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THE ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

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CONTENTS

THE ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM	3
I. THE CONDITION OF MAN AS CREATED BY GOD	16
II. THE CONDITION OF MAN CONSEQUENT ON HIS FIRST SIN	21
III. THE DEALINGS OF GOD WITH MAN PREVIOUSLY TO THE INCARNATION	44
IV. THE WORK OF CHRIST IN HIS INCARNATION, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION	55
V. THE RELATIONS AND DEALINGS OF GOD TOWARDS MAN SINCE THE DAY OF PENTECOST, AND THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THOSE THAT ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST	84

THE ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

The death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of the office of High Priest and Mediator on which, at His resurrection and ascension, He entered. Christ, who, “through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself¹ without spot to God,” “being come an High Priest of future good things,” hath entered into the true Holy Place, “even into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” He is made an² High Priest “after the power of an endless life,” and “ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

Thus it is, that the sacrifice of the holy Eucharist, ordained by Christ in His Church to be the continual memorial of that one sacrifice once offered for our eternal redemption, is the basis of all our Services of worship and prayer and intercession, of all those Services in which the functions of the priesthood are exercised in the Church.

For a similar reason, the sacrament of holy Baptism is the basis and root of all the other sacraments

¹ Heb 9:11-2,14.

² Heb 7:16,25.

and ordinances for the ministration of the Spirit. It is the door of entrance into the house of God, which is the Temple of the Holy Ghost. It is the manner and means ordained by God for our being born again, that we may live the new and eternal Life of manhood brought to us by Jesus Christ: and those only who are quickened with that new life can be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, as He was given on Pentecost. It is, therefore, the means of admission into that blessed company, among whom the gifts of the Holy Ghost are bestowed and distributed.

Hence all the other sacraments or Offices in which the Gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed - whether in sealing those who have been baptized, or in ordaining those who are [236] to serve in the sacred Ministry - and all the minor services for the communication of grace and blessing to the Ministers, and to all the members of the Church, are based on the Office for the Administration of Baptism, and, as it were, proceed therefrom.

We are now, therefore, to direct our attention to this holy sacrament of Baptism, to consider what it is, and for what ends it has been instituted. Thus we shall be able to perceive the reason and propriety both of the form and order appointed by the Church for the administration of the sacrament, and also of

the other rites preparatory thereto contained in our Prayer Book.

What, then, is the sacrament of Baptism? and what are the special ends and objects for which it was ordained?

First: The essential form of this sacrament is baptism with water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is the Sacrament, or means ordained of God, for translating men from that form, condition, or constitution of human nature in which Adam was created, and which, through Adam's transgression, has become corrupt and obnoxious to evil, and subject to death, into that form, condition, or constitution of the same human nature in which Christ was raised from the dead, and which is incorruptible and immortal and Divine. This translation or change from the one condition to the other is effected by Christ Himself, the risen Man, God Incarnate. To Him on His Ascension the Father gave the Holy Ghost. He gave Him, who is eternally the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, to be the Spirit of the risen Lord and Christ. And by the same Spirit Christ effects this change in them that are given to Him of the Father out of the world, incorporating them in one

Body in Himself, and imparting to them eternal life.³ Therefore is Baptism called "the washing (λουτρον, laver) of regeneration."

Secondly: The sacrament of Baptism is administered to those only who profess to repent of sin and to turn to God, and also to believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God; who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is One God, Very God and for our sakes, and for our salvation, became Very Man [237], who suffered and died for us, and rose again, and lives for ever by the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly: While it is true that the benefits of Baptism, whether immediate or future and ultimate, can only be received by faith, yet the unbelief of the recipient, or his subsequent relapse into unbelief, cannot frustrate the operation of God; and therefore, whether we believe or disbelieve, the results of Baptism - as we have declared in our Testimony to the Bishops of the Church and to the Princes of Christendom - are certain, irrevocable, and eternal: but whether to our eternal welfare or to our eternal misery, will be according to our faith; for if, having been baptized, we abide not in faith - if, finally, we fall away to unbelief - we shall be condemned, not merely

³ Tit 3:5.

as impenitent and unbelieving, but as apostates from Christ.

Fourthly: From what has been said as to the change of nature wrought through holy Baptism in those who believe, we may readily understand the meaning of the Confession in the Creed, "I believe in One Baptism for the remission of sins." For, being by natural birth children of wrath through sin, those who believe and are baptized are engrafted into Christ, in whom is no sin or condemnation for sin; as it is written, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved⁴;" and again, "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."⁵

Lastly: Although they that receive Christian Baptism are thus united unto Christ in His mystical Body, and are made partakers of His Life and of the Divine nature proper to the risen Man, yet this change of nature and new birth are not in this Dispensation complete. For the baptized still remain in mortal bodies; their physical nature undergoes no alteration; they are still liable to temptation and to fall away from grace: and, if they fall away, they make

⁴ Mark 16:16.

⁵ Rom 8:1.

void the benefits of Baptism and deface the image of Him, in whom they are new-created in the inner man. They "live by faith" enduring in patience until that day when they shall be clothed upon with their house from heaven, and be made like unto their Lord and Head in their whole being [238].

In this short account of what Baptism is and to whom administered, and of its effects and consequences, the following subjects occur to us: I. The condition of Man as created: II. The change in his condition consequent upon his first sin: III. The dealings of God with Man before the incarnation of Christ: IV. The work which Christ our Lord has effected in His Incarnation, in His death, in His resurrection and ascension: V. The relation and actings of God towards Man since the Day of Pentecost, and the condition of Man when baptized into Christ. All these we shall find are topics requiring attention in order to the understanding of this holy rite.

Before proceeding further let us note, that in treating of the change which has come upon Man, through sin, and the change also which comes on sinful man through regeneration, we speak only of a change of condition: it is not in either case an alteration in the original elements of man's being. That which every individual man is, as constituting him a

human being, that he must remain under all forms of his existence, if he is to remain a Man. It is most necessary that we should understand this truth. Ignorance or misapprehension on this point may lead men of speculative minds into the most fatal errors, and perverse men into the most dangerous heresies. Let us, therefore, first of all, endeavour shortly to define what it is that constitutes the creature Man.

We are told in holy Scripture that God “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (neshamah) of life, and man became a living soul⁶.” To the same effect we read in the book of Job, “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration [or breath (neshamah)] of the Almighty giveth them understanding⁷;” and again, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath (neshama) of the Almighty hath given me life.⁸” Man, therefore, is not a mere brute animal, however intelligent: he is endued with a spirit: a created spirit indeed, for he is a creature, but inspired into him by God; and, as the Hebrew word rendered breath or inspiration apparently conveys, inspired into him from heaven. His spirit, therefore, is not of the [239] earth earthy, but belongs

⁶ Gen 2:7

⁷ Job 32:8

⁸ Job 33:4

to the invisible part of the Creation. And to this agree the words of the preacher: for, after saying that “all” (both man and beast) “go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again,⁹” he adds, “who knoweth the spirit of the sons of man” (marginal reading) “that goeth *upward*, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?”

So then Man is not a simple substance. He is not an angel, a purely spiritual being; for his spirit is by the act of God in creation breathed into, and subsists in, a material body formed from the dust. Neither is he merely an intelligent animal; for he is not *wholly* formed from the dust: but he is endowed with a spirit from God, and possesses spiritual powers and faculties. Neither is he a being compounded of the two natures of angels and of animals. Man’s nature is distinct and separate from the natures both of angels and of brute beasts, though in certain respects allied both to the one and to the other. It is constituted of the two substances, the spiritual and the material, which, so far as we know or can conceive, comprise the whole of created substances. And the perfection and integrity of man’s nature consists in the presence of the spirit with the material body. When the body ceases to live, the spirit is separated from the corpse,

⁹ Eccles 3:20-21

and the *man dies*, and his body corrupts and dissolves, though the spirit survives.

Man, therefore, has a spirit, and exercises spiritual powers and faculties. He is endowed with the faculties of self-consciousness, reflection, judgement, and active will and self-determination. These are higher faculties than those perceptive faculties and motive energies which are common to men with the inferior animals. These lower faculties are apparently connected with, and cannot be separated from, the bodily organization. But in Man they are or ought to be the servants and ministers of the spirit, and the means whereby through the bodily senses the individual man receives impressions and ideas from the outer world, and through the members of the body acts thereupon.

Man is constituted (as the Scripture testifies) of spirit and soul and body; of these the spirit and soul are spiritual¹⁰ [240], the body only material. "Perfect man" - that is, man in his completeness and integrity - is, as it is expressed in the Creed, "of a *reasonable* soul and human flesh subsisting." For these words, "reasonable soul," express what is meant by "spirit and soul:" for if a soul is reasonable, it is spiritual.

¹⁰ 1.Thes 5:23

Where there is reason, there must be thought, judgement, and self-consciousness. A being, therefore, endowed with a reasonable soul, is endowed with a spirit: and such is man. A being not endowed with a reasonable soul, with spiritual as well as perceptive powers, is not a man, but a brute. No other nature but that which in its integrity is constituted of body, soul, and spirit, is the Nature of man.

It is because a man is endowed with a spirit, and possesses spiritual faculties, that we apply to him the name of person. Personality is no part of the *substance* of man: it is not another name for his spirit, or for his soul, or for his body, or for his whole nature. It is an abstract term, signifying that the being to whom it is applied is an individual living and reasonable agent; who, whatever be his nature, acts in the exercise of his own will, and is ordinarily conscious of his own identity in the past and in the present. Such is Man, constituted as he is of body, soul, and spirit; and therefore every man is not a mere individual creature or thing, but a *person*; that is to say, a being endowed with spiritual faculties, conscious of his own identity, both in spirit and soul, and in body also, and therefore knowing that he is his individual self, and not another individual.

One word more with regard to the nature of Man. He is a living organized creature. His spirit, which (as far as we can judge) must continue to exist, if it be not annihilated, is united to an animated body; which body also must live, or the union must cease; for the body, when dead, is resolved into dust, and ceases to be a body. What then is life? We sometimes hear expressions, as though life were a distinct substance, infused into some other substance, and by its presence causing such other substance to live. So far as we know, life is not an individual substance, nor forms a substantive part of Man, or of any other living creature. It is [241] simply the condition in which the living subject fulfils its functions according to the law of its existence. We say that a vegetable lives, so long as the sap flows, and growth or reproduction continues. Life is in a seed, though it may be dormant for centuries, so long as there is a germ capable of producing a new plant. When there is no such germ capable of reproduction, the seed is dead. Life is in the animal body, so long as lungs and heart fulfil their functions. When these cease finally to act, the body is dead. Life then, as applied to the body, so far as our knowledge extends, expresses no more than the condition in which its animal functions are fulfilled. In like manner, when we say that after the death of the body the soul still lives, we mean that it is still capable of fulfilling certain functions, such functions as its

circumstances, when separate from the body, permit. And when we say that the spirit is quickened with the life of Christ in regeneration, we mean that it is brought into a new condition, wherein by the continual presence and energy of the Holy Ghost it is now rendered capable of the functions of spiritual life, of knowing and loving God, and of all holy spiritual actions by the Holy Ghost. These functions were alien to the fallen nature of Man, until the Son of God became Incarnate: they are still alien to him, except as he is regenerated in Christ.¹¹ Again, that future and never-ending life of the body, for which we look in the resurrection, is simply a condition in which the functions of the spiritual body will be eternally fulfilled¹². The Holy Ghost is the giver of all life, and this future life He will bestow by His immediate operation in them in whom He dwells. As it is written, "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." And again, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the

¹¹ We speak here of the permanent condition of the regenerated spirit of Man. We do not refer to the ordinary influence, or the supernatural inspiration of the Holy Ghost previously to regeneration: these effect no change of nature.

¹² Hence we may understand what is meant by the *figurative* expression, that the spiritual life bestowed in regeneration, is the germ or seed of that future life of the body; because the life with which we are quickened in regeneration, is not only the pledge, but the earnest and the commencement in man's being of that life with which the body also shall be quickened in the resurrection.

dead dwell in you, He [242] that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

But, under all these different circumstances, life, so far as we know, is simply the condition under which the living subject is capable of acting according to the laws of its existence. In what manner life in the individual commences, or by what means it is continued, except by reference to God as the Author and Giver and Continuer of Life, we cannot tell.

Let us now proceed to the several topics proposed for consideration.

I. THE CONDITION OF MAN AS CREATED BY GOD

Adam, then, was created such as we are now, in all that constitutes the specific creature, Man. He had the same form of body, with the same members and number of parts, the same nervous and muscular system, and the same organs of sense; - the same powers in kind of consciousness and thought, the same ability to conceive and compare and conclude, and to purpose and determine and proceed to action; in one word, the same faculties, affections, and capacities of spirit, heart, and mind, and the same bodily sensations, functions, and powers. The difference between Adam as created, and Adam as he subsequently became and as his descendants after him have been, is a difference of condition, not of the essential constituents of the creature.

Of the condition of Adam before he sinned, we have no experience. Our knowledge must be derived from the positive statements of Scripture concerning the same, and from the comparing of these statements with the testimony of Scripture concerning our fallen state, and with our own experience and consciousness in our fallen state.

In bringing all things into being, God completed and crowned His work by the creation of Man. Of this crowning work it is written, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness¹³.” - “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him.” As the Preacher also declares, “God hath made man upright.¹⁴” [243] How could it be otherwise, seeing that he was made in the image and after the likeness of God?

There is, indeed, in the threefold nature or condition of Man, as already described, a correspondence with or resemblance to the being of God, as revealed to us through Jesus Christ. The Father invisible and inscrutable, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, is revealed to us in His Word, and made known by the operations of the Holy Ghost. And so in Man there is that within, the inner man, as it is called in Scripture, known only to himself and to God; for what man knoweth the inward spiritual things of a man, but his own self-conscious spirit that is in him? It is by speech - a gift which none but a reasonable spiritual can possess or use - it is by word, that the inner man is made known to his fellow-men: and by his outward actions, through the exercise of the bod-

¹³ Gen.1:26, 27

¹⁴ Eccl. 7:29

ily members, his secret will and purpose is elaborated. Thus, though compassed with the ruins of the fall, Man bears, in the form and character of his nature, the impress of the image and likeness of God. It is the very form devised of God, as that in which the Only-Begotten Son was to become Incarnate, and in becoming Incarnate was to reveal to men the true character of God. Nevertheless there is more than the mere form and character of nature expressed in these words: “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” - “created in the image of God,” - “in the image of God created;” - there is, I say, more in these words, thrice repeated in two short sentences, than a reference merely to the form of nature. The words declare the character of Man himself as he was created; the individual being, and not merely the *constitution* of his nature. He was made like unto God. He existed in the image of God. Self-conscious, deliberative, capable of determination, endowed with active will, - these powers, all of them, with which he was endowed by nature, were now directed by the man, as God Himself would direct them; for he was created upright. Master of himself under God, his faculties of mind clear and distinct, his body exempt from infirmity, both body and mind free from all disorder, they were all disposed by him, while he abode in uprightness, towards the observance [244] of the words of God and the fulfilment of His will. As God, we are

told, delighted in Man, so Man delighted in God; delighted to hold communion with Him, and to learn, and know, and love Him more and more. Separate from evil, he was unconscious of the existence of evil. Evil spirits there were already in existence, and had been, as we may reasonably presume, previously to the existence of Man; but Adam knew nothing of them, and so long as he abode in uprightness, they could no more affect him by their power and influence, than they could affect God Himself, in whose image and likeness, in this respect also, Man was created. Limited in knowledge and in all his powers - for no creature can be otherwise - he was yet created perfect in reference to all the ends for which he was made: and therefore God was pleased to bestow on him the dominion of the earth and of all the inhabitants of the earth. He was so formed physically, as to be capable of subduing them: he was so formed morally, as to govern and direct them, even as God Himself would govern and direct them; and thus to shew forth the glory and majesty and goodness of God, - Man himself, at the head of the Creation, being the image and glory of God.

Such was the condition of Man in his original creation in the image and likeness of God. That condition he did not retain: he did not abide in uprightness. In the exercise of his own will, he forsook God,

and sacrificed on the altar of his own independence all that dignified and ennobled him. The woman who was given to be his help-meet, assailed by the subtlety of Satan, failed to betake herself to her husband for defence; she listened to her own inclinations, and followed her own independent reasonings; and so, being deceived, she was in the transgression. Adam was not deceived! Therefore through his transgression was the fall of the whole race irrevocably sealed.

Instead of committing the case of his beloved in her terrible fall to Him, who, if there were remedy, could alone apply it, he cast off hope, and faith, and obedience. Instead of still upholding and protecting his wife against herself, he listened to her, as she had listened to the serpent: he received of her the fruit of the tree, and he did eat [245]!

Eve was deceived and sinned; but Adam's act of disobedience was the perfection of sin: because, not being deceived, he sinned knowingly and deliberately. Thus was the fall of the human race in its principle and root consummated; and sin being perfected, brought forth death!

II. THE CONDITION OF MAN CONSEQUENT ON HIS FIRST SIN

As God had forewarned, so did it come to pass. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die!" For, although the man did not cease to breathe, nor therefore were soul and body separated, nor were the functions of the reasonable soul in the body arrested; yet from that moment commenced decay and corruption, and physical death and the disintegration of the particles of the body, involving ultimately and inevitably, according to the ordinary course of nature, the dissolution of soul and body.¹⁵ They commenced and must proceed in him and his posterity, in each individual, until the expiration of the allotted term of his bodily life.

¹⁵ It may be asked, whether, if Adam had not sinned, the same course of disintegration and decay would not have ensued, according to the laws of animal existence as created by God. It is sufficient to reply to this and to other similar suggestions, that if Adam had abode in uprightness, we may be quite sure that God would have been faithful to His obedient creature; and would have provided not only for the continuance of his life as a living soul (το ψυχικον, 1 Cor. 15,46), but also for his subsequent advancement to a higher state of spiritual life as a living spirit (το πνευματικον); of which, indeed, the Tree of Life (Gen.2,9 and 3,22) was the symbol of pledge.

But further, from that moment, Man created in the image and after the likeness of God, upright and righteous, ceased to exist! He no longer lived to God. He had become dead in trespasses and sins. No longer seeking to God, he was alienated and perverted from Him. His foolish heart had become darkened, his understanding obscured; he neither knew God as He is, nor loved Him.

Before proceeding to other particulars of this fatal change, let us guard ourselves upon one especial point.

It has been supposed that, whereas at first Man was endowed with free will, his will, in consequence of the Fall, ceased to be *free*. It is difficult to understand the propriety of applying the term freedom to the will: the expression, at [246] least; is liable to misconception, and requires to be correctly explained and guarded. When we speak of the Will, we speak of that faculty in the exercise of which we determine to do, or to abstain from doing, such things as at the time being are within our power, if we resolve to do them. If the exercise of the powers belonging to me as a human being are not under my own control, if another being than myself is able, at his own will and independently of me, to employ my powers of mind or body, then I am so far deprived of the faculty of will;

the actions are no longer mine. But if, within the limits of my other powers, I am free to choose or to refuse - to do or not to do - then, so far, I am possessed of will. Where, therefore, there is will, there is, so far, freedom. The limitation of the powers of action is no limitation of the will. If it were so, no creature being, God alone, could be capable of will: no being but God is free from limitation and restraint. The faculty of will in any creature is confined within the limits of his powers of action at the time. Nor would any reasonable creature will to do anything which he knows to be impossible to him.

Nor, again, is the freedom of the will restrained or affected because it proceeds upon motives, that is, causes moving the individual to action. The will is always determined by motives. These motives in man are derived either from the conclusions of his reason, as to what is good or bad, or from the lower appetites or perceptions of what is pleasant or otherwise. If he be a man guided by his reason, and so far as he is guided by his reason, the motives supplied by the reason will prevail. If he be a good man, the conclusions of the reason will proceed from good principles; if a bad man, the conclusions of his reason will be influenced by bad principles. If he be not only bad, but sensual, the motives derived from the lower appetites will prevail. If there be no motive to action, the man

will be indifferent, and there will be no movement or exercise of the will. But whenever moved to determination, the man exercises his will upon motives internally suggested to him, and without internal coercion or compulsion exercised by another being; for if coercion or compulsion be exercised internally [247] by any other agent, the creature is not free indeed, but he is destitute of will: he does not possess this particular faculty, or has been deprived of it.

In fact, what is ordinarily meant by the denial of free will to fallen man, is that his will is determined by evil motives. This, alas! is true: but it does not affect the liberty of the human will. It does but prove that fallen man of his own free will embraces that which is evil. And if such an argument is of force to prove that the will of Man is not free, it is of equal force to prove the same conclusion concerning God Himself; who can no more choose evil, than men without His grace can choose that which is good. And so in like manner it would prove that good angels are not free agents: for they were created very good, and in abiding steadfast they have persevered in following the original tendency to good. It would prove also that Man himself, who was created upright and very good, and therefore inclined to good, was either not originally endowed with free will, or was created indifferent, and as much inclined to evil as to good: whereas

he was created “upright” and “very good,” and was therefore inclined to good.

In fact, if Man be not free to do or to abstain from doing any specific act - and this is freedom of will or self-determination - he is so *far* a machine, and not a reasonable and responsible creature. He may be responsible for the *original* cause of his coming into such a condition: but now that he has fallen into it, he will have ceased to be directly and immediately responsible for his own individual actions. On the other hand, if he be free to act or to abstain from acting, then, whether the motives be good or evil, their efficacy to move the will depends upon his own moral condition; and the character of those motives, whether good or evil, is the true index of his moral condition.

Alas! the prevalency of the motives to evil, the fact that man of his own free will, when left to himself, chooses and determines and works wickedness, these are the convincing proofs that since the Fall he is of his own nature inclined to evil, and lost in the death of trespasses and sins [248].

The fact, then, that Man is possessed of the power of will, is the convincing proof of the deep depravity of his nature. He chooses evil, not from any

compulsion exercised upon him by another, but because he himself is inclined to evil and averse from good. He was created upright, and in the exercise of his own will he was the servant of God. He is now, by natural disposition, the willing slave of Satan. He does not, indeed, count himself the servant of Satan, nor, voluntarily, of any other being. On the contrary, whereas in innocence he lived to God, now he lives to himself. His conversation or course of life is in fulfilling the desires or wills of the flesh and of the mind, the leadings of predominant sensuality, or of intellectual pride. These desires or wills, the instinctive desires of the body, the affections of the heart, and the activity of our intellectual and reasoning faculties, were given to us as aids and instruments. The continuance in life of individual men, and of mankind, is provided for by our bodily instincts; the higher objects for which we were created, are fulfilled through the exercise of our mental faculties. They are all given to us to be our servants, to be used by us, or, at the least, to be under our control. When, therefore, Adam hearkened to the voice of his wife and transgressed the Commandment, the balance of our nature was suicidally destroyed. Whatever the motive, whether proceeding from the flesh or from the mind, or from both, - it was an act of self-gratification, in the indulgence of which he forsook duty and violated love and faith. From that fatal hour

faith. From that fatal hour the God of the natural man has been himself.

In considering the effects of the Fall upon human nature, we have already said, that immediately upon the sin of Man, God's sentence of death began to be executed. Then commenced that tendency in the human body to decay and corruption, which, even through growth and immaturity, is ever proceeding until it terminates in death and dissolution. It is not needful, for our present purpose, to speak of the effects of the Fall upon the body, except so far as those effects act upon our spiritual and moral condition. The diseases induced by excessive indulgence of the appetites [249] are themselves the consequences of sin, and they re-act upon the spirit: their tendency is to enervate and degrade the man. Nor are their consequences confined to the individual sinner: they affect both the physical and moral condition of his posterity. Nor, again, are any of the other diseases which affect mankind, either those which are engendered from corruption and decay, or those which accompany and follow upon destitution, conducive to moral excellence or spiritual advancement. They are often, by the grace of God and through the operation of His Spirit, made instrumental in bringing individual men to self-reflection and repentance: but in their own nature they not only enfeeble mind and body, and dis-

able their victims from serving God, but they aggravate the spiritual sickness and moral degradation of those afflicted by them.

With regard to the mind, our intellectual faculties exercised in the body, and in connexion with the bodily organs, are affected by all that affects those organs, and with them are subject to failure and decay. The mind, however, has its own peculiar failings and infirmities.

In falling from uprightness, we have become liable to delusion and error. It is a direct consequence of sin, that the understanding becomes darkened, and our perceptions of truth confused. Such is the testimony of Scripture; and observation and reflection upon our own experience lead to the same conclusion. There is a power in sin to bring a cloud over the spirit, and to deaden our apprehension of goodness and truth.

Again, there is another way in which our fall from integrity affects the exercise of our reason. No finite creature can, by searching, find out God. We can only know Him as He reveals Himself to us. When, therefore, we became alienated from God, no longer loving and trusting Him, we cast off the only means by which we could receive the principles of truth or ar-

rive at right conclusions. They that love not God cannot make progress in the knowledge of Him; nor can they apprehend what He may reveal concerning Himself or His ways. Their opinions and conclusions and judgements about Him and His ways can only [250] be founded on assumptions derived from a deluded fancy, or from vain and uncertain interpretations of traditional truth.

But whatever be the effects of the Fall in deteriorating the bodily and mental functions, these are but the symptoms and consequences of the disease: the disease itself lies deeper. Sin does not consist in the deterioration, but in the wrong exercise - the abuse and misuse - of our faculties. It is to the spirit, the inner man of the heart, that the corruption of our nature is to be traced. It is from the spirit that the movement proceeds, when the man is drawn away and enticed by the bodily appetite, and, instead of exercising it within due control and for lawful ends, gives himself up to excessive indulgence or to wicked misuse of it.

In the heart and spirit is the source of that mental chicanery by which we contrive to make the worse appear to ourselves the better reason, deceiving our own selves. We accept as settled truths our prejudices and misconceptions; and thus it is that even those

who profess themselves, and think themselves, to be special lovers of truth and right, are able to demonstrate to their own satisfaction the opinions which they favour, and to justify to themselves the propriety of their actions in the past, and of their intentions in the future.

In the spirit are excited, and from thence are moved into action, those furious passions which, like a whirlwind, disorganize and plunge into confusion all the mental powers; which carry away, as by a flood, all the barriers interposed by conscience and reason and prudence, and even by the instincts of self-preservation, and convert a reasonable creature into a mad and raging brute.

In the spirit is the seat of that self-contained pride, more hateful than the fury of passion in this respect, that it casts off all semblance of natural feeling, and works out its selfish purposes through the instrumentality of a cold and heartless intellect.

Such is fallen Man, as he is in himself, and unrestrained by the grace and by the providence of God. There is one more feature of his fallen state, on which we must touch.

Not only are we by nature in ourselves corrupt and evil, [251] but through sin we have placed ourselves under the power and dominion of Satan. We have given to Satan and to his wicked spirits access and entrance into our spirits, enabling him to carry on his work within us - to inspire us with evil thoughts, to suggest wicked imaginations, to accelerate our propensity to evil and help us on in being fellow-workers of wickedness with himself. Thus has he been enabled to adopt the children of disobedience as his children, and to plant his seed in the world. We have admitted him into the citadel of the human heart as ruler, and into the possession and guidance of the course of this world as prince and god.

In speaking of the power of Satan and his wicked spirits over fallen man, we do not imagine that wicked men are universally or generally given up to the power of Satan, so as to be devil-possessed. It may be that it is in the power of Satan to enter into and possess all men in their natural state (except as hindered by the grace and power of God), and to use their faculties and powers and the members of their body at his will. It is certain that, even in the case of men given up to wickedness, he does not ordinarily do so. We may observe in the instances of evil possession recorded in holy Scripture, that the evil spirit supersedes the personality of the possessed: he is the agent, and not the

man. And in the instances which have from time to time come under our own notice, or have been recorded, it is not the strong-minded who are the ordinary victims of possession, but the weak and infirm of will. We may, therefore, well suppose that it is far more in accordance with the wicked and malicious purpose of our spiritual enemy, that he should not ordinarily reduce those over whom he has power to be the mere organs of his will: but rather that he would induce them to be the willing agents of his purposes. This he effects by occupying all the avenues of thought, penetrating and pervading the spiritual affections and powers, presenting to the mind and spirit all the motives and seductions to evil; at one time veiling the sinfulness of sin, at another time boldly presenting it to view; suggesting evil thoughts, prompting to self-interest, self-indulgence [252], ambition and pride; inflaming passion and violence, anger and malice, envy and murderous thoughts; - affecting also the bodily sensations, and helping on the downward progress to wicked actings. And let us never forget that however men may deceive themselves by attributing their own wicked actions to the devil, and so excuse themselves, God holds every man responsible, when of his own will he yields to the devil's temptations.

Moreover, confederated with Satan and under his commands, are legions of evil spirits, each differing from the others in his own peculiar propensity and character of wickedness, but all combining to advance the work of rebellion against God. Thus we read in Scripture of an evil spirit working discord and treachery; of another inspiring gloom and trouble; of another as a lying spirit; of another as a spirit of perverseness¹⁶ (or of deceivableness, as the Septuagint gives it; or of giddiness, as the Vulgate has it). To these we may add those several spirits mentioned in the New Testament; such as deaf and dumb, producing by their power within the victim deafness and dumbness; spirits of infirmity, subjecting their victims to helpless debility; spirits of divination, which infuse into their victims the false notion that they are able to foretell future events, and inspire them to the utterance of such predictions as evil spirits may be able to prognosticate.

These several notices of the number and of the diverse operations of wicked spirits, amply prove that Satan is well provided with a multitude of instruments adapted to every class of human character and ever variety of constitution. These his myrmidons beset all the avenues of man's being, and find access to

¹⁶ Judges 9:23, 1Sam 16:14, 1King 22:22-23, Isa 19:14.

mind and spirit. Sometimes by temporary possession or inspiration, sometimes by a possession more permanent, and always by the foul poison of their spiritual presence and influence, they help forward the tendency to evil, and the subjection of individual men to the dominion of Satan.

In accordance with all that we have said is the description in holy Scripture of the corruption of Man, and of his [253] subjection to Satan. God had said of him before the flood, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually¹⁷." He said of him after the flood, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth¹⁸." - "The heart is deceitful¹⁹ above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" - "Out of the heart," said He who knew what was in Man²⁰, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." - "When they knew God,²¹" says St. Paul, "they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their fool-

¹⁷ Gen 4:5

¹⁸ Gen 8:21

¹⁹ Jer 17:9

²⁰ Rom 1:21-25

²¹ Rom 1:28-31

ish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up” (hitherto He had restrained them) “to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” - “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness; maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful²².” Such St. Paul describes the Gentiles to be; and then he turns to the Jews, and tells them that they also, the hearers of the Law, do the like things. “Both Jews and Gentiles, they are all under the sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh

²² Rom 2:1&c

after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. There is no fear of God before their eyes²³.” Thus “every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must become guilty before God;” - “for all have [254] sinned, and come short of the glory of God²⁴.” - “The carnal mind is enmity against God.”

Again he saith, “The works of the flesh²⁵” (that is, of the natural man) “are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like”

Elsewhere he describes the Gentiles as “walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts²⁶” - “We ourselves also²⁷,” he says in another place, “were sometimes foolish, dis-

²³ Rom 3:9,19,23

²⁴ Rom 8:7

²⁵ Gal 5:19,21

²⁶ Eph 4:17,18

²⁷ Tit 3:3

obedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, and hating one another.” And again he says, “Mortify your members which are upon the earth²⁸” (that is to say, the actions and passions proper to the life of earthly men, and these he goes on to enumerate): “fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

We conclude with one further passage, which at once describes the moral degradation of man, and his subjection to the wicked one. “Ye were dead²⁹,” says the Apostle, “in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath.”

All these several passages from holy Scripture speak to our consciences. They are the words of divinely inspired Truth. They describe the consequences of our lapse from the righteousness in which

²⁸ Col 3:5

²⁹ Eph 2:1,3

Adam was created, both as regards our spiritual and our physical condition. But, through the mercy of God, they do not describe the actual circumstances or state of every individual man. They describe what in all ages some men have been; what at certain periods, and among certain nations, many, perhaps the [255] multitude, have become; what, except for the restraining grace of God and His providential disposition and intervention, all men would have become. But, of God’s infinite mercy, all men have not actually proceeded to the same extremes of wickedness, nor are actually subjected by Satan to the same extent of abject slavery. God in the foreknowledge of His own eternal purpose, and having regard to the future sacrifice of Him that should take away the sin of the world, has restrained the power of Satan, and kept back the sons of men from that universal apostasy and corruption into which otherwise they would have sunk.

Once indeed, manifesting what is in man, and as an example and warning to all generations, God withdrew the strivings of His Spirit. Bursting through all barriers, the race became utterly corrupt. They were overwhelmed in one universal catastrophe, a type of that future destruction which shall overtake apostate Christendom, and of that final dissolution and

judgement of ungodly men which shall overtake the world that now is, at the end of all things³⁰.

With this exception, God has continued His restraining grace, seeking to bring into His service all in man that can be made available for good, and to win the heart back unto Himself in faith and confidence and love.

For, in the first place, and before considering the dealings of God with men, let us remark that in the constitution of Man, even after the Fall, there were (through the good providence of our Creator) certain natural tendencies which have acted as impediments and hindrances in our downward course to utter apostasy.

Man is a creature of imitation and habit. These dispositions are indeed available for evil as for good; but in the ages which succeeded the fall of Man, and again in those which followed on the Deluge, and so also in later times, in the times of the first disciples of the Gospel, they were operative almost wholly for good. It is an old saying, and *generally* true, that no man suddenly becomes utterly vile. Our first father,

³⁰ Gen 6&7 Rev14:20 Rev 17,18 & 19:17-21 Rev 20:9 to 21:1 2 Pet 3:10-13.

immediately after the Fall, with all those proclivities to degeneration of which we have spoken, was yet under the influence of habits and thoughts, and associations [256] also (which are the habits of the mind) derived from the period, whether long or short, of original innocency. No other thoughts had hitherto occupied his mind, nor other habits or associations influenced him. It is not in the course of nature that these should have lost at once all their power. In the infancy of our race, it is probable that with many disorders, and even crimes, there was, as it were, the simplicity of childhood, - such as may be observed even in the present day, among those few tribes which remain uncontaminated with *civilized* vice.

In these habits and associations, to some extent, the children of the first fathers of the human family were brought up. Nor is it probable that at first there were many of those examples of monstrous wickedness which brought down the judgement of a universal deluge. And, even when they first occurred, it would be some time before the evil influence would leaven the whole lump. Crimes, even enormous crimes, when witnessed during childhood, and before they can be fully apprehended, are rather as seeds sown in the youthful mind - seeds of corruption, which, if fruitful, will bear fruit only in later years. Indeed, in all ages, so far as our knowledge and experi-

ence extend, few parents are so abandoned as not to seek in some degree to shield their children from the influence of evil example. For the most part children are brought up under some degree of discipline, and in a comparative guilelessness, to which in after life the memory returns as to the tradition of a golden age of innocence; and this recurrence of earlier recollections is not without its effect in reviving the power of conscience and in preparing the heart for better influences.

And yet, in spite of these and of all other advantages resulting from the constitution of Man, how few were the generations before the earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted his way before God!

Again, Man is a creature, formed to live in society. The institution of marriage, the early relationships of the family, the later bonds resulting from marriage, prepare for, and lead directly to, the institution of government and laws in larger communities. And where there is law and government [257], whatever be the form or character of government, there must be the exercise of self-discipline and the rendering of willing obedience.

It would seem, then, that all these influences, parental influence in early childhood and in more matured life, law and government and social order, act as a restraint upon violence, and strengthen the sense of duty and obligation. The final apostasy in which Christendom will be involved will be distinguished by the dissolution of the bonds and ties of the family and of society, and by the prevalence of universal lawlessness. Therefore is the angel, under whose guidance the hosts of evil spirits will hereafter emerge from the bottomless pit, named Abaddon and Apollyon, the corrupter or dissolver: and the Man of Sin, to be revealed in those last days, is called "the lawless one." In the meantime, those who, as the ordinance of God, have ruled the nations, even when they have been wicked rulers, have for the most part, and in their own interests, exercised their authority for the punishment of evil-doers; and the restraints of government and order have tended to preserve in men those principles and habits of obedience, on which better things may be grafted.

It must, however, be borne in mind that these better influences of our nature co-exist with the alienation of the heart from God, and the indulgence of the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and unless the heart and spirit can be brought into subjection to the Spirit of God, God will again cease to strive with

man, and once more man will become utterly corrupt and apostate. Nay, more, when once lawlessness and corruption have become predominant, all these influences of example and of habit - nay, the very ordinances of government - will be perverted, and will be employed by Satan in the completion of his work. The corruption of all that is best in man will be the consummation of all that is most evil. Vain and insignificant, therefore, would have been the effect of these dispositions of our nature, if God had left us to ourselves. Blessed be His Name, the history of mankind, preserved to us in holy Scripture, is the record of that continual agency and of [258] those successive acts by which God is bringing His creature, created in His image, back unto Himself. In tracing these continuous and successive acts, we shall be led through the remaining topics which we have proposed, as necessary to the elucidation of the sacrament of Baptism: the dealings of God with man before the Incarnation, the work which Christ effected in His life and death, in His resurrection and ascension, and lastly, the condition into which Man is brought when baptized into Christ.

III. THE DEALINGS OF GOD WITH MAN PREVIOUSLY TO THE INCARNATION

The times and the seasons are in the hands of God. He in His wisdom have ordered them. And having foreordained the sacrifice for all sin, and the means by which we should be made partakers eternally of His holiness, He has in the meantime foreborne, and has not dealt with us according to our iniquity. For a short season previously to the Flood, men were given up to their own ways: but otherwise the Lord has not withholden His restraining grace. Unweariedly has He waited, as it were, upon His creature, and striven with him by His Spirit; He has sought to incline his heart towards Himself, to enlighten his understanding, to reveal more and more of His own future purpose, to inspire him with faith and obedience, and to discipline and prepare him for the reception of the Gospel.

Immediately after the Fall, God, in passing sentence on the serpent, concluded in these words - "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

These words convey the intimation - 1. Of the immediate work which God would commence in Man: "I will put enmity between *thee* and the *woman*, and between thy seed and her seed." 2. Of His further and ultimate purpose upon earth: "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" By both these words God addressed Himself, immediately upon the Fall, to the heart [259] and spirit of man, and placed before him the way of righteousness, and the objects on which faith was to rest and to which hope was to be directed.

God spake these words concerning the woman then present before Him, the woman who had been deceived by the Serpent, and concerning her seed. Therefore did Adam, awaking to faith and hope, and inspired with the spirit of prophecy forthwith call his wife's name *Eve*. In the days of innocence he had called her "Isha," "Woman; because she was taken out of man."³¹ Man was now in the transgression and he called her name "Eve; because *she* was the mother of all living"³². Therefore also Eve, when she bare her first-born, exclaimed, "I have gotten the man from the Lord"³³. Not yet, indeed, was this fulfilled: God in His

³¹ Gen 2:23

³² Gen 3:20

³³ Gen 4:1

infinite wisdom long delayed: and even now, though the seed has been given, the end has not yet been attained. Nevertheless, Adam believed the word, and embraced the hope. Eve believed the word, and embraced the hope. And among their posterity there has ever been a seed into whose hearts the Lord has been able to infuse penitence and faith, hope and love, toward Himself; and toward the serpent, enmity.

Therefore, although God spake of the woman before Him, yet in her He saw one greater, - even her who was to be chosen thereafter out of all the daughters of Eve, and should bring forth "the seed of promise." He spake of the seed of the woman, the godly seed, who in all future times should serve Him. But in her seed He had regard above all to Him, who, being the Eternal Word - the Only-Begotten of the Father - was to be born in time: without whom, and except for whose work, foreseen and foreordained, there should have been no godly seed at all. In Him by covenant foreordained, "ordered in all things and sure," the Father hath chosen those who in all ages have believed, and have sanctified them to be a righteous seed, His witnesses, to carry forth His testimony from generation to generation to the sons of men, their brethren. These are they who, as the Apostle declares, have "obtained a good report through faith," who have [260] pleased God in their day and generation, because

they have believed “that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him³⁴” And so they have come to Him; and they shall receive their reward, when “they with us shall be made perfect.”

We learn then that Faith - faith in God, faith in all that God has made known to the individual believer - this is the common characteristic of all God’s servants, the testimony which in their lives, if not through their words, has been borne to their fellowmen, and the victory by which they have individually overcome the world.

But the knowledge of God’s purpose to which men have attained has been different at different periods, gradually growing and increasing in extent, as He has been pleased to make Himself known. Thus, before the Deluge, Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and others whose names have not been made known to us, but are written in the Book of Life, testified by faith to a world which hated and rejected them. This was the period of the infancy of the human race. What knowledge God had revealed concerning Himself was accepted by the faithful few, and rejected by the many. By the latter the proclamation of the coming of the Lord to judgement was scorned and disregarded,

³⁴ Heb 11:6

the paths of righteousness, to which even the conscience in all men testifies, were forsaken; and so judgement overtook them, and the world of the ungodly was overthrown.

After the Flood, in no very long time, all distinct knowledge of God, even to the extent which had hitherto been revealed, was gradually obscured, and was vanishing from the thoughts and memory of mankind, when the Lord revealed Himself to Abram. In order that a righteous seed might be preserved among men, Abram was called and separated from among the families of the earth, that he and his seed might be a holy nation, a peculiar people. To him God made a fuller revelation of His purpose than had been hitherto vouchsafed (or, if vouchsafed, it had been lost), promising that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. This promise He confirmed, entering into covenant with Abram, giving him the name of Abraham [261], the sign and pledge of the number of his future seed; and engaging to be his and their God, and to give to them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. And again the same promise and covenant He attested with an oath on the Mount Moriah, and subsequently confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob. They conveyed a distinct and definite assurance of an inheritance on earth, and established a basis for all those higher promises and revelations

of a heavenly glory which were more fully, but still imperfectly, revealed through the Prophets which came after.

The next step in the dealings of God with Man was the giving of the Law. This was in some sort a limitation on the previous promises, which were made through Abraham to all nations, and which, indeed, will never be realized to the nations, until Israel shall have been admitted to that new Covenant of which the Prophets speak. Nevertheless, as regards the children of Israel, it was at the time a great advancement; and as regards all nations, it was a step onward towards the ultimate fulfilment of God's purposes in the whole earth. Hitherto the Lord had revealed His character and purposes in words of promise: now He was about to commence the actual fulfilment of them. Hitherto He had made Himself known to His chosen servants by word and vision: now He was about to reveal Himself in acts and works patent to all men. Hitherto His presence had been vouchsafed from time to time, and at long intervals: now He was about to dwell in visible glory in the midst of His people, Israel - a presence and a glory which would have been permanently vouchsafed, and might have ensured the obedience of Israel to Christ, when He was sent into the world, but for the apostasy of those to whom so great a privilege was vouchsafed.

The Law was given as a necessary preliminary to the bringing in of the children of Israel to the land of promise. Previously to the giving of the Law, Israel was not a polity. In the giving of it, they were constituted a nation in the midst of the nations. And God was manifested to be their Legislator and their King. Moses and those who succeeded him were but princes and judges and officers under [262] Jehovah. The particular statutes, indeed, so far as they were municipal, were fitted to the circumstances of the people, and to the times that then were, and to the social condition of those to whom they were given; but they were such as no other nation possessed; they were calculated to train and advance them in righteousness and purity, and to preserve them from the wickedness which surrounded them, and from the vices which have invariably prevailed in every other nation when prosperous and powerful.

The Law manifested the character of God as the righteous Judge, the Awarder of just retribution to offenders. Not that God can be other than a just and righteous God, judging every man according to his works; or that under the Law men could be saved by works of righteousness, or otherwise than through faith; for, except through faith, no man can keep God's holy Law. But in the presence of a Law awarding penalties to every act of disobedience, God's anger

against all unrighteousness and ungodliness was made manifest, and sinful man was shut up to faith.

It is, however, more to our purpose to observe that that which especially distinguished the Law, is the revelation given therein of the Nature and attributes of God, through means of the ordinances of Worship ordained and appointed to Israel. The nations of the earth had corrupted even the traditions of Truth which had survived, by abominable superstitious and idolatrous practices. Israel, in becoming a nation, received holy rites of worship, wherein is shadowed and delineated the highest worship which can engage the heart and spirit and mind of man, even of that heavenly worship which Christ Himself, as High Priest and Head of His Church, redeemed and new-created in Himself, presents and offers in the very presence of God. All that can be known of God and of His infinite perfections - all that can be known of the relations of mankind to God, and of all the duties resulting therefrom - all to which Man will hereafter attain in the heavenly and spiritual condition to which he is called in Christ Jesus, are probably typified and adumbrated in the Law.

Thus, in delivering His people out of Egypt, in giving [263] them the Law, and bringing them into the land of promise, God did, in truth, make Himself

known by His Name "Jehovah." Thus did He educate and discipline and prepare them to receive the Gospel of the Kingdom, and, through faith, to enter thereinto.

The Law, then, contains the great revelation of God made to mankind before the coming of Christ. The psalms, for the most part, and the writings of the Prophets, are based upon the Law. These holy words of inspiration, especially the Psalms, were calculated to lead the people of God onward to higher and larger and more spiritual views of the character and nature of all that the Law enjoined, both as regards the statutes of righteousness and the appointed ordinances of worship. These higher views were elucidated also by the words of the Prophets, calling Israel and Judah to repentance; and the unprofitableness of the letter of the Law was shewn by the promises contained in the Prophets of a future and spiritual Covenant. And as ages passed by, and the time drew nearer and nearer when the Lord was to be born into the world, intimations more and more distinct were given of the character and work of Him that was about to appear. At length came John the Baptist into the wilderness of Judea, and preached, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

In all these successive stages in God's dealings with men before the coming of the Lord, we see that it

is only by degrees that God imparts the knowledge of Himself and of His purpose. Faith, then, is not dependent on knowledge, for some of the brightest examples of faith have been in times of comparative ignorance. How little had God revealed of His purpose in the days of Abraham! how limited was Abraham's knowledge! Yet was he "the father of the faithful!" In the simplicity of his heart he heard God's voice, and "went forth, not knowing whither he went." God bade him to slay his son - the child and heir of the promises made to him; and forthwith he took him to the mountain of sacrifice! How scanty was the knowledge possessed by David; and yet what faith and love and spiritual apprehension of the goodness and majesty of God [264] are breathed forth in his Psalms! It is faith, not knowledge, which is well-pleasing to God. Without faith, knowledge even of the highest mysteries is profitless: it does but increase the obstinacy and pride and rebellion of the natural heart, and arms man with weapons against God. But where faith exists, the mind, in proportion to its power and capacity, will always apprehend what God reveals; and in the exercise of faith both mind and heart are prepared and enabled to receive the Truth in the love of it. In fine, "without faith it is impossible to please God," or to receive grace or blessing from Him. Whereas the amount of knowledge actually acquired is, of necessity, at all times subject to a variety of limitations. It

must always depend upon the extent to which, at the time, God has made Himself known; the extent to which the revelation has reached the individual; and, moreover, the degree of intelligence which the individual possesses: for although God is able to reveal Himself as the object of love and of faith and of obedience to the spirit even of the most ignorant and untaught, even of a child, yet it by no means follows that with the spiritual apprehension there should be clear and definite ideas of truth in the understanding. One quality must be common to all who please God - viz., that whatever be the extent of their knowledge of Him and of His ways, there be in them, to the extent of their knowledge, a heart to fear and love, and obey and trust in Him.

This same great law or principle, which, as we have seen, is to be discerned in all God's dealings since the fall with mankind in general, is also to be found regulating His dealings with individual men in reference to their salvation. Our spiritual health depends, not so much on the extent of our knowledge, even of our knowledge about God, as on the condition of our heart. The amount and quality of our knowledge depends on our circumstances and our individual character: but conversion to God and faith in Him are absolute pre-requisites to any spiritual work in men. Our sin has entailed these consequences, that

our nature is perverse and our heart is alienated from God; and unless, by the action of God's good Spirit, aversion and distrust can [265] be banished, and we are brought to seek God, and, according to our knowledge, to love Him, and, however feebly, to trust in Him, our merciful and loving Father cannot work salvation.

Who that has watched the early action of grace upon the heart of the very young, or has stood by the death-bed of the ignorant and untaught, has not observed, - who that reflects is not conscious to himself, how much more can be apprehended concerning God in the spirit, than can be grasped by the understanding? Who can hesitate to admit that many times and in many ways God reveals Himself to the spirit when the mind is unfruitful, and that neither our love nor our trust in God is to be limited by our mere theological knowledge?

Keeping this principle in view until we shall be able to apply it immediately to our main subject, let us now go on to the fourth topic - viz., the Work which Christ has effected in His Incarnation, in His death, and in His resurrection and ascension.

IV. THE WORK OF CHRIST IN HIS

INCARNATION, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION

1. The Son of God was incarnate by becoming Man, - He was incarnate in our nature. Being Very God, Incarnate, it was impossible that He should sin. Such an imputation is an outrage against God, and therefore blasphemous: it is contradictory and absurd. Nevertheless, with this exception, He was made like unto us. The nature which He assumed was ours, under all those conditions of infirmity into which it had been brought by the fall. The flesh which He took was in itself mortal and corruptible; so that the Everliving One became capable of death. Body and mind and spirit were constituted with all those senses, affections, and natural desires which are vehicles of temptation; so that He, who in His Divine subsistence could not be tempted of evil, yet, having become Very Man, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."³⁵

Such was the nature that He took: but, in taking it, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Therefore that Holy One, that was born of the Blessed Virgin, was called the Son of [266] God. He was, and ever abides, Very God. He became Very Man, and He abides

³⁵ Heb. 4:15

abides Very Man, without confusion or admixture of Divine and Human. Therefore, in taking our nature, He sanctified it and kept it holy, not by transfusion of Divine prerogatives into the Humanity, not by personal exercise in the Humanity of those prerogatives; for this would be the commingling and confusion of the two natures: but through faith in God, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, who was bestowed upon Him without measure.

So then, by faith in God He lived perfect in holiness and in all righteousness; and by the Holy Ghost, thus given to Him without measure, He presented our nature in all its parts, a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God.

This was His work in becoming Incarnate. This was the sacrifice which through life He continually presented to the Father, and which was perfected and rendered complete by the endurance of the extremity of suffering, and finally by the laying down of His life, and the yielding up of body and soul to death.

2. What, then, in the next place, was the Work of Christ in His death?

This work must be regarded from two distinct points of view: (1) as a work which He, the Holy and

Innocent One, effected on our behalf and in our stead, who are guilty sinners; and: (2) as a work which, in His life and in His death, He wrought as our Head and Representative; and in which, therefore, they that are to be saved must participate.

From the first point of view we cannot better set forth the truth than by referring to the prophecy which Isaiah spake concerning Him, and which in His sufferings and death He fulfilled: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;³⁶" - "Surely He hath borne our griefs" ("our sins," as it is given in the Greek version of the Septuagint) "and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him" - (His own nation, that rejected and accused and betrayed Him, and followed Him with execrations to the cross, "did esteem Him") - "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [267] was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." - "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." - "He was cut off out of the land

³⁶ Isai 53:3, &c

land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken” (in the Greek of the Septuagint, “led away to death”). “He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth: yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief. When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed.” - “He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many.”

These words of Isaiah, interpreted literally, foretell that Christ should die for the sins of Israel, and that through His death Israel shall yet be brought back and restored to the favour of God, when His Kingdom shall be established on earth. But the thoughts expressed, and even the words employed by Isaiah, are reproduced in the Scriptures of the New Testament, testifying that Christ was to die, not for Israel only, but for the sins of the whole world. Thus applied, all that Isaiah says is confirmed and enlarged by those who spake and wrote after Christ had come. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh³⁷ (or beareth)” “away the sin of the world:” such is the testimony of John the Baptist. “The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many:³⁸” such are the words

³⁷ Joh 1:29

³⁸ Mat 20:28

of the Lord Himself. “We have proved,³⁹” says St. Paul, “both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” And then he adduces out of the Psalms sundry passages from which he draws the conclusion that “every mouth should be stopped, and all the world become guilty” (or “under judgement”) “before God.” He proceeds: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus⁴⁰: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, for the declaring of His righteousness in passing by the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; unto the declaring of His righteousness in [268] the time now present: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Again, we are told by St. Paul, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly⁴¹” - “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us - much more then, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the

³⁹ Rom 3:9-19

⁴⁰ Rom 3:23-26

⁴¹ Rom 5:6,8-10

death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Again, in sundry places, “Christ died for our sins⁴², according to the Scriptures⁴³;” - “He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;” - “He gave Himself for our sins⁴⁴.” - “He hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour⁴⁵;” - “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us⁴⁶;” - “He gave Himself a ransom for all⁴⁷.” And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, after referring to the first Covenant, under which the blood of the sin-offering that was slain was carried into the Holy Place within the Veil, he says, “Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the

⁴² 1 Cor 15:3

⁴³ 2 Cor 5:21

⁴⁴ Gal 1:4

⁴⁵ Eph 5:2

⁴⁶ Gal 3:13

⁴⁷ 1Tim 2:6

ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God?⁴⁸” Again, “Almost all things are by the Law purged (purified) with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the heavenly things themselves [should be purified] with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself:” - “nor yet that He should offer Himself often: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away” (or, bring to nought) “sin by the sacrifice of Himself;” and the [269] Apostle states two conclusions. As a victim, “Christ was once for all offered in order to bear the sins of many⁴⁹;” and as High Priest, “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins⁵⁰,” (He) “for ever sat down on the right hand of God.”

St. Peter, in like manner, tells us, “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold - but with the precious blood of Christ,

⁴⁸ Heb 9:11, &c

⁴⁹ Heb 9:28

⁵⁰ Heb 10:12

as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot;⁵¹ - “Christ suffered for us⁵²” - “who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes” (quoting the words of Isaiah) “ye were healed.” Again, “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh⁵³” - “Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh⁵⁴.”

So also St. John: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin⁵⁵”; - “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world⁵⁶”; - “Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because He laid down His life for us;⁵⁷” God “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins⁵⁸”; He “hath loved us and washed us from our

⁵¹ 1 Pet 1:13-19

⁵² 1 Pet 2:21-24

⁵³ 1 Pet 3: 18

⁵⁴ 1 Pet 4:1

⁵⁵ 1 Joh 1:7

⁵⁶ 1 Joh 2:2

⁵⁷ 1 Joh 3:16

⁵⁸ 1 Joh 4:10

sins in His own blood.⁵⁹” And lastly, in the vision of the courts of heaven vouchsafed to the Apostle, he sees the Lamb of God before the Throne - ”a Lamb as it had been slain;⁶⁰” and he hears the new song which, on His taking the sealed book from the hand of Him that sat on the throne, bursts forth from the heavenly company, “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.”

Such is the work which Christ effected in His death as taught in holy Scripture, and from these the following propositions are to be deduced.

First, we learn that although God is Very Love and abundant in mercy, nevertheless, as the inevitable consequence of our sin, a barrier has been interposed between God and man, which must be removed before His mercy can reach the sinner. The interposition of this barrier was *inevitable*, because God is not only Infinite Love, but also [270] perfect righteousness. Through sin (we are taught) we had become guilty before God, and were subject to His righteous condemnation: and so long as our guilt remained, His

⁵⁹ Rev 1:5

⁶⁰ Rev 5: 6,9-10

condemnation and just judgement would rest upon us.

Next, it is manifest that before this barrier could be removed and our guilt blotted out - before we could be delivered from the judgement of God, and His favour restored to us - the righteousness of God must be vindicated, and His justice satisfied.

Further, it is manifest that the way in which God has ordained that the vindication of His righteousness and the satisfaction to His justice should be brought about, is, that One should be found of spotless innocence and sufficient worth, who by the sacrifice of Himself might endure in His own Person the penalties due to our sins. This substitute must be One of spotless innocence, or he would be obnoxious to God's judgement on His own account. He must be of sufficient worth, in order that his sufferings and death on our behalf and in our stead, might, in the just judgement of God, be accepted by Him as a sufficient expiation of our guilt, a complete satisfaction to His righteousness, and an adequate ransom or price for our redemption; by whom, therefore, God might be propitiated - that is to say, God, in consideration of the sufferings and death of this innocent One, might, consistently with His own righteousness, have mercy

upon us sinners, and forgive us and embrace us in His love.

It has, indeed, been supposed by some, that to insist upon the necessity of propitiation or satisfaction to God's justice in order that He may forgive, is an impeachment of His mercy and love. It is pleaded also that the assertion of the necessity of propitiation or satisfaction by a sinless One on behalf and in stead of sinners, is contrary to natural justice; and that it is, therefore, irreconcilable with God's character that He should exact from the innocent - so they represent the matter - the penalty due to the guilty. They think, moreover - such is their conception of the Divine character, and of the condition of Man, or of his relation to God - that the penitence and faith of the sinner are a sufficient satisfaction [271] for his sins; that Man is capable, or can be rendered capable, of penitence and faith; or, if God's grace be needed, it will be vouchsafed without reference to, or necessity for, His being propitiated.

Those who advance this doctrine, if they profess Christianity, would have us to believe that the sacrifice of the Lord was a sacrifice only in the sense of His voluntarily submitting to it, in order that He might set us an example of self-denial and patience, and submission to the will of God; that, by such an example

of love, He might lead us to love Him, and thus to repent and to live for the future a life of obedience and self-denial; or (with a nearer approach to truth) might by His sufferings and death obtain for men that grace and power of God which may bring them back to Him.

But unless we altogether discard and reject every truth of Christianity, we shall not get rid of the supposed difficulty. If the sacrifice of One that is holy and innocent is made available to procure grace or salvation for those who through their sins must otherwise be lost - if *this* is admitted, then, after all, the sacrifice is vicarious and meritorious. The Just One suffers, that the unjust may not suffer; the Just One by His sacrifice obtains what the unjust could not procure by any power or merits of their own. Or *if this* be denied, if the unjust could obtain salvation without the sacrifice of the Just One, then we are left without any conceivable motive, or at least without any sufficient motive, for the sufferings which the Just One endured. The rejection, therefore, of the plain words of Scripture in their obvious meaning, and of the ideas of Sacrifice and Atonement everywhere conveyed, both in the Law and by the Prophets, and subsequently in the New Testament, on the plea that such doctrines are opposed to natural justice and to God's righteousness, has no more ground in reason than in revelation. On the contrary, if the sacrifice of Christ

be not vicarious, if our sins were not laid upon Him and expiated by Him, *then indeed* the sufferings of the holy and innocent Saviour would appear to our reason to be totally opposed to the justice and to the love of God, and to be contrary to His [272] character as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and further, the assertion that God, without reference to any satisfaction to His offended Law, will forgive the transgressions of His Law, impeaches His righteousness and nullifies His justice.

It is, however, a grievous misrepresentation of the truth which we are maintaining from the words of holy Writ, to represent God as an offended tyrant, and incapable of love or mercy until His vengeance had been satiated, and Himself propitiated by sufferings; or, again, to represent Him as exacting from the innocent a precise measure or weight of suffering, as an equivalent for the guilt of those who had sinned. We do not attempt to investigate or to define how it should have been that the sufferings of the Just One should be made available as a ransom or price for the unjust: we know that they were so. We do not speculate upon the nature or extent of those sufferings: we know that they were more than mortal man could endure: they terminated in death. But this we testify, - Love was not purchased with vengeance. Love was the source and origin from which the Sacrifice of Christ

proceeded, and in Love the Sacrifice was perfected. God did not need to be moved to love or compassion for His creatures. He is eternal and infinite Love, but He is also infinite holiness and truth: and the way which, in mercy and righteousness, He has devised for the redemption of the world and for the salvation of those that believe, brings forth into manifestation all His attributes, and proves them to be consistent with each other; not only vindicates His righteousness, but especially magnifies and demonstrates His loving-kindness and mercy, and His unsearchable wisdom also. In dying for us, Christ fulfilled that eternal purpose ordained by the Father in His infinite love.

It is, then, the love of God which prompted, His wisdom which devised, His mercy and goodness which carries out, that wonderful plan of redemption to which the passages quoted by us abundantly testify. "In this was manifested⁶¹" (as St. John tells us in another passage) "the love of God toward us, because that God sent His Only-Begotten [273] Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

⁶¹ 1 Joh 4:9,10

We say, therefore, that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He hath paid the ransom, and hath redeemed us unto God; not with silver or gold, but with His own most precious blood. He is the Lamb of God⁶², the Lamb for a sacrifice which God hath provided, which beareth and taketh away the sin of the world.

As under the Law the offerer laid his hands upon the victim,⁶³ and it was accepted for him to make an atonement for his soul; and as the High Priest⁶⁴ on the Day of Atonement laid both his hands on the head of the goat, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; so on this willing victim the Lord hath laid the iniquities of us all. In His own body on the tree He hath borne them, - on that tree to which, in His crucifixion, the handwriting which was against us was nailed and taken out of the way. He has suffered, the Just for unjust; and God, in entire conformity with His holiness and justice, is able to forbear and pass

⁶² Gen 22:8

⁶³ Lev 1:4,&c.

⁶⁴ Lev 24:21

over the sins which are past, and finally justify and hold guiltless them who believe in Him.

Because of this Sacrifice which God fore-ordained⁶⁵, and which Christ, before the foundation of the world, willingly undertook to offer on our behalf, it became possible that Very God should become Incarnate in the likeness of sinful flesh, and be found therein: for through His Sacrifice He was to sanctify the polluted nature which He assumed.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ 1 Pet 1:20

⁶⁶ Therefore, conversely, the Incarnation of the Son of God would have been impossible, unless our polluted nature had been sanctified before He assumed it.

It is true that the sacrifice through which it was sanctified was offered up on the cross at the close of His life: nevertheless, our nature was sanctified thereby before the Lord assumed it, because the sacrifice was fore-ordained of God and undertaken by Christ before the foundation of the world; and therefore it was effectual to remove that pollution of our nature, which otherwise would have made it impossible that the Son of God should become Incarnate in it. This is the argument of the passage in the text.

The word "sanctify" is not used here in the same sense as when we speak of personal holiness, or the attribute or spiritual quality of holiness. To sanctify by means of a sacrifice cannot have any such meaning. The sense in which it is used is that of hallowing or separating to the use or service of God. Thus the people were sanctified before the giving of the Law (Exod. xix.). Thus Moses sanctified Aaron and his sons (Exod. xxviii. and xxix.). Thus also the holy gifts in the Eucharist are sanctified in consecration; and so

Because of this Sacrifice, God hath from the beginning forborne and delayed the Day of Judgement, so that He might introduce his own plan of mercy and grace. Having respect thereto, He forbore with Mankind before Christ came and offered it. And at all times He forbears, not dealing with us our guilt has merited, in the severity of His judgement; but sparing us, giving space for repentance [274], and inviting and persuading us to come to Him for pardon and acceptance.

We conclude, therefore, that Christ, in His sufferings and death terminating a spotless life, bore the penalty of our sins, and in His own body expiated our guilt, and presented to God a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, atonement, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: that by His sacrifice the demands of righteousness are satisfied, so that God is just in passing by the sins that are past, and in remitting the sins of all those who believe. Therefore saith the Apostle, "God was in Christ, reconciling the

forth. Thus was our nature sanctified to God, and therefore, being polluted, was purified and cleansed in His sight.

As regards the perfect holiness of the Son of God in our nature, it is not treated of in this passage: but it is expressly and fully set forth in pages 265 and 266 in discoursing of the Work of Christ in His Incarnation, and in the subsequent pages; wherein we speak of His "spotless innocence" and His sinlessness, as absolutely necessary to the acceptance by God of His vicarious sacrifice for us.

world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.⁶⁷

Thus was effected the reconciliation of Man to God; the barrier which sin had erected was thrown down, and the way to pardon and acceptance opened to those who should repent and believe the Gospel. So far as we know or can judge, it could not have been accomplished in any other way. At least, we are sure that it could not have been accomplished in any way which would have been more effectual, or more in accordance with the Divine attributes.

But, in order to apprehend the complete work which Christ has wrought for us in His death, we must consider it from another point of view. For, secondly, Christ in His death fulfilled indeed as an Individual, on behalf of His fellow-men, a work which no other but Himself could have fulfilled: but also He ful-

⁶⁷ 2 Cor 5:19-21

filled it in the one nature common to Himself and to us.

In His work of vicarious sacrifice and propitiation, it is evident from all that we have said, that we as individuals could have no part, any more than we can partake of His own Eternal Godhead. The propitiatory Sacrifice accepted on our behalf, was offered by the Son of God Incarnate. If our sins had rested on our own heads, we should have [275] remained in perpetual impenitence, and gone away into eternal death, and everlasting banishment from God. Christ suffered for Sins from which, as an individual, He was wholly free; and by His Passion obtained of His Father, for those who were guilty, what otherwise they could never have obtained for themselves. Had we been left to ourselves, we should have received no more than the just reward of our deeds: but this Man had done nothing amiss; nor was there any necessity or compulsion laid upon Him, but that of voluntary Love. He had "power to lay down His life⁶⁸." - "No man took it from" Him. He "laid it down of Himself: therefore doth the Father love Him." He suffered of His own free will; because, if He had not died, our sins could never have been expiated, nor ourselves redeemed from everlasting death.

⁶⁸ John 10:18

Nevertheless, the nature in which He suffered was that very nature which we by our sins had polluted: and as none other but God could have redeemed us, so also, we may rest assured, it was equally necessary to our redemption that God should become incarnate in this nature of ours. In this nature of ours - in flesh substantially the same with our own - in a body derived from the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, and taken into personal union with Himself - hath the Son of God suffered and died, and offered up the perfect and sufficient Sacrifice for the sins which we in this same nature have committed.

This oneness of the nature in which our Blessed Lord condescended to take part with us, suggests one further thought.

As in His life, our nature in His Person was sanctified and brought into obedience to the will of God, so in His death, our nature in His Person passed out of the original condition of creation, with all the evils superadded and introduced through sin. Death, as we see in all nature, is not annihilation. It is the extinction of the earlier form of life. It dissolves the past, and leads to fresh combinations and forms of existence: nay, it is compatible with the continuance of the same vital power. As the naked seed committed to the ground rots and dies, in order that the living [276]

principle therein may be developed in a new and glorious form, so our nature, of which Christ is the Eternal Life, was in His Person, with all its infirmities and deficiencies, given up to death, in order that all that was weak and corruptible might pass away and become utterly extinct. He put off this body of humiliation, and buried it in the grave where all things are forgotten, in order that in Him and through Him it might emerge in glory and beauty.

In this manner the foundation has been laid for the whole superstructure of the work of mercy and grace. By the vicarious sacrifice of Christ our ransom has been paid, and the pardon of our sins procured; and in the same act of submission to death, the common lot of all men, Christ has, in our nature, destroyed him that hath the Power of death. Human nature, in His Person, has paid the debt, in order that Life and Immortality may become the lot of the inheritance of all who believe and are *spiritually* united unto Him.

3. Let us proceed to consider the work which our Lord has wrought in His resurrection from the dead and ascension to the right hand of God.

Christ, in condescending to assume our nature, willingly endured, as we have seen, all those infirmi-

ties which are inseparable from its present condition. Personally, He was incapable of error, as He was incapable of sin. Whatever might be the limitation of His knowledge, and “Very Man” is not omniscient, He could never, under any circumstances, be deceived or misled. In Him, as in all men, the functions of the mind were exercised in connexion with the organs of the body; and as He suffered in the body from weariness and privation and other infirmities, we cannot imagine that the reasonable soul should remain unaffected by the condition of the body.

But, in rising from the grave, the same body which in itself was originally mortal and frail, is now exempt from death, and is, in all its parts, for ever free from infirmity and decay. It remains, indeed, material in substance and limited in space; but, by the quickening power and operation [277] of the Holy Ghost - an operation of the manner or effects of which we have, in our present state of being, neither experience nor conception - that material body has become spiritual and replete with heavenly glory.

We may be quite certain that with this change in the material body of our risen Lord, the reasonable soul is also advanced, enlarged, and augmented in all its faculties, and the spirit is endowed by the Holy Ghost with heavenly powers - the powers which, in

relation to our present mortal condition, are called by the Apostle, “the powers of the world to come.⁶⁹” - “God hath highly exalted Him.” The whole being and nature of the risen Man has become heavenly and Divine; so that not only by reason of the dignity of His Person, but in the proper constitution of His being, in body, soul, and spirit, He is, in His resurrection from among the dead⁷⁰, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness. In Him the heavenly host behold, and soon shall we behold, the brightness of the Father’s glory⁷¹ and the express image of His Person - the object of worship and adoration to all created beings, the fit Temple and Dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.

For now, risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, He hath received the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, after a manner of which human nature, while yet subject to mortality, was incapable. The Holy Ghost, after this manner, was not given before that Jesus was glorified; nor was Jesus glorified before that He had suffered. He was not glorified until, having been raised from the dead, death had no more dominion over Him.

⁶⁹ Heb 6:5

⁷⁰ Rom 1:4

And as in His life and death it was our nature which He carried through the world and through the grave, so in His resurrection and ascension it is our nature which, in His Person, has been quickened from death to never-ending life, and has been exalted to such excellent glory. In Him for ever dwells the Holy Ghost, who, being Very God and Lord, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, has become the Spirit of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, God in our nature.

Thus far we have considered the perfection to which our [278] nature has been brought, through the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has indeed been advanced to so great a height of dignity and glory, that the Apostle Peter speaks of it as “Divine⁷².” But of what avail would it have been, if this perfection had been confined to the Person of the Son of God? Of what avail either to God or to Man?

As regards God, whatever be the perfection to which human nature has attained in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whatever glory in His ascension, whatever be the further growth and progress to which it may be advanced, Man’s nature will ever be infi-

⁷¹ Heb 1:3-6

⁷² 2 Pet 1:4

nitely remote from the infinitude of God Himself. To become incarnate can add nothing to God; nor can it be other than an act of wondrous condescension that the Lord should vouchsafe to become Man, and to remain Man!

As regards Man, what advantage could we have derived if we were ever to have remained the same feeble, changeable creatures as now we are, on whose foreheads, even in our best estate, “Vanity of vanities” must have been inscribed?

But now, in rising from the dead, Christ has become the First-fruits of a glorious harvest. Having received the Holy Ghost, our risen Saviour, by the same Spirit, henceforth communicates eternal life to those whom the Father gives to Him, even to those who, by His prevenient grace, turn to God and are made obedient to the Gospel. This is the grace which in the Gospel is presented to us.

Therefore; although we know and have insisted that the death of Christ was not only necessary in order to our salvation, but is in truth the very basis on which the work of salvation is upreared, - nevertheless, we know also that He became Incarnate, not only, or chiefly, that He should die, but that He should live for ever. By His death He redeemed and reconci-

reconciled us⁷³; but by His life He saves us. He lives, that He may be the Giver of life, and for ever abide the Fountain of life - yea, our Very and Eternal Life.

For, in His resurrection from the dead, the Lord from heaven has become the root and origin, of the New Creation [279], and is declared to be the Second Man, the last Adam. He has been made the Quickening Spirit; and by the Holy Ghost which dwells in Him, He communicates the Spirit of life to all who come to Him. Quickened from the death of sin, they are made children of God, and members of the one mystical and spiritual Body, of which He is the Head, and which is His Body. Thus He invites them to Himself and makes them partakers of His own Divine nature, as by resurrection it subsists through the power of the Holy Ghost. They become of His flesh and of His bones: and He becomes their life. Dead to sin, crucified to the world, they are raised with Him and seated with Him in heavenly places; and when He shall appear the second time unto salvation, they shall be changed into His image, and appear with Him in glory.

And who are they who come to Christ, and are thus made one with Him? Even those whom the Fa-

⁷³ Rom 5:10

ther “hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world⁷⁴,” - “having predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,” Therefore, when in due time and according to His providential care and ordering, the Word of the Gospel, comes to them, they hear and obey the calling of the Lord. They repent and turn to Him. Confessing their sins with true contrition, they embrace the promise of forgiveness. In obedience to His word, they approach to the Font of Baptism, and in that Font they are born again of water and of the Spirit. Baptized into the death of Christ, they are quickened with His life. “Buried with Him in Baptism, they are therein also risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead⁷⁵.” - “Planted in the likeness of His death, they shall be planted also in the likeness of His resurrection.⁷⁶” And thus it comes to pass that, being “dead in trespasses and sins,” - “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He hath loved them, hath quickened them together with Christ,⁷⁷” - “and hath raised them up together, and hath seated them together in heavenly places in

⁷⁴ Eph 1:4-5

⁷⁵ Col 2:11-12

⁷⁶ Rom 6:5

⁷⁷ Eph 2:1,4-6

Christ.” By the same acts by which He quickened and raised and glorified Christ [280], He quickens and raises and glorifies them that are in Baptism made one with Christ.

Thus we have been brought, in the course of our argument, to holy Baptism, which is the door of entrance into the House of God, of whose family, through our union with Christ, we are made members, and children of the resurrection. And we may now proceed to our next topic:-

V. THE RELATIONS AND DEALINGS OF GOD TOWARDS MAN SINCE THE DAY OF PENTECOST, AND THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THOSE THAT ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

In one respect those relations and actings are the same now as they have been from the beginning. As we have already said, at all times, and whatever the extent at the time of the revelation which God hath made of Himself, the first and preliminary work of God is to convert unto Himself the alienated heart of Man. “Turn ye unto Me, from whom ye have revolted:” such is ever the word which He addresses to His sinful creatures. When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, the word was still “Repent;” though he enforced it by adding, “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When the Lord commenced His Ministry He also proclaimed, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.” And when Peter with the Eleven first commenced their Ministry on the Day of Pentecost, and declared that this Jesus had God raised up and made Him Lord and Christ, the same exhortation forms part of his concluding sentence: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the

Holy Ghost⁷⁸.” As in every former Dispensation, and every former stage of God’s dealings with man, so now, in order to the reception of holy Baptism, God calls men to repentance, and by His Holy Spirit He moves their hearts to repent. Repentance - the conversion of the heart to God, sorrow for sin, and entire submission to the just judgement of God - this has been ever, and is now, the absolutely necessary condition of the work of grace in Man [281]. And belief in God’s revelation, so far as it has come to us, and entire trust in His unmerited Love, are the necessary concomitants of repentance.

But the revelation which God now calls on men to believe is the revelation of himself in Christ. It is no longer a revelation of His purpose to *send* a Redeemer: it is the revelation concerning Him that has been sent. It is not only a proclaiming of the Name of the Lord, that He is “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;” but it reveals the infinite Love which He has manifested, in that He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all; and sent Him to be the propitiation for the sins of the world. It is the revelation of that loving Saviour who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself of the glory

⁷⁸ Acts 2:33

which He had with the Father from all eternity, and took upon Him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Oh, how doth this Love appeal to the conscience! with what power does it come to the heart of every one that will hear! How does it penetrate and pierce even to the inner man, convicting us of our guilt, filling us with shame and loathing at the unveiling of our sin, striking the flinty heart, and drawing forth the outflow of love and gratitude!

This, however, is but a partial view of God’s dealings with the children of men under the present Dispensation. In order to have some idea of the grace which has come to us, we must look not merely to the moral tendency of the truths which are declared to us in the Gospel; we must also have regard to the power with which they are enforced. The fact that Christ has become Incarnate, and abides for ever in our nature, is a cogent argument; but it is also a saving power. Becoming Man, He has made all men His brethren; and receiving the Holy Ghost, the Father hath given Him “power over all flesh, that He may give Eternal Life to as many as the Father has given to Him⁷⁹.”

⁷⁹ John 17:2

Far be from us the heresy of those who have imagined that Christ in His Incarnation has brought all men into such [282] unity with Himself, that nothing more is needed in order to their reception of the full grace of the Gospel, than that they should awake to the consciousness of all that Christ has done for them. But yet it is very certain that Christ, in becoming Man, has in some sort laid hold of all men, and has made Himself one with them in the bond of our common nature. So real is this union, that St. Paul argues that forasmuch as Christ is risen, all men must rise. The resurrection of Christ is the pledge and the proof - nay, it is the motive power - of the resurrection of all men. We may, therefore, well believe that through this union many and great advantages have accrued to the children of men⁸⁰; and that God through Christ has, by His Holy Spirit, a nearer and readier access to their heart and spirit than He had before.

We must further bear in mind that since the Day of Pentecost God speaks not to men through prophets acting independently - if we may so express it - sent at long intervals, and for the most part only to one nation. Now He has sent His Church into the world. On the Day of Pentecost He that had ascended, and

⁸⁰ 1 Cor 15:12-22

received gifts for men, gave gifts unto men. Thenceforth God has not dealt with men as a God afar off: He has not dealt with them as One that cannot be known, dwelling in the invisible, abiding in His own infinitude, and moving them by His Spirit in such wise as that His actings passed all knowledge. Now He speaks to them through the lips of their fellow-men⁸¹. He deals with them now through the actings of their fellow-men - the members and ministers of Christ - in whom, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, Christ Himself is present, speaking and acting, and ministering the same Spirit, through the instrumentality of these, His members and ministers.

But if such is the relation of God towards all men, and such the benefits which have resulted to all through the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, and the reception by Him of the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, what are we to say of the relation in which God now stands to those whom He has chosen out of the world, and from among [283] their fellow-men, and made them His children, members of Christ, and with Christ fellow-heirs of God? How are we to estimate the exceeding grace and benefits vouchsafed to them?

⁸¹ John 3.

This relation and these benefits are amply set forth in the Scriptures of the New Testament: and from the same Scriptures we also learn that it is through Christian Baptism that we are brought into this relation, and, are made partakers in these benefits, - through *Christian* Baptism, as distinguished from all previous rites of Baptism.

The practice of Baptism, or washing with water, as a religious rite, was well known among the Jews. It was the ordinary mode enjoined by the Law of Moses for purifying those who by that Law were pronounced unclean; and it is said, and no doubt truly said, to have been one of the rites employed in admitting proselytes to the privileges of the Covenant made with Israel as the peculiar people of God.

There is no doubt that washing with water was enjoined upon Israel as a preliminary to their admission into covenant with God on Sinai. It is contained in the command to Moses that he should sanctify the people. If even their clothes were to be washed, much more their bodies. The first act in the consecration of Aaron and his sons was to wash them with water: and after consecration, the priests that were clean must, before entering upon any holy service, wash their hands and feet. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest was directed in the first place to wash his

whole body with water; and at all times when they had become unclean in any of those ways pointed out by the Law, which indeed were intended to typify the various ways in which heart and conscience are defiled through sin, one mode of purification is invariably enjoined: both priests and people, when defiled, must wash the whole body.

The fact that this rite of washing was thus used in admission to the Covenant of the Law, and as a rite - for it *was* a rite - by the priests in entering on the service of the Holy Place, for the restoration also, on all occasions, of the unclean, and for initiation into holy office, gives great probability [284] to the tradition⁸² that proselytes were baptized before they could be admitted to the full privileges of the Covenant, or even allowed to go into the Court of the Temple to of-

⁸² By three things did Israel enter into the Covenant - by Circumcision, and Baptism, and Sacrifice. Circumcision was in Egypt; as it is written, "No uncircumcised shall eat thereof" (Exod. xii. 48). Baptism was in the wilderness before the giving of the Law; as it is written, "Sanctify them, to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes" (Exod. xix. 10). And Sacrifice, as it is said, "And He saint young men of the sons of Israel, which offered burnt offerings," &c. Exod. xxiv. 5.) And so in all ages, when a Gentile is willing to enter into the Covenant, "He must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice." Maimonides in *Mischna*, in *Asurei Biah*, c. 1, s. 1-6, &c., as quoted by Ainsworth in *Pentat*. See also Maimon. *Porta Mosis*, *Praefat*. in *Seder Kodashim*; Oxon, 1655, p. 273.

fer sacrifice on their initiation. But whether the practice rested on a Divine authority or not, the tradition thus received among them shews in what way the Jews regarded Baptism. Nor should we omit to refer to the many passages in the Prophets and Psalms in which the same figure of washing is applied to the purifying of the conscience from guilt, and of the spirit from the pollution of sin; and to the new Covenant which God has promised to make with Israel, when He shall restore them to the promised Land.

When, therefore, John, the forerunner of the Lord, came into the wilderness of Judea, and proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, it created no difficulty in the minds of those who received him as a prophet, that he also preached the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. With the exception, perhaps, of the chief rulers, all classes of the Jews - not only publicans and sinners, but Pharisees and Sadducees - went out, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. If he was inspired to publish the near approach of the kingdom of heaven, not even the rulers would dispute his authority to administer this rite of preparation for the kingdom: and yet it is manifest that this act of John in baptizing was not considered a light matter. If they had felt able to deny his mission as a prophet, they would certainly have denied his authority to baptize.

“Why baptizest thou, then⁸³,” said the messengers of the rulers to him, “if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?” [285].

But let us examine a little more closely into the nature of John’s Baptism, seeing that it is especially contrasted in Scripture with Christian Baptism⁸⁴.

The reception of John’s mission by so many of the Jews is a great evidence of the grace and power of God vouchsafed at this particular period, and of the mighty working of the Spirit of God among them. Whenever, indeed, God sends His messengers, we may be sure that He is present to bestow His grace; and as John was the greatest of the prophets that had been sent in the earlier Dispensations, so (we may be sure) his mission and work was accompanied by a larger measure of the power and influence of the Spirit of God. The whole nation was moved! Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. All men counted him to be a prophet. Even the rulers who did not acknowledge him, did not venture openly to oppose: nay, from various motives - some of them, no doubt, from high and good motives - they were impressed

⁸³ Joh 1:25

⁸⁴ Acts 18:25, to 19:3

pressed with the necessity of examination, and sent priests and Levites expressly to inquire of him.

And as the power of God was largely present, so were the results of this mission of John great and important. John's Baptism was no empty ceremony: it is nowhere so treated in holy Scripture, however strongly contrasted therein with Christian Baptism. It was a great act of God towards Israel, a work of preparation for the reception of the Gospel - an outward and visible sign of that condition of penitence for the transgressions of the existing Covenant, and of faith in God's promise to send forth His Christ, which was the necessary preparation for the reception of the Gospel; and in which, if they had persevered, they would have been enabled to acknowledge Him when manifested. And had they as a nation acknowledged Him, they should as individuals have received the full blessing of the Gospel, and, nationally and collectively, the full benefits of the Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed for ever. But it was not so to be. They did not persevere. They did not abide in penitence and faith. They betrayed the King of Israel, the King from heaven, into the hands of [286] the Romans and the mission of John, so far as regards the salvation of the nation collectively, has but shadowed forth that future time of preparation for the age which is yet to come, when

the words spoken by Malachi shall be fulfilled. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse⁸⁵."

But though the nation failed, yet did the ministry of John accomplish that for which in the purpose of God he was sent; and the full import of it may be seen in this, that even Jesus, having been made under the Law, must fulfil all righteousness by receiving baptism from John, before the Holy Ghost should come down upon Him, and seal and anoint Him for the work of His ministry on earth, before the Father should proclaim Him to be His well-beloved Son, and manifest Him to Israel. "That He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water⁸⁶."

But however important was the place of John's Baptism, we need go no further than to the words of John himself to show how far more important is Christian Baptism; its character incomparably higher, and its effects and benefits incomparably greater! "I

⁸⁵ Mal 4:5-6

⁸⁶ Joh 1:31

indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I: - He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire⁸⁷.” And long after the Holy Ghost had been sent down on Pentecost from the risen and ascended Lord, the distinctive character and higher nature of Christian Baptism was made evident in the conduct of St. Paul towards certain disciples whom he had met with at Ephesus. They had been baptized by John, and apparently believed in the testimony of John concerning Christ. Nevertheless he required them to be again baptized “in the name of the Lord⁸⁸,” in order that through the laying on of his hands they might receive the Holy Ghost.

The testimony, then, of John is that, while he himself baptized with water unto repentance, He that should [287] come after, even Christ, was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. The word “baptize,” as referred to the Holy Ghost and the expression, “baptize with fire,” are evidently figurative. Are we, then, to understand that Christian Baptism is not a baptism with water, but is purely a spiritual operation, wrought by Christ without material or visible means? The other passages in holy Scripture to which

⁸⁷ Mat 3:11

⁸⁸ Act 19:1-6

we are about to refer, will abundantly answer this question. They will shew us what Christian Baptism is in its outward form, as well as in its true essence - what it is, and what are its effects.

Let us turn to our Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus. When Nicodemus came to Him acknowledging His divine mission, the Lord met him with these words: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God⁸⁹.” When Nicodemus objected, “How can a man be born a second time?” the Lord answered him, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And He added, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” [Therefore] “do not wonder that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” - “As the wind bloweth,” and you cannot detect its source or follow its ultimate career, “so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

These words of our Lord teach us that through natural generation and birth man derives a fleshly nature. He is formed of the earth, and so long as he remains earthy, his inheritance cannot extend beyond the earth: at least, it cannot be in heaven. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth

⁸⁹ Joh 3:1,&c.

corruption inherit incorruption.⁹⁰ Therefore the Lord, who was Himself thereafter to baptize with the Holy Ghost, declares beforehand that, in order to enter into the kingdom of God, there must be a second birth. He that has been born of the flesh must be born again: and this second birth is a birth of water and of the Spirit. A second birth - a birth of water and of the Spirit; not two second births, - one of the Spirit, and another of water, or water and the Spirit. One birth [288], from which, therefore, water cannot, according to God's ordinance, be disjoined.

It is a birth of water. In the wisdom of God, a visible element is employed; for man is a creature endowed with bodily senses, and through the senses the understanding is approached.

It is a birth of the Spirit; for the kingdom of heaven is in its essential nature spiritual, in the Holy Ghost; and none but those who are spiritual, of the Holy Ghost, can be citizens of that kingdom.

Let us proceed further. This same Jesus - who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and who at His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and not before, was to receive that promise of the Father - de-

⁹⁰ 1 Cor 15:50

layed His ascension for forty days, that He might be with His disciples and speak to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. In this interval He commanded them to "teach⁹¹" (or make disciples of) "all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" or, as the same event is recorded in another Gospel, He bade them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; adding these words, "He That believeth and is baptized shall be saved⁹²." Nevertheless, before He left them, He made them understand that they were not to attempt to fulfil these injunctions until a great change had passed upon them. The Spirit was not yet given; an until He was given, they had not the power to obey His word. He "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but *wait* for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me: for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence⁹³."

Here we see why they were to wait: even because they were not yet themselves baptized with the Holy Ghost: because they were not yet born of the Spirit

⁹¹ Mat 28:18-19

⁹² Mark 15:15-16

⁹³ Acts 1:4-5

and were not yet spiritual! None but they that are spiritual, born of the Spirit, can be employed by Christ who has ascended, as members of His Body and instruments of His will, in communicating the spiritual life of the new birth and the [289] anointing with the Holy Ghost, which were now to be bestowed on those who should believe through the word of these disciples. These disciples, therefore, in whom the spiritual and mystical Body of Christ came into manifestation, by whom, as His ministers and members of His Body, He was to baptize those whom the Father should bring to Him, must first be baptized themselves. All of them probably, some of them without doubt, had received the baptism of John. This, as we have seen, could not avail for admission to the kingdom of heaven. Probably, also, they had all been baptized at the word and under the immediate authority of the Lord. But this Baptism, though not John's Baptism, but Christ's, was not and could not be complete until the Holy Ghost should be given. Therefore, In obedience to the word of the Lord, they waited!

But within ten days after He had left them, the promise was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came down upon them in the likeness of cloven tongues of fire, which sat upon each of them: and in that act of the Lord, from the right hand of the Father, all was con-

summated. They were now spiritual, born again of the Spirit: and by the same act they were endowed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, sealed and anointed. Their Birth of the Spirit, their Baptism with the Holy Ghost, was complete. In this first instance, in sending down the Holy Ghost on those who were to baptize the rest, no further act of Baptism was deemed necessary; nor, so far as we can judge, was possible.

And now that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, we can ascertain how they understood the words of John, the words of the Lord to Nicodemus, the commandments of the Lord to themselves. We can discover whether they considered Baptism with water to be a necessary rite of the Christian Church.

The first opportunity of fulfilling these words and commandments of the Lord was on this very same Day of Pentecost on which they had received the gift. The Holy Ghost⁹⁴ had come down upon them, and His presence had been manifested by the tongues of fire which sat upon them, and [290] by the words which they spake by the Holy Ghost, declaring in prophetic power, and in all manner of languages, the wonderful works of God. Attracted by these marvels,

⁹⁴ Acts 2

the multitude of Jews and proselytes, who had come up to the Feast, came together where the Apostles and disciples were assembled. To these Peter, standing up with the Eleven, preached, and taught them concerning Christ: and when they who heard were pricked in their hearts and demanded of the Apostles what they should do, Peter said to them. "Repent, and be BAPTIZED, *every one of you*, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off⁹⁵." First, he tells them, "Repent;" secondly, "be baptized;" thirdly, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." - "then" (we are told) "they that gladly received his word WERE BAPTIZED."

There can be no doubt, then, that the Apostles required of those who received their word, that they should be baptized. As little can we doubt that when they called upon the converts to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, they did so in fulfilment of the Lord's command, bidding them to baptize those whom they should make disciples, "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The proper form of receiving penitent believers to Baptism

⁹⁵ Acts 2:38

in the Name of Jesus Christ, is that it be administered in the Name of the adorable Trinity.

And this is Christian Baptism, in which is bestowed upon those who repent and believe the remission of their sins. It is not as was John's Baptism - a Baptism of *repentance* for the remission of sins - a rite which was only a sign and profession of that repentance which prepared men for the Gospel; as it is said, "They were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins." It is a Baptism for the remission of sins of those who have already repented, and are already believing the Gospel.

There is one other matter suggested by these words of St. Peter to those converted on the Day of Pentecost, which it may be profitable to consider.

In exhorting his hearers to be baptized, St. Peter added [291], "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Occasion may be taken from these words to object that the Apostle appears so to distinguish between Baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, as to convey the idea that the Holy Ghost does not accompany, and is not given in, the Christian rite of Baptism, and that even in the Christian Church Baptism is only a sign of grace which God otherwise and subsequently bestows. It might, perhaps, be answered,

that the words of St. Peter do not necessarily imply that it is after Baptism when this promised gift of the Holy Ghost is to be received. But it is certain from other parts of Scripture that there is a gift of the Holy Ghost which Christ sends down and imparts after Baptism, and to those already baptized. This post-baptismal gift, therefore, is assuredly to be distinguished from any gift or operation of the Holy Ghost bestowed in Baptism. It is a gift, moreover, manifested by those outward signs of power and glory which had drawn the multitude together on this occasion, and of which St. Peter had spoken in his previous address, when he said, "Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the PROMISE of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." It may, therefore, well be believed that St. Peter referred especially (though, it may be, not exclusively) to this subsequent gift: for it was the outward demonstration of the glory of the Holy Ghost, and not His life-giving power in the new birth, which had appealed to the senses of these converts.

There is, then, a gift of the Holy Ghost which is to be distinguished from Baptism with water. But the gift of the Holy Ghost in the new birth - that life-giving, regenerating power by which Christ, the Quickening Spirit, quickens by the Holy Ghost those

whom the Father gives to Him - cannot be disjoined from Baptism with water. The second birth, the birth which is necessary to those who will enter into the kingdom of God, is a birth of *water* and of the Spirit. There cannot, we have said, be two second births: there is but one; and in what other way can that *one birth of water* and of the Spirit be received, except through that [292] ordinance of Baptism with water which the Lord enjoined on His Apostles to administer to all disciples, and which, as soon as there were penitent and believing converts, crying out, "What must we do?" the Apostles called on them to receive. Therefore, forasmuch as in Christian Baptism, by the operation and presence of the Holy Ghost, the penitent believer receives the second birth, he has thereby become a competent candidate and an expectant heir of the kingdom of God. Rightly, therefore, may he now look to receive the further promise, even that gift of the Holy Ghost, which is, as we know, the earnest of the inheritance of which he is heir, and the first-fruits of the kingdom to which he is to be admitted. God deals with us in this Dispensation of His grace as He has dealt, in His infinite wisdom, with Christ, our Forerunner. For Christ was first raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father; and then, and not before, He received the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, as St. Peter, in his words already quoted, has expressly declared. Those, therefore, who

are baptized into Christ and born again, and those only, can claim, they only ordinarily receive, this gift: although on one occasion, presently to be considered, God saw fit to bestow on those not yet baptized the like gift to that which He would ordinarily bestow on those already baptized.

In the next passage of Scripture in which mention is made of Baptism,⁹⁶ we have a further exemplification of the practice of the first disciples in administering Baptism to those converted by their word; and also of the distinction between that sacrament and the gift of the Holy Ghost subsequently conferred on those baptized. In the eighth chapter of the Acts we read, that in consequence of the persecution which followed upon the death of Stephen, all the Church was scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles, who abode together in Jerusalem. Thereupon the deacon Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And when they believed Philip, preaching concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were all baptized, both men and women; but when the Apostles at [293] Jerusalem heard of this, they sent two of their own number, Peter and John; who, when they had come

⁹⁶ Acts 8.

down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

From this passage we deduce that although in Baptism they that believe are born again of water and of the Spirit, nevertheless that gift of the Holy Ghost in which the Holy Ghost falls upon the believer and in said emphatically to be received by him, is ordinarily conveyed, subsequently to Baptism, through the prayers and the laying on of the hands of Apostles.

In the passage of Scripture, however, to which we now proceed, the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed neither after nor in Baptism. In this instance the Lord was pleased to send down the Holy Ghost on certain who had believed the preached Word, but had not yet been baptized: and yet, notwithstanding, these persons were subsequently baptized by the command of the Apostle of the Lord.

The passage to which we refer is that contained in the tenth and part of the eleventh chapters of the Acts, in which passage we have the account of the first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the immediate results.

Hitherto the Apostles and disciples had refrained from preaching the Word to any other but to the circumcised. Now the time had come, in the progress of God's purpose, when the Gospel must be preached to the Gentiles also, to those who were not included in the Covenant of Israel under the Law. In order to bring this about, God had prepared the hearts of certain pious Gentiles in the city of Caesarea - namely, Cornelius⁹⁷, a centurion, and his household, and certain of his friends. To this centurion an angel appeared in a vision, and directed him to send to Peter, who was at Joppa, who should speak to him from God. But there was another work of preparation to be accomplished. Will Peter (who had hitherto preached to Jews only) accept the invitation? It is evident that he, in common with his countrymen, had hitherto counted it to be unlawful for a [294] Jew to keep company with a Gentile. For this also the Lord provided. By a vision three times repeated He shewed to Peter that the Gentiles were no longer to be counted common or unclean: and, as a consequence, that it was not necessary that they should be admitted as proselytes to the Covenant of Israel before the Gospel should be preached to them. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

⁹⁷ Acts 10

While Peter was still occupied in meditating on this vision, and doubting in himself (the word implies great hesitation and perplexity) what it might mean, the messengers from Cornelius arrived; and the Spirit said to Peter, "Behold, three men seek thee; arise and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Thus prepared and thus instructed, St. Peter went with the men to Caesarea; and on entering the house of Cornelius, he found both Cornelius and his friends assembled and waiting to receive him. Many had come together. St. Peter, after hearing the account of Cornelius's vision, commenced with these words: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." He then preached Christ unto them. He reminded them that God had anointed Jesus for His ministry, and of His works of goodness and power. He told them of His sufferings, death, and resurrection; of His having been ordained to be Judge of quick and dead; and of the testimony of the Prophets, that "through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The inspired historian proceeds to narrate that "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word: and they of the Circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy

Ghost: for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.” - “And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the Circumcision⁹⁸ [295] contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning,” and after declaring how that the Holy Ghost had fallen on these Gentiles, he concluded as follows: “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?”

Thus did God convey to the believers from among the Circumcision the lessons which they needed, in order to be fellow-workers in His further purpose towards the Gentiles. In shortly reviewing these lessons, we may observe in them the confirmation of our previous conclusions with regard to God’s dealings with mankind before the Gospel, as well as of the conclu-

⁹⁸ Acts 9:2-3,&c.

sions at which we have arrived at this point of our argument concerning the nature and effects of Christian Baptism.

St. Peter, by the vision vouchsafed to himself, and not less by the vision vouchsafed to Cornelius, of which Cornelius had informed him, was instructed that by the one offering of Christ, once for all, God had sanctified all men, both Jews and Gentiles; so that in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of Him. He also learned at least thus much, - that the good tidings that God hath so loved the world that He hath sent His Son to die for the sins of the world, may be preached freely to the uncircumcised Gentile as to the Jew; and that it was not necessary, in order to the reception of the Gospel, that men should be brought into the Covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai. Therefore the Apostle, having received this revelation of the will of God, went to Cornelius, and without further hesitation preached the death and resurrection of the Lord, the judgement of all men committed to Him, and the remission of sins through faith in Him.

But remission of sins is not necessarily admission to the kingdom of heaven. Remission of sins is a gift and grace of God, freely bestowed through Christ; and the inheritance [296] of the glory of the kingdom

is a further act and gift of God. And the Lord proceeded, by a marvellous exercise of His own sovereign power, to make it manifest that the Gentiles also were fit candidates for admission to the kingdom, and were destined through faith to be fellow-heirs with the Jews of the eternal inheritance. Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, who had on Pentecost sent down the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles, sending them into the world to baptize those who should believe through their word, and by the laying on of their hands to bestow the Holy Ghost on those who should be baptized, now upon these Gentiles, who were not only uncircumcised, but unbaptized, sent down the Holy Ghost, not through the ministry of His Apostles, but immediately from Himself. Well might they of the Circumcision who believed, and had come with Peter, be astonished when they heard the Gentiles speak with tongues and glorify God.

What, then, was the effect upon St. Peter's mind, and what further did he gather from this wonderful manifestation of the grace and power of God?

First, he recognized that the gift bestowed upon these Gentiles was the like gift which had already been bestowed upon themselves, who had believed in the Lord Jesus. He recognized it as a further fulfilment of the promise of the Lord, when He said, "John

indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." He recognized it, then, as the Baptism with the Holy Ghost - as the like gift of the Holy Ghost which it was the office of the Apostles to bestow, through the laying on of their hands, on those already baptized.

But in the next place, although the Gentiles had received this gift, had they received from the Lord Jesus all that they needed to receive? Had they received that second birth - that birth of water and of the Spirit, the gift which Jesus would bestow on those that believe, which He had commissioned the Apostles to minister in Christian Baptism, and without which no man, be he Jew or Gentile, can enter, can see, the kingdom of God? And if they had not received it, was it the will of God, and therefore the duty of [297] the Apostle, that they should be brought to holy Baptism and become the recipients of this gift, and be made the subjects of the operation of the Holy Ghost bestowed therein? The answer to these questions, given clearly and distinctly, is to be gathered from the course which St. Peter pursued.

If these men, in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, had also received all that is comprehended in the second birth, - if, because they had received the *gift* of the Spirit, they had also received all that is

comprehended in the *birth* of the Spirit, - would it not have been a profanation of God's holy ordinance to propose that they should be baptized? Would not this be to reduce Christian Baptism to an empty ceremony - a Jewish rite? Would not the question arising in the mind have been, How can these be baptized, who have received all that Christ can bestow upon them - all that Baptism represents and is ordained to communicate?

But again, if they had not received that second birth which Christian Baptism is ordained as the means and instrument of imparting, then in that case, after what had occurred, how could the ministers and servants of Christ refuse to receive them to the sacred rite? In considering the answer to be given to this question, we must give due weight to the difficulties which would occur to the minds of the Jewish believers in reference to the admission of uncircumcised men into covenant with God, and the sources and grounds of those difficulties.

The prophecies of the Old Testament abound with promises of a future kingdom, which is to bear rule over all nations upon earth. These promises are made to Israel. The Lord is to be King, and He is to reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. And the kingdom and nation that will not serve Jerusalem shall

perish. Accordingly the Angel, in announcing to Mary that she should be the mother of Jesus, declared to her, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." He was "born King of the Jews." These promises are unrevoked; and when fulfilled [298], although replete in their consequences with blessings to all nations, so that it shall be to them as life from the dead, yet they assure a future dominion and glory which, from the nature of the case, must belong to Israel, exclusively of the other nations of the world, in the midst of whom, according to God's covenant, Israel is to be a nation of kings and priests.

These were the difficulties which were to be overcome. And now, in this demonstration of His sovereign will, the Lord has shewn that whatever universal dominion on this earth is to be exercised by Israel, or through Israel over other nations, this kingdom upon earth, for which beyond all doubt the whole nation waited, is not identical - or, rather, is not commensurate - with the kingdom of God and of heaven, however it may be connected therewith or involved therein. The Lord was now pleased unmistakably to point out these Gentiles - these uncircumcised men, who had not been admitted to the Covenant, nor could have any right to the exclusive privileges of Israel - as those whom He would have to be brought to

Christ, and admitted to the future glories of the kingdom of heaven. He had sent down upon them the Holy Ghost, which is the earnest of our inheritance. How, then, could Baptism be refused to them? Surely it would have been an open defiance of God, if there had been a refusal of that rite in which is bestowed that second birth of water and of the Spirit, which is the prerequisite and necessary qualification of those who are to enter into the kingdom. Such was the judgement of the Apostle, as exemplified in his conduct and expressed in the words which he uttered at the time before his companions and fellow-witnesses, and repeated in his subsequent defence when impeached by the brethren at Jerusalem: "Can any man *forbid* water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" - "What was I, that I could withstand God?"

These are remarkable expressions. St. Peter had in his mind those words of the Lord, "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." It was not, therefore, simple Baptism with water - a mere external [299] rite - a profession of penitence - a sign. The Baptism of John was, in fact, contrasted in his mind with the work wrought in these Gentiles. The Baptism which he commanded to be administered was a solemn and important action, the necessity of which he had brought himself, not

without a struggle, to admit. There was a struggle and a victory. "What was I, that I could *withstand* God?" There was a full consciousness also of the difficulties and objections which possessed the minds of his countrymen and fellow-disciples, which would not allow his act in administering Baptism to pass unquestioned: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?"

On a full review of the whole narrative, it seems impossible to resist the conviction that Baptism is the ordinance of God, by means of which is effected that second birth of water and of the Spirit which those must receive who are to enter into the kingdom; and further (although it belongs to a subsequent subject), that the gift of the Holy Ghost, in His descent on the believer, is the earnest and pledge of that glory into which Christ risen from the dead has entered, and those shall enter who, being born of the Spirit, shall with Him inherit the kingdom.

Hitherto the passages of Scripture to which our attention has been directed, have been calculated to instruct us principally in the character and general results of the sacrament of Baptism. In the few remaining passages to which it will be necessary to advert, we shall be led into more of the details.

In the opening chapters of the epistle to the Romans St. Paul had shown that through the sin of Adam, sinfulness and death and condemnation had come upon all men; that, inheriting his sinful nature, we have all been made sinners, and following our own perverted affections, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned⁹⁹.” - “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” - “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much [300] more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Thus the grace of God hath abounded, “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord,” This argument the Apostle follows up by the question - “Shall we (then) continue in sin, that grace may abound?¹⁰⁰” He answers, “God forbid! how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” (that

⁹⁹ Rom 5.

¹⁰⁰ Rom 6:1

is, as he explains in the eighth chapter, by the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit and glory of God), “even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” - “If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord.” In the eighth chapter the Apostle resumes this argument. He says, “There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Again, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin” (for, as the Apostle had said previously, “He that is dead is freed from sin”); but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit

that dwelleth in you.” Let us compare these passages with the words of the Apostle in the fifteenth chapter of the First [301] epistle to the Corinthians. He had reminded them in the former part of the epistle that they were the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelt in them¹⁰¹; that their bodies were the members of Christ; and that their body was the temple of the Holy Ghost¹⁰². And in the twelfth chapter: “As the” [natural] “body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body¹⁰³.” Having thus shortly stated the same things in effect as in the epistle to the Romans, he tells the Corinthians, in the fifteenth chapter, “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming¹⁰⁴.” And then, after advertising to “the end “ - at the close of the kingdom which Christ should deliver up to the Father, he treats in

¹⁰¹ 1 Cor 3:16

¹⁰² 1 Cor 6:15,19

¹⁰³ 1 Cor 12:12-13

¹⁰⁴ 1 Cor 15:20

the remaining verses of the chapter of that resurrection in the likeness of Christ, and of that change into His likeness, which await those that are Christ’s at His coming. “There is,” he concludes, “a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit¹⁰⁵.” - “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.” - “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Before considering the purport of these several passages, let us make two further quotations. In the epistle to the Galatians, after stating that the promises to Abraham¹⁰⁶ and [302] his seed are summed up in Christ, and, through Christ, were to be received by

¹⁰⁵ 1 Cor 15:44,&c.

¹⁰⁶ Gal 3.

the Galatians, though Gentiles, through faith in Christ, - the Apostle proceeds to shew them how this is accomplished: "Ye are all¹⁰⁷" (he writes) "sons (υιοι) of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Our last passage is from the epistle to the Colossians, which is indeed nearly a repetition of the first passage we have given from the epistle to the Romans, but varying in one or two important expressions, which need to be noted. He writes as follows: "In Him¹⁰⁸" (that is, in Christ) "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." And ye are complete (fulfilled, πεπληρωμενοι) in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by (in, εν) the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the

¹⁰⁷ Gal 3:26

¹⁰⁸ Col 2.

dead. And you, being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him." - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God¹⁰⁹." - "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."

In these passages of holy Scripture we are carried onward from the foundation of the work of salvation laid in the death of Christ to the superstructure raised thereon through His life in resurrection. We had previously learned that through faith in the Name of Jesus Christ we have remission of sins and eternal life in a second birth of water and of the Spirit; now we learn the source of this life, and the way in which it is derived and secured to us [303].

St. Paul places before us two forms or conditions of human nature, such as we have already delineated.

Children of Adam, we are born into the world inheritors of his nature - sinful, enfeebled, subject to death. We are, by original formation, of the earth,

¹⁰⁹ Col 3:1

earthy. Born of the flesh, we are fleshly; and that flesh has lost its original goodliness. As the consequence of the Fall, it has become sinful and corrupt. The natural bent of the flesh and of the fleshly mind is enmity against God. He had indeed His saints in the former Dispensation: but, to whatever extent they were lifted up and sustained by the Holy Spirit above all powers of nature, they waited for the promise; they had not attained to it. And in the meantime all the good that was wrought in them was contrary to the law of their nature in that condition of which alone they had knowledge, experience, or consciousness.

But now, contrasted with the condition of Adam's nature through sin, we have another form or condition of the same nature presented to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath died for our sins - died unto sin once; and, being raised from the dead, He hath redeemed our nature from the bondage of sin. In the days of His life on earth, though in mortal flesh and tempted in all points like as we are, yet He was without sin. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, while in His goodness and pity He was conversant with them. The grace of God abounded in Him. He received the Spirit without measure. He loved righteousness and hated wickedness. His heart was filled with the love of God, and set upon obedience to His Father's will. How could it be otherwise? He is

Very God, and He became man by conception of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, though He took our nature as He found it, He brought into it the life of God. "In Him was life." Nevertheless, while here on earth, this life was hidden under the veil of a mortal body and this earthly flesh - flesh, through which He was liable to temptation, and was, in fact, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin - a body subject to infirmity, and liable to death. He came, in truth, that He might die, that He might take part with us in all our misery [304], and carry our nature through death into the grave; thence to emerge, freed from all the consequences of our sin, and clothed with immortality and glory. This is the new nature, the state or condition of the second Adam - our nature, new created in Christ Jesus our Lord: and in this new nature we are admitted to partake through union with Him. And Baptism is the ordinance appointed by God for our admission. This is the summary of the truth presented to us in these passages of Scripture: but let us go a little further into the details.

We already know that the new life and the second birth, the birth of the Spirit, cannot be separated from Baptism with water. It is the second birth of water and of the Spirit. In the Scriptures now before us we find that Baptism - baptism into Christ - baptism by

the one Spirit into the one Body¹¹⁰ - are employed as interchangeable terms. Baptism, true Christian Baptism - baptism with water, administered according to the will and in obedience to the commandment of Christ, administered to those who seek it in true penitence and faith, is Baptism into Christ - Baptism into the Body of Christ. In other words: as Baptism is the ordinance through which is bestowed the second birth of water and of the Spirit, so is it also the ordinance in which, when duly administered, we are baptized into the Body of Christ. And we now learn that our second birth is the consequence and effect of that union with Christ which is effected by the Holy Ghost in those that are baptized; and that this union is effected in the communication of His life to us. Observe the figure which our Lord employs in the course of His last words addressed to the Apostles before His Passion: "I am the [305] vine, ye are the branches: he

¹¹⁰ The Apostle, in the passage quoted above from 1.Cor. 12 says, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." And it will be remembered that St. Peter, when he witnessed the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his company, tells us that he was reminded of the words of the Lord, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." We may understand, from comparing these passages, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost comprises more than the operation of the Spirit in regeneration or the second birth. It includes this; for by the Spirit we are baptized into the Body of Christ: but it also comprises that full gift and endowment with the Holy Ghost, which all who are members of the Body of Christ ought to receive.

that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for apart from Me (*χωρίς εμού*) ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered."¹¹¹ Thus spake the Lord concerning the union with Himself which was to be effected in the Apostles on the coming down of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, and to be effected through the operation of the Holy Ghost, proper to Baptism, in those who should believe through their word, and, believing, should be baptized into Him. The figure of the vine is the counterpart of the figure of the body. The reality contained under both figures is that in Baptism we are made one with Christ, through the one Spirit of life imparted to us. Thus we are brought into Him; we are engrafted into Him; we become one with Him through the reception of His life into our spirits; we are made partakers in that new condition of human nature which was hidden in Him, while on earth, under the form of a servant, and is manifested in Him in heaven as King, Lord, and Christ. Thus are we new-created in Him, and are born from above.

We further learn that so close is the union, that we are identified with Him in all that He has wrought for man, in His death unto sin once, in His burial, in

¹¹¹ John 15:5

his resurrection, and in the life which He now liveth unto God. All this is true of them that are baptized into Him, as it is true of Himself. We are crucified with Him, buried with Him in Baptism, in Baptism we are risen with Him through faith in God's operation, and with Him and in Him we are seated in heavenly places.

Crucified with Him, we are dead to that nature wherein we were born into the world, and through death we are clean delivered (I speak of God's act in Baptism which He works in them who unreservedly yield to His working) from the fleshly and earthly state. Risen with Him, we are to count ourselves alive unto God, being born again of water and of the Spirit.

In this our new nature, the law of His being, the law of the Spirit of life, is the law of our being, so long as we [306] abide in him; and accordingly as we live in Him, He rules in us, governs our hearts, purifies the well-spring and directs the current of our thoughts, draws upward our affections and desires towards heavenly things, breathes in our words inspiring us by His Spirit, supplies the motives of our actions, and works all our works in us. True and holy thoughts, sincere and holy words, righteous and holy acts, are the proper fruits of our union with Christ.

We learn further that to those who are thus in Christ, there is no condemnation: so long as we abide in Him and through faith obey the law of our new being, there cannot be. Who is He that condemneth? Christ, whose and in whom we are. All judgement is committed unto Him: all judgement belongeth unto Him that died - yea, rather that is risen again - who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

And, again, being thus united unto Him, He has made full provision in His Church, that the Holy Ghost should come upon us, and dwell in us as He dwells in Christ: so that the Spirit of Christ is not only the giver and sustainer of our spiritual life, and the efficacious law of our new being, our guide and comforter; but, according to the economy and law of the Church, He should dwell in us and supply to us from Christ the powers of the world to come, and by Divine energy work by our hands the works of God, and through our lips utter the truth of God, according to His will: as saith the Apostle Peter, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth¹¹²." If we be very member and living members of Christ, His will must be the motive power, and regulating

¹¹² 1 Pet 4:11

regulating power, and controlling power, of our thoughts, and words, and acts. The Spirit which dwells in Him should dwell in us.

In drawing from these Scriptures the lessons they are intended to teach, we must not pass by certain expressions full, not of instruction only, but of solemn warning. The Apostle bids those who are baptized to “*reckon* themselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God.” He says “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ [307] Jesus,” and adds suggestively, “who walk *not* after the flesh, *but* after the Spirit.” And then, setting forth the fatal results of walking after the flesh, he adds, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be* that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” By these expressions he throws no doubt on the efficiency of God’s Sacrament, or on the certainty of His gift and grace conferred therein. In bidding us to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God, he does not bid us to account that to be true which is untrue: he bids us to rely upon that which is true and certain. And in warning us that if we walk after the flesh we shall die, His words remain true and unimpeached that the law of our new life frees us from the law of sin and death.

But we learn also from the Apostle’s words, that we possess the fearful prerogative of determining for

ourselves whether we will go back, and again pursue the downward course of apostasy and ruin. We possess the terrible power of again forsaking God and Christ, and casting in our lot again with the bond slaves of sin and death. If, after being raised from the death of the flesh and quickened with new life, we again choose death - if we abide not by faith in Christ, in whom we are quickened, and cease to be actuated by His mind and will - if we walk after the flesh and mind the things of the flesh - if we forget that we were purged from our old sins, and, instead of going onward to perfection, we draw back to perdition, - what is this but to crucify the Son of God afresh, and to build again what He hath destroyed? what is it but to smother and extinguish the life into which we have been new-born, and to quicken again into life what He hath crucified and put to death in us? We may rely upon it that the eternal order of God’s righteousness shall not be put aside by anything that we do. “Little children,¹¹³” saith St. John, “let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil.” - “Be not deceived¹¹⁴,” saith St. Paul; “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the

¹¹³ 1 Joh 3:7

¹¹⁴ Gal 6:7

flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life [308] everlasting.” But the possibility of our failure no more affects the reality of the grace which God bestows in His Sacrament, than our refusal to repent and come to God makes void that all-atoning and all-available sacrifice of the Lamb of God offered for the sins of the whole world.

While we are in this life there is still opportunity to reject God’s grace, and to cast away our faith and hope. Herein is the fight of faith, and the patient endurance of the saints. But a day is at hand, when we shall pass beyond the possibility of apostasy or failure. While we abide in our mortal bodies, we have this treasure in earthen vessels: but the treasure is there. The time is at hand, when our body also shall be quickened with the same life with which our spirit is already quickened. He who by the Holy Ghost raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in us. All that are in Christ, whether they sleep in Him or remain to His coming, shall undergo this glorious change, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,” the dead shall be raised in glorious bodies like unto that body in which Christ is exalted to the right hand of God; and we that are alive and remain shall be changed into the same image of glory.

Further, let us take notice that it follows from what we have just said, that the regeneration or new birth for which Baptism is the ordinance, is in one respect complete; in another sense it is but inchoate - it waits for completion. In the former point of view, the work wrought in Baptism, though wrought in the inner man, is complete in Christ; and through faith we live the new life, and fulfil all spiritual actings of that life, and are new-created - yea, we grow up and are perfected in Christ. “I give unto [My sheep] eternal life, and they shall never perish¹¹⁵.” - “He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die¹¹⁶.” In this sense the work wrought in Baptism is truly a *birth*, we are children of God in Christ Jesus. But in another point of view, it is as a seed of life sown in the human spirit, which is to burst forth into manifestation at a [309] future time, at the coming of the Lord. In this sense, the life is now hidden with Christ in God. The new man shall be born in the day of the resurrection in glory¹¹⁷. Or, to combine both these views in one, the instant of our spiritual birth in Baptism is a point moving onward continually, throughout all intermediate time, unto that day when

¹¹⁵ Joh 10:28

¹¹⁶ Joh 9:25-26

¹¹⁷ Col 3:3-4

we shall be revealed the living members of Christ our Head, the living brethren of the First-Begotten from the dead. The Day of Pentecost, when first the Church was quickened into life - the day of our Baptism, when that life was communicated respectively to each individual believer - will find its certain issue and its development in that day, which, by reason of the glory in which it shall excel all previous days, is indeed the Day of the Palingenesia¹¹⁸, the day of the regeneration, “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and we also shall appear with Him in glory.”¹¹⁹

We have now nearly completed our discourse, so far as concerns the doctrine of Christian Baptism. In endeavouring to arrive at right conclusions on this subject, we have sought to ascertain what could be learned from holy Scripture with regard to that happy state of righteousness and innocence in which man was created, and the change effected in our nature through sin. We have traced the successive dealings of God towards man before the Incarnation of Christ. We have contemplated in the light of revelation what Christ has wrought on our behalf, and the change effected in our nature in His Person, through means of His Incarnation and conception by the Holy Ghost, of

¹¹⁸ Compare Mat 19: 28 with Tit 3:5

¹¹⁹ Col 3:4

His life on earth, and of His sufferings and death. We have spoken also of the benefits resulting to us from these events, and from His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Lastly, we have investigated and examined what is contained in Scripture concerning Baptism, what is the nature and character of that holy sacrament, and what are its effects and consequences in those who rightly receive the same.

In the course of these investigations we have learned that in all times God has revealed Himself as the Author and source of our salvation, and this salvation He has ever [310] purposed to effect through Christ. From eternity He has purposed to send Him forth, that by incarnation the eternal Word might become the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of the Virgin. To Him, and to His work of atonement, the Law bore witness in all the ordained rites and sacrifices, which were figures of that which was to come: and in the Psalms and writings of the Prophets still clearer light was given concerning Christ, and the revelation of the work to be wrought by Him became more distinct. In these writings the sinfulness of our nature and the guilt of sin are plainly declared; and the promise is conveyed of that new and better Covenant, founded upon a better sacrifice than those hitherto ordained. They contain also clear and unequivocal predictions of the suf-

ferings of Christ as the atonement for the sins of the world, and of His anointing with the Holy Ghost, and of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon those who should repent and turn to God.

In the Gospels we have the narrative of those things which our Saviour, when on earth, did and taught: and His words recorded therein, and the inspired writings of the Apostles and ministers of Christ, reveal to us explicitly the Gospel of our salvation, and the benefits and privileges to which we are admitted by holy Baptism. These are the several topics with which we have sought to deal in the course of our previous remarks.

Among other things, we have taken occasion to point out, that the extent to which God has seen good to reveal His purpose has been always progressive, and continually enlarging; and it is clear from the passages in the New Testament to which we have specially referred, that even after the Day of Pentecost the truths of the Gospel received further elucidation and a gradual development. But we have also seen that in all ages God has sought, by His Spirit, to turn to Himself the averted regard of His sinful creatures, and to open their reluctant hearts to believe and trust in Him. Such we have seen, has been the course of God's dealings with mankind collectively, and the

same principle has regulated His action towards individual men [311]. From childhood to youth, and from youth to maturity, the understanding is continually enlarged, knowledge is increased, and by the natural action of the mind is systematized: but the work of salvation in the heart cannot be commenced, except the man be converted and believe in Him.

The faith, then, of which we speak, as being the necessary condition of the work of salvation in the heart of man, is not merely or only the acquisition of a catechism or a creed, or the learning of a system of doctrines concerning God, or merely the approbative reception in the mere letter of the truths imparted by catechists, teachers, or preachers. The assent of the mind to the truths of religion, or to the reasonable conclusions to be deduced from sufficient evidence, may indeed properly receive the name of faith in an objective sense. But these truths and facts may be apprehended and accepted by the understanding, and professed with the mouth, without any salutary confession from the heart. It is true, also, that the declaration of God's Word by the teacher or preacher is a principal instrument and ordinance by which God communicates faith: but faith in the heart from which true confession proceeds - unfeigned belief of God, and trust in Him - is His own gift, the work of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man. Except this be wrought

wrought in us, whatever be our opportunities of hearing and learning the Truth, we shall remain without profit; or rather, as is the tenor of all God's dealings with us, we shall have incurred increased responsibilities, followed by greater condemnation: for God withholds not His Holy Spirit from any man, nor denies to any man the gift of faith. On the other hand, when by the grace and gift of God our hearts are converted to Him, and we believe and trust in Him, we readily embrace what God teaches and obey what He commands.

Therefore, before the Lord had ascended up on high, He commanded His disciples to go into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature¹²⁰, adding, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." And now that He is ascended, He preaches the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent [312] down from heaven, through all the members of His Body, through each in their several places, and according to their several proper functions; and He calls upon all men to repent and to believe. The Holy Spirit now waits, as He has ever waited, upon all men; striving with them, seeking to repel the power and to destroy the influence of the evil one over them, and to incline their hearts to God;

¹²⁰ Mark 16:15-16

opening the hearts of all who persist not in resistance, that they may hearken and obey; inspiring them with that faith in Him which is alien to the natural heart of man, and is derived from Himself alone; and so bringing them to desire the full knowledge of the Father and of the Son, and in holy Baptism to receive that entire remission of sins and that eternal life, which in Christ are inseparably conjoined.

We are not of them that believe that none but those who are baptized can be saved from eternal perdition. It is nowhere so stated in holy Scripture. On the contrary, there are not wanting passages which would lead to a different conclusion. We are told that in every nation those who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with Him.¹²¹ Nor are we without assurance of God's tender regard, before Baptism and irrespectively of Baptism, to those who are yet in the simplicity of childhood - incapable, as yet, from the immaturity of the faculties of understanding and will, of wilful rejection of the Gospel. But if we are to have hope concerning them, on what must our hope be grounded? Man needs not only forgiveness, but the constraining power of grace and the purifying efficacy of faith. Christ has, indeed, died for all men: His blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole

¹²¹ Acts 10:34-36; Rom 2:6-16.

world.¹²² But it is through the work of the Holy Ghost that the sacrifice of Christ can alone be made available for those who shall be saved. It is certain that all who are born into the world of the seed of Adam (One only excepted) are conceived and born in sin, and are by nature alienated in heart from God, and are all children of wrath. Our hope, therefore, concerning any who have died in ignorance of the Gospel, must rest on this foundation - namely, that God has been pleased, of His infinite mercy through Christ, to effect such a change in their hearts and [313] spirits as would have prepared them to believe and obey the Gospel, if it had come to their knowledge.

And as this is the ground of our hope concerning any of those who die without having been received to Christian Baptism, so it is the ground of our faith concerning those that are baptized. On the Day of Pentecost, and since that day, the preaching of the Gospel is ever thus concluded: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." - "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized]¹²³." There is no warrant in holy Scripture for any minister of Christ to administer His holy sacrament of Baptism, except to those who approach with confession of sin and of

¹²² 1.Joh. 2:2.

¹²³ Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:37

faith in Christ Jesus. If this profession be made, God's minister, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, in charity believes that God has turned to Himself the heart which by nature is alienated from Him, and has bestowed the gift of faith, revealing to the candidate, and enabling him to embrace in spirit what flesh and blood could not reveal.

What has just been said will enable us to solve the question, why it is that infants are baptized. The Church has at all times received infants to this holy rite, because she has faith that God is not willing that any should perish, and is especially willing to embrace the little ones in the arms of His mercy. She has faith in His good-will to work in all men, and especially in the little infant, that change in the natural heart and spirit, which is the foundation of His work of salvation in all and each - that change which can alone prepare the heart to receive and embrace the revelation of God, when, and so far as, the same is brought to the understanding. The infant is incapable in his own person of testifying to his own condition of heart or of professing faith in the Gospel. That testimony and profession is made on his behalf by others who are willing, and able in good conscience, to answer for him. And the Church receives the little one to Baptism, because she believes that those spiritual affections are present in the child, of which, if the intel-

lect were matured, penitence and faith would be the necessary expression.

We shall not occupy our time by inquiring into the [314] weight of the evidence adduced by divines in proof, and proving unequivocally, that it was the practice of the Church from the earliest periods to baptize infants. Those who refer to these authorities will find that the few passages which can be alleged from early writers on the other side of the question, are of themselves sufficient to prove the *general* practice. Viewing this question in the light of all God's dealings with men, as recorded in holy Scripture, it is difficult to understand how it should be otherwise.

From the beginning of the world, God's promises and the blessings of His successive covenants with man have not only embraced, but in various instances have been given directly to, the children yet unborn. Under the Law, which contains the shadow of good things to come, and whose ordinances are types and figures of those to be established in the Church, all the children, within a few days after birth, were admitted into the Covenant with Israel. Such was God's express command before the Law: and it was now repeated under the Law¹²⁴. Of this Covenant

¹²⁴ Gen 17:10-14 and Lev 12:3

the very basis was a code containing rules and prescriptions and requisitions, which required the personal action of those admitted to the Covenant; and so far as those rules applied to infants, they could only be fulfilled through means of the parents and the ministers of God's ordinances. The Law in its letter took cognizance only of outward acts; it did not expressly prescribe the condition of the inward heart and spirit: whereas the Covenant of the Gospel is essentially spiritual, both on the part of God and of man. His promises are spiritual; and our obedience must extend, beyond the letter of a law, to the entire subjection of heart and spirit to the Holy Ghost. Our external acts under this Covenant are of little worth, except as they are the phenomena or the results of faith and love, which God's Spirit inspires and bestows - faith and love, which are God's gifts, inspired and wrought in us by His Spirit within. These gifts God alone can make us willing to receive. He alone can enable us to give the spiritual response - "the answer of a good conscience¹²⁵" - to His grace freely bestowed. If, therefore, under the covenant of the Law, the terrors of which required obedience to external [315] commandments, infants were admitted immediately after birth, much more should we expect them to be admitted to the Covenant of the Gospel, which is

¹²⁵ 1 Pet 3:21

not a covenant of works, but one in which God on His part gives His Holy Spirit to those whom He gives to Christ - Christ, who is alone the Mediator in whom the Covenant is ordained.

Moreover, if the baptism of infants (the rite ordained for uniting us to Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant) had been contrary to the will and purpose of God, it is beyond doubt that God would have given some indication, some instruction, some hint, at the least, to guard the Church from falling into so great and yet so probable an error as the prostitution of its first initiatory ordinance and sacrament, by administering it to those for whom it was never intended.

But so far from there being even the shadow of a prohibition or warning against the reception into the New Covenant of those who had always been received into the former Covenant, what is it we find? The ordinance of Baptism is, as we have seen, the means and instrument ordained by God for planting us into Christ, and so of making us fellow-heirs with Him of that heavenly kingdom; but so far from infants being excluded from this heavenly inheritance, we find that our Blessed Saviour takes express opportunity of pointing to children as the fittest candidates for admission, or rather as the very models and examples of

those who would enter therein. When the twelve disciples had asked the Lord, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven¹²⁶?" we are told that "Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, that except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." And again, in that touching passage of St. Mark's Gospel, confirmed by St. Matthew and St. Luke, we read: "They brought young children to Jesus, that He might touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them¹²⁷. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom [316] of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

And why are the little children the fittest candidates for the kingdom of heaven? Not because they do not inherit from Adam the corrupt and evil nature which, in the tendency and direction of the mind, is enmity against God: they *do* inherit it, and in order to their profitable reception of Baptism, that aversion of

¹²⁶ Mat 18:1 compared with Mark 9:33 &c

¹²⁷ Mark 10:13, Mat 19:13, Luk 18:15

the mind from God needs to be rectified: but, because by reason of this very immaturity of the spiritual and mental faculties, which is alleged as the objection to Infant Baptism, there is an absence of the obduracy and indifference, of the pride of heart and the wilful rejection of God and of His Gospel, under the influence of which men resist God's grace which would move them to repentance and to faith in Him.

There is another class of arguments derivable from holy Scripture to which we may advert - namely, the instances recorded of the baptism of individuals and of whole households, immediately upon the first preaching to them of the Gospel. Let us take the instance of the gaoler at Philippi. In the short interval between midnight and early day, Paul preached the Gospel to this previously untaught man "and to all that were in his house."¹²⁸ In that short interval of time the work of the Lord in converting and opening their hearts was wrought effectually. The Apostle discerned it, and acted accordingly. The gaoler, with all his house, believed, and he and all his were *straightway* baptized. "He and *all his*." If any of "*his*" were infants or young children, the terms employed include them. We cannot, indeed, lay it down as certain, however probable, that the gaoler's house included in-

¹²⁸ Acts 17:32

fants or young children; still this narrative is not without a bearing on our subject. If we were to suppose that all were of riper years, these adults had been up to this night dark and blinded pagans, worshippers of idols, sunk in the grossest idolatry, utterly ignorant of the one true God and of any revelation concerning Him. As far, then, as regards any apprehension of the truths of the Gospel, it must have [317] been purely a revelation in their spirits by the Spirit of God. As to any clear or distinct intellectual apprehension of the truths of the Gospel, they were all as infants in knowledge. It was a work of grace in all - a work wrought in the spirit, and not a work of intellectual apprehension.

It is manifest, then, from the words of our Lord which we have quoted, that it is according to the mind of God that infants should be admitted to the kingdom of heaven. But if we are persuaded of this, we cannot avoid the further conclusion that it is also God's will that infants should be born from above - born of water and of the Spirit, and made members of the mystical and spiritual Body of Christ, in whom alone we can be partakers of the regeneration and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. How, then, can the sacrament of Baptism be refused to them? Baptism, which is the ordinance of God for bringing us out of the death of sin, and that condition of our fallen na-

ture in which all the natural descendants of Adam are born; and for quickening us with the life of Christ, and making us members of His mystical and spiritual Body; - Baptism, which, when administered according to the will of God, is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but is that blessed sacrament wherein we are born again of water and of the Spirit.

But then, if it be according to the mind of God that infants should be baptized, it is surely most certain that in bringing them, in His providence, to the holy font, the Lord works in them, so far as in their immature condition they are capable of receiving it, that preparation of heart, that conversion in the spirit of their mind, which, by reason of the corruption of our nature through original sin, is a necessary condition, in order to the due reception of Christian Baptism.

Infants are born into this world complete in all the parts of their being. They are constituted with soul and spirit, and all the faculties proper thereto; as they have bodies with all the members proper to the human frame. The soul and spirit, with all the latent faculties, are there, though (as with the members of the body) the child must [318] grow to maturity before he has the full and complete use of them. They are present; nor is it possible to say how early in the in-

fant's spirit may be the first faint exercise of will, or how soon it may be possible to impress on the infant mind the sense of right and wrong. Nor can any but God Himself discriminate or define the precise amount of intelligence or the extent of deliberative power necessary to constitute an act of sin. It is, however, unnecessary for our purpose that we should enter upon such questions, or found anything upon the fact that from the earliest days the buddings of the future are to be discerned. It is sufficient for us to remember that the corruption of our nature has its root in the heart! It is not commenced or constituted in the individual by the first act of sin: but all our sinful actions, from first to last, proceed from that diseased state of heart derived from our first parents, which is in itself a state of alienation from God, a normal rejection of Him; and which, but for the grace of God and the action of His good Spirit, can only produce fruits of sin abhorrent to God. By *one* man's, disobedience many were made sinners: nor is it merely by the imputation of Adam's sin that we are made sinners, for "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ¹²⁹" - all, according to their opportunity; inasmuch as all have inherited that sinful nature which is the root and fountain of all our sin.

¹²⁹ Rom 5:12

Seeing, then, the good-will and love of God our Father towards all infants, recognizing that it is His mind that they should be received to holy Baptism, but also acknowledging that there is in them, from the earliest moment of existence, that evil root and disease of original sin, that original perversion of the heart to evil, that mind of the flesh which is enmity against God, which we all inherit, from Adam downwards, - we cannot doubt that the Holy Spirit, who moves the hearts of all men to seek after God, moves also in the heart and spirit even of the youngest, although the manner and extent is past our perception and comprehension. And with this difference in the case of the infant, that the immaturity of the intellectual and spiritual faculties, if it does not render impossible, certainly modifies [319] all wilful acts of sin, and to the same extent precludes or modifies the action of the will in resisting the grace of God. To the extent to which we are called upon to admit that the infant is incapable of actual sin, to the same extent it must also be admitted that he is incapable of wilful resistance of the Spirit of God, who is present to all men to turn their hearts to Him. Nor can we suppose that this gracious movement of the Holy Spirit is without effect. We may all of us observe the trustfulness of the young child in the arms of his mother. How know we, then, the extent to which God can effect His gracious operations in the spirit even of the

youngest, and attract to Himself the first trustfulness of the infant spirit? Remember we the words of the Psalmist, "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts¹³⁰." These words, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by one of like passions with ourselves, could not be untrue of himself, although most fully realized in Him who is in all things our great example - the type of those that are regenerated in Him - Jesus, the Son of Mary. Nay more, let us remember the testimony of the Evangelist concerning John, the forerunner of the Lord, before he was yet born: "It came to pass¹³¹," he tells us, "that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother my of Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb *for joy*."

There can be no doubt, therefore, that God can work by His Holy Spirit in the infant spirit; and as little doubt that He does so, so far as is necessary for the effecting of His gracious purposes. When God in

¹³⁰ Ps 22:9

¹³¹ Luk 1:41-44

His providence brings the infant to the font, and in the person of His minister receives him into His arms, He gives, we may be sure, that preparation and disposition of heart and spirit which is necessary to the due reception of holy Baptism by all that are born of Adam. It is upon this ground that the [320] Church has faith to receive the infant, who by reason of his tender years cannot answer for himself. On this ground the Church puts into the mouths of the sponsors the answer *of the infant*, not their own, and the sponsors have faith to declare in his name that *he, the infant*, acknowledges the corruption of our nature by sin and desires to be delivered from it, that he is persuaded of God's mercy through Christ, that he renounces and abhors the devil, and believes in the Christian faith; and that in this faith he desires to be baptized, and submits himself to God and to Christ.

Are these the expressions of the natural heart of man before he is converted to God? Are these words such as should be put into the mouth of any, or uttered as the personal declarations of any, in whom the Holy Ghost has not wrought penitence and faith, so far as the actual growth of mind renders him capable, or, at least, that condition of spirit, of which, according to his knowledge and apprehension, the words of penitence and faith would be the genuine

expression, and, which is not and cannot be the unchanged condition of him that is born in sin?¹³²

I say, therefore, that the minister of God could not properly administer the sacrament of Baptism, nor could the sponsors properly utter these solemn declarations, if he and they did not believe that the infant thus presented at the font is actually at the time of presentation the subject of the grace and power of God's Holy Spirit: so that if he were now capable of answering for himself, he would from the heart repeat with his own lips the professions and vows which are uttered in his name.

And to this the confession of faith made in the name of [321] the infant, contained in the forms of Christian Baptism delivered to us in the ancient Lit-

¹³² In thus speaking of the work of God's Holy Spirit in the heart of the infant, we speak of a work which has been wrought, and of spiritual effects which have been produced, previously to or at the time of baptism. We must all know what will be the inevitable consequence, if the child be not brought up in the knowledge and fulfillment of the holy vows which by his sureties he has made; or if, through perverseness of heart, he turns away from his instructors, and grows up in the life of the flesh, following the carnal mind, and violating, in his habits of thought and of action, the law of the Spirit of life which is in Him into whom he has been baptized. If he burst through the bonds which bind him to Christ in the unity of His Body, much more will he disregard those motions of the Holy Spirit by which God would continually draw the hearts of all men to Himself.

urgies, bears witness. For in these forms, as in those of later date, the interrogatories or demands concerning faith and good purposes, which are the substance of the vows made in Baptism, are addressed, not to the sponsors, but to the candidate for Baptism, whether he be an adult or an infant. And if the candidate be an infant, the sponsors do not answer as to their own faith, nor do they give in their own vows: it is not they who are about to be baptized. Nor, again, do they merely engage on behalf of the candidate that he will *afterwards* believe and do as is professed and promised. They answer in the name of the infant, - "This is *my* faith," - "So *I* believe," - "It is *my* desire to be baptized in this faith," - "These are *my* vows of obedience and submission to God."

This form of interrogatory and answer, then, proves the doctrine of the Church. It is impossible that it can be intended as a dramatical representation. This would indeed be a solemn mockery of God, a religious farce enacted before the eyes of men and holy angels. All indeed - both minister, and sponsors, and spectators - all who witness these ceremonies or read these forms, know what an infant is. They know that, so far as we are able to gauge its intelligence, the infant has no distinct apprehension of the words in which the interrogatories are conveyed, or of the propositions of the creed professed, or of the vows

made, in its name. The explanation, and the only explanation, of forms of Christian Baptism as observed in the Catholic Church, is this, - that God has so disposed and turned towards Himself the heart and spirit of the infant, that, if now possessed of the full apprehension of the terms and propositions to which his assent is given, that assent being the condition of his being baptized, he would respond in the words which in his name are uttered by the sponsors.

It is an act of faith and hope; - faith, on the part of the Church, that God, who, in His providence, has brought the child in the arms of parents and sureties to the holy font, has, in the power of His grace, effected such a change in the [322] spirit of that infant as to prepare him for the due reception of the grace of Baptism; - faith also, on the part of the sponsors, that, through the grace and mercy of God already bestowed on the infant, they are giving, in the name of the child, an assent which the child himself would give if he were then able to speak in his own person: hope, that as the intellectual faculties are enlarged, the baptized person will, in the exercise of these faculties, grow up in the grace of God, yield himself to the instruction of the Church, and, under the fostering care of godly parents and spiritual pastors, keep the deposit which the Church commits to him.

Thus far we have spoken of the objects for which the sacrament of Christian Baptism was instituted, and of its effects and consequences. Of these our knowledge is derived from the words of our Lord, and of His Apostles; and holy Scripture, as we have seen, testifies in all parts to the principles involved therein. These principles are exemplified practically, for they are embodied in the several and diverse Offices, and in the rites and ceremonies prescribed therein, which have been in use in ages long gone by and from the earliest times, both in the Eastern and in the Western Church preparatory to the administration of this holy sacrament. Some, indeed, of the ceremonies prescribed in these Offices - ceremonies practised in very early times - are open to objection: but, on the whole, we shall find in them full and invaluable testimonies to the great truths of the Gospel.

Some of the earlier Offices to which we shall refer are no longer used as distinct Offices. They were framed in times when the Church was as yet a comparatively small body, surrounded by heathen populations; and when the greater number of those brought to Baptism were adults, who were subjected to a long course of instruction before they were admitted to Baptism. For centuries past, the great majority of the candidates have been infants. No long preparatory course of instruction is in their case admissible.

Nevertheless, let us take especial note that these ancient Offices are still to be found forming part of the present [323] Ritual, and used previously to Baptism; or, when not actually preserved in their integrity, their leading features are distinctly to be seen reproduced in the Offices now in use. The same process of consolidation or amalgamation of earlier Offices seems to have been pursued in the Eastern and in the Western Churches, although with considerable variation as to the objects, and some variation as to the forms, of the several Offices thus amalgamated or reproduced. The fact that these Offices are still retained in use, when the circumstances under which they were originally framed have been so greatly altered, gives additional force to the testimony in favour of the principles which they illustrate.

In the Eastern Church, immediately on the birth of the infant, a service is provided for use on the day of the birth. The priest is instructed to visit the house; and offering up prayers for the mother, for her preservation and purification from uncleanness, he also commends the child to God, praying that both mother and child may be kept from evil spirits, and that the child may be accepted as a worshipper in the Church. This rite, at least so far as regards the prayer, is not supposed to be of great antiquity. Objection has been taken to the service by Western authorities (Third

Provincial Synod of Milan, A.D. 1573) on the ground that visitation of a priest on the day of the birth of the infant is dangerous to the mother and failing in decency. It may well be answered, that any approach either to danger or indecency can easily be avoided by proper arrangement in conducting the service; unless, indeed, the latter objection is grounded on the supposition of some impurity attaching to the mother, so great as to render it an improper occasion for the visit of a priest - an objection which, one would have supposed; would not have occurred so readily to a Western mind as to an Eastern, or, rather, to an Asiatic.

On the eight day after birth, another rite is appointed for the solemn oblation and naming the child; that is to say, for setting on him the sign of the cross, and for giving to him a name under which he is subsequently to be baptized. On this occasion the nurse is directed to bring [324] the infant to the door or entrance of the church, and then the priest is to sign him with the sign of the cross on the forehead, mouth, and breast. This is followed by a prayer that the cross of Christ may be impressed on his heart and thoughts, and the name of the Lord may abide on him, so that in due season he may be brought into his place in the Church.

All the Offices and rites used in earlier times preliminarily to Baptism, including those already mentioned and those presently to be noticed, were framed at a time when the ancient rule of the Church was observed for administering Baptism principally at Easter. This rule was introduced and observed when those baptized were mostly, or to a great extent, adults - converts from the heathen, who were supposed to need a long period of oversight and instruction. It gradually ceased to be observed when those to be baptized were mostly infants, as has long been the case in the Eastern as well as in the Western Church. Indeed, in the Eastern Church, infants are not only named, but baptized, if possible, on the eighth or tenth day after birth. The Office for the eighth day, however, is still retained in the Greek Euchology, or Service-book, although the special object of the rite seems to be included in the service hereafter noticed for "making a catechumen," which is now apparently used immediately before, and as forming the preliminary or introductory part of, the Baptismal Service.

We next come in the Euchology (or Service-book of the Greek Church) to an Office appointed to be used on the fortieth day after birth. On this day the child, whether already baptized or not, is for the first time to be introduced within the sacred precincts of the church. The Office is called "Prayer for a woman

after childbirth at forty days.” But the larger part of the Office (necessarily omitted if the child should have died) is the presentation of the infant in the church - or, to use the phraseology of the service, the “Churching” of the child. The mother brings the infant to the entrance of the church, accompanied by the person who has officiated as sponsor, or who is to officiate if the Baptism is yet future. The priest makes the sign of the [325] cross over the child, and offers a short prayer - the prayer commencing with a thanksgiving for the safety of the mother, and for her purification from all sin and defilement; and here the service ends, if the child should be already dead. But if the child is living, the prayer is continued with a petition for his growth, sanctification, and instruction; and, if unbaptized, for his baptism in God’s appointed time. Then, after a prayer for the mother’s reception to Communion, the priest imposes the sign of the cross on the child, and further prays that, all power of the enemy being put to flight by that sign, the child may be admitted to holy Baptism, and made partaker of the kingdom of the Lord. This is, of course, omitted if the child is already baptized. The priest now takes the child in his arms before the door of the church, he makes with him the sign of the cross, and, invoking the Blessed Trinity, he pronounces him to be church-ed. Then he brings him into the middle of the church, and again pronounces the same formula.

Lastly, he brings him to the door of entrance to the altar, called “the beautiful gates,” and a third time pronounces him to be church-ed. Afterwards, according to the rubric in the Office, the priest is to bring the child, if a male, up to the altar. This presentation on the altar, however, according to the opinion of the great liturgical writer, Symeon of Thessalonica, does not take place, even in the case of a male child, unless he has been already baptized.

From this time, if not previously baptized, the child was considered to be a catechumen. At the present time, as we have said, infants are ordinarily baptized considerably before they are forty days old.

Besides these for the newly-born child, there is a distinct Office, entitled “For the making of a Catechumen,” which, however, has for centuries (as appears from the most ancient rituals preserved in manuscript) formed the preparatory or first part of the Baptismal Service. In this Office the candidate is introduced, and the priest looses his girdle and takes off his clothes and shoes; and thus, with only a loose outer garment, he sets him with his face toward the [326] east. He breathes on him thrice,¹³³ and signs

¹³³ For this, as well as for a description and *rationale* of the rite, see the quotation from Symeon Thessal., in Goar’s Note to the Euchology, p. 284, note 7.

him thrice on the forehead and breast, and after a prayer, with imposition of hands, he pronounces two exorcisms addressed to Satan, and one exorcism and a prayer, in both of which last the Lord is besought to put away the power of the evil one, and to cast out all evil spirits. After the exorcisms are concluded, the priest turns the candidate to the west, and calls on him, in several interrogatories, first to renounce and abhor Satan, and afterwards to submit himself to Christ. To these interrogatories severally the candidate, or his sponsor, makes answer, and afterwards repeats thrice the Nicene Creed, which is the only creed used in the Greek Liturgy. The candidate, or his sponsor, is then called upon to adore the Blessed Trinity; and after this act of adoration, the Office concludes with a prayer that the candidate may be prepared for holy Baptism.

The service just described was originally intended for the case of an adult or of one able to answer for himself. This is evident from the rubrical directions inserted in the older manuscripts, in which the sponsor is instructed to make the answers in the case of the candidate being a barbarian - that is, one ignorant of the Greek language - without any reference to the case of an infant. In the present Euchology, however, the rubric instructs the sponsor to make answer also when the candidate is an infant. And as, accord-

ing to the modern practice in the East, as in Western Christendom, infants are baptized shortly after birth, the Office is now, and for some centuries past has been, used in the case of infants as well as of adults, and in their case immediately before proceeding to the Baptismal Office. In fact, though printed separately, the rubric prefixed to the Office for making a catechumen speaks of him as being about to be baptized (του μελλοντος φωτισθηναι); and that prefixed to the Office of Baptism also shows, as we shall presently see, that the two services follow in immediate sequence, and are in practice one service.

Before proceeding to the Baptismal Service, it should be [327] remarked that, both in the Eastern Church and in the Roman, the candidate is not only baptized, but anointed with oil, and also with chrism. In the Roman Church, the oil and chrism are consecrated by the bishop on the Thursday in Passion week, and afterwards delivered to each parish priest, to be kept by him for sacred uses during the year; and the anointing both with oil and with chrism is held by the Latin divines to be properly part of the Order of Baptism. The baptismal water is blessed by the Roman priest in each parish only on the eves of Easter and Pentecost. In the Greek Church, on the contrary, the water and the oil are consecrated by the priest on each occasion, and the unction with oil is

considered part of the Baptismal Service: but the chrism is consecrated once in the year, on Holy Thursday, by the bishop; and the administration of it, though applied at the time of the baptism - or, more properly speaking, immediately after it - is not considered to form part of the order of administering Baptism, but to be a distinct and separate sacrament, which the Greeks call "the Sacrament of Chrism," and considered to be identical with the sacrament of Confirmation, as it is called in the Western Church.

The Greek Church, therefore, maintains a great distinction between this sacrament of Chrism and the previous rite of anointing with oil. The chrism is administered by the priest as the agent or instrument of the bishop, employed by him under a general delegation or authority: whereas the previous rite of anointing with oil is considered so entirely to belong to the sacerdotal as distinct from the episcopal office, that even when the bishop is present and baptizes¹³⁴, the priest is nevertheless employed to administer the oil: although, if the bishop be present and the priest baptizes, the rule of the Church has ever been that the bishop administers the chrism; unless at the time he should expressly instruct the priest to do it for him. The rite of anointing with oil previously to Baptism is

¹³⁴ Goar, p. 297.

considered both in the Eastern and in the Roman Church as a rite fulfilled towards the catechumen, and preparatory to the act of Baptism: the oil itself is called by the Roman Catholics [328], "the catechumen's oil." The candidates for Baptism receive this first anointing, as several ancient writers have expressed it, as a preparation for engaging in the contest for the heavenly crown - as those were anointed who were about to engage in an athletic contest in the ancient games.¹³⁵

"The Order of holy Baptism" in the Greek Euchology commences with a rubric, to which we have already referred, and which presupposes that the priest has just been engaged in the previous service "for making a catechumen." The rubric directs the priest, on "coming in," to change the priestly vestment and maniples which he had been previously wearing. He is now vested in white. Then, after the tapers used in this service are lighted, he proceeds with the censer to the baptistery, and incenses round it. After certain versicles, principally referring to the consecration of the water, to each of which the people respond with the "Kyrie Eleison," he prays secretly for

¹³⁵ Thus St. Ambrose, "Unctus es, quasi athleta Christi, quasi luctamen istius saeculi luctaturus." Lib. i. De Sacram. Also Pseudo-Dionysius De Hierarch. c. 2, quoted by Goar, p. 297.

grace in fulfilling his office, commencing with words of self-abasement and confession of sin and unworthiness. He proceeds to consecrate the water and the oil. He prays first for the sanctification of the water, making over it and in it, with his finger, the sign of the cross, and breathing on it thrice; then, after a similar insufflation on the oil, thrice repeated, and also signing the cross thrice over it, he prays for the sanctification of the oil. After this, he pours on the water a small quantity of the oil in the form of the cross. Then the candidate is brought up to the priest, who applies the oil, signing him on the breast and back, ears, feet, and hands, and declares that the servant of the Lord, naming him (such is the usual formula in the Greek Church), is anointed with the oil of gladness in the name of the Blessed Trinity. And again he anoints him on the breast and ears, feet and hands, using on each occasion appropriate words. The candidate is then baptized with trine immersion. The priest, holding the candidate upright, in or over the font, pronounces the servant of the Lord, naming him, to be baptized in the [329] name of the Blessed Trinity; and as he names each *Person*, he lowers the candidate in the water, and raises him again. Such is the direction in the rubric; but Goar states that the more recent practice in his time was, that the candidate was seated in the font, and the water was thrice poured on him; and in justification of pouring, he quotes a pas-

passage from a Greek liturgical writer, Neophytus Rhodinus, in which the term immersion is most distinctly applied to the action of pouring, and not of dipping or immersion proper. After the baptism, the priest puts on the baptized the baptismal vesture, consisting of an open tunic or mantle, and a hood. The Baptismal Service proper is concluded with a prayer for the preservation of the baptized in holiness, and his establishment in the faith, accompanied by an acknowledgement of the mercy of God in regenerating him. The priest afterwards proceeds to administer the sacrament of Chrism: but upon this, after the explanation already given, we need not enter at the present moment.

It was an early practice, both in the East and West, that those who had been baptized should retain the baptismal vesture until the eighth day. Hence, in the Roman Church the week terminating with the first Sunday after Easter (Easter being the principal season for the administration of Baptism) was called "Octavum in albis," the Octave in white vestments; and the Saturday and Sunday are still called "Sabbatum et Dominica in albis." The Greek Euchology still retains a service appointed to be used on the eighth day after baptism. In this service the opening rubric directs, that after seven days the child shall be brought into the church to receive ablution. The

priest looses the girdle and linen vestment or cloth (σαβανον), and, after prayer for the newly-baptized, he dips the cloth in pure water, sprinkles the child with the water, and afterwards sponges the face, head, and chest. Upon this service follows another and distinct service, entitled "Office for tonsure (or clipping) of the hair." The idea which pervades the service is that the hair is thus shorn as a first-fruits offering, taken from the noblest part of our frame - a token of the dedication of the recently-baptized. At the close [330], the priest addresses some words of admonition to the sponsor.

In a subsequent part of the Euchology there is a "Prayer for a child proceeding to learn the Sacred Scriptures," which probably at one time was an edifying and substantial service. The opinion of Goar is that the "Sacred Scriptures¹³⁶" referred to are the Anthem-book, the Epistles, and the Psalter, which were used in teaching young boys to read. There is also in the present Service-book an Office for "badly-disposed youths." Such is the title; but the prayers used in the Office are rather for dull or backward youths. The matter of interest in these two services is the proof which they give of the care with which the Church,

¹³⁶ Goar, p.573.

from early times, has tended even the youngest and weakest of her children.

The Latin Order for the Administration of Baptism, like that in the Greek Church, is formed by a combination of several more ancient forms, which were originally used as separate and distinct Offices in times when, as we have before remarked, the majority of candidates were adults. And in order to understand the *rationale* of the Baptismal Service, it is necessary to review these earlier independent forms. Although there are considerable variations between the earlier forms used respectively in the East and West, yet the general analogy of the respective rites will assist us. We shall find in the Latin Offices a confirmation of our previous remarks on the Greek, and that they mutually illustrate each other.

For instance, we shall have no difficulty in concluding that the earlier and more simple forms in the Latin Church, as in the East, were originally used in the case of infants; although afterwards they appear to have been used as initiatory and impetratory rites for pagan adults at the first moment of their inquiring into the truth. Further, that the more complicated Offices were specially framed for adult converts, and for persons actually under instruction, although also

used, at least in part, for the infants of Christian parents [331].

The use of all these different services, including those originally framed for infants, in the case of adult converts, was possibly the cause of the threefold division of catechumens which, under several names, obtained in the Latin Church.

In this threefold division, the first or lowest class consisted of those sometimes called "hearers," sometimes "Christians." The second consisted of those called "kneelers," probably because they were allowed to be present at the prayers and services previously to the actual celebration of the holy Mystery, from which, both in the East and West, catechumens were excluded. Those comprised in this second class were also sometimes called "elect," being such as were confirmed in Christian faith, but who had not yet received complete instruction. The name "catechumen," which was used as a general term for all three classes, seems also to have been especially applied to this class, as distinguishing them from those in the third or highest class. And, lastly, the third class, called "competent," comprising those who had received full instruction in the Christian faith, and were waiting for Baptism.

The earliest and most simple rite was the signing of the cross upon the forehead, accompanied with prayer. There are manuscripts containing this form simply and alone, the record probably of the original initiatory rite, administered perhaps at first to newborn children of believers, and afterwards to adults seeking to be instructed in the faith. However, at a very early period this rite, even when administered to infants, was accompanied with imposition of hands, and the putting of salt into the mouth. St. Augustine¹³⁷ refers to it as having been practised in his own case as soon as he was born. Subsequently other ceremonies were added.

We have seen that, in the Greek Church, in the Order for making catechumen, the priest at the commencement breathed on the forehead of the child or person. This rite of insufflation, as it is called, is probably very ancient: but in the Latin Church it was used towards infants; adding the words with which our Lord accompanied the same act when, after [332] His resurrection, but before His ascension, He breathed on His disciples and bade them to receive the Holy Ghost. The words are not used in the Eastern Church, and this ceremony of insufflation, or breathing gently on the candidate, is to be distin-

¹³⁷ De peccat. meritis, &c. lib.2. c.26, and Confess. lib.1.c.II.

guished from a later ceremony called “exsufflation,” which was not the breathing on the candidate, but was a blowing from the mouth, which, followed by spitting, used as a form of exorcising the evil spirit, was fulfilled not by the priest alone, but by the catechumen also, or his sponsor.

Afterwards, as superstition increased, and men gave loose to their imagination and exercised their ingenuity, other ceremonies were added; - forms of exorcism in words, also by significant acts, such as that just mentioned of exsufflation; also the use of spittle, in imitation, it is to be presumed, of the act of the Lord in healing the blind man, but applied to the nostrils and to the ears.¹³⁸ These ceremonies are to be found prescribed for administration to infants,¹³⁹ as well as to adult catechumens, in the various Offices originally distinct, but now brought together in the present “Order of Baptism” in the Roman Ritual, with some curtailment, however, both of the forms of prayer and of the acts prescribed. Of the early Offices extant in a separate form, that which is apparently earliest in date, judging from the date of the manuscript from which it has been taken, is, as we have

¹³⁸ It is to be remarked that the use of saliva has never obtained in the Eastern Church.

¹³⁹ See the various Offices in Martene, *De antiquis Rit.* tom.1.

noted, most simple. It is entitled “For the making of a Christian.” Hence, perhaps, the application of the name “Christian,” by which the lowest order of catechumens was sometimes called.

The Office comprises a short collect or two, and a direction to sign the candidate on the forehead and to breathe on him, bidding him to receive the Holy Ghost and to retain Him in the heart. The Offices entitled “For the making of a Catechumen” are all taken from manuscripts of later date, though some are of considerable age. They commence with the same ceremonies as that to which we have referred [333], “For the making of a Christian;” but now are added the other ceremonies of which we have spoken - placing salt in the mouth, the application of spittle to the nostrils and ears; and, instead of breathing accompanied with words invoking the Holy Spirit, we have in some of the forms blowing, accompanied with words of exorcism. Then, again, in the Offices for the same purposes, but of later date, the prayers, and especially the exorcisms, are longer and more full.

Besides these Offices, there are others applicable to catechumens who had passed through the full course of instruction, and were now presumably prepared for admission to the Church by Baptism. These are the rites called the “Scrutinies,” to which the can-

didates were submitted; and which were probably in their origin intended to be public tests or demonstrations, so that not only the bishop and his ministers, but the congregation also, might be assured of the ripeness of the candidates to receive Baptism.

The Scrutinies, so called, were, no doubt, the growth of post-apostolic times. In the earliest years of this Dispensation, the Holy Ghost rested upon the Church in manifested power. This power was not confined to the Apostles, as seems to be the modern notion. The Spirit which dwelt in the Apostles was ministered by them to the Church, and pervaded and inspired all the members. The preaching of the Gospel was with power: the hearts which the Lord opened subdued by it. Those who received the Word were lifted up into such faith, and the ministers of Christ had such discernment and assurance of their steadfastness, that the profession of belief was speedily followed by Baptism. This period seems to have been of no long duration. We can trace in the later Epistles of St. Paul and St. John and in those of St. Peter and St. Jude, and in the Apocalypse of St. John, clear indications of the decay of faith, and of the gradual decline of the first love. With the departure of the Apostles, the exercise of the gifts and power of the Holy Ghost declined both in energy and in manifestation. The rulers of the Church were soon taught by experience

that it had become impossible, consistently with prudence, to admit persons to Baptism immediately on their [334] profession of belief. While the Apostles were in the midst of the Church, and in the full exercise of their office, the secret motives and the self-deceptions and hypocrisies of the heart were readily detected. "Of the rest," says the sacred historian, after recording an instance of immediate detection, "durst no man join himself to them." And even when hypocrites or self-deceivers had been baptized, as in the case of Simon Magus by the deacon Philip, their sin speedily found them out. Not so, when men had failed from the earlier standing of grace. It became necessary to subject professing believers to instruction and to supervision. From this cause came in the practice of appointing fixed seasons in the year for administering Baptism, the intermediate time being employed in the work of preparation, and of testing the faith and conversation of the candidates.

When Christianity had become triumphant, the necessity for precaution increased. Persecution had ceased. It became the interest of the Roman world to profess the Christian faith. Conscientious ministers would delay the administration of Baptism to those professing faith sometimes for years. Nor was this the only cause of delaying the rite. In the midst of the increasing worldliness and immorality of Christians,

they still retained in their profession the true doctrine of the calling of the Church to perfect holiness, and of the fearful nature of acts of sin committed after Baptism. And hence it was that the clergy, in many instances, encouraged young persons and others converted to the faith to delay the reception of Baptism; and such persons themselves, witnessing the increasing prevalence of sin within the Church, were willing to delay until a later period of life, and sometimes until the approach of death. And in spite of the efforts of some of the greatest Fathers of the Church, the practice of delaying Baptism continued, until in the general profession of Christianity parents universally brought up their infant children to be baptized.

Thus we can easily perceive how the forms which at a very early period had been used for newly-born children of believers, came to be applied to those adult professors whose [335] baptism, either at their own desire or at the direction of the clergy, had been postponed. These forms in their original state were, as we have said, extremely simple. As superstition increased, the simplicity of earlier times was overlaid with multiplied exorcisms and other external ceremonies, which were presently regarded as charms against the coercive power of the evil spirit, rather than as means of grace and strength for resisting his temptations. And the Scrutinies, which were insti-

tuted originally for ascertaining the condition of spirit¹⁴⁰ of the candidate, and probably his progress in the knowledge of truth, had apparently degenerated into mere forms even before the baptism of adults had ceased to be an ordinary practice.

The preparatory services for those to be baptized at Easter commenced about mid-Lent. The first preliminary seems to have been the giving of the new name to the candidate, and the inscribing of the name in the Church registers. The name was given sometimes by the parents or sponsors, sometimes by the bishop or priest. The candidates were then submitted to the series of services held under the general name of the Scrutinies, and which, whatever they may have been originally, consisted principally of the rites and ceremonies already described in our account of the manner of "making catechumens," together with courses of prayer, exorcisms, and acts of penitence; then by solemn delivery to the candidates of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer; and finally by a service called "the rendering back" or returning of the Creed, because therein the Creed is repeated by the

¹⁴⁰ Liturgical authors who have written since these services had assumed their present shape, have contended that the name *Scrutiny* referred to the act of the priests in scrutinizing the hearts of believers and doubters; but it seems more applicable to some course of private or public examination.

candidate, or his sponsors, as the profession of his faith.

The general order of the Scrutinies, when held in Lent, seems to have been as follows. Notice was given of the Scrutiny on the Monday or Tuesday in the third week. On the first day appointed, the names of the candidates were registered and afterwards called over in the [336] church. Afterwards the prayers, exorcisms, and other ceremonies employed in making a catechumen were gone through. These last composed the service of the second day.

On the third day, generally the Wednesday in the fourth week in Lent, the third and great Scrutiny was held, called the Scrutiny for the opening of the ears. On this day, in Rome and in some other places, after the signing with the cross and usual exorcisms, ashes were blessed and sprinkled on the candidates. Subsequently the priest applied spittle to the nostrils and ears, with the word "Epheta," that is, "Be opened." Other exorcisms followed. Then, after the lessons for the day, the first verses of each of the four Gospels were read and explained in the mystical manner usual in those times; and especially a mystical explanation or account was given of the symbolical application to each of the four Evangelists, of one or other of the four living creatures named in the fourth chapter

of the Apocalypse. After the Gospels, the catechumens withdrew and the Mass proceeded, being especially offered on behalf of the catechumens about to be baptized, beseeching that their instruction might be perfected, and the faith fully received by them. The sponsors were also included among the special objects of the Mass, and their names publicly recited.

On the same occasion, in some churches - but in the Roman Church, in the sixth of the seven Scrutinies - after repeating the several forms already referred to, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were solemnly delivered to the catechumens. This ceremony was fulfilled after the reading of the four Gospels, which in the Roman Church was repeated in the sixth Scrutiny. The form of solemn delivery was twice gone through, first to the male candidates, and afterwards to the females. If children, one of the boys was taken up by an acolyte, or exorcist, in his arms. The priest inquired, in Greek, if (as is added in some copies of the Office) the priest understood Greek, in what language he could make confession of the faith, and after receiving the answer, the priest bade the minister to declare what things the catechumens ought to believe: whereupon, the minister recited the Creed in [337] Greek. Afterwards, one of the female children was taken up in the arms of the minister, and after a similar process, the Creed was recited in Latin. Dur-

ing the recital of the Creed on each occasion, the acolyte or exorcist kept his hand upon the head of the child or other candidate.

The other Scrutinies were fulfilled with similar ceremonies to those introduced into the first two; and on Holy Saturday the catechumens, or the acolyte or exorcist on their behalf, “returned” the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer by repeating the same, after which the candidates were baptized.

The Scrutinies have been disused for centuries; but the present Order of Baptism contained in the Roman Ritual unites in one service most of the prayers and ceremonies contained in the ancient Offices for making a catechumen, and which were repeated, as we have said, in the Offices for the Scrutinies.

The Order commences by the priest meeting the candidate, with the sponsors, at the door of the church, and after ascertaining his name, he asks him, what it is he seeks from God’s Church. To this the candidate, or, if an infant, the sponsor on his behalf, replies, “Faith;” and to a further question, what benefit he expects from faith, he answers, “Eternal life.” The priest rejoins, in the words of our Lord addressed to the young man in the Gospel. “If thou wilt

enter into life, keep the Commandments¹⁴¹,” bidding him to love the Lord his God, and his neighbour. The priest breathes gently thrice on his face, bidding the unclean spirit to depart and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete. He signs him, and bids him to receive the Cross, that through faith of the heavenly precepts, and good morals, he may become God’s temple; and he prays that through keeping the Commandments, he may be brought to regeneration. Then, laying his hand on him, he prays that he may be delivered from blindness of heart, and from the snares of Satan, and may make progress, from day to day, in God’s service. He takes salt and, after exorcising and blessing it, he puts it in the mouth of the candidate, with a suitable prayer, and afterwards proceeds with certain forms [338] of exorcism. Finally, placing his hand on the head of the candidate, he prays for his illumination, sanctification, and attainment of true knowledge; so that, being made fit for the grace of Baptism, he may hold fast firm hope, right judgement, and holy doctrine. Thus are repeated the several forms already referred to “for making a catechumen;” and these having been gone through, the priest introduces the candidate into the church. On coming within the church, he goes to the font and recites with the candidate or sponsors the Creed and

¹⁴¹ Mat19:16

the Lord's Prayer. Entering the baptistery, he repeats a form of exorcism and adjuration of the unclean spirits. He applies saliva, as already described, to the nostrils and ears, and requires of the candidate a renunciation of Satan and his works and pomps, to which, in the case of an infant, the sponsor replies. He anoints him on the breast and between the shoulders with the oil of the catechumens, using the appropriate words. After this last ceremony, the priest puts off the purple stole which he had hitherto worn, and puts on a white stole, marking, by the same method as in the Greek Order, the point of separation between the preliminary services and the Baptismal Office proper. He proceeds with certain interrogatories, embracing the principal articles of the Apostle's Creed, to which the candidate, or, if an infant, the sponsor, replies. The priest demands, "Wilt thou be baptized?" and the candidate or sponsor answers again in the affirmative; whereupon the sponsor or sponsors hold the candidate, if an infant, over the font, and the priest baptizes him in the name of the Holy Trinity, sprinkling him thrice, once on the recital of *each name*. If the baptism is by immersion, which is customary in some places, the priest receives the candidate from the sponsors and baptizes him with trine immersion, each immersion being made on the repetition successively of the sacred names. The sponsors (or one of them) raise the infant from the

font, or, in the case of an adult, they hold or keep their hand upon him during the action of baptism. After the baptism, the priest anoints the newly-baptized with the chrism on the top of the head, using the appropriate words. Afterwards he places on his head a white linen cloth, now [339] used for the original white robe; and in the case of an adult, the ordinal directs that he shall also change his clothes, and that the outer garment shall be of white colour. Afterwards the priest delivers to the newly-baptized, or, if an infant, to the sponsor, a lighted taper, bidding him to guard his baptism, that when the Lord shall come to the marriage he may meet Him in the heavenly palace, with all His saints; and then, with a dismissal "in peace," the Office concludes.

In the above account of the Roman Office we have noted those points in which variations occur in the same rites when administered to an adult, and when administered to an infant. These we have taken from the separate Order in the Roman "Ritual" for the Baptism of adults. There are in this second Order several other variations, but chiefly in the commencement of the Office, in which the principal rites originally used in the making of a catechumen are introduced.

We have now to consider how far the rites heretofore used as preparatory for Baptism, and in administering the sacrament, are in accordance with the true doctrine of the Church; to what extent they are unreal and superfluous, and how far they are the genuine expression of sound Christian faith, and the necessary and proper mode of approaching God, and receiving His great gift bestowed in Baptism.

First, as to the three Offices in the Greek Liturgy appointed for use on the day of the infant's birth, and on the eighth and fortieth days after birth.

On the first of these occasions the priest visits the private house, prays for the mother, and commends the child to God's care; but the child is not signed with the cross; this ceremony is reserved until the eighth day after birth.

With regard to this first Office, we have already given reasons for its approval. The prayers for the mother, indeed, are open to objection, as implying some ceremonial uncleanness in the mother, and having too much of a Judaizing tendency: and on this point we shall presently [340] have to remark. The Office would also appear to be defective, in that the priest does not on the very first opportunity set upon the infant the sign of the cross. Nevertheless, in its

main design it would appear to be a holy and Christian Office.

We now proceed to the second and third of these Offices - namely, that appointed for the eighth day after birth, when the child is brought to the door of the church, and there receives the holy sign, and his name is given to him and registered; and that appointed for the fortieth day after birth, when the mother comes to the church, and prayers are offered for her purification - prayers which, as well as those offered on the day of birth, are evidently framed on the presumption that, as under the Levitical Law, so also under the Christian Covenant, the woman since childbirth is to be counted to be unclean, and her baptismal privileges suspended; and, that she is now to be restored. On this occasion, also, both woman and child are presented in the church, as of old in the Temple; and the infant, if a male and baptized, is carried up to the altar. If not baptized, the child is henceforth to be regarded as a catechumen.¹⁴²

These two Offices, on the eighth and fortieth days after birth, bear evident marks of having been adop-

¹⁴² It will be remembered that there is a distinct service in the Greek Church "for making a catechumen," which is now fulfilled in the case of every infant immediately before the administration of Baptism.

adopted when infants were brought up for baptism at the special seasons appointed for the baptism of adults. They were not in existence at that earliest period of all, when the full grace and power of the Holy Ghost was ministered through Apostles to the Church; for there is no reason to believe that at that time either infants or adults were kept for months before they were baptized. And, again, it is clear that the practice of bringing up infants on the eighth and fortieth days after birth, for the purposes prescribed in these Offices, is inconsistent with the practice, which has long obtained in the Greek Church, of administering Baptism and Chrism to infants at eight or ten or twenty days after birth [341].

In the next place, it may be fairly concluded that, whereas these two Offices were originally framed for infants, the Office which will next come under review, for "making a catechumen," was originally intended for adults.

Again, all these services, with all the prayers contained therein, are marked with a strong tendency to Jewish notions and practices. In the absence, indeed, of any principle to the contrary, it is no matter of surprise that, in countries where the climate permits, infants should be brought to Baptism on the eighth day after birth, as among the Jews infants were admitted

to the older Covenant on the eighth day. It does not seem equally justifiable that, if the baptism is to be postponed, but the child is to receive the sign of the cross, this signing with the cross should be deferred until the eighth day, and should not be administered on the first occasion on which the priest has access to the child. There is apparently no reason why, when the priest prays over the child on the first day, he should postpone signing him until the eighth day, unless it be the indefensible notion that it is necessary or proper to adapt the Christian rite to the model of the Jewish.

But the Office appointed for the fortieth day seems to be purposely framed on the Jewish model. We have already noted that on the first day after the birth the prayers for the mother express the idea that some ceremonial uncleanness, as under the Levitical Law, attaches to her. There are also, on that first occasion, prayers for the nurses and attendants, that they may not be defiled by contact with her. And now, this fortieth day - on which day, under the Law, the woman was cleansed from her uncleanness - is fixed upon as the occasion for the purification of the Christian mother, and for her restoration to the Church, from which it is supposed that she has been separated since the birth of her child; and so the priest

makes prayer for her purification, and gives thanks for her restoration.

This idea of uncleanness attaching to the woman, and the consequent separation of her from the sacraments and rites of the Church, cannot be justified. No such imputation of defilement can attach to a Christian mother under [342] the Dispensation of the Gospel. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled¹⁴³." Woman, though foremost in the transgression, "shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety¹⁴⁴." This is the promise of the Gospel, which should sustain the Christian mother in those peculiar pains and sorrows which she endures as the penalty of Eve's transgression. And though this season of travail is the penalty of sin, yet, sanctified through grace, it is a symbol of the work of Christ, the Holy One, in our flesh of sin; - a living death, of which life is, by God's gift, to be the fruit. No! the faithful mother is not unclean: "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy !¹⁴⁵"

¹⁴³ Heb 13:4

¹⁴⁴ 1 Tim 2:14-15

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor 7:14

The Church counts none of her children unclean or polluted, save those who defile themselves with wilful sin. We may rest assured that it is the mind of God, and that it has been from the inspiration of His Spirit, that the priest should visit the Christian mother in the hour of her weakness, emerging as it were from "the sorrows of death" and "the pains of hell;" and should comfort her heart and sustain her spirit with holy prayers for strength and restoration. It is surely of the Holy Ghost that the Church should take charge of the children of her members from the first moment of their birth; that she should claim them in the name of Christ (not on the eighth day, but) at the earliest opportunity, and set upon them the sign of salvation, the sign of the Cross of Christ; should commit them into the hands of God, praying that they may be delivered and kept from the power and invasion of evil spirits, may be brought to the holy font, and enabled, through the grace of God, worthily to receive the baptismal gift.

We apprehend, therefore, that the Church fulfils a bounden duty when the priest visits the house on the first or earliest day after the birth of the child, and places on his brow the sign of Christ, invoking the grace of God, that he may be prepared and brought to holy Baptism. But, then, there can be no room for any further rite until both mother and child can be safely

brought to the church, - the mother, that she may offer up her thanksgiving, and the child, that [343] he may be admitted by holy Baptism into the family and household of God.

We come to the conclusion therefore, that the second of these three Offices is objectionable, on the ground that the principal ceremony then fulfilled should find its place in the previous Office, and not be reserved to the eighth day. It has every appearance, also, of having been an after-thought, introduced in post-apostolic times, when Baptism was ordinarily administered only at certain periods of the year.

And as regards the third Office, forasmuch as it is contrary to sound doctrine to impute to a Christian woman that she contracts spiritual defilement through child-bearing, we apprehend that any service for the purification of a Christian woman on the fortieth day after the birth of her child, in imitation of the rite appointed in the Levitical Law, is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. Then further, with regard to the practice on this occasion of "churching" the infant - that is to say, of introducing him into the church, and even bringing him up to the altar, - we apprehend, and it would appear to be admitted, that such a rite can only be applicable to an infant already baptized. But when the infant has been baptized, remembering

that, by reason of his tender years, he will not be able for years to go in and out of the house of God, and to join intelligently in the worship of the Church, or intelligently to receive the ministrations of the priests, this practice would appear to be a very solemn and beautiful mode of expressing the spiritual standing of grace to which the infant has been admitted in Baptism. But the time for this would surely be immediately after he has been baptized, and on the same occasion. To reserve it for the fortieth day after birth, would seem to be either the following of a Jewish rite on the supposition that it applied to a Christian mother and child, or else to be a vain imitation of the event in the infant life of our Lord, when, as the first-born son of a Hebrew mother, He was presented in the Temple, and was received into the arms of Simeon.

We may now proceed to the Offices which have been used in the Oriental and Roman Churches, "for making a catechumen." [344].

On considering the account of these Offices already given, we can have no doubt that the original and essential idea of them is the invocation of the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit upon the candidate, that he may receive that change of heart and disposition without which there can be neither peni-

tence and contrition for sins original and actual, nor desire or ability to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, or to believe in Him for pardon and salvation¹. So far as this original idea is really contained and carried out, we need not repeat our statement of those principles of Christian doctrine, which amply vindicate the use of such an Office. It is surely appropriate, whether Baptism is to be delayed in order that the candidate may be for some time under instruction, or whether, from the circumstances of the case, the sacrament is to be forthwith administered.

If we be reminded, in the way of objection, of the instances recorded in the New Testament, when those to whom the message of the Gospel was brought received the Truth at the instant, and were immediately thereupon baptized, as on the Day of Pentecost, and in the case of St. Paul, and probably on other occasions, - and that the servants of the Lord were not only filled with the Holy Ghost in preaching the Word, but also were mightily endowed with gifts enabling them, as with eagle's eye, to discern the spirits and apprehend the condition of heart of those before them, and thus to distinguish between the true men and the hypocrites, - our answer is, that no doubt God vouchsafed, in those first days, thus to manifest the power and presence of His Spirit, and, but for the sin and shortcoming of the Church, He would have

continued to do so. Speedily would the elect have been gathered, and the kingdom would have been given to His Son. But it is perfectly consistent with the exercise of these powers, that the minister of Christ, even if he were an apostle, although fully assured of the discernment given to him by the Lord, and acting thereon in proceeding immediately to baptize the candidate, should, as a preliminary act, lay his hand on the candidate's head, and pray that the Lord would turn the heart from Satan to God, illuminate the mind with the true knowledge of God and the faith of [345] the Gospel, and prepare the heart and spirit, through penitence and faith, for the grace of that Baptism which he was about to administer. Surely it is more than probable that, when the due order of the sacrament was subsequently developed, prayer to this effect would be ordinarily offered at some time or other before Baptism was administered.

Again, it may be objected, that the preaching of the Word, and not an Office of prayer, is the great instrument of God for converting the heart and inspiring faith. It is most true that there is in the words of the preacher of the Gospel a present power of God, working unto salvation. The Holy Spirit, who evermore and continually seeks to persuade and turn the natural heart, is especially present with the minister of God's Word. But why should this exclude a minis-

try of prayer, directed to the same end? The word of preaching is not a sacrament. It is not the invariable means, nor the only means, of conversion. And in those cases in which conversion is to be attributed to the preached Word, it is not necessarily an immediate or instantaneous work. Many, in all ages, are only brought to Christ by slow degrees; yielding up gradually their hatred to God and to His Truth, and gradually brought to submit their stubbornness of will and pride of intellect, that they may, as little children, receive instruction.

There is, however, no ground either in Scripture or in reason to imagine that, in those earliest times, all who professed to believe were forthwith baptized. On the contrary, the fact that the Apostles, and others, were largely endowed with the gift of the discernment of spirits, is alone sufficient to lead to an opposite conclusion. Many times those who are most ready to make profession are the least prepared to enter into the Christian Covenant. So has it always been. And although there is no limit to the power of the Spirit of God, who can in a moment turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; yet it is not according to the way of God to deal with men irrespectively of their individual character. There must always have been those who, even in comparison with other men, were especially slow of

heart and weak in faith - unable to lay hold at once of the [346] things which they heard, and who therefore, especially and beyond their fellows, required instruction and supervision. There must always have been cases, in which the minister of God must have deemed it necessary to interpose some delay; in order that, by the ministration of the Church, the candidates might be brought to a full apprehension of their lost estate by nature and of the salvation provided for us by God in Christ, and thus be prepared for instruction in the mysteries of the faith. There must always have been some, to whose moral advancement it must have been requisite that they should pass through an intermediate and preliminary discipline: and such persons, we may rely upon it, were never at any time admitted to this probationary state without some solemn act of reception, some prayer for blessing and grace offered in God's church and before the congregation, so that the sympathies of all might be aroused and the prayers of all drawn forth.

Our arguments have hitherto been directed to the case of adult candidates. But if such a form of prayer be applicable to adults, still more suitable and right must it be that such prayers should be offered on behalf of infants. These are not yet capable of receiving instruction; there is no motive on this account for delaying their Baptism. We baptize them, as we have al-

ready said, in the faith and confidence that God, who in His providence brings them to the font, gives to them, of His grace, that change of heart and disposition which can alone enable them to receive Baptism aright. It cannot, therefore, but be according to God's will that His minister, before proceeding to the actual administration of Baptism to an infant, should, in the presence and with the assistance of the congregation, call upon Him, in all assurance of faith, to bestow that grace of conversion and that due disposition of heart and mind, which are the essential elements of penitence and faith. Of this change of heart and mind, infants are surely capable, although not capable of those mental processes which constitute penitence and faith, as they are ordinarily understood.

We believe, therefore, that, so far, the Office in the Greek Church is holy and good. The priest lays his hand [347] on the head of the candidate, of whatever age, and prays that the Lord will "fill him with faith in Himself and with hope and charity, that he may know that God our Father, and His Only-Begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, is the only true God;" and further seeks for him that God will open the eyes of his understanding and make him meet for the grace of Baptism.

In like manner and to the same extent, the Office to be found in the older Roman rituals for "making a catechumen," which now forms the preliminary part of the "Order of Baptism," is to be justified. The candidate and his sponsors are reminded, at the threshold, of the need of faith and of the knowledge of the holy Law of God, in order to eternal life. And prayer is made for the candidate to the Lord, that He will "put away from him all blindness of heart, and break asunder all snares of Satan which have bound him;" and further, "that He will illuminate him with the light of the understanding of the Lord, cleanse and sanctify him, grant him true knowledge, that, being made worthy of (or fit for) the grace of Baptism, he may hold fast firm hope, right judgement, and holy doctrine." Again, when the candidate is an adult, the form is more full, and the reference to doctrine is more distinct, and especially more express reference is made to the Blessed Trinity. The Lord is besought for the candidate, that He will "cause (*jubeas demonstrari*) the way of truth and of the acknowledgement of Himself to be made plain to him, so that the eyes of his heart may be opened, and that he may acknowledge the One God, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, with the Holy Ghost."

With regard to the ceremonies accompanying these prayers, we have already been led, in our ex-

planations of them, to point out the objections to which some of them are liable. Both in the Greek and in the Roman Churches the forms of exorcism are such as to convey the notion that all persons before Baptism are actually possessed by Satan, and that it is necessary by exorcism to expel him and his legions of evil spirits from the body and soul of the candidate. We have already explained that it is quite true that [348] we are by nature subject to the law of sin; and in obeying that law we do the work of Satan, and are practically his servants and slaves. In yielding ourselves to evil, we yield to him. If sin have dominion over us, Satan exercises that dominion, and to his will we become subject. While thus in subjection to him, and yielding ourselves to his power and influence, we know not to what extent evil spirits may beset the natural man, and find access to the springs of thought and will. But actual possession is a further degree in subjection to the power of Satan or his emissaries - a degree wherein our individual will is for the time annihilated, and the evil spirit possesses himself of our powers and faculties. But this is not the case with all men, or most men, before they are regenerated. There being, therefore, these several degrees and conditions of subjection to the power of Satan, it is most suitable and most necessary that prayer should be made to the Lord for the deliverance of the candidate from all power of Satan; and that, so

far as he may have rendered himself subject to the incursions and power of Satan, he may be delivered. But if there be any ground for apprehending that the man is actually possessed by Satan, he is not a proper subject for any such Office of prayer as we are treating of, until by the Word of God and by prayer he shall have been dispossessed and delivered.

With regard to the use of saliva and the words accompanying, in the Roman Order, it is a mere following of the letter of the Gospel narrative, and an attempt to imitate the Lord's actions, on occasions of a totally different nature. This is not only not justified by anything which the Lord did, but, when thus introduced into perpetual use, is offensive. It is a fleshly and unclean mimicry, or attempt at mimicry, of the Lord's most holy act.

The placing of salt in the mouth of the candidate is another ceremony wanting even the poor foundation assumed for the use of saliva. It is almost equally offensive and unjustifiable.

In the ceremony of breathing on the forehead, with invocation of the Holy Spirit, the act of breathing is objectionable, as being an unwarrantable imitation of our Lord's [349] action, when, after His resurrection, He breathed on the Apostles with the words,

“Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” For the Holy Ghost is His Spirit, and dwells in Him; and all we receive the same Spirit only from Him and in Him. But, in itself, the invocation of the Holy Spirit on the candidate cannot be wrong. With regard to the application of simple oil (“the oil of the catechumens,” as it is called), it is an expressive rite, not in itself objectionable, but devoid of apostolic authority.

In proceeding to consider the various points suggested by the Greek and Roman Offices for the administration of Baptism, we have first to note the forms or rites of the renunciation of Satan, of the repetition of the Creed, and of the adoration of the Blessed Trinity, which the candidate or his sponsors are called upon to make. These in the Greek Church precede the final prayer in the Order “for making a catechumen,” which, it will be remembered, is set forth as a distinct Office, but is now in practice immediately followed by the Baptismal Service proper. In the Roman Ritual, in that part of the Order of Baptism which is derived from the older Offices “for making a catechumen,” the repetition of the Creed and of the Lord’s Prayer follow upon the introduction of the candidate within the church. They are repeated by the priest, accompanied by the candidate or the sponsor. Subsequently, after the application of saliva, the renunciation of Satan is made in the form of

question or demand, and answer. And in the same form of question or demand, and answer, there is a subsequent confession, immediately before the Baptism, of the three principal articles of the Creed: but there is no act of adoration, as in the Greek service, nor, as it would appear, has this particular observance ever been practised in the Western Church. The Roman liturgists plead that the act of adoration is virtually contained in the confession of faith in the Trinity.

The renunciation by the candidate of Satan and his works is beyond question a very ancient rite, and is referred to by the earliest Fathers.¹⁴⁶ And both this and the act [350] of adoration following upon the confession of the Blessed Trinity, as practised in the Greek Church, do not seem to need the support of argument to recommend them.

In support of the propriety of the recital of the Creed, we can only repeat what has been already said in the “Readings on the Holy Eucharist,”¹⁴⁷ as to the use of the Creed as an act of worship. The recital of the Creed by the ministering priest is, on his part, an act of authority in the name of the Lord, laying upon

¹⁴⁶ See the references in Martene, lib. 1. ch. 1. art. xiii. 8,9.

¹⁴⁷ Vol. 1. p. 123, &c.

the heart of the candidate the truths confessed. The repetition of the Creed by the candidate is, on his part, the answer of a good conscience, which is necessary to his reception of the benefits of the sacrament. God alone can purify the conscience, enlighten the understanding, and inspire faith into the heart; and the solemn delivery of the Creed, with prayer to Almighty God, is the fitting liturgical form for imploring these gifts of His grace, and in the faithful use of this form His grace will surely be obtained. The repetition by the candidate is both a confession by him of the things which our Father in heaven has revealed to him, and also an act of adoration and worship. And although the repetition of the Creed cannot be held to supersede the necessity, or to affect the propriety, of a distinct act of adoration in words, yet it may fairly be considered as supplying to some extent the absence in the Roman Order of express words.

Having said so much on the rites preceding the administration of Baptism, we will now proceed to the form and manner of administering the sacrament, with its attendant ceremonies, as heretofore and at present practised in the two great divisions of the Church.

Some of these attendant ceremonies, and some of the points wherein the respective observances of the-

these two great divisions vary, will not need more than a passing notice. We need not discuss the question, whether the water to be used in Baptism should be consecrated on each occasion, as in the Greek Church; or once or twice only in the year, as in the Roman Church; - whether, in consecrating the water, any other ceremony is needed than prayer and invocation of the presence and blessing of the holy Trinity [351], with the sign of the cross; or whether oil or oil and chrism, may conveniently be used for such a purpose; - whether the newly-baptized should receive a white robe; or whether, as a substitute, a linen cloth or veil should be placed on the head; - whether, when the candidates are adults, there should be a change of clothing; - whether at the close a lighted taper should be delivered to the newly-baptized or his sponsor. These are ceremonies evidently not essential to the validity of the sacrament: they involve a multiplication of ceremonies, which, if the ceremonies are unnecessary, or not conducive to the dignity of the service, is to be avoided: and some of the ceremonies are, to a certain extent, repugnant and displeasing, to the greater sensitiveness, or, it may possibly be, the fastidious delicacy, of modern times. Most of them, indeed, may be interpreted as symbols of spiritual truths: but it may be questioned whether the same truths are not more fitly conveyed by word of mouth in prayer. Moreover, they have been superadded, and

most of them admitted to be so, in times posterior to those of the Apostles: and we find the two great representative Churches, the two principal witnesses to ancient tradition, differing both as to the number of the ceremonies thus introduced, and in the mode of fulfilling them.

But to proceed. Whatever we may think of the particular ceremonies employed in consecrating the water previously to Baptism, the question remains, whether the water should receive a special consecration by word or act. We have no doubt that the water to be used in Baptism ought to be set apart or consecrated by prayer, invoking the power and presence of the Lord. It is difficult to conceive that any one who acknowledges the true doctrine of the Church, concerning the gift of God bestowed in this most holy sacrament on such as receive the same in penitence and faith, can entertain any other opinion. That it has been the practice from the very earliest period to consecrate the water, is to be inferred from various passages in the writings of the Fathers of the Church from the third century downwards. The use of the sign of the cross also in this act of consecration, receives a similar confirmation. As in other acts of [352] benediction, so in this, it is not only allowable, but most significant, that, in the invocation of the pres-

ence of God, the minister should pass his fingers over the water, making the sign of our redemption.

With regard, however, to the use of either oil or chrism in consecrating the water, we have already intimated that such use is both unnecessary and inconvenient. There seems, also, a further objection to the practice. The unction with oil is the old form, both in the East and West, of admitting a catechumen; and in the Latin Church the oil itself bears the name of "the catechumens' oil." This oil is, therefore, the symbol of the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon those not yet baptized. How, then, should it be employed in consecrating the water of regeneration? This objection would not apply to the use of chrism: but, as chrism is the symbol of grace bestowed by a subsequent rite upon those who have been already baptized, the danger is incurred of confusing in the minds of the people the two sacramental acts and the distinct gifts bestowed severally therein. But to this question of chrism, and its use in the administration of Baptism, we shall have occasion to refer presently.

We now proceed to the mode of administering Baptism. In both the Eastern and Western Churches the earliest mode is generally supposed to have been that of immersion. In the present day, while immer-

sion is the practice in some Churches, infusion (pouring) or aspersion (sprinkling) is now held to be sufficient. This we believe to be the right conclusion. There is no sufficient proof to be given from Scripture that those who were baptized by John the Baptist, or by the first disciples of the Lord, were actually laid prostrate in the water. It is difficult to bring the mind to contemplate the idea of such a posture in the case of our Lord Himself, or of the multitude. The gaoler at Philippi who was baptized, with all his, within the walls of the prison, in the dead of night, was surely not baptized after this particular fashion. It is possible that, at the first, Baptism took place in streams, or in pieces of water, sufficiently large to allow of immersion; but probably the general [353] practice was, that the minister of Baptism went into the water with the candidate, and then, with the hand, or (it may be) with a scallop-shell, or other convenient vessel, took of the water and poured it on the head of the candidate. There is no proof that the word "Baptism," in reference to this sacred act, has ever been used in the Church in its strict etymological sense; still less proof that it was applied to the whole body. So far as the truth is conveyed by symbol, there is much to be said on both sides, - for immersion, and for pouring or plentiful aspersion. In the former mode of administering Baptism, the death unto sin, the burial with Christ, and the resurrection to a new life of right-

eousness, are indeed vividly shewn forth in a figure, provided that there be a total immersion of the whole body. This, except in the case of infants, is unseemly. On the other hand, when Baptism is administered by pouring, we have a lively figure of the pouring out of the Spirit of life and sanctification from on high, and the spiritual washing with the Word of life. Moreover, in looking at the symbolic force and meaning of what is done, the head may well be taken as representing the whole body; and so the pouring of water on the head may sufficiently represent that which is figuratively conveyed by the act of immersion.

We may next proceed to the subject of Trine Baptism. We have seen that in both the Eastern and Western Churches Baptism is administered by a triple act. On pronouncing the name of each of the adorable Persons in the Godhead, the candidate is immersed or sprinkled. This is, no doubt, a practice of great antiquity. Tertullian refers to it in two of his works written in the beginning of the third century, and Jerome and other writers in the fourth century claim for it apostolical authority. It is, however, certain that the single act of immersion or other mode of Baptism has also been practised in early times, and

has been the use in certain Churches at later periods.¹⁴⁸

Several reasons have been offered for the triple mode of administering Baptism. Some of them, as may be supposed [354], are fanciful and altogether insufficient; such, for instance, as the three days burial of our Lord,¹⁴⁹ adduced by St. Gregory the Great. The most satisfactory reasons are those deduced from the words of our Lord, when He commissioned the Apostles to baptize disciples “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” although, indeed, the same words have been alleged as the ground for *single* Baptism in the name of the *Three*.

This Commandment of our Lord, that those who believed should be baptized in the name of the Blessed Trinity, is full of comfort and assurance. As in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and in all the work which God Incarnate hath wrought, the Father and the Holy Ghost are ever present and concurring in grace and power, - so, also, in our Baptism into Christ, the Lord commands that we be baptized in the

¹⁴⁸ See Conc. Toletan. can. 6; and see also the other authorities quoted by Martene, De Eccles. rit. lib. i. c. i. xiv. 7, 8.

¹⁴⁹ Conc. Toletan can. 6.

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. By this injunction He gives us the assurance that the presence and power of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are with the minister of Christ; and that the Blessed Trinity in the unity of the Godhead are alike engaged, according to the Divine economy, in that work and operation of the Holy Ghost whereby our union with Christ and our new birth from above are effected.

As the Holy Ghost has been called by theologians the bond of the Trinity, seeing that He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, - so, in our regeneration in Christ, He is the gracious means of our union with the Father and with the Son; according to the promise of our Blessed Saviour¹⁵⁰, that, in sending to us the Holy Ghost, He would come and the Father would come, and take up their abode in us.

Such is the doctrine conveyed to us by these words of the Lord in ordaining this sacrament: and the Church has always understood them as requiring that the minister should not only believe in his heart, but should declare with his mouth, that his act in baptizing is fulfilled “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The utterance of

¹⁵⁰ Joh 17:21 and 14:16-23.

these words in the act of Baptism is necessary to the fulfilment of the Commandment. It is also due [355] to the Church. It is right and fitting that the minister should, by word, in the hearing of the Church, represented by those present, give testimony to their common faith in the Triune God, in whose name Christian Baptism is administered.

But when the act of Baptism, duly fulfilled, is accompanied with the utterance of the prescribed words, it would seem that the Commandment of the Lord is strictly and sufficiently obeyed, and that all that is essentially necessary to the validity of the sacrament is fulfilled. There is, then, no warrant for insisting, from these words, that the repetition of the act of Baptism, after naming each One of the Blessed Trinity, is essential to the *validity* of Baptism. At the same time, the threefold repetition of the act of Baptism thus fulfilled operates as a confirmation by outward act of the words which are unquestionably essential

We do not think, therefore, that these words of the Lord prescribe either a triple or a single act of Baptism. At the same time, the triple form is to be preferred. The sacrament effects the one Baptism into Christ: but it is a Baptism administered in the name of the three - the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Ghost. The idea of the unity is shewn forth rather in the first words of the form of Baptism - "I baptize thee." The font and the water contained therein are the sufficient symbols of the *one* Baptism into Christ. The threefold application of the water seems to be the *proper* testimony by visible act to the name of the One God in Three Persons, in whose name we receive Baptism.

The next subject of remark will be the application of chrism immediately after Baptism, as practised in the Roman Church. This is considered to be a rite connected with the sacrament of Baptism; not a distinct and separate sacrament. In the Greek Church the sacrament of Chrism is administered, as we have already explained, immediately after the sacrament of regeneration. It is administered by the priest under the general authority of the bishop, if the latter is not present. In the Roman Church the sacrament of Chrism or Confirmation is administered by the bishop alone, and at a later period than infancy. Those, therefore [356], who are baptized in the Roman Church are instructed to look forward to this further sacrament: and, indeed, in the case of adults, it is administered immediately after that of Baptism, if the bishop be present. Nevertheless, in all cases after the candidate is baptized, the priest is directed by the Roman ritual to anoint the newly-baptized on the top

or crown of the head with chrism. There seems to be a total absence of proof that this practice is derived from remote times. The most probable explanation of its introduction into the Order of Baptism is this, - that in very early times, when the candidates were mostly adults, Baptism was ordinarily administered by the bishop, or, in his presence, by his direction, by some priest or deacon commissioned by him; and so, usually, the sacrament of Chrism was administered immediately afterwards by the bishop. This procedure receives corroboration by the practice, in the Greek Church, of administering the sacrament of Chrism immediately after Baptism, not only to adults, but also to infants. In fact, not only was Chrism administered at this time, but also the holy Communion; and even in the West we learn that in some Churches, while yet the custom of bringing up infants for Baptism at Easter was in vigour, it was the practice to communicate those who had been baptized, whether adults or infants, through the Paschal week¹⁵¹.

But in later ages, when the number of congregations placed under the government of each bishop had greatly increased, infants shortly after birth were brought to the parish church for Baptism. The bishop, consequently, was not ordinarily present. Un-

¹⁵¹ Martene, lib. 1. Art. xv. 20.

der these altered circumstances it would appear that the two divisions of the Church, East and West (and the schism had at this time probably taken place), adopted different courses. In the East the bishop gave a general authority to the priest not only to administer Baptism, but also the sacrament of Chrism, using chrism consecrated by himself. And so the practice of administering the sacrament of Chrism immediately after Baptism, not only to adults, but to infants, continued in use. Whereas in the West, the administration of Confirmation or Chrism [357] having been reserved to the bishop, the custom very naturally obtained of confirming young persons at a later age, and after they had been duly catechized. This custom is not only natural, but very reasonable. But, then, how are we to account for the prescription in the Roman ritual, directing the priest, after Baptism, to apply chrism to the head? We can only suppose that this rite was continued, or more probably re-introduced, lest the Roman Church should seem to come short of their brethren in the East, in the outward forms and ceremonies practised at the time of Baptism.

Whatever be the explanation, the practice in the Roman Church does not appear capable of defence. The external forms or ceremonies of two distinct sacraments are used confusedly. The outward and visible sign - the materia, as it is held to be by the Roman

Church - of one sacrament, and of one which ought to be subsequently administered, is actually introduced and employed as an adjunct or additional rite in administering the prior sacrament.

There is one other institution connected with the Order of administering Baptism which it is important to consider. It is that of sponsors. The official name given to the Sponsor in the Greek rubrics is “*αναδοχος*,” and in the Roman ritual “susceptor” (“he that receives”). These ministering servants of the Church are also referred to in early writers as “God-parents,” and as “sureties,” or sponsors.” None of these names is without signification.

The first name refers probably, in its literal signification, to the custom prevalent, both in the East and West, that the sponsor should receive the newly-baptized from the water or from the font. This is not all that is conveyed by the name. There is a spiritual signification which would be attached to it, or acknowledged to be applicable, both in the Greek and in the Roman Churches. These “susceptors” - these which receive the newly-baptized from the font - are the arms which the Church stretches forth to receive her new-born child - her child born of water and of the Spirit, dead and buried with Christ, crucified through the operation [358] of the Holy Ghost as to

the old Adam, and born again from the womb of the morning by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead.

They are also God-parents; for whether they be the natural parents, or whether they have first received the infant candidate from the hands of the parents, in either case they are the means which the Church employs for carrying out the work of faith which issues in the new and heavenly birth. Thus they are brought into a new spiritual relation to the candidate. They place him in the hands of the priest, that he may be washed in the laver of regeneration; and, when baptized, they receive him again from the hands of the priest as a child of God in Christ Jesus, to the intent that they may care for his future education in the faith; and not only his education, but also for the nourishment of the new life which he has received. The Church is the mother of us all: she desires that her children should be nourished with the food of immortality through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments; and so she provides through these her organs and representatives, that the little ones may be brought up to those ordained to dispense the same.

And further, they are sponsors or sureties. As faithful members of the Church themselves, they are

persuaded of the good-will of our Heavenly Father towards all, and especially towards young children; and that His good-will finds exercise and way in that effectual power of the Holy Spirit whereby the heart of the natural man is converted, and the eyes of his understanding are opened to the acknowledgement of the mysteries of the faith. Therefore they are not afraid to bring up the candidate to the Church of God; and there, in the name of the infant, while he himself is yet immature in mind and incapable of speech, to testify his present faith in God and in Christ, and to give utterance to his vows of future obedience. They are not afraid to receive him when baptized as a member of Christ and God's child, and to pledge themselves that they will train him as an heir of the heavenly kingdom - God's heir, joint heir with Christ [359].

Thus they are God-parents and sureties, bound and answerable to the Church. Their obligation is not merely that general duty of the natural parent to teach the child what they themselves may chance to have attained to: they enter into a definite and specific obligation - namely, that they will bring up the child in the Church of Christ, and in the true faith of Christ, and in the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles.

In giving this explanation of the several names which the doctors of the Church have applied to those

undertaking the office of sponsorship, we have said all that is requisite in support of this institution. It is a necessary development of the healthful action of the Church, resulting from the relation between the Church and the newly-baptized child of God. All the sacraments are spiritual actings of Christ by the Holy Ghost in His Body, the Church. To the due fulfilment of the sacraments faith is essential; - faith on the part of the Church and her ministers, as well as on the part of those to whom the sacraments are ministered. Faith finds expression in fitting words and outward acts, which also are the outward signs of the spiritual things transacted; and for the utterance of these words, and the doing of these acts, the Church employs her children. Sponsors, then, are faithful members of the Church, selected and employed by her; they are her ministerial agents, by whom the elect of God are brought to the holy font, that therein they may be made members of Christ and children of God by adoption and grace.

Our preceding remarks will serve also to solve another question - viz., whether the natural parents may be selected for this office; and if so, whether they alone, if faithful, are to be selected

There seems no reason on the ground of principle either for excluding faithful parents, or for selecting

them, to the exclusion of all others. Their qualification, whether parents or others, is the choice of the Church. The¹⁵² sponsor is the trustee and servant of the Church. How, then, it may be asked, can there be any violation of principle, when the Church reposes this trust on parents? Those who, as Christian [360] parents, are already bound by a law resulting from their natural relation, may surely be called upon, openly and before the congregation, to give their pledges that, as faithful members of the Church, they will fulfil their duties. No others can possess either the opportunities or the power to fulfil these duties, which by natural law devolve upon them. Whether they be sureties or not, if they be faithful, they cannot be deprived of their place, or superseded in fulfilling their duties. In such cases, the office of sponsor subsequently to Baptism, when undertaken by one who is not the parent of the child, is of necessity limited to oversight and to such assistance as the parents may themselves desire.

On the other hand, there are great objections to the restriction of the office to parents. When they are unfaithful or unbaptized, it is impossible. When parents are themselves unfaithful, but are yet willing that faithful members of the Church may present

¹⁵² Original: their – erratum?

their children for Baptism, the Church joyfully receives them: but the parent can neither himself present the child nor be entrusted with the duties of sponsor subsequently. Those only who are members of the Church can be her valid representatives and spiritual agents. Those only who are faithful can give the answer of faith; and to such only can the Church entrust her children. But even when the parents are faithful, if they alone are selected, the office of sponsor will soon cease to be regarded as a constant institution of the Church. The act of the Church in committing her children to the parents will be accounted in the light of a mere charge to them, urging upon them to fulfil their ordinary duties. The sponsors will no longer be regarded as the ministerial agents and servants of the Church: nor will the Church receive any additional security that her children will be cared for. The pledges given to her will not extend beyond what those who give them are already bound to: and in case of the decease of the parents, the provision made for the spiritual nurture of baptized infants will, so far as the Church is concerned, altogether fail.

It would seem, on the whole, that the rule which has obtained in the Roman Church, and until lately in the English [361] Church also, for the total exclusion of parents from being sponsors, is not justifiable on the ground of principle. Still less justifiable is the

practice, among Presbyterians and others, of committing baptized infants only to parents, or those fulfilling parental functions as guardians and tutors. It does not, indeed, appear necessary to select either of the parents. On the contrary, if it were necessary to observe a strict and logical consistency, it is, perhaps, more conformable to the original nature of this institution that those not standing in the relation of parents should be selected. Sponsors who do not stand in the relation of parents, become responsible for the duties imposed on them only by the act of the Church, whose ministers or agents they thus become. At the same time, if one of the parents be associated in the office with other members of the Church, the latter have the satisfaction and assurance to be derived from their being associated with those whose natural duty is in their case identical with their official responsibility to the Church: and yet the true nature of the Office is sufficiently vindicated.

With regard to the number of sponsors, there can be no doubt that originally one only was allowed. Such is the rule in the Greek Church, as expressed in the rubric. In the course of time various abuses crept in. It became the practice that sponsors should present to their God-children large and costly gifts. And thus, on the one hand, the comparatively poor in all classes were deterred from acting as sponsors, and

parents were led to prefer wealthy persons to present their children; and then to defer the baptism of their children, in order to obtain as many sponsors, and as wealthy, as possible. Sundry provincial synods have at different periods sought to deal with these abuses. On the other hand, the notion that the spiritual relation between sponsors and their God-children was of such a nature as to render marriage between them unlawful, made it a matter of importance on this ground to restrict the number of sponsors. This is the ground assigned in the proceedings of the Council of Trent for the restriction imposed therein. It is laid down in this Council that, in order to avoid the [362] impediments to marriage arising from the increase of these spiritual relationships, and the consequent prohibition of marriage between those so related, there shall be only one sponsor in each case¹⁵³, or at most only one of each sex. The rule which has obtained in the Church of England seems to be reasonable, that the number of sponsors shall not exceed three - viz., two of the same sex as the candidate, and one of the other sex - especially as it is now permissible to admit to sponsorship one or both of the parents.

¹⁵³ Conc. Trid., Sess. 24. De Reform Matrim., cap. 2.

We have brought to a conclusion our examination of the several questions which have occurred in our endeavours to obtain a proper understanding of the sacrament of Baptism. Let us shortly repeat our explanation of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, on which is based all right faith concerning this holy sacrament.

We acknowledge and confess that Man, of the seed of Adam by natural generation, is born into this world dead in trespasses and sins. He knows not God, nor desires to know Him as He is. Such knowledge concerning God as he receives traditionally is speedily lost or perverted when he is left to his own devices. Of his sinful condition before God he is at best but dimly conscious. Except as he is supernaturally moved by God's Spirit, he is obdurate, incapable of true repentance for the past, of trust in God for the present, of hope in God for the future. He cannot love *Him* whom, so far as he knows, he dreads.

On the other hand, God is ever ready to receive back His sinful creature, to open and convert his heart, to enlighten his understanding, and to inspire him with right desires and affections towards Himself, and with submission in faith and hope to His holy will. Therefore He has at all times sent forth His Spirit, and does continually send Him forth. He in-

spired His prophets of old, He inspires now the ministers of the Church, to make known to the sons of men His grace and truth, the revelation of His own character, the severity of His righteousness, and the fullness and tenderness of His love. He waits upon all men by His Spirit, that [363] He may draw them unto Himself, if only they will not despise His mercy and persist in rejecting His salvation. God would "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth¹⁵⁴." The heathen He would prevail with to receive the light of His revelation, that they may be brought into covenant with Himself. And now, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, He calls upon all men to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, that, being baptized into Him, they may receive remission of their sins and the fullness of the grace which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In all the different stages of His dealings with mankind He seeks to lead them unto Himself through the only way, the way of deep and heartfelt penitence in the acknowledgement of their sins, of firm trust in God in the reception of His present grace, and patient waiting in hope for the entire fulfilment of His promises.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Tim 2:4.

This, then, is that good purpose and will of God towards all men which He commissions and enjoins upon His Church to carry forward. The savour of it must ascend from all her services: the principles involved therein must be embodied in all her rites, and carried out in all her ministrations: and those which she appoints for the administration of Baptism, and preparatory thereto, are of a nature especially to illustrate and testify to them. We have seen to how great an extent these principles have been found embodied in the most ancient liturgies of the two great divisions of the Church; we have faithfully pointed out how far the services for Baptism and relating thereto, to be found in those liturgies, are deficient or redundant: it now remains that we should consider how far these principles are embodied and set forth in the Liturgy given to us by the Apostles.

Let us first notice the short Office provided for use immediately on the birth of an infant. It is entitled "Prayer for a Woman immediately after Child-birth;" but it contains also the first and earliest action of the Church towards the new-born babe. This Office may be used in a room adjoining to that of the mother, with the doors open if the mother is strong enough to bear it. The infant is brought into the [364] room in which the priest officiates. The Office commences with two prayers for the restoration of the

mother, and for the protection both of mother and child from the oppression of the devil and the invasion of evil spirits. The priest signs the infant on the forehead, and prays especially for the protection of the child from the power and invasions of the evil one, and also that he may be presented in God's Temple and received to holy Baptism. The Office concludes with further prayer for the sanctification of the mother, and the acceptance of her infant.

We next come to the Offices immediately connected with Baptism, either preparatory thereto or for the administration of the sacrament. They are as follows: First, "The Order for Receiving a Catechumen;" secondly, an Office for "The Dedication of Catechumens previously to their Baptism;" and thirdly, "The Order for the Administration of holy Baptism."

The two preparatory Offices are so constructed as to be applicable to the case of those adult persons who have not only not been baptized in infancy, but have grown up in ignorance of the true faith of the Gospel, or have lived in disregard of its precepts. Such persons, being of mature age, are capable of receiving instruction: being ignorant, they need to be instructed: or, if they have lived without God in the world, they need a course of discipline or supervision, as well as of instruction, before they can be admitted

to the sacred font. Those who pass through this course of discipline and instruction, in order to their being prepared for Baptism, are properly Christian catechumens; and it is the evident duty of the Church, as from the earliest times it has been her practice, to receive them into this status by a solemn rite, invoking the power of the Lord for their preservation from the snares and power of Satan, and imploring His blessing upon them for their due illumination, advancement, and preparation.

The Office "for receiving a catechumen" is fulfilled by a priest, who should by preference be of the border or ministry of the Evangelist. The catechumen is to be at the lower end of the church, signifying that he is not yet admitted [365] to the congregation of the faithful as a member of the Church. The priest goes down and addresses a few words to him, recognizing that God has given him to believe in His Word, to desire instruction in the faith, and to seek the grace of Baptism, and invoking God's mercy for the fulfilment of these desires. Then follows a prayer for the candidate - that, having hitherto wandered in error and uncertainty in the darkness of the world, he may be delivered from the spirit of evil; that his eyes may be enlightened, his ears unstopped, and his heart opened to the knowledge of the only true God. The priest then invokes the power of Christ, in a form corresponding

to the earlier forms of exorcism, for the deliverance of the candidate from Satan, and from every evil and unclean spirit. And then he receives him as a Christian catechumen, by signing him on the forehead in the name of the Blessed Trinity; he warns him not to be ashamed of the cross of Christ, but to confess the faith, and continue Christ's faithful soldier. Lastly, he lays his hand on the catechumen's head, and prays God to make him meet for the grace of Baptism. The Office concludes with a benediction on the congregation.

Those who are thus admitted catechumens remain under the ministerial care and instruction of the Evangelist (ordinarily one serving under the Angel-Evangelist) until the Angel-Evangelist shall judge that they are fully prepared to receive the sacrament of Baptism. When thus prepared, the Angel-Evangelist notifies the fact to the Angel of the church, to whose pastoral care the catechumens are to be committed, and informs him also of his intention to admit them to Baptism, and of the day on which he purposes to administer the sacrament. He accompanies this notice with a request that the Angel of the church will dedicate the candidates previously thereto. The latter Angel, being satisfied of the competency of the candidates, fixes a day for their dedication within ten days previously to that appointed for their Baptism.

The second of the two preparatory Offices, therefore, is framed on the supposition that the due course of instruction and godly discipline has been effectually fulfilled, and that [366] the catechumens have been duly prepared to receive the sacrament of regeneration. This Office, as may be readily gathered from the foregoing account, corresponds to the concluding Offices of the ancient "Scrutinies," and especially to that in which the Creed was solemnly delivered to the candidates.

The Office consists of two parts - a preliminary act, in which the candidates express their readiness to take upon them the vows of the Baptismal Covenant, and the main Office, in which the candidates are dedicated to the Lord.

The first part of the Office commences with an address to the catechumens. The Angel of the church, accompanied by the four priests - Elder, Prophet, Evangelist, and Pastor - goes down from the altar to the lower or western part of the church, where for the same reason as when they were admitted, the catechumens are standing. He reminds them that the day appointed for their Baptism is near, and that the last act in their instruction is to be fulfilled, by the solemn delivery to them of the mysteries of the faith which they are bound to believe and to confess, in order to

the due reception of the sacrament; and, further, by the commendation of them to God for His blessing and preparation of them. He bids them, therefore, to search their own hearts, or, rather, to suffer the Word of God to search them. He reminds them of the vow which they are about to take, dwelling upon the several particulars to which they will engage themselves, and beseeches them to receive and embrace the Gospel, and to take heed that they be wholly resolved to walk worthy of their holy calling. He proceeds to demand whether they be resolved - first, to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; and, secondly, to cleave only to Christ. To these two demands the answers are given separately. This introductory part of the service concludes with a short prayer for illumination and grace, and the pronouncing of the "Peace."

The Angel proceeds to the celebration of the Eucharist. After the "Gloria in Excelsis," and before the proper Collect, are introduced two appropriate Collects, a lesson of holy Scripture, and an anthem. The lesson is taken from [367] the fifty-fifth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah (the first seven verses), the same lesson, as we find in the earliest manuscripts, which was appointed in those preparatory services to which we have already adverted. Then follow the proper Collect, Epistle, and anthem; but, instead of one of the four Evangelists being selected for the Gospel, the an-

cient practice is pursued of reading successively the opening verses of each of the four Gospels; those from St. Matthew being read by the Pastor, those from St. Mark by the Evangelist, those from St. Luke by the Prophet, and those from St. John by the Elder.

The Gospels having been read, the Angel, with the four priests, again goes down to the lower part of the church. Here the catechumens are severally presented by their respective sponsors, and kneel while the Angel solemnly recites over them the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer; the Creed being the summary and symbol of our faith, and the Lord's Prayer the type and summary of all that we seek from God in prayer.

The ministers return to the altar, and the Angel proceeds with the celebration of the Eucharist. After the Nicene Creed, the sponsors bring up the offerings of the catechumens, and give them to the Deacons, who present them in the usual way. These offerings are the outward sign and symbol of that willing sacrifice and oblation of themselves which the catechumens would present, and of their desire to be dedicated henceforth wholly unto God. The prayer of offertory recognizes the offerings as tokens of the resolve of the catechumens thus to dedicate themselves to God's service in His church. Immediately after the

conclusion of the prayer, the sponsors rise; the Deacon bids the catechumens to remain on their knees, that they may receive the blessing of the Lord, which the Angel pronounces over them. The Deacon bids the catechumens to depart: forasmuch as, not being yet baptized, they are not privileged to receive or partake in the holy mysteries, or even to witness the celebration of them. They depart, but the sponsors remain behind. The service proceeds, and the commemorative sacrifice is offered, with especial reference [368] in the prayer of oblation (after consecration) to the candidates for Baptism, commending to the Lord in faith of the sacrifice of Christ thus commemorated, and interceding for them, that they may be brought to holy Baptism.

“The Order for the Administration of holy Baptism” consists also of two parts. It commences with a preparatory service, embracing in its main points the Office “for receiving a catechumen,” adding thereto the ceremony (as in the Office last reviewed) of delivering to the candidate the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. There is, however, a rubric prefixed to this Office, prescribing that if the person to be baptized has been previously admitted to be a catechumen, this preparatory service is to be omitted. The rubric in question leads to the following remarks.

The preparatory service, and indeed the whole Office, including the form and order proper for administering Baptism, is constructed primarily for infants; for in a land professing Christianity there are comparatively few adults unbaptized. As we have already explained, we have good hope concerning infants. God in His providence, and through the operation of His Spirit, brings them to the font. He moves the hearts of parents to give their children to the Lord in His church, or at least to *suffer* them to be brought to Him. He inspires sponsors with faith to answer for them and in their names. And thus He is pleased to give witness of His good-will and purpose to change the natural heart, and to dispose it towards Himself, and therefore the Church, receiving this witness from God, has faith to invoke His name, beseeching Him, on behalf of the infant, for deliverance from all spiritual evil; she sets upon the infant's brow the sign of redemption; she seeks for him the grace of Baptism; and in the name of the Lord, and in exercise of the authority and power given to her, she commits to the infant the form of sound words, the symbol of the faith, as a sacred deposit to be kept in his heart and spirit; - in heart and spirit, not (as hitherto) unchanged and alienated from God, but prepared of the Lord by the Holy Ghost, which dwells in the Church, the congregation of the faithful [369].

It is of importance to observe that this preliminary and preparatory action is not of the nature of a Christian sacrament; as though God were pleased exclusively to bind up His grace and gift of preparation in this ceremony, or as though at this especial time only, and by this as the exclusive means, the due preparation was effected in the heart and spirit of the child. It is not intended by this service to prescribe or define anything, either as to the time or as to the manner in which God gives His prevenient grace: but, believing God's purpose towards the child, we have faith to ask, because we know that it is according to His will to give. When God promises, it is our duty to ask, and through faith to obtain, the fulfilment of the promise.

But the Order for holy Baptism, in this preliminary part and throughout, although primarily framed for administration to infants, is equally applicable to adults - to those, namely, who, not having been baptized in infancy, have yet been brought up in the knowledge and profession of the doctrine, and in observance of the moral precepts, of Christianity. Those included in the class of which we now speak are qualified, so far as respects the knowledge of the principles of the faith, to receive Baptism. Many of them from their youth have, to all outward appearance, walked in the fear and love of God; many, through the

through the carelessness of parents or friends, or through the culpable ignorance of the ordinances and sacraments of the Church, or through culpable indifference to them, have been admitted to communion in her highest privileges. These are not such as it is ordinarily necessary or proper to subject to a course of catechetical instruction; and if not, then to receive them into the order of catechumens would be an empty form. They are persons who, so far as man can judge, are prepared to receive the sacrament. We have good hope concerning them. But, forasmuch as we can have no certainty, we are bound to ask for them, as for all others, that they may receive that conversion of heart and those godly dispositions which are necessary to the right reception of Baptism, and which we know God is willing to vouchsafe to all. Although, therefore, we do not receive such persons as catechumens in the [370] separate form set forth for that purpose, we ought by no means (and for reasons which it is unnecessary to repeat) to omit in their case this preliminary and preparatory part of the Baptismal Office.

If, on the other hand, the adult candidate for Baptism has been already received as a catechumen, and at the close of his course of discipline has been duly dedicated to the Lord, in such case the preliminary service would be only a repetition of the preced-

ing rites, and therefore the rubric prescribes that it shall in such case be omitted.

The Office commences with a form of prayer or invocation of Almighty God, that He would bestow upon the candidate that gift of faith and of eternal life which he himself seeks of God, as testified by his appearance in the church. Then follows a declaration, that life eternal is to know the only true God and His Christ; and that the true faith is, that we worship One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. It proceeds with a prayer similar to that in the Office for receiving a catechumen, that the candidate may be delivered from blindness of heart, and from the dominion and presence of the devil. Next, the power of Christ our God is invoked for deliverance from Satan and every evil and unclean spirit. The candidate is signed on the forehead with the sign of the cross; and after a prayer that he may be admitted to the grace of Baptism, the priest receives the candidate from the sponsors (and, if an infant, holds him in his arms) and pronounces over him the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, after which he delivers the candidate again to his sponsors. This part of the Office, as in the receiving of a catechumen, and for the same reason, is fulfilled at the lower end of the church, the priest going down from the altar to the candidate and his sponsors.

The preliminary Office being thus completed, the priest returns to the choir and proceeds with the service proper for the administration of Baptism; or, in the case of those who had been previously received and dedicated as catechumens, he here commences the service. He first addresses an exhortation to the congregation, which we find set forth those great principles of the Gospel on which, as we have [371] seen, the sacrament of Baptism is founded: our original condition of sin by birth, the inclination of our fallen nature to evil, our consequent exposure to God's wrath: then, further, the sacrifice for sin offered by Christ in His death upon the cross; His resurrection, whereby He has become the last Adam, the quickening Spirit, who by His Word and Sacraments makes us partakers of Himself and of eternal life, and has instituted the sacrament of Baptism for the remission of sin, and for regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Further, the congregation is reminded of the special occasion of assembly, and that the candidate, being an infant, is brought to Baptism in the assurance that it is not the will of our Heavenly Father that one of such little ones should perish. Lastly, they are called to humiliation and confession of sin, which becomes us at all times, but especially when God's mercy, in making the candidate a partaker in the benefits of Christ's passion, reminds us of the sins for which He suffered.

Hereupon follow suitable forms of confession of the sins of our nature and of our actual transgressions, and of absolution from the same; and then is read an appropriate Gospel selected from that of St. Mark (ch. x. 13-16), or St. John (ch. iii.1-8), or, in place of the Gospel, a lesson taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (ch.vi.1-11).

When the Gospel or lesson is ended, the priest, accompanied by the candidate and his sponsors, goes to the font, and when there, he calls upon the sponsors in the name of the infant, or on the candidate if able to speak, to "make that confession of unfeigned faith which Almighty God shall accept and answer, by vouchsafing His holy Baptism." The interrogatories which follow are put to the candidate as an individual person, the singular pronoun being used throughout. No difference is made whether the candidate be able or unable to answer. To him, and to him alone, they are addressed. In like manner the answers are framed as though given by the candidate, the singular pronoun being again used. And although, in the case of an infant, the sponsor only can give the answers, yet they give the answers strictly in the name of the candidate, and as his [372] individual answers. The interrogatories and answers, therefore, refer to the candidate alone, and in no case to the sponsors. They constitute a public examination and inquiry in the face of

the Church concerning the belief of the candidate touching our corrupt and guilty condition by nature, and his own desire to be delivered therefrom - concerning his faith in God's mercy through Christ, and concerning the efficacy of Baptism. He is called upon to renounce and abhor the devil, and to make his confession of faith in God and in Jesus Christ, in the terms of the Apostles' Creed. He declares his desire to be baptized in this faith, his unfeigned submission to the will of Christ, and his purpose to obey and to walk in God's commandments. Finally, he is called upon to worship and adore the living and true God. And in answer to this, the candidate by his own lips, or, if an infant, by the lips of his sponsors, ascribes worship and adoration, praise and glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the One living and true God. To this act of worship the priest and congregation on their part respond by ascribing "praise and glory."

Having thus received from the candidate the full confession of his faith, the priest offers a prayer for his admission to the benefits of the sacrament about to be administered; and the prayer is followed by short prayers or supplications for that death to the old nature, with its affections, and that spiritual resurrection and life, which are wrought by the Holy Spirit in all those who are baptized into Christ, and for the victory, consequent on this death and resur-

rection, over the devil, the world, and the flesh. These are summed up in a final exorcismal prayer for the utter expulsion, then and ever, from body, soul, and spirit, of all power and wickedness of Satan; and that the Lord will sanctify the candidate in his inward being, and clothe him with the garment of salvation, the robe of innocency and righteousness; and that, thus preparing him for His presence, He will dwell in him for ever. Then, after a prayer for the consecration of the water in the font to this sacred end, the priest receives from the sponsors the new name which is now to be given, and by that name he baptizes [373] the candidate in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

We have already explained that the triple administration of the water is not essential to the validity of the sacrament; we have also given the grounds on which this mode of administration is to be considered the preferable form.

The newly-baptized is taken by the priest, and, if an infant, is carried by him in his arms, from the font up to the altar, and is there formally received into the congregation of Christ's flock: he is again solemnly signed with the sign of the cross, and blessed in the name of the Trinity. The priest brings him down from the altar and commits him to the sponsors, who had

followed from the font and stopped at the entrance to the upper or priests' choir. He repeats the Lord's Prayer, and a short form of thanksgiving and prayer, giving thanks unto God for His grace in regenerating the baptized and incorporating him in His Church, and beseeching Him that the newly-baptized, having thus been made partaker in the death and burial and resurrection of Christ, may crucify the old man, and at length partake in the glory of the resurrection, and inherit the everlasting kingdom. This form is in substance taken from a similar thanksgiving and prayer to be found in the Order of administering Baptism in the Church of England, and which has been wisely substituted by them for the ceremonies used in the Roman Church, of placing on the head a white linen cloth as a substitute for the earlier baptismal vestment, and of putting a lighted taper into the hand of the newly-baptized or his sponsors. At the close of the thanksgiving, the priest gives a short charge to the baptized, and to the sponsors; and, after singing a psalm, the congregation is dismissed with a benediction.