before Pentecost were the special times of solemn baptism.

§ The distinction and excellence of the baptism of Christ are plainly declared.

drew all to penance : and thou, instructed by the prophets : “ Wash yourselves : be clean : ” — admonished by the Psalmist : “ Come ye to Him, and be enlightened : ” — having the joyful proclamation of the Apostles : “ Do penance and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost : ” — invited by the Lord Himself, who says : “ Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you : ” (for all these passages have occurred in to-day’s lesson) — thou, I say, tarriest, and hesitatest, and puttest off. Although instructed in the divine word from thy infancy, hast thou not yet yielded to truth ?* always learning, hast thou not yet attained unto knowledge ? through life an inquirer, a seeker even to old age, when wilt thou become a Christian ? when shall we recognize thee as our own ? Last year thou didst await the present time, and now again thou puttest off to a future season. Take care that thy promises extend not beyond the term of thy life. Thou knowest not what the morrow will bring forth. Do not make promises concerning things not subject to thy control. We call thee, O man,

* In the latter part of the fourth century, when Paganism had lost its influence over the minds of men, many were favourably impressed with the truths of Christianity, without being entirely convinced of them, and frequented the Churches to receive instruction. Their children were presented by them at an early age for instruction, and their baptism nevertheless deferred, on account of the wavering state of mind of the parents, and the danger of their not being trained at home to the practice of religious duties. The same takes place in this country, where many parents for a long time frequent the Catholic Churches, and sometimes cause their children to receive instruction in the faith, long before either become members of the Church by baptism.

to life : why dost thou shun the call ? We invite thee to partake of blessings : why dost thou disregard the gift ? The kingdom of heaven lies open to thee : he that invites thee cannot deceive : the path is easy : there is no need of length of time, of expense, of toil : why dost thou delay ? why dost thou refuse ? why dost thou fear the yoke, as a heifer that never has borne it ? *It is sweet : it is light :* it does not hurt the neck ; but it ornaments it : it is not a yoke put on forcibly : it must be cheerfully assumed. Dost thou perceive that Ephraim is styled a wanton heifer, because, spurning the yoke of the Law, she wanders far away ? Bend then thy stubborn neck : submit to the yoke of Christ, lest rejecting the yoke, and leading a loose life, thou become an easy prey to wild beasts. “O taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” How shall I make those who know it not, sensible of the sweetness of honey ? “Taste and see.” Experience is more convincing than any reasoning. The Jew does not delay circumcision, being mindful of the threat, that “every soul that is not circumcised on the eighth day, shall be destroyed out of her people :” and thou delayest the circumcision—not that which is made by hands, in the stripping of the flesh, but that which is accomplished in baptism, whilst thou hearest the Lord Himself : “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And in that ceremony pain was endured, and an ulcer was caused : but in this the soul is refreshed with heavenly dew, and the ulcers of the heart are healed. Dost thou adore Him who died for thee ? Suffer then thyself to be buried with him by baptism. Unless thou be planted together with him in the likeness of his death, how wilt thou become partner in his resurrection ? Israel was baptized in Moses

in the cloud, and in the sea, presenting therein types for thy instruction, and sensibly exhibiting the truth which was to be shown in the latter days : and thou shunnest baptism, not as typified in the sea, but really perfected : not in the cloud, but in the Spirit : not in Moses, a fellow-servant, but in Christ, our Creator. Had not Israel passed the sea, he would not have escaped Pharaoh ; and if thou pass not through the water, thou wilt not be delivered from the sad tyranny of the devil. Israel would not have drunk of the spiritual rock, had he not been typically baptized : nor will any give thee true drink, unless thou be truly baptized. He ate the bread of angels after baptism ; and how wilt thou eat the **LIVING BREAD**, unless thou receive baptism previously ? He entered into the land of promise, on account of his baptism : how canst thou enter into paradise, if thou be not sealed by baptism ? Dost thou not know, that an angel with a flaming sword is placed to guard the way to the tree of life—an awful and burning sword for unbelievers ; but easily approached, and shining with mild radiance to believers ? For according to the will of the Lord it turns : and its glittering side is presented to the faithful : its burning edge to the unsealed.

Elias was not terrified at the sight of the chariot of fire, and the fiery steeds approaching him : but eager to ascend on high, he dared to mount the awful seat ; and whilst yet in mortal flesh, he joyfully took the reins, to guide the flaming chariot : whilst thou hesitatest, not to mount a fiery vehicle, but to ascend into heaven through water and Spirit. Why not rather run to obey the call ? Elias showed the power of baptism on the altar of holocausts, having consumed the victim, not by fire, but by water : although the nature of fire is most opposed to water. When the water,

with mysterious significance, was for the third time poured out on the altar, the fire began, and it blazed up as if fed by oil. "And he said: Fill four buckets with water, and pour it upon the burnt offering, and upon the wood. And again he said: Do the same the second time. And when they had done it the second time, he said: Do the same also the third time: and they did so the third time." The Scripture hereby shows, that through baptism, he that approaches to God, is admitted into his household; and that a pure and heavenly light, through faith in the Trinity, shines forth in the souls of those who approach Him. If I were distributing the gold of the Church, thou wouldst not say to me: "I shall come to-morrow, and to-morrow thou wilt give me some:" but at the present time, thou wouldst press for thy portion, and unwillingly bear to be put off. Now that the munificent Lord offers thee, not coloured earth, but purity of soul, thou framest excuses, thou numberest over many causes of delay, instead of running to receive the gift. O! strange thing! thou mayest be renovated without being put in the crucible: thou mayest be formed anew, without being broken in pieces: thou mayest be healed without suffering pain: and still thou dost not value the favor. If thou wast the servant of men, and freedom were offered to slaves, wouldst thou not hasten at the appointed time, and engage advocates, and implore the judges, that by every possible means thy freedom should be obtained? Yea, thou wouldst submit willingly to the blow given for the last time,* that thou mightst thenceforward be free from stripes. Now the divine herald calls thee to freedom, slave as thou art, not of men, but of sin;

* In manumitting slaves, a blow on the back was given with a rod, and a slap on the face.

that he may free thee from bondage, and make thee a fellow citizen of the Angels, and even, by grace, an adopted child of God, heir of the blessings of Christ: yet thou allegest that thou hast not time to receive these gifts. O! wretched impediments! base and endless occupations! How long, then, must pleasures be sought after? How long must passion be indulged? We surely have lived long enough for the world: let us live henceforth for ourselves. What is equal in value to our soul? What can be compared with the kingdom of heaven? What adviser should be listened to in preference to God? Who is more prudent than the All-wise? Who is more useful than He, who alone is good? Who is nearer to us than our Creator? Eve gained nothing by hearkening to the suggestions of the serpent, rather than to the command of God. O! senseless words! I have not time to get cured: let me not yet see the light: do not yet present me to the King. Dost thou not speak plainly to this effect, nay, still more absurdly? If thou wert loaded with debts to the treasury, and a reduction of the claim were offered to the public creditors, and some one should maliciously attempt to deprive thee of the benefit proffered to all, thou wouldst be angry with him, and exclaim against him as interfering with thy right to a share of the general indulgence. And now that not only the pardon of past debts, but gifts for the time to come are proclaimed, thou dost thyself an injury which no enemy of thine could inflict, and imaginest that thou hast suitably provided for thyself, and adopted wise measures, by neglecting to accept forgiveness, and continuing unto death laden with sins. Yet thou knowest that even he who owed ten thousand talents, would have been entirely forgiven, had he not provoked the severity of his creditor by his inhu-

manity towards his fellow-servant. We must also take care, that the same happen not to us, if, after obtaining grace, we pardon not our debtors ; which is required of us that the gift bestowed, may be perpetually preserved.

Enter into the recesses of thy conscience : refresh thy memory. If thy sins be numerous, do not despair on account of their multitude : for where sin hath abounded, grace will abound more, if thou wilt but accept grace : to him who owes much, much also will be forgiven, that he may love the more. But if thy faults be trivial and venial, and not to the death of thy soul, why art thou anxious about what may befall thee hereafter, whilst thou hast hitherto lived without reproach, although thou wert not as yet instructed in the law of Christ ?* Consider thy soul as now placed in a scale, drawn to one side by the angels, to the other by demons. To which of them wilt thou give the affections of thy heart ? What shall prevail with thee ? the pleasures of the flesh, or the sanctification of the Spirit ? present enjoyment, or the desire of future happiness ? Shall the angels receive thee ; or shall those who hold thee now, continue to hold thee fast ? When preparing for battle the generals give a watchword to the soldiers, that they may the more easily call on one another for assistance, and recognize one another, should they be mixed up with others in the conflict. No one can know whether thou belongest to us, or to our adversaries, if thou manifest not thy brotherhood by mystic signs, if the light of the countenance of the Lord be not signed upon thee. How can the angel claim thee ? how can he rescue thee from the enemy, un-

* St. Basil here addresses the man who asserts the past purity of his morals, and yet fears his life after baptism may not correspond with the perfection of the Christian law.

less he recognize the seal? how shalt thou say: 'I am of God:' if thou bear not the mark? Dost thou not know that the destroying angel passed by the houses that were marked with blood, whilst he slew the first born in those that were not marked? A treasure unsealed is easily laid hold of by robbers; a sheep without a mark is carried away with impunity.

Art thou young? secure thy youth against vice, by the restraint which baptism imposes. Has the vigor of life passed away? Do not neglect the necessary provision for thy journey: do not lose thy protection: do not consider the eleventh hour, as if it were the first; since it even behoves him who is beginning life, to have death before his eyes. If a physician should promise thee, by certain arts and devices, to change thee from an old to a young man, wouldst thou not eagerly desire the day to arrive on which thou wouldst find thy youthful vigor restored? Nevertheless, whilst baptism promises to restore to her pristine vigor thy soul, which thy iniquities have brought to decrepitude, and covered with wrinkles and defilements, thou despisest thy benefactor, instead of hastening to receive the proffered boon. Art thou without any solicitude to witness the miraculous change which is promised—how one grown old, and wasted away by corrupting passions, can bud forth anew, and blossom, and attain to the true bloom of youth? Baptism is the ransom of captives, the remission of debts, the death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, the robe of light, the seal which cannot be broken, the chariot to heaven, the means to attain the kingdom, the gift of adoption. Dost thou think that pleasure is preferable to these and such like blessings? I know the cause of thy delay, although thou cloakest it with various pretexts. The things themselves

cry out, although thou art silent. ‘Suffer me to use the flesh for shameful enjoyments, to wallow in the mire of pleasures, to imbrue my hands in blood, to plunder the property of others, to act deceitfully, to perjure, to lie; and then I shall receive baptism, when I shall cease from sin.’ If sin be good, persevere in it to the end: if it be hurtful to the sinner, why dost thou continue in pernicious pursuits? No one that wishes to get rid of bile, should increase it by hurtful and intemperate indulgence: for the body must be cleared of what injures it, and nothing done to increase the power of disease. A ship keeps above water as long as it can bear the weight of its cargo: when overloaded it sinks.* ‘Thou shouldst dread lest the like befall thee, and that thy sins being exceedingly great, thou suffer shipwreck, before thou reach the hoped for haven. Does not God see all that is done? Does He not perceive thy secret thoughts? or does He co-operate in thy iniquities? “Thou thoughtest unjustly,” He says, “that I shall be like to thee.” When thou seekest the friendship of a mortal man, thou enticest him by kind offices, saying and doing such things as thou knowest will please him: but wishing to be united with God, and hoping to be adopted as a son, whilst thou dost things hateful to God, and dishonorest Him by the transgression of His law, dost thou imagine to obtain His friendship by the things which are particularly offensive to Him? Take care, lest multiplying evils in the hope of being ransomed, thou increase sin, and miss pardon. ‘God is not mocked!’ Do not traffic away grace. Pleasure is the devil’s hook, dragging us to ruin: pleasure is the mother of sin: and sin is the centre of death. Pleasure is the food of the everlasting worm; for

* καταβαπτίζει.

a while its enjoyment delights: but its fruits are more bitter than gall. Delay is equivalent to saying: 'Let sin first reign in me: afterwards the Lord shall reign. I will yield my members as instruments of iniquity unto sin: afterwards I shall present them as instruments of justice unto God.' Thus also Cain offered up sacrifices, reserving the best things for his own enjoyment, and giving those of an inferior kind to God, the Creator and Benefactor. Because thou art strong, thou wastest away thy youth in sin. When thy limbs shall be worn out, then thou wilt offer them to God, because thou canst no longer use them, but must lie by, their vigor being destroyed by inveterate disease. Contenance in old age is not strictly continence, but incapacity of indulgence. A dead man is not crowned: no man is just merely because unable to commit wrong. Whilst thou hast strength, subject sin to reason: for virtue consists in this, to decline from evil and do good. Mere cessation from evil of itself is worthy neither of praise nor of censure. If, on account of advanced age, thou cease to do evil, it is the consequence of infirmity. We praise such as are good from choice, and such as necessity withdraws from sin. Moreover, who has marked out for thee the limit of life? who has defined for thee the length of old age? who is the surety on which thou reliest for what is to befall thee? Dost thou not see infants snatched away, and others in the age of manhood carried off? Life has no fixed boundary. Why dost thou await that baptism should be for thee as a gift brought by a fever? Wilt thou wait until thou shalt not be able to utter the saving words, and scarcely to hear them distinctly, thy malady having its seat in thy head? Thou wilt not be able to raise thy hands to heaven, or to stand on thy feet, or to bend thy knee in

adoration, or to receive suitable instruction, or to confess accurately, or to enter into covenant with God, or to renounce the enemy ; probably not even to follow the sacred minister in the mystic rites ; so that the by-standers may doubt whether thou perceivest the grace, or art unconscious of what is done, and if even thou receivest the grace, with consciousness, thou hast but the talent, without the increase.

Imitate the eunuch. He found an instructor on the road, and he did not spurn instruction ; but although he was a rich man, he caused the poor man to mount into his chariot : a grand and splendid courtier placed at his side a private individual, on whom others would look with contempt : and when he had learned the gospel of the kingdom, he embraced the faith with his heart, and did not delay to receive the seal of the Spirit. For when they drew nigh to a stream, ‘ behold,’ he says, ‘ here is water :’ thus showing his great joy : behold what is required : what prevents me from being baptized ? Where the will is ready, there is no obstacle : for He that calls us, loves mankind, the minister is at hand, and the grace is abundant. Let the desire be sincere, and every obstacle will vanish. There is only one to hinder us, he who blocks up the path of salvation, but whom by prudence we can overcome. He causes us to tarry : let us rise to the work : he deludes us by vain promises : let us not be ignorant of his devices. For does he not suggest to commit sin to-day, and persuade us to defer justice till the morrow ? Wherefore the Lord, to defeat his perverse suggestions, says to us : ‘ To-day, if you hear my voice.’ He says : to-day for me : to-morrow for God. The Lord cries out : ‘ To-day hear my voice.’ mark the enemy : he does not dare counsel us utterly to

abandon God, (for he knows that this were shocking to Christians,)* but by fraudulent stratagems he attempts to effect his purpose. He is cunning in evil doing: he perceives that we live for the present time, and all our actions regard it. Stealing from us, then, artfully to-day, he leaves us to hope for to-morrow. Then when the morrow comes, the wicked distributor of time appears again, claiming the day for himself, and leaving the morrow to the Lord: and thus perpetually, by using the bait of pleasure to secure for himself the present time, and proposing the future to our hopes, he takes us out of life by surprise.

I once witnessed a stratagem of a bird. Her young ones being easy to be taken, she threw herself before them, as a ready prey to the fowlers, and fluttering in view of them, she neither could be caught, nor yet did she leave them without hope of catching her: and having in various ways deluded their expectations, keeping them intent on her, and afforded to her young ones the chance of flight, at length she herself flew away. Fear lest thou also be deceived in like manner, since thou preferrest uncertain hope to the certain opportunity of present good. Come, then, at once, to me: devote thyself entirely to the Lord: give in thy name: be enrolled in the list of the church. The soldier's name is enrolled: the champion enters on the combat, after his name has been inscribed on the lists: a naturalized citizen is registered on the city books. By all these titles thou art bound to give in thy name, as a soldier of Christ, a champion of piety, and one who aspires to citizenship in heaven. Have it inscribed on this book, that it may be inscribed above. Learn, be instructed

* St. Basil applies the term here to catechumens, persons professing faith in Christ, but not yet baptized.

in the evangelical discipline,—restraint of the eyes, government of the tongue, the subduing of the body, lowliness of mind, purity of heart, annihilation of pride. When constrained to do any thing, add cheerfully something to what is exacted : when despoiled of thy property, do not have recourse to litigation : repay hatred by love : when persecuted, forbear : when insulted, entreat. Be dead to sin : be crucified together with Christ : fix thy whole affection on the Lord. But these things are difficult : what good thing is easy ? Who ever raised a trophy whilst asleep : who ever, whilst indulging in luxury and music, was adorned with the crowns of valor ? No one, without running, can gain the prize : brave struggles merit glory : combats win crowns. “Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven :” but the beatitude of the heavenly kingdom succeeds these tribulations : whilst the pain and sorrow of hell follow the labors of sin. If any one consider it attentively, he will find that not even the works of the devil are performed by the workers of iniquity without toil. What exertion does continence require ? The voluptuous man, on the contrary, is exhausted by indulgence. Does continence diminish our strength in a like degree as detestable and unbridled passion wastes it away ? Sleepless nights are, indeed, passed by those who devote themselves to vigils and prayers ; but how much more wearisome are the nights of such as are wakeful for iniquity ? The fear of detection, and the anxiety for indulgence, utterly take away all rest. If, fleeing the narrow path which leads to salvation, thou pursue the broad way of sin, I fear lest continuing on it to the end, thou come to an inn suitable to the road.

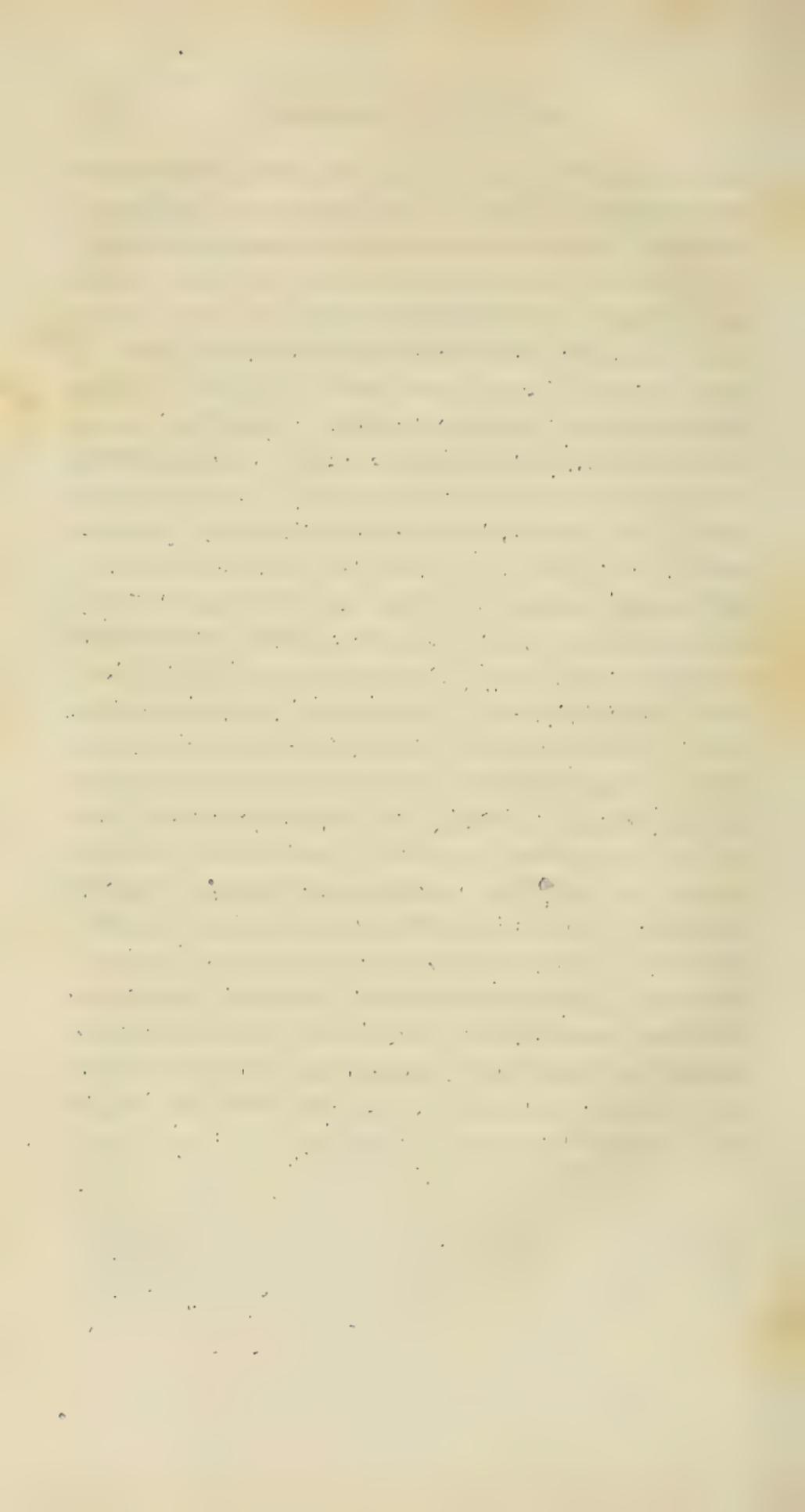
But thou wilt say : the treasure is hard to be guarded.* Be vigilant, then, brother : thou hast aids, if thou wilt—prayer as a night sentinel—fasting a house guard—psalms a guide of thy soul. Take these along with thee : they will keep watch with thee, to guard thy precious treasures. Tell me, which is it better to be rich, and anxiously to guard our wealth, or not to have any thing to preserve ? No one, through fear of being despoiled of his property, abandons it altogether. If men in each of their pursuits considered the misfortunes that may ensue, all human enterprise would cease. Agriculture is liable to the failure of the crops : shipwreck may defeat commerce : widowhood may soon follow marriage : orphanage may prevent the education of children. We, however, embark in each undertaking, cherishing the fairest hopes, and committing the realizing of them to God, who regulates all things. But thou professest to venerate holiness, whilst in reality thou continuest among the reprobate. See, lest thou hereafter repent of evil counsels, when thy repentance may be of no avail. Let the example of the virgins serve as an admonition. Not having oil in their lamps, when they had to enter with the bridegroom into the nuptial chamber, they perceived that they were without the necessary provision : wherefore the Scripture stiled them foolish, because, in going about to purchase, having spent the time in which the oil was wanted, they were, contrary to their expectations, shut out from the wedding. Take care, lest putting off from year to year, from month to month, from day to day, and not taking with thee oil to nourish thy lamp, the day at length arrive to which thou dost not look

* The dread of losing baptismal grace induced many to delay being baptized.

forward, when it will be impossible to live any longer. There will be distress on all sides, and inconsolable affliction, the physicians having tried every remedy to no purpose, and thy friends having lost hope. Thy breathing will be dry and difficult: a violent fever will burn and inflame thy interior: thou wilt heave deep sighs, and find no sympathy. Thou wilt utter something in low and feeble accents, and no one will hear thee: every thing uttered by thee will be considered raving. Who will give thee baptism then? Who will remind thee of it, when thou wilt be plunged in deep lethargy? Thy relatives are disheartened: strangers care not; the friend hesitates to remind thee, fearing to disturb thee: or perhaps even the physician deceives thee, and thou hast not lost hope, being deceived by the natural love of life. It is night, and there is no attendant at hand: there is no one to baptize thee. Death is impending: the demons seek to carry thee off. Who will rescue thee? God, whom thou hast spurned? But He will hear thee: forsooth thou now dost hearken to Him! Will He give thee a respite? thou hast made so good use of the time already given thee!

Let no one deceive himself by vain words: for sudden destruction will rush upon thee, and a storm of vengeance will overwhelm thee. The angel sorrowful will come, and will force and drag away precipitately thy soul, bound fast in sin, attached strongly to the things of life, and mourning without power of utterance, the organ of lamentation being closed. O! how thou wilt be ready to tear thyself in pieces! how thou wilt sigh! In vain thou wilt repent for thy omissions, in compliance with evil suggestions, when thou shalt see the joy of the just, at the splendid distribution of divine gifts, and the sorrow of sinners in pro-

found darkness. What wilt thou say, then, in the anguish of thy heart? Alas! that I have neglected to cast away this heavy load of sin, when it was so easy to rid myself of it, and that I have drawn down on me this weight of woes! Alas! that I washed not away my stains, but remained defiled by sin! I should have been now with the angels of God! I should have been enjoying the delights of heaven. O! perverse counsels. For the temporary joy of sin, I am tormented for eternity! for the pleasure of the flesh, I am delivered over to fire! The judgment of God is just. I was called; and did not obey: I was instructed; and I did not pay attention: they besought me; and I scoffed at them. Such are the reflections thou wilt make, bewailing thy lot, if thou be snatched away without baptism. O! man, either fear hell, or aim at the kingdom: do not disregard the call. Do not say: Hold me excused, for this or that reason. There can be no semblance of excuse. I am moved to tears, when I reflect that thou preferrest shameful actions to the great glory of God: and clinging to sin, thou deprivest thyself of the promised blessings, so that thou mayst not see the good things of the heavenly Jerusalem. There are myriads of angels, the church of the first born, the thrones of Apostles, the chairs of prophets, the sceptres of patriarchs, the crowns of martyrs, the choirs of just. Conceive the desire to be enrolled with them, being washed, and sanctified by the gift of Christ: to whom be glory and power for endless ages, Amen."



TREATISE ON CONFIRMATION.

CHAPTER I.

DIVINE INSTITUTION.

THE Catholic Church holds that confirmation is a real and proper sacrament, of which the Bishop is the ordinary minister; and she anathematizes whosoever says, that to ascribe any virtue to the sacred chrism of Confirmation, is to offer an insult to the Holy Ghost.* Most modern sects entirely reject this sacrament. The Mormons pretend that by the imposition of hands miraculous powers are given among them. Calvin endeavored to account for the solemn rite of the ancient Church, which he could not deny, by saying that it was no more than a catechetical exercise, it having been thought expedient to require youth to make a profession of the faith to which they were bound by baptism, and to dismiss them with the episcopal blessing, by the laying on of hands.† Anglicans have a rite which they call confirmation, and which is suited to this theory of Calvin; although some of the prayers, with some additions and subtractions, are taken from the Roman Pontifical.

* See Council of Trent, Sess. vii. can. de confirm.

† Inst. l. iv. c. xix. n. 4.

Several of their divines speak of confirmation after the manner of Catholics. "Confirmation," says Bishop Wilson, "is the perfection of baptism. The Holy Ghost descends invisibly upon such as are rightly prepared to receive such a blessing, as at the first He came visibly upon those that had been baptized."* The Oxford divines maintain that spiritual benefits are conveyed by confirmation, and consider that the ancient tradition of the Church is not discarded, although not explicitly declared by their communion.† In the dictionary of the Church, published by Rev. William Staunton, confirmation, although not styled a Sacrament, is declared to be a divine appointment, and to have been practised by the Apostles, and to be binding on Christians; and its effects are said to have been described by the Apostle, when he speaks to the faithful of "being established in Christ," being anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and having "an earnest of the Spirit in their hearts." "And that all these expressions refer to confirmation is evident, as well from comparing them together, as from the concurrent testimonies of several ancient Fathers."‡ Such is the strong language of this American divine, but which can by no means be considered as expressing the general sentiments of Episcopalians, among whom the Calvinistic view widely prevails.

The Baptists, in their confession of faith, say: "We believe that laying on of hands, with prayer, upon baptized believers, as such, is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to

* Bishop Wilson's Meditations on his sacred office, cited in Oxford Tracts, vol. i. No. 62.

† Tracts, vol. iv. No. 81.

‡ Dictionary of the Church, by Rev. Wm. Staunton. New York, 1839. Art. Confirmation.

be submitted unto by all such persons that are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, and that the end of this ordinance is not for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but for a farther reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the graces of the Spirit, and the influences thereof; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus; it being ratified and established by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive times."* Their predecessors were greatly divided on this point: "They differ among themselves," says Wall, "about the practice of confirmation, or laying on of hands after baptism. Some of 'em do wholly omit and reject the use of that ordinance, as being popish, or having no foundation in Scripture, or at least not now to be continued. And this it seems was the way of those churches or societies of 'em that did first openly set up at London. Others of 'em account it a necessary thing. And some of these latter, making it an order among themselves, as the Church of England does, that none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed (the Church of England adds, 'or be ready and desirous to be confirmed') there necessarily follows a breach of communion between the two parties."†

The conversion of the inhabitants of Samaria by the preaching and miracles of Philip, gave joy to the Apostles then at Jerusalem, and gave occasion to the visit of Peter and John, to confirm them in the faith. They went to Samaria, and "prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for He was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."‡ This prayer, accompanied by the imposi-

* ch. xxxi.

† Wall, Hist. Inf. Bap. p. ii. ch. viii. n. 15.

‡ Acts viii. 15.

tion of hands, obtained for the new Christians the Holy Ghost: of whose presence such evidence was afforded, that Simon the Magician, who had been brought to the faith by Philip, offered money to the Apostles, that he might be endowed, like them, with power to communicate the Holy Spirit. It is believed by the Catholic Church that the rite performed by the Apostles is a sacrament instituted by Christ, and always to continue in the Church, so that the Holy Ghost is still imparted by means of the imposition of hands and prayer. This sacrament is called confirmation, because the Holy Spirit confirms and strengthens us in faith, that we may firmly believe, and profess our belief intrepidly.

Of the institution of this sacrament by our divine Redeemer, direct proof cannot be given, but the indirect evidence is perfectly satisfactory. From the narrative of St. Luke it is manifest, that Peter and John expressly undertook the journey to Samaria, with a view to impart the Holy Ghost to the new converts; and that, to this end, they imposed hands on them, and offered up prayer; and that the actual communication of the Holy Ghost ensued. The inference is irresistible, that they were empowered to communicate the Holy Ghost by this rite; and that those admitted into the Church by baptism needed this additional grace. As it is the privilege of the Divine Founder of our religion to attach grace to external rites, we must suppose that the Apostles acted by His express authority; and the want of direct proof of the commission to perform this special act, is abundantly supplied by the record of the act done by those who would usurp no undue power, and by the miraculous sanction that accompanied it. That it was an ordinary act of the Apostolic ministry, is evident from

the solicitude which St. Paul manifested, that all the faithful should be strengthened by this divine succour. When he came to Ephesus, and found there certain disciples, he made special inquiry whether they had received the Holy Ghost: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?"* After their instruction and baptism, for he discovered that they had previously received only the baptism of John, he performed on them the same sacred rite which Peter and John had performed on the Samaritans: "And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied."† This imposition of hands was, then, a rite performed by the Apostles indiscriminately, and to which the communication of the Holy Ghost was attached. The speaking of tongues and prophesying were not the effects of the rite, but the evidences of its efficacy, and were so many seals which God gave to this institution. The Holy Ghost is given when grace is imparted by which the soul is sanctified, for then it is that the Spirit of God dwells in us. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."‡

An attempt is made to show that the gifts communicated by the Apostles, were of an extraordinary character, and confined to the commencement of the church. Prophecy, the knowledge of tongues, and other miraculous gifts, are said to have been granted by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles. It will, however, be easily shown that these gifts were not the object to which the imposition of hands was directed; but the proof that the action was not performed in vain. Philip had already performed great mira-

* Acts xix. 2.

† *Ibidem* 6

‡ Rom. v. 5.

cles in Samaria, so that it was not necessary to communicate miraculous powers to prove the Divinity of Christ, and the truth of His religion. Besides, among the promises of Christ, which foretell the many prodigies which His disciples would perform in His name, and among the powers communicated to the Apostles, no mention whatever is made of the power of communicating the gift of miracles. A journey made by the Apostles Peter and John must certainly have been made with a view to the sanctification and spiritual strength of the new converts, rather than to the endowing of them with miraculous powers. The inquiry of St. Paul cannot be supposed to be: Have you received the gift of miracles? He doubtless was concerned for their personal sanctification. The gifts of tongues and prophecy which they received on that occasion, were superadded to the sacramental grace, that this might be the more firmly believed. As such miraculous evidences often followed the preaching of the Gospel, and attested its truth; so they occasionally accompanied the administration of the sacraments, to show forth their efficacy. The communication of them was the immediate act of God, totally independent of any ministerial agency. By the ministry of men God imparts the gifts of grace in the sacraments; but He has reserved to Himself to bestow these extraordinary powers, which are occasionally exercised, in proof of his supreme control over the laws of nature, and as the divine seals of his revelation and institutions. "There are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all All these things the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."* This is strongly stated by the writers of the Oxford Tracts: "When the doctrine of

* 1 Cor. xii. 6. 11.

the Holy Ghost, and of His inward influence, was new to the world, it pleased God to confirm it, and to show that the influence was real, by permitting, in some cases, those on whom it descended, to perform works which they could not have done, had not God been with them. Thus, the real importance, even then, of these miraculous gifts, consisted in their bearing witness to the inward and unseen ones which God still showers upon His Church" . . . "And which we dare not suppose to have ceased, merely because the outward signs of them did, when God Himself had promised that they should last for ever. . . . The promise of support to the Apostles, in the performance of their ministerial duties, was equally perpetual: CHRIST was to be with them, as the teachers and baptizers of all nations, 'always, even unto the end of the world.' The reality of their powers, and among others, their power of conferring the HOLY GHOST on others, was attested at first by miracles."*

The imposition of hands with prayer, therefore, was not directed to communicate the power of miracles, or any extraordinary gift, but the grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby the soul is sanctified and strengthened. By that grace we become in baptism the children of God: and by a further communication of it in this sacrament, we are confirmed, that "neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor death, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."† To the faithful who had received this strengthening grace, the Apostle said: "you were signed with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the

* Tracts, Vol. I. No. 30.

† Rom. viii. 38

pledge of our inheritance.”* Elsewhere he says : “ God . . . hath given us the pledge of the Spirit.”† ST. AMBROSE distinctly refers to this text in speaking of the seal of confirmation given to the Neophytes : “ Remember that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of holy fear : and preserve what you have received. God the Father hath sealed you : Christ the Lord hath confirmed you : and hath given the pledge of the Spirit in your hearts, as you have learned from the lesson read from the Apostle.”‡

The early Christian writers understood Peter and John to have performed a rite directed to communicate the Holy Spirit, and intended to be perpetual in the Church, so that the bishops at all times felt authorized to perform it in like manner ; as is acknowledged by several Anglican writers. “ The Fathers every where impute unto it that gift or grace of the Holy Ghost, not which maketh us first Christian men, but when we are made such, assisteth us in all virtue, armeth us against temptation and sin.”§ ST. CYPRIAN observes that the Apostles did not baptize the Samaritans anew, because it was not fit that they should be baptized again, since they had already received a lawful baptism in the Church ; but what was left imperfect was supplied, as was done by Peter and John, so that having prayed for them, and imposed hands on them, the Holy Ghost was invoked and poured forth on them : which is done at present with us also, since those who are baptized in the church are presented to the prelates of the church, and obtain the Holy Ghost by our prayer and imposition of

* Eph. i. 13.

† 2 Cor. v. 5.

‡ De Myst. c. vii. n. 42.

§ Hooker's Eccl. Polity, l. v. p. 353.

hands, and are perfected by the seal of the Lord.”* This practice of the whole Christian world is also solemnly attested by **ST. JEROM** in his dialogue against the **LUCIFERIANS**. He introduces an adversary speaking in this way: “Do you know that it is the practice of the churches, that the imposition of hands should be performed over baptized persons, and the Holy Ghost thus invoked: do you ask where it is written? In the Acts of the Apostles: but were there no Scriptural authority at hand, the consent of the whole world in this regard would have the force of law.” The orthodox replies: “I do not deny that it is the custom of the churches, that the bishop should go to those who have been baptized by priests and deacons in the smaller cities, distant from his residence, and should impose hands on them to invoke the Holy Ghost.”† This, then, was a custom which Catholics and schismatics admitted to be universal, and to have a Scriptural warrant in what was practised by the Apostles.

Of the unction with chrism, that is, with blessed oil mixed with balsam, no mention is made by the sacred historian, who merely relates the fact, that by the imposition of hands and prayer, the Holy Ghost was communicated, and does not enter into the details of the ceremony. “Of these two things,” says Wall, “the chrism of anointing is not commanded in Scripture: yet it is still practised by all the Christians of the East and West, except the Protestants. But the laying on of hands is plainly mentioned in the Scripture, Acts viii. 17. Heb. vi. 2, and is yet continued by all Christians, except some very absurd people.”‡ St. Paul speaks of the unction which he and the faithful

* S. Cypr. Ep. 73. ad Jubajanum. † S. Hier. Dial. adv. Lucifer.

‡ Wall, Hist. of Infant Baptism, p. ii. ch. ix. § 8.

generally had received from God, and which there is no reason to limit to the interior influence of the Divine Spirit, of which the external unction is emblematic; "Now He that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God: who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts."*

The antiquity and universality of the practice of anointing with chrism, in the administration of this sacrament, and the importance attached to this rite by the ancient writers, warrant the belief that it was practised by the Apostles. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, in the second century, writes: "We are called Christians, because we are anointed with the oil of God."† Tertullian says: "The flesh is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated: the flesh is marked, that the soul may be fortified: the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of hands, that the soul may be enlightened with the Spirit."‡ St. Cyprian affirms: "it is necessary that he who has been baptized, be anointed likewise, that having received the chrism, that is, the unction, he may be the anointed of God, and may have in himself the grace of Christ."§

St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, compares the sacred chrism to the divine Eucharist: "You were anointed with oil, being made sharers and partners of Christ. And see well that you regard it not as mere ointment: for as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is no longer mere bread, but the BODY OF CHRIST, so likewise this holy ointment is no longer mere, or as one might say, common ointment, after the invocation, but the GIFT OF

* 2 Cor. i. 21.

‡ De resur. carn. c. viii.

† L. 1 ad Autolyicum, n. xii.

§ Epist. lxx. ad Januar.

CHRIST, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, being rendered efficient by His divinity. Thy forehead, and other senses, are anointed symbolically; and whilst the body is anointed with visible ointment, the soul is sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit. You were anointed first on the forehead, that you might be delivered from the shame which the first transgressor always experienced, and that you might contemplate the glory of God with an unveiled countenance.” He proceeds to specify the unction of the ears, nostrils, and breast, which was then practised in the Eastern portion of the church, to express more fully the effects of the sacrament; and he adds: “As Christ, after His baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, going forth overcame the adversary, so you, likewise, after holy baptism and the mysterious unction, clothed with the panoply of the Holy Ghost, stand against the adverse power, and subdue it, saying: ‘I can do all things in Christ, who strengtheneth me.’”*

St. Pacian, of Barcellona, argues that the power of forgiveness has descended to the bishops of the church, from the admitted fact, that they have the power to impart the Holy Ghost, which he calls THE POWER OF CHRISM: “is the power of binding and loosing confined to the Apostles? For the same reason they alone could baptize, they alone could give the Holy Ghost, they alone could cleanse away the sins of nations, because all this was ordained to no others than the Apostles: if then the POWER OF THE LAVER AND OF CHRISM, gifts far more sublime, has come down to the bishops, they also have the right to bind and loose.”† St. Augustin says: “You wish to understand by this oint-

* Cat. xxi. Myst. iii. de Sacro Chrismate.

† Ep. i. ad Sympron.

ment the sacrament of chrism, which, indeed, in the class of visible seals is as sacred as baptism itself.”*

The bishop is the ordinary minister of this sacrament. It is manifest that Philip, who baptized the Samaritans, had not the power of communicating the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. This was reserved for the Apostles. The narrative concerning Paul at Ephesus shows that it was not always conferred by the person who baptized. St. Chrysostom remarks on the former fact: “this was the prerogative of the Apostles; therefore we see that the leaders, and none others did it.”† St. Cyprian and St. Jerom, already quoted, testify that the bishops, who are the successors of the Apostles, performed the same rite; and Pope Innocent I. maintains it to be the privilege of their office. “With regard to the confirmation of infants,” he says, “it is manifest that it should not be done by any one but by the bishop. For presbyters, though they be priests, have not, nevertheless, the dignity of the pontifical office: and that it is the prerogative of pontiffs alone to mark (*with chrism*) or give the Holy Ghost, is evident, not only from the custom of the churches, but likewise from the reading of the very Acts of the Apostles, which relate that Peter and John were sent to communicate the Holy Ghost to those who had been already baptized. For priests baptize either in the absence or in the presence of the bishop, and are allowed to anoint with chrism those whom they baptize, provided it be consecrated by the bishop: but not to mark the forehead with the same oil, which is the privilege of the bishops alone, when they communicate the Holy Ghost.”‡

* L. ii. contra lit. Petiliani, c. 104. n. 239.

† Hom. xviii. in Acta Ap.

‡ Ep. i. ad Decentium, c. 3.

It is not necessary that we should stop to examine the principles or practice of the Greeks on this point. It is certain that they admit this sacrament, which they designate “the chrism of holy ointment,”* “the seal of the Holy Ghost.”† The custom of administering it after baptism, by the priest, is different from our discipline; but even amongst the Latins a priest sometimes confirms by the delegation of the sovereign pontiff. Although he is not the ordinary minister of this sacrament, he may be delegated to confer it, as we learn from the practice of the church.

The end for which confirmation is administered, is to strengthen us in the belief of the Christian mysteries, and in the profession of our faith. We cannot apprehend with certainty supernatural truth, unless we are enlightened from above. We cannot acknowledge with divine faith our Lord Jesus Christ, unless the Holy Ghost exert his influence on our mind, to dissipate its darkness, and stay its vacillation: “No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.”‡ To profess our faith is a strict duty, for “with the heart,” says the Apostle, “we believe unto justice; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”§ The temptations to deny it are numerous and powerful. It is scoffed at by the wise and prudent of this world, from whom, by a just judgment of God, it is hidden: and few have fortitude to endure the imputation of credulity, simplicity, and superstition. It is unfashionable, and despised by those who possess or claim influence in society, and is regarded as the religion of the low, vicious,

* Apud Coccium, tom. 2 Thes. p. 590.

† These words are used by the Greeks in confirming.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

§ Rom. x. 10.

and degraded—the offscourings of all—and few love the glory of God, rather than that of men. Our interest is often to be sacrificed to preserve our conscience without stain. How strong is the temptation in such cases to abandon a religion which thwarts our schemes of ambition, and all our worldly designs! Yet the penalty of apostasy from Christ, of the denial of His truth, is eternal separation from Him: “if we deny him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, He continueth faithful, He cannot deny Himself.”* It is only the Holy Spirit, who can give us intrepidity in circumstances calculated to inspire fear, and heroic resolution, when faith and conscience require great sacrifices. “The ‘Spirit of our Father’ spoke in the martyrs, and gave them wisdom which their adversaries could not resist. He still communicates his grace, and gives us strength, that we may not shrink from our good and glorious confession. ‘Since (says an ancient father) we are to pass our whole life in the midst of invisible enemies, and we must advance through dangers, we are regenerated unto life in baptism; after baptism, we are confirmed for the combat.’”†

As from the perpetual practice of the church, it is manifest that this sacrament, as well as baptism, can be received but once, a spiritual character being impressed by it on the soul, it is necessary that much diligence be used in preparing for its reception. The discipline of the church has varied as to the age at which it may be received, it having been often conferred immediately after baptism, even to infants, whilst now it is more generally delayed until the

* 2 Tim. ii. 13.

† Hom. in die Pentecost. tributa Eucherio Lugdun. tom. vi. biblioth. Patr. Lugd. p. 649.

child can be instructed in the leading mysteries of faith, and in the sanctity of the sacrament. The most ample instruction is desirable; but a knowledge of the great mysteries of the adorable Trinity, and of our redemption through the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, is particularly requisite. It is above all necessary that the heart should be pure, into which the Holy Ghost is invited. If stained by sin, the tears of repentance should wash away the stain. The humiliation of confession will dispose the soul for reconciliation and grace; but wo! to the soul who, in this very act, lies to the Holy Ghost. He lies not to man, but to God!

CHAPTER II.

RITES OF CONFIRMATION.

THE rites used by the Apostles in the administration of the sacraments have not been recorded in the Sacred Scripture. The leading rite has, indeed, been mentioned, but the details of the ritual were left to be learned from other sources. Had the Apostles used no ceremony but the simple imposition of hands with prayer, in administering confirmation, the Church would still be at liberty to add such rites as might seem calculated to awaken in the faithful, sentiments of piety, and impress them with the nature and effects of the sacrament. The simplicity of the original institution might suit the circumstances in which it was first administered, and could not form an objection to such additional rites as might develop its import, and the obligations attached to its reception. But we have reason to believe, that the Apostles themselves used several ceremonies with a view to instruct the applicant, and to show the meaning and end of the sacrament.

The ceremonies of confirmation, as it is now administered, are very simple. As the sacrament is directed to communicate the Holy Ghost, the bishop begins by this prayer :

“ May the Holy Ghost come upon you, and the power of THE MOST HIGH guard you from sin. Amen.”

This prayer, with the whole rite of confirmation as now

practised, though with some slight variety, and some difference of arrangement, is found in an ancient Ritual of the church of Bolsena, a manuscript whereof, written in the eleventh or twelfth century, is still preserved.* Almost the whole rite is likewise found in a liturgical book referred to the times of Pope Gelasius.† The prayer is in manifest harmony with the end had in view in the administration of the sacrament.

The extension of the hands, with the accompanying prayer, is more immediately directed to obtain the grace of the Holy Ghost, with his sevenfold gifts for those, who, being already baptized, seek to be strengthened with this new succour. Of our Divine Redeemer the prophet Isaiah said: “The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.”‡ The bishop prays that the same spirit may rest on those over whom his hands are extended, that they may receive that wisdom which is from above, and may understand the things of God, which the sensual man perceiveth not; that they may be guided with divine light in all the difficulties of life, and choose the better part: that they may be strengthened with power from on high, against all the enemies of salvation—the rulers of this world of darkness, the spirits of wickedness in high places: that they may have true knowledge, that of Jesus Christ crucified, the science of the saints: that they may cherish piety, devotion, tender attachment to all that regards the divine glory: and may

* Rit. Eccl. Tyr. apud Trombelli, de conf. t. 1. diss. v. p. 199.

† L. 1. c. xliv. lib. Sac. Rom. Eccl. apud Thomasium l. vi. operum p. 75.

‡ Isaiah xi. 2.

be replenished with filial fear of offending their heavenly Father. **ST. AMBROSE** makes a distinct reference to this portion of the prayer.* The bishop then prays God to mark them with the sign of the cross unto eternal life, and to be propitious to them, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In uttering these words he makes the sign of the cross over them, which he afterwards makes on the forehead of each one, with holy chrism, saying: "I mark thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The making of the sign of the cross in the administration of the sacraments, is a practice attested by the most ancient writers, and by all liturgical books. It is a profession of our belief in a crucified Redeemer, from whom all grace is derived. The words formerly used on this occasion were: "The sign of Christ unto everlasting life." The Christian thus marked can say with **ST. AUGUSTIN**: "So little am I ashamed of the cross, that I do not bear it in secret, but on my forehead."† The antiquity of the practice of forming it with chrism is manifest from several testimonies of the Fathers.§

The use of chrism has already been shown to be derived from the early ages. In the Latin church it is made of oil

* L. de initiandis, c. vii. n. 42.

† Trombelli, diss. v. de conf. c. iii. q. i. p. 265.

‡ Enarr. in Ps. 141. ad v. 4. n. 9.

§ **S. PROSPER**, in *Psychomachia*, sect. vi. de *Luxuria et sobriet.* v. 50.

Post inscripta oleo frontis signacula, per quæ
Unguentum regale datum est, et chrisma perenne!

See also Prudentius poem. iii. Apotheosis, v. 490.

of olives, and of balsam; this latter ingredient being intended to signify the sweet odour of virtue, which the perfect Christian spreads around him. The Greeks, with the same view, unite the juice of many odoriferous plants in the composition. The chrism is called "the chrism of salvation," because it is directed to signify the saving influence of the Holy Ghost, by which we are strengthened unto everlasting life.

The gentle blow on the cheek, given by the bishop, to the person confirmed, is intended to remind him that he should be ready to suffer for the faith of Christ. The lesson of our Saviour, that we should be ready to present the left cheek to him who strikes us on the right, is admirably insinuated by this rite. "Peace be to thee" is said, because in patience we are to possess our souls.

After some prayers the solemn benediction is given by the Pontiff, that God may bless them from Sion, and that they may see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of their lives. This manner of terminating the rite is both ancient and appropriate. A similar blessing is found in a manuscript of the eighth century. Those who receive the grace of confirmation need the continuation of divine aid to persevere to the end, and obtain an eternal benediction.

THE END.

