

ART. II.—AN INQUIRY INTO THE VALIDITY OF LAY-BAPTISM.*

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Lay-Baptism has never formally obtained a place among the customs and usages of the Reformed Church. Even in the greatest emergencies—the “*extremæ necessitatis articulo*” of the old rubrics—there is no resort to the lay-administration of this Sacrament. Why then institute an inquiry into its validity?

In other Protestant Churches (Lutheran and Episcopal, not to name others), the validity of Lay-Baptism, in given circumstances, is recognized, and the custom to some extent still prevails. Cases may arise, have arisen, in the orderly prosecution of the ministerial office, when the responsibility of rejecting, or recognizing and ratifying a Baptism administered by lay-hands must be assumed. One such case recently occurred on the application for confirmation of a person thus baptized. The minister in charge properly proceeded with the service without

* This article was submitted as a majority report, by a Committee appointed for the purpose, to the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church, at Baltimore, Md., in October, 1867. The case which gave rise to it, was that of the Baptism of a child by its mother, when it was thought the child would not live, and no minister could be procured. When the child grew up and came forward for confirmation, the question of the validity of its Baptism came up, the mother insisting, as we believe, that it was valid. The case was referred by the pastor to the Classis, and from thence to Synod. The subject was referred to a Committee, of which Rev. S. H. GIESY, D.D., was chairman. This article is the report which the Committee submitted. At the same time, by permission, a minority report was submitted by Rev. F. W. KNESEN, of Lebanon, Pa. Without adopting either report, the whole subject was referred to the next meeting of Synod, and the regular report of the Committee ordered to be printed. Under such circumstances it is hardly necessary to say, that this Review, in publishing the report, assumes no responsibility for the conclusions reached by the author, but only commends the subject as worthy of study, and its treatment, as the article abundantly shows, highly elaborate and able.—*Ed. Review.*

the re-baptism of the subject. Similar cases may occur. What is proper under such circumstances? The inquiry is neither unimportant nor yet needless.

In another view, the question is full of importance and seriousness. If the minister be of the absolute essence of the Sacrament, another question lies back of this, viz.: What constitutes a lawful minister? what is a true and valid ordination? Up to the period of the Reformation, ordination episcopally conveyed alone prevailed. With that vast theological upheaval many and great changes in church order were introduced. The Reformed branch, with one or two exceptions, threw off the episcopate as one of the intolerable corruptions of Popery. In the room of Episcopal, Presbyterian ordination came in, and with it the parity of the ministry was stoutly maintained over against the unbroken practice of the Church from the earliest, if not Apostolic, times. Without presuming to a settlement of this controverted point, its bare mention shows how intimately related it is to the subject in hand—the validity of Lay-Baptism. If Episcopal ordination be alone admissible, then all persons not thus ordained, are not ministers at all, and their acts no more than the acts of laymen. Under this form, it is not hard to see, that the question carries along with it the most serious consequences, involving the very constitution and right of existence of all the Protestant non-episcopal Churches, and, besides, affecting the Christian status and spiritual condition of millions of persons now quietly satisfying themselves with the ministrations of men unauthorized, because improperly and irregularly ordained. This reference is only made to show the scope and serious nature of this inquiry.

THE AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

The Church is not a human but a divine institution. All sacramental ordinances legitimately finding place therein must stand by divine authority. It is the prerogative alone of the great Head of the Church to say what ordinances shall have perpetual force. The Sacrament of Baptism is not without such high and specific sanction. The authority for its admin-

istration proceeds directly from our blessed Lord. This is clear enough from the imperative form of the Apostolic commission: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name," &c. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. The power here bestowed upon the eleven apostles was not to end with them. They should die, but not the power with them; that was to continue, from age to age, through their successors in office, according to this promise of our Lord's perpetual presence: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The purchase of salvation was for the ends of the world, and the due means of admitting all nations into the fold of the church—the ordained order of that salvation—must never be wanting. From the commission itself this also is clear and unquestionable, that the *proper and regular* administration of Baptism is confined to persons, like the apostles originally, invested with ministerial character and authority.

THE PURPOSE OF HOLY BAPTISM.

The Church, by virtue of its divine institution, is the depository and medium of the resources of life and salvation. The Person of Christ is and must remain the original Fountain of grace; the Holy Ghost its original and efficient minister; and the Sacraments the divinely appointed method of its communication. Hence the Sacraments are not the *sources*, only the ordained and ordinary *means* of grace; not saviours nor substitutes for *the* Saviour, only the channels of the provided salvation; the sacred *mysteries* by which the grace of God meets the needs of our fallen life and "counteracts the operation of original and actual sin." Hence, although administered necessarily through human instrumentalities, they are not human but divine acts; not man's, but God's hand of salvation—His way of gracious doing to man. By them God, the sole Giver of grace, bestows, and man, in his abject poverty, receives, specific spiritual benefits—"that which by nature he cannot have." This intervening order is fully witnessed to by St. Paul, when, of the ministry in its largest sense, he says: "But

we have *this treasure in earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Calvin admits this same principle in saying: "It ought to be sufficient for us to recognize the *hand and seal* of our Lord in His Sacraments, let the administrator be who he may." Another old Reformation divine says: "For as faith is our hand by which we seek, lay hold of, and receive the blessings of the Gospel, so the Word and Sacraments are, as it were, *the hands of God*, by which he offers and presents to us, and applies and seals to all believers, the benefits procured by Christ."* Hooker speaks of grace being a donation from God *by Baptism*.† A modern Anglican divine calls the Sacraments "the media by which God co-operates with man in his endeavor after Christian life."‡

Natural generation is and must be a birth in sin. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," says our Lord most emphatically; and St. Paul reiterates the same fundamental truth in these words: "By *nature* the children of wrath." The law of sin starts with our conception, not with self-consciousness. Hence the Psalmist's confession: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Long before the human powers come to self-conscious activity, this law of sin is in operation. The law of grace must go as deep as the law of sin—must touch the very spring-head of human life. Not by the order of nature in any way, but only by the order of a supernatural grace—a new birth, a regeneration—is this possible. In Infant Baptism, the work of grace is made to precede the self-conscious activity of the child, standing thereby in a new order of life.

BAPTISM THE SACRAMENT OF THE NEW BIRTH.

It is definitely called so by our Lord Himself, in His conversation with Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water

* Gerhard's Theo. Inst.

† Hooker's Eccl. Polity. Book V., § 62.

‡ Directorium Pastorale, Rev. John Henry Blunt, p. 158, London.

and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. It is not to be denied that Christ associates here the birth of the Spirit with the birth of water, or Holy Baptism. Why this peculiar association is made, is no concern of ours. The fact is all we have to do with; and what, in this way, God has joined together, no man has a right to put asunder. That by "water" here our Lord refers to Baptism was, up to a comparatively recent period, the universally accepted interpretation of the passage, carrying with it the authority of the most learned and orthodox commentators, from the earliest ages on down.* St. Paul further testifies to Baptism being the Sacrament of the new birth, when he calls it *δὲ τοῦ ποῦ παλινγενεσίας*—the bath of the new birth, or the "washing of regeneration." Titus iii. 5. There can be no doubt that this Pauline conception of Baptism—the actual translation of the subject from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ—was the full and firm faith of the early Church. The ancient Fathers are all one here. No one can read them at all thoughtfully without being thoroughly convinced of this; for this thought—a new birth in the Sacrament of Baptism—is continually repeating itself in their writings.

Take a few passages from those early Christian writers, implying a new birth in that Sacrament. Many others are furnished in Wall's exhaustive work on Infant Baptism, already referred to, and Sadler's excellent work, "The Second Adam and the New Birth."

* "All the ancient Christians (without the exception of one man) so understand that rule of our Saviour, John iii. 5, of Baptism. All that mention that text, from Justin Martyr (A. D. 148) down to St. Austin, (A. D. 430) do so apply it. Neither did I ever see it otherwise applied in any ancient writer. I believe Calvin was the first that ever denied this place to mean Baptism. He gives a new interpretation, which he confesses to be new. The judicious Mr. Hooker saw betimes the inconvenience and groundlessness of this new interpretation of Calvin's, which was then greedily embraced by Cartwright and others, that they might with better face deny any necessity of that private Baptism, which had been ordered by the Church in cases of extremity; and says on that account, 'I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst.'"—Wall on Infant Baptism, Vol. I., pp. 443-445. *Cotton's Edition*. 1862.

Justin Martyr, A. D. 148. "Then they are led by us to the water, and are regenerated by the same process of regeneration by which we were ourselves regenerated; for they then receive the laver in the water in the name of God the Father and Master of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. For Christ says, 'Unless ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 192. "He seems to me to form man of the dust, to regenerate him by water, to make him grow by His Spirit, to instruct him by His word."

Tertullian, A. D. 200. "When with this law is compared that limitation, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God,' this hath bound down faith to the necessity of Baptism."

Origen, A. D. 210. "And because, through the Sacrament of Baptism, the pollutions of our earthly origin are removed, so it is, also, that infants are baptized; for, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,'" &c.

Cyprian, A. D. 248. "For then may they at length be fully sanctified, and become sons of God, if they be born of each Sacrament, since it is written, 'Except a man be born of water,'" &c.

Ambrose, A. D. 397. "Nor, again, does the mystery of regeneration take place without water; for, 'Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit,'" &c.

Augustine, A. D. 430. "No man passes from the first man to the second man except through the Sacrament of Baptism. In children born, and not yet baptized, let Adam be recognized. In children born and baptized, and on this account born again, let Christ be recognized."

These passages—and it would be quite an easy matter to multiply them—from the early Fathers, expressing so clearly their view of the significance and necessity of Baptism, will account for the great stress they put on its actual administration, and that general anxiety in regard to it which, at a very early period, led to the custom of Lay-Baptism in cases of extreme peril to life. In his work on Primitive Christianity, Cave

says: "This custom, without question, arose from an opinion they had of the absolute and indispensable necessity of Baptism, without which they scarce thought a man's future condition could be safe, and therefore it was better it should be had from any one than to depart this life without it."

Further, Baptism is the Sacrament of incorporation into Christ. *Gal. iii. 27, Rom. vi. 3, 4.* It is the Sacrament for the remission of sins. *Acts ii. 38, xxii. 18, Eph. v. 26.* "When the last clauses were added to the Nicene Creed by the Council of Constantinople, in the year 381, one was included which declares, 'I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.' The meaning of this clause may be shown by paraphrasing it: 'I acknowledge one Baptism, administered once only to each person, and only in one manner (that is with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost), to be efficacious for the pardon of all sins,—original sin in infants, original and actual in adults.'"^{*} And this still remains the mind of the Church wherever the sacramental sense of the Gospel is not obscured or wholly obliterated by a different system.

Baptism is the Sacrament of incorporation into the Church, the mystical body of Christ—the initial ordinance. *Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Βαπτίζοντες. Matt. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 13.* The Heidelberg Catechism follows in this same pure sense of the Gospel, when it says, in answer to *Question 74*, "Are infants also to be baptized? Yes, for since . . . they must therefore, *by Baptism*, as a sign of the covenant, be also *admitted* into the Christian Church." The old German text is, "durch den tauff der Christlichen Kirchen *eingeleibt*;" the modern German reads, "durch die Taufe der Christlichen Kirche *einverleibt*;" the Latin, "*per Baptismum Ecclesiæ Dei inserendi sunt*;" to which the English, "*by Baptism incorporated*," or as the new translation (Tercenary Edition) has it, "*ingrafted into the Christian Church*," answers most nearly. From all this it follows that "the grace given in

^{*} *Sacraments and Sacramental Ordinances*, Rev. John Henry Blunt, p. 72.

Baptism places the person baptized in a new relation to God; being accounted His child by spiritual adoption as well as natural creation, and receiving spiritual as well as natural gifts from Him."^{*}

THE CONDITIONAL NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

Salvation is ordinarily through the divine order of grace. The Sacraments are for man, not God; they bind us, not Him. God binds us to the ordinances, but Himself remains unbound—omnipotent, if He will, in the sphere of grace as well as nature. But it is clear enough from the Scripture, that God has associated salvation with Baptism. There are no less than twelve passages where this association is brought out in a direct and positive form.† The unbiassed consideration of these passages forces the candid student of the Divine Word to the conclusion so tersely put by Hooker: "*The law of Christ tieth all men to receive Baptism.*" It is not to be doubted that this firm belief in the necessity of Baptism, as a condition precedent for salvation, fixed itself very early in the mind of the Church, and led to the authorization of its administration, in necessitous cases, even on the part of the laity.

We are now prepared to pass over to the consideration of the

ESSENTIALS OF A TRUE AND VALID BAPTISM.

On this point Maskell makes this observation in his able and learned work on Holy Baptism: "The validity of the Sacrament, as regards its essentials, must depend upon the same particulars at all times; that once instituted by our blessed Lord, it cannot be changed or altered in any necessary detail whatsoever, by authority less than His. And this, whether by addition or by diminution."[‡] From the institution of the Sacra-

^{*} *Directorium Pastorale*, Rev. John Henry Blunt, p. 158.

† St. John iii. 3, 5; St. Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 39; xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 1-4; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27; Gal. iii. 26, 27; Eph. v. 25, 26; Col. ii. 12; Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21.

‡ *Holy Baptism*. By Rev. W. Maskell. p. 121. London.

ment, three things enter absolutely into its essence and integrity—the proper matter, its actual application, and the proper form. Gerhard, standard Lutheran authority, holds this language: “As a whole, the parts of Baptism which pertain to its essence are three, which can neither be sundered, nor changed, to wit, the water, the word, and the act.”* In this he only follows the previous statement of St. Augustine.

At first sight, it might appear wholly unnecessary to say anything with regard to the proper matter of Baptism. The frequency with which water is mentioned in this connection, one might suppose would have forever settled the point, both as to the absolute necessity of water being used in the administration of the Sacrament, and as to water, and water only, being the proper matter. But very early in the history of the Church, it was found necessary to insist on the absolute use of water, since, in a metaphorical interpretation of the Scriptures, water-baptism was, in some cases, repudiated, and, besides, wine, vinegar, milk, sand and other material were sometimes substituted. Tertullian, in his treatise *De Baptismo*, mentions a sect which denied the necessity of water in this Sacrament; and Augustine charges the Manicheans with the rejection of water in the administration of Baptism, as one of their heresies. The Cathari, whom Blunt calls the Puritans of the twelfth century, substituted for water-baptism a ceremony which they called Baptism by fire. The Waldenses, too, in mistaken zeal for spiritual Baptism, ruled out altogether the necessity of water in this Sacrament. The Flagellants, a sect of the thirteenth century, so named from their peculiar faith in this particular, held that each one ought to be baptized in his own blood, *per flagella de corpore excusso*.† It is well-known that, to this day, the followers of George Fox, in their hyperspiritualism and abhorrence of all religious forms, repudiate altogether the outward ordinance, under the pretext of

* “In universum tres substantiales baptismi partes sint statuendum, quæ non possunt divelli aut mutari, scilicet aqua, verbum, et actio.” *Gerhard's Theo. Inst.*

† *Holy Baptism*, by Rev. W. Maskell, pp. 32–35; also “*The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*,” by Rev. John Henry Blunt, pp. 210, 211.

holding to a spiritual Baptism. Besides, where water was not at hand, recourse has been had to wine, milk, vinegar, and, on the desert, sand, as the material of Baptism.

The mystical sense, always attached to the use of water for a religious purpose, goes to show its necessity to a true and valid Baptism. This association of water—ceremonial ablutions—with inward spiritual purification does not belong exclusively to the system of revealed religion. There we find it by divine appointment and under divine regulations. But nothing was more common among the heathen nations than ceremonial bathing before sacrificing. The Old Testament, however, is particularly full of such prefigurements of its sacramental virtue. We meet this mystical force of water on the very first page of Holy Writ. The creative operation of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, is directly associated with this element. “When as yet there was no living thing upon the earth,” He moved upon, *i. e.*, hovered, brooded over (according to the original*), the face of the deep, and, lo, a living world starts forth from that boundless waste of waters: a type of the Sacrament of Regeneration, in which “born of water and of the Spirit,” the dead soul becomes instinct with a new life. The holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, teaching by inspiration, do give this prefigurative sacramental sense to two remarkable occurrences recorded in the ancient Scriptures; the one† seeing in the waters of the flood, cleansing the earth of the defilement brought upon it by the inhabitants of the old world, a “figure” of the Baptismal cleansing of mankind from the filth of sin, and in the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, a “figure” of salvation by Baptism; the other,‡ taking Israel’s hasty transit through the Red Sea, separating them from the land of their long and bitter bondage, to be a type of man’s deliverance by Baptism from the bondage of nature and his freedom in Christ. Showing the deepest sympathy with the apostolic meaning given to these remote events, we find

* Lango’s Genesis, translated by Prof. Taylor Lewis, LL.D.

† 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

this mystical view, from the earliest ages, incorporating itself into the sacramental thinking of the Church. With peculiar fitness it has been enshrined and is perpetuated, from age to age, in this old Baptismal prayer: "Who, of Thy great mercy, didst save Noah and his family in the ark by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel, Thy people, through the Red Sea, *figuring thereby Thy holy Baptism.*"* Old as is this Baptismal prayer, it is, doubtless, based on this still more ancient form from the Sacramentary of Gelasius, A. D. 492: "Thou . . . who washing away the sins of the world by water, didst, in the very outpourings of the deluge, stamp a figure of regeneration; so that through the mystery of one and the same element, there was both an end put to sins, and a source of excellence."

The Old Testament contains yet other instances of this mystical force of water, prefigurative of its higher sacramental use. Of special significance in this respect, because leprosy was a type of sin, is the cleansing of Naaman, when, following the direction of Elisha, "he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."† What was here, in the Old Testament, in the form of prophecy and prefigurement, finds its full meaning and force in the sacramental use and cleansing virtue of water in Holy Baptism.

The sanctification of this element by our Lord's Baptism in Jordan gives, for all ages, the solemn sanction of His own blessed example. His words to Nicodemus must also be taken as an authoritative designation of the matter absolutely necessary to its administration: "Except a man be born of *water*," &c. Hence, in the absence of the proper matter and the substitution of anything else, that Baptism must be pronounced null and void.

The ruling of the Church has always been against an exclusively spiritual conception of the ordinance, and the substitu-

* "Order of Worship," p. 189.

† 2 Kings, v. 14.

tion of any other material than the one designated by our Lord, "baptizing with water." It is not possible to produce any liturgy, either from the Eastern or Western Church, from the earliest ages down to the present, which allowed the use, even in cases of extremity, of any other matter than water in a true and valid administration of Baptism. The Council of Trent holds this explicit language: "If any one shall say, that true and natural water is not of necessity for Baptism, and on that account shall wrest to some sort of metaphor those words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Ghost,' let him be anathema.*" According to the Heidelberg Catechism, the outward visible sign of Baptism is water necessarily. In Question 69, it is said, *Christ appointed* this external washing *with water*. Hence the rubric in all properly prepared liturgies, preceding the office of Baptism, directing that "*water be provided*," &c.

The proper form of Baptism has always been regarded as no less important. That the recitation of the words of the institution is necessary to the integrity of Baptism is manifest from the original commission: "Go ye . . . baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Only that which is of God can be the bearer of the divine. Augustine says: "*Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*;" join the word to the element and it becomes the sacrament. The word here is the authorized formula of Baptism—the plain enunciation of the three Divine Persons. The Church, by its bishops, councils, canons, has all along pronounced the distinct mention of the names of the blessed Trinity to be of the essence of a valid Baptism. Ambrose says: "Except one shall have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot receive the remission of sins, nor share the gift of spiritual grace."† The "venerable Bede," called so from his superior

* The canon is: "Si quis dixerit, aquam veram et naturalem non esse de necessitate baptismi, atque idcirco verba illa Domini nostri Jesu Christi, *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua, et Spiritu Sancto*, ad metaphoram aliquam detorserit; anathema sit."

† "Nisi baptizatus fuerit in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, remissionem non potest accipere peccatorum, nec spiritualis gratie munus haurire."

piety, virtue, and protracted life, declares: "If any one baptizing says, 'I baptize you in Christ Jesus,' and does not say, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' as the Lord instituted, it is no true Baptism."^{*} It would be an easy matter to repeat, if that were necessary, from the Apostolical Constitutions and ancient Councils, canons like this: "If any bishop or presbyter, contrary to the ordinance of the Lord, does not baptize into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but into three unoriginated beings, or three sons, or three comforters, let him be deposed." Heretical Baptism, and as well that of persons usurping the holy office, was accepted and recognized as valid when administered in the proper form and with the proper matter.[†] The Council of Nice ordered the re-baptism of those only who had been baptized by the Paulianists, and so not in the name of the Trinity.[‡] The rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity vitiates necessarily any service or ceremony in imitation of Christian Baptism.

The greatest stress, as appears from the history of the Church, was laid upon the use of the proper matter and the proper form of Baptism. Its validity was made dependent upon this. Archbishop Laurence of the Anglican Church says: "It was always the doctrine of the Reformation, that the element of water alone,

^{*} "Si quis baptizans dicit, baptizo te in Christo Jesu; et non dicit in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, sicut Dominus instituit, non est verus baptizans."

[†] The Sardian Council, A. D., 347 which condemned and excommunicated Isehyras, who usurped the office of a Presbyter and then of a Bishop, did not annul the Baptisms administered by him, nor order the re-baptism of persons baptized by him either before or after his pretended consecration to the usurped Bishopric. The same Council declared null and void the ordination of all persons ordained by the pretensors Musceus and Eutychianus, and yet did not order the re-baptism of persons baptized by any of these men acting without authority and legitimate ordination. *Rev. E. Kelsall's letter to Dr. Waterland on the validity of Lay-Baptism; Waterland's Works, vol. VI., p. 126.*

[‡] Maskell makes this observation in his thorough discussion of the whole subject, in the work already referred to: "Where any notice is taken of the question of the Baptism of heretics, the constant rule and practice seems to have depended, whether as to receiving or rejecting it, upon the fact, on the one hand, of the true form, or, on the other, of any substitute having been used in the administration of the Sacrament." *Holy Baptism, p. 168.*

united to the form of words prescribed by our Saviour, constituted true Baptism." So much importance, indeed, was justly attached to this, that, lest in the fear and haste consequent upon its administration in a case of extremity, there might be some damaging omission or substitution, the Book of Common Prayer, in its office for private Baptism of children, directs the parish-priest to make the following inquiries touching any Baptism he may be required to recognize and allow: "With what matter was this child baptized?" "With what words was this child baptized?"

The third essential of a true and valid administration of Baptism, is the actual application of the water in the plain use of the words of the institution. Gerhard, in his "*Theo. Inst.*," styled by Kurtz the *opus palmare* of Lutheran Theology, says: "It is not sufficient that the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should be invoked upon the water of Baptism, but it is also required that the person should be put into the water, or have the water poured upon him; so, on the other hand, it does not suffice to put the person in water, or pour it upon him, but it is required that this should be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."^{*}

Just at this point comes in the consideration of the proper administrator of the Sacrament. Who may lawfully make the application of water in Baptism? There can be, and has been, no dispute that only a person who has been duly clothed with the ministerial office is the proper and lawful administrator of Baptism, and indispensable to its regular, though not its valid, administration. To the Apostles, and to them only, and their successors, down through the ages, was it with divine authority said: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing," &c. By our blessed Lord, the administration of Baptism with the office of teaching is committed to a class of persons especially

^{*} Non sufficit, invocari nomen Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti super aquam baptismi, sed requiritur etiam, ut homo in aquam mergatur, sive aqua perfundatur; vicissim non sufficit, hominem in aquam mergere, vel aqua perfundere, sed requiritur, ut hoc fiat in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. *Gerhard's Theo. Inst. Cap. VI., § 88. Tubaryn, 1769.*

called and ordained to the sacred work. St. Paul reiterates the same thing in 1 Cor. iv. 1, where he styles the ministers of Christ, "the stewards of the mysteries of God,"—οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων Θεοῦ, which the Vulgate renders, *dispensatores mysteriorum Dei*. It is not to be denied that, ordinarily and regularly, the administration of Baptism pertains alone to the ministers of the Church, *ex officio*.

The question before us, however, is not as to its regular administration, but its *validity*, when, under *necessitous circumstances*, it is *irregularly administered*, i. e., by a person not in holy orders. The validity and regularity of Baptism are separate and distinct questions, and ought not to be confounded. The question to be decided is this: Is the administration of Baptism absolutely tied to the Minister: like the proper matter and the proper form, is the minister of the *absolute essence** of the Sacrament, and is its assumption on the part of an unordained person, even in necessitous cases, *in periculo mortis*, so gross a violation of order as to vitiate the act itself, and render re-baptism necessary? Sacredly guarding against its unwarranted and uncalled for administration on the part of others, the constant practice of the Church, with some few exceptional cases, has been all one way. Broadly asserting the *irregularity* of necessitous baptism by laymen, it has boldly maintained, by authoritative deliverances and the steady refusal of re-baptism to all such, the *validity* of the act where the proper matter was

* If the minister be absolutely *essential* to its validity, then a strict construction of the great commission, "Go ye," &c., would have confined its administration to the *Apostolic* rank. Yet the Primitive Church did not so confine it, but suffered, in cases of emergency, Presbyters and Deacons, even without the formal permission of the Bishops to baptize, thus furnishing precedents of its *valid* administration where the degree of holy orders did not originally comprehend it. "To make the minister *essential* to true Baptism," says Kelsall in his reply to Dr. Waterland, "is to teach a doctrine which is altogether new, is countenanced by none of the ancient Fathers, is contradicted by some, and is disclaimed by the known practice of the Primitive Church." *Waterland's Works*, Vol. VI., p. 103. "Ministrantis personam non de *esse* sacramenti, sed de *bono esse* iudicant. Pie igitur fit, si minister tangat solus; at fit etiam, si tangat alius." *Archbishop Abbot*. In this the Archbishop only follows the theory held by St. Augustine, who made the essence of the Sacraments to consist in the application of the water with the proper form, by whosoever done.

at hand, the proper form observed, and the element actually applied. This it has done without abating in the least the intervening character of the sacred ministry, but defending it alone on the ground of necessity, and the practice of the old Testament Church in regard to circumcision, the appointed initiatory Sacrament into that Church, performed even by women in several instances.* "The rules of the Church," says Bingham, "required that none should baptize in *ordinary cases*, but the regular and lawful ministers of the Church; and to do otherwise was always a note of criminal schism: but in *case of extremity*, she granted a general commission even to laymen to baptize, rather than any person in such an exigence should die without Baptism; and in such a case to receive Baptism from a layman, was neither usurpation nor schism in the giver or receiver, because they had the Church's authority for the action."† Touching the validity of irregular Baptisms, Hooker, in his quaint way of putting things, says: "Many things are firm, being done, although in part done otherwise than positive rigor and strictness did require. Nature, as much as is possible, inclineth unto validities and preservations: dissolutions and nullities of things done, are not only not favored, but hated, when either urged without cause, or extended beyond their reach. If therefore at any time it come to pass, that in teaching publicly, or privately in delivering this blessed Sacrament of regeneration, some unsanctified hand, contrary to Christ's supposed ordinance, do intrude itself to execute that whereunto the laws of God and His Church have deputed others; which of these two opinions seemeth more agreeable with equity, ours that disallow what is done amiss, yet make not the force of the word and Sacraments, much less their nature every substance, to depend on the minister's authority and calling; or else theirs, which defeat, disannul, and annihilate both, in respect of that one only personal defect; there being not any law of God which saith, that if the minister be incompetent, *his word shall be no word, his baptism no baptism*."‡

* *Exod.* iv. 24. 2 *Macc.* vi. 10.

† *Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church*, p. 563.

‡ *Hooker's Ecl. Polity Book V. § 62.*

LAY-BAPTISM IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY.

The precedents of such extraordinary Baptism are already furnished in the Apostolic times. In the Acts, mention is made of the fact that Philip, a deacon only, baptized the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch. We also read of Paul, afterward the chief of the Apostles, having been baptized by Ananias. The diaconate, as the name imports, was an inferior ministry; not an office with which the cure of souls was originally associated. In its formal institution, there belonged to it no right to baptize, at least nothing of the kind is expressed. It was primarily and mainly concerned with the outward temporal necessities of the poor membership, as appears fully from Acts vii. And yet so far from the validity of Philip's Baptism being questioned, the Apostles St. Peter and St. John, proceeding to Samaria, ratified his act by confirming those whom he had baptized. This view of the diaconate agrees with the actual usage of the Primitive Church; deacons only being allowed to baptize when a bishop or presbyter was not at hand. But in all such cases of necessity the validity of Baptism administered by a deacon was never disputed.

If an ordained minister is absolutely essential, like the proper matter and form, to the valid administration of Baptism, what shall be made of the case of St. Paul? He was baptized, not by the hand of one to whom the original commission was given—Peter, James, or John—but by Ananias. And who was this Ananias? He was not one of the Apostles; he was not even a prominent teacher among the early Christians, and yet not without some reputation, but it was more for earnest piety and devotion.* Receiving Baptism by the hand of Ananias, St.

* The following authorities are given in support of the unofficial character of Ananias. Prof. Lechler says in his commentary *in loco*, "Ananias is not an Apostle, not a distinguished teacher, but a disciple, that is simply a member of the Church, not intrusted either with the ministerial, or any other congregational office." *Lange's Comm., Acts of Apostles*.

"A Jewish disciple at Damascus of high repute, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there (Acts xxii; 12). Tradition makes him to have been afterwards bishop of Damascus." *Smith's Bible Dict. Art. Ananias*.

Paul received by Baptism and the laying on of hands the Holy Ghost (Acts ix. 17). The fact of special revelation to Ananias as the administrator of Baptism in St. Paul's case did not remove its official irregularity, and yet its validity is unquestionable.

TESTIMONY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

That the Primitive Church allowed the validity of Lay-Baptism, in necessitous cases, may be shown from the action of Councils and the writings of some of the most prominent of the Fathers. If there is weight in great names, it has in its favor a long line of such authorities. Earliest, is Tertullian, A. D. 192. In his treatise *De Baptismo*, he writes: "The Bishop has the (original) right to give Baptism; next to him Presbyters and Deacons, yet not without the authority of the Bishop, for the honor of the Church, by which peace, *i. e.*, order, is preserved. Otherwise the Laity also possess the right; for what is received in common, may be given in common But laymen are in much greater degree obliged by the rules of modesty in the use of their power, since they who are superior to them, are obliged not to assume to themselves the office, which belongs to the Bishop only. Emulation is the mother of strife. All things are lawful, says the holy Apostle, but all things are not expedient. Therefore it ought to suffice them to use this power in necessities, when the condition of the place, or time, or person requires it; for then their charitable assistance is accepted, when the circumstances of one in danger presses them to it. And in this case he would be guilty of a man's destruction who omitted to do, what he lawfully might."* It has been sought

"A Jewish convert living in Damascus, who seems to have had considerable influence among the Christians." *Herzog's Theo. & Eccl. Encyclopedia. Art. Ananias. Trans. by J. H. A. Bomberger, D. D.*

"He was not an Apostle, nor one of the conspicuous members of the Church. And it was not without a deep significance, that he, who was called to be an Apostle, should be baptized by one of whom the Church knows nothing, but that he was a Christian disciple, and had been a devout Jew," *Life & Epistles of St. Paul by Conybeare & Howson; Vol. 1, p. 94.*

* Dandi quidem jus habet summus sacerdos qui est Episcopus; dehinc Presbyteri et Diaconi, non tamen sine Episcopi auctoritate, propter Ecclesie honorem, quo salva pax est. Alioquin etiam laici jus est. . . . Sufficiat scilicet, in necessitatibus ut utaris; sic ubi aut loci, aut temporis, aut personae conditio compellit; tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur, cum urget circumstantia periclitantis."

to break the force of this testimony of Tertullian in favor of the validity of Lay-Baptism, by regarding it as an expression simply of his *private opinion*, and no authority as to the actual practice of the Church at the time. Kelsall is not far from the mark, in styling this, "a nimble and easy way of taking off an evidence that we do not like." Though extending this right to *laymen*, Tertullian was decidedly opposed to its being exercised by women, regarding it as a flagrant act of presumption. But in this there was a manifest inconsistency. Whatever may be said in regard to Tertullian's peculiar notions on some subjects, his testimony on this point carries weight with it as evidence to a practice then already prevailing in the Church.

The Spanish Council at Elvira, A. D. 305, allowed the validity of Baptism administered by laymen who had not disqualified themselves for holy orders. "Peregre navigantes, aut si Ecclesia in proximo non fuerit, posse *fidelem* (qui lavacrum suum integrum habet, nec si *bigamus*), baptizare in necessitate infirmitatis positum Catechumenum." *Concil. Illiberit. can. xxxviii*. This provision was attached to this canon, that in case the persons receiving this necessitous Baptism survived, they were to be brought to the Bishop that it might be recognized and ratified by confirmation. Had this decree of a provincial Synod of the Western Church been contrary to the received principles and usages of the Church, it would certainly have been promptly annulled and repudiated by some subsequent œcumenical Council. No censure having been passed, its decree must be allowed to carry with it full ecclesiastical sanction and force in the case.

Optatus of Milevis, A. D. 366. This Father, in speaking of our Lord's commission thus delivers himself: "Non dixit Apostolis, vos facite, alii non faciant. *Quisquis* in nomine Patris, et Filii, et spiritus Sancti baptizaverit, Apostolorum opus implevit."

Jerome, A. D. 384. "Quod, *i. e.*, jus baptizandi, frequenter, si tamen necessitas cogit, scimus etiam licere laicis. Ut enim accipit quis, ita et dare potest." *Dial. adv. Lucifer I. c. 4*.

Augustine 400, A. D. "Quamquam etsi *laicus* aliquis pereunti dederit (Baptisma) necessitate compulsus; quod, cum ipse ac-

cipèret, quomodo dandum esset, addidit; *nescio an pie quisquam dixerit esse repetendum*. Nulla enim necessitate si fiat, alieni muneris usurpatio est: si autem necessitas urgeat, aut nullum, aut veniale delictum est." . . . "In necessitate, cum Episcopi, aut Presbyteri, aut quilibet ministrorum non inveniuntur, et urget periculum ejus qui petit, ne sine isto Sacramento hanc vitam finiat, *etiam laicos solere dare Sacramentum*, quod acceperunt, solemus audire." . . . "Sanctum est Baptisma per seipsum, quod datum est in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti: ita ut in eodem Sacramento sit etiam auctoritas traditionis per Dominum nostrum ad Apostolos; per illos autem ad Episcopos, et alios Sacerdotes, *vel etiam laicos Christianos* ab eadem origine et stirpe venientes."

Here is explicit testimony to the usage of the Church in Augustine's time. The validity of Baptisms administered by laymen is not without the endorsement of this most distinguished Father of the Latin Church. From this time onward, the lay-administration of the Sacrament, in cases of emergency, prevailed universally, both in the Western and the Eastern Church, far beyond the reach of the authority and influence of his name.

THE ROMAN CHURCH.

Ever since the time of Augustine, the Church of Rome, in necessitous cases, has allowed *women* as well as *laymen* to baptize. In a later period this permission was greatly extended, even allowing it to a pagan. The Council of Florence among others put forth this decree. "But in case of necessity, not only a priest, or deacon, but also a layman, or woman, indeed even a pagan and a heretic may baptize, provided only he observes the form of the Church, and intends to do what the Church does." So solicitous was the Roman Church to have this necessitous Baptism properly administered, that several Councils adopted canons requiring the curates to instruct the people in the form of baptizing, lest in their haste and trepidation there might be some damaging omission.* The Roman manuals contain the

* *Concil. Ravenn. A. D. 1311. Rubr. II. Concil. Ravenn. A. D. 1314. R. 14. Concil. Arelat. A. D. 1260. Concil. Salisb. A. D. 1420. de Baptismo, tom VII.; authorities cited by Kelsall in his answer to Waterland on the validity of Lay-Baptism.*

fullest directions to midwives where the necessity of Baptism appears.

ANGLICAN CHURCH.

The same practice obtained in the Anglican Church from the earliest times. English Councils have passed upon it in the most definite form. "The Pupilla Oculi," which was a standard book of instructions for the clergy in the mediæval period, has some exhaustive statements on the subject, which plainly show that it was the practice of that Church to recognize Baptism as valid, by whomsoever administered, if given with the proper matter and form of words; which practice undoubtedly continued up to the time of the Reformation.* Hooker, undisputed authority in the same Church, says, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity": "Baptism by any man, in case of extreme necessity, *was the voice of the whole world.*" And on the validity of Baptism given by women in case of extremity, he is equally positive, declaring that it ought not to be reiterated. In 1584, a petition, signed by Puritans, was presented to Archbishop Whitgift, asking the inhibition of Baptism by women. The Archbishop replied: "That the Baptism mynistered by women is lawfull and good, howsoever they mynister it, lawfully or unlawfully, (so that the institution of Christ, touching the *words and element*, be duly used,) no learned man ever doubted, untill now of late, some one or two." In 1661, the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer were altered, so as to make no mention of Baptism by any other than a "lawful minister."† By some this alteration has

* The mediæval rubric of the Salisbury Baptismal Office, A. D. 1085, substantially retained in the Book of Common Prayer, is as follows:—

"The Pastors and Curates shall oft admonish the people that they defer not

And they shall warn them that without great cause and necessity they baptize not children at home in their houses. And when great need shall compel them so to do, that then they minister it on this fashion. First, let them that be present call upon God for His grace, and say the Lord's Prayer, if the time will suffer. And then one of them shall name the child and dip him in water, or pour water upon him, saying these words: I BAPTIZE THEE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, AMEN. And let them not doubt but that the child so baptized is lawfully and sufficiently baptized.

† The old rubric was: Non licet laico vel mulieri aliquem baptizare, nisi in articulo necessitatis. Si vero vir et mulier adessent ubi immineret necessitatis articulus baptizandi puerum, et non esset alius minister ad hoc magis idoneus præsens, vir baptizet et non mulier, nisi forte mulier bene sciret verba sacramentalia et non vir, vel aliud impedimentum subesset.—*Sarum Manual*.

been regarded as a formal decision of the Anglican Church against the validity of Lay-Baptism; others, and among these stand some of the most eminent Episcopal divines both of this country and England, say, that while this alteration does, and was intended to check the practice of Lay-Baptism, it was no decision against its validity, and the practice of the Church for unbroken centuries.* At all events the practice of the Episcopal Church in both countries is still in favor of its validity. Contending that ordination episcopally conveyed is alone true and lawful, they reduce the ministrations of the Clergyman of dissenting Churches to the level of lay-ministrations, and yet do not hesitate to receive members from those Churches without subjecting them to the necessity of re-baptism, thus recognizing their unepiscopal, and, therefore, irregular Baptism as true and valid.

* Blunt, in his "Annotated Book of Common Prayer", p. 213, says in a note touching the alteration of the rubric, limiting the administration of Baptism to lawful ministers, that it affected not the Church's position on the subject of necessitous Baptism, inasmuch as "Minister," in the Book of Common Prayer, means "executor officii," and if used in that sense, the addition of "lawful" does not by any means of necessity restrict it to a clergyman. The "*alius minister ad hoc magis idoneus*" of the former rubric, shows that the word minister was used even of lay persons in the case of the administration of Baptism, long before the Reformation. Nor did this action throw any doubt upon the validity of the Baptism of the 300,000 persons in England who had been baptized by laymen, as no public provision was made for their re-baptism.

"The phrase 'any other lawful minister,' added, in 1661, at Bishop Cosin's suggestion, is, in fact, the equivalent of an ancient Latin rubric (the one above quoted), referring to lay persons baptizing, and the word minister is used to indicate the person ministering the Sacrament, without reference to his being a clergyman." *Sacraments and Sacramental ordinances*, by Rev John Henry Blunt, p. 63.

Rev. Dr. Lea says, "The term 'lawful minister' with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism includes under certain circumstances not only persons clerical but lay. But even if it meant an 'ordained' minister only, it would simply act as a discouragement to lay and schismatical Baptism, for which purpose it was introduced in the Book of 1604, as treating them *irregular* but *valid*, and therefore not to be reiterated conditionally or otherwise, for the proper matter and form are alone essential to this Sacrament, 'a lawful (ordained) minister' is not." *Directorium Anglicanum*, Third Ed. London, p. 199.

"If a Priest or Deacon may not be had, in an urgent case of private Baptism (the speedy death of the child being apprehended), the parents had better get some male friend to baptize the child. If such cannot be procured, the father must administer the Sacrament; the mother may only do so if the father knows not the Sacramental words, or some other impediment." *Ib.* p. 203.

LUTHERAN CHURCH.

No change in this particular was proposed by the Lutheran Reformers. Sacramental and historical theology was not repudiated by them in the correction of the overlaid abuses of the Papacy. Occupying high ground in reference to the necessity and efficacy of the Sacraments, the Lutheran theologians had no difficulty in accepting the validity of Lay-Baptism in extreme cases, and continuing in the new order of things, under proper ecclesiastical regulations, the practice of the primitive, mediæval, and Roman Church. It would burden this article too much to make extensive quotations from the old Lutheran divines and the early liturgies of that Church. Suffice it to say, that in both ways its undeviating testimony is given to the validity of necessitous Baptism by laymen. Take the following unquestionable authorities, only as examples among many others at hand.

Buddeus says: "They who by divine command can confer Baptism are the rightly constituted ministers of the Church. If, however, no minister of the Church be present, and the danger of death forbid the deferring of Baptism, the judgment of our Church is that it may be rightly administered by a layman or a woman."* Hollazius says: "Extraordinarily however, and in case of necessity, any pious Christian, male or female, acquainted with the Sacraments can administer Baptism."†

In Lutheran Liturgies explicit directions are given for the proper administration of what is styled "Noth-Taufe." From such an old service book, bearing date A. D. 1713, but the reprint, as shown by the illuminated title-page of an older liturgy published A. D. 1626, under the auspices of John Casimir, Duke of Saxony, we take the following rubric: "Es sollen

* "Qui baptismum ex Numinis mandato, aliis rite conferre possunt, ministri ecclesie sunt rite constituti. Quodsi ecclesie minister non adsit, vitæque periculum differo diutius baptismum votet, eundem a laico etiam, aut femina, recte administrari, ecclesie nostræ est sententia." *Inst. Theo. Dog., Lib. V., cap. I., § 4.*

† "Extraordinarie vero, et in casu necessitatis, quisvis Christianus pius et rituum sacrorum gnarus, sive sit mas, sive femina, baptismum administratri potest."

aber die Pfarrer das Volk in den Predigten unterrichten, dass sie nicht leichtlich zu der Noth Tauff eilen sollen, wann es aber die höchste Nothdurfft erfordert, dass man tauffen soll und muss, dass die, so dabey seynd, unsern Herrn Gott zuvor aufrufen, und ein Vater Unser beten, wann solches geschæhen, als dann darauf taufen, in Namen des Vaters, und des Sohns, und des Heiligen Geistes, und dass man dann nicht zweifelo, das Kind sey recht und gnugsam getauft, und nicht soll anderweit in der Kirchen, oder sonst öffentlich getauft werden. Doch soll man solch Kind, wenn es am Leben bleibet in die Kirchen tragen, das der Pfarrer die Leute frage, ob sie auch gewiss seyen dass das Kind recht getauft sey, und mit was Weise und Worten sie es getauft haben," &c. Women were not allowed to baptize only under circumstances of the greatest need, and only then in the failure to get some Christian man there, and then it is added: "Aber so dasselbige wegen Schwachheit des Kindes nicht seyn mochte, als den soll die Wehe-Mutter, oder welches gegenwärtig Christlich-Weib sich des Tauffens unterfangen will, zwo oder drey Personen, so vorhanden, zum Zeugniß beruffen und erfordern, damit auf zweyer oder dreyer Kundschaft, die heilige Tauffe des Kindes bestehe, und zuvor das Gebet Christi, Vater Unser, &c., beten, dem Kind ein Namen geben, und darauf das Kind tauffen und sprechen: Ich tauffe dich in Namen Gottes des Vaters, und des Sohns, und des Heiligen Geistes."

THE REFORMED CHURCH.

No definite canon has been adopted by the Reformed Church on the subject; and the absence from its liturgies of all directions and forms for the right administration of "Noth-Taufe," such as the above, would indicate an unfavorable judgment as to its validity even in necessitous cases: With the exception of Zwingle, it must be conceded, the most prominent Reformed divines were decidedly opposed to the practice, although frankly confessing that it had in its favor the authority of antiquity.

Zwingle says: "Wir sind getouft, und sind recht getouft;

denn es kann ein jedes wyb sebs toufen."* "Daran dry irrungen des umstands warend (das ist, der elementen diser welt). An dem umstand der person ward geirret, dass alein der Pfaff söllte toufen; so man doch wol wusst, das ein jedlich mensch toufen mocht, ouch die hebamm und vorgängerinn."†

Calvin, in his Institutes, Book IV., Chap. XV., thus expresses his dissent: "The custom, which has been received and practised for many ages, and almost from the primitive times of the Church, for Baptism to be performed by laymen, in cases where death is apprehended, and no minister was present in time, it appears to me impossible to defend by any good reason."‡ Over against the usage of the Church for unbroken centuries, Calvin interposes here simply his *private judgment*. Rather than that infants should die without Baptism, Luther and his followers, we have seen, in accordance with the ancient and uniform practice of the Church, allowed a layman or woman to administer it in times of necessity. But Calvin put the doctrine of Baptism a pitch lower. He allowed its necessity, but only as *necessitate præcepti*, by God's command, and so far *necessitate medii*, as it is God's ordinary means of regeneration and giving salvation; denying that there is or can be any such direct necessity as to justify its lay-administration. And yet even this Reformer did not insist absolutely on the rebaptization of all that had been baptized by lay-hands, thus practically at least recognizing its validity. In one of his letters, while condemning absolutely all Baptisms administered by women, he yet cautions against the scandal of repeating that administered by laymen, since its reputed validity has the *countenance of antiquity*, and its repetition, he thought, would be regarded as an innovation.§

Ursinus is clearly against the administration of this Sacrament by lay-hands. In his exposition of Question 71, Heidel-

* *Huldrici Zwinglii Opera*. Vol. II., p. 278. Zurich, 1830. † *Ib.* p. 299.

‡ "Multis abhinc seculis adeoque ab ipso fere ecclesie exordio receptum fuisse, ut in periculo mortis laici baptizarent, si minister in tempore non adesset, non video quam firma ratione defendi queat."

§ *Kellhall's Reply to Waterland*. *Waterland's Works*, Vol. VI., p. 95.

berg Catechism, he says: "Baptism is properly used when it is administered by the ministers to whom Christ has limited it, and whom He has sent to teach and baptize, and not by women and others whom God has not sent."* "Since the administration of the Sacraments forms a part of the ecclesiastical ministry, those who are not called to this, and especially women, ought not to take upon themselves the right and authority to baptize."† The emphatic exception made here in the case of women would seem to indicate, even in the judgment of Ursinus, that the administration of this Sacrament by laymen, under urgent circumstances, might be admissible. At all events, in his defence of Infant Baptism, he quotes, with evident approbation, this saying of Augustine: "*The whole Church holds the doctrine of Infant Baptism by tradition. What the whole Church holds and has always retained, although it has not been decreed by any Council, that it is just and proper for us to believe, as if it had been delivered and handed down by apostolic authority.*"‡ From the time of Tertullian, at least, the custom of the lay-administration of Baptism, in necessitous cases, as has already been shown, has been held and always retained in the Church, thus carrying along with it the very authority—*tradition*—which Ursinus claims in support of Infant Baptism. If the voice of the Church is to be respected in the one instance, it is certainly entitled to a like respect in the other.

Beza, writing to Bullinger from Geneva, about the usages obtaining in the Anglican Church, most decidedly disapproves of Lay-Baptism in these words: "What must we say when, in

* Ursinus' Comm. on Heidelberg Catechism; translated by Rev. Dr. Williard, p. 363. "Baptismus administratur ab iis, quibus id Christus, præcepit, hoc est, ministris ecclesie, quos Christus misit ad docendum et baptizandum: non a mulieribus, aut aliis, qui a Deo non sunt missi, et nomine Dei nihil stipulari possunt." *Corpus Doctrina Christianæ*; Hanover edition, 1634, p. 391.

† Dr. Williard's Translation of Ursinus' Comm. p. 373. These "Theses concerning Baptism," concluding Ursinus' exposition of this Sacrament, have been omitted in the Hanover edition, now before us.

‡ "Baptismus parvulorum traditum tenet universitas Ecclesie. Quod univærsæ tenet Ecclesie, nec a Conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est: non nisi apostolica auctoritate traditum rectissime credimus."

case of necessity, as they call it, women are allowed to baptize."*

It is not to be disputed that the Reformed divines generally were opposed to the practice of the lay-administration of Baptism, and more especially by women, even under the most urgent circumstances. Assuming this position, whether true or false, they broke with the entire pre-Reformation Church, and also, in this particular, the more historical and sacramental branch of the Reformation itself, as represented by the Lutheran and Anglican communions, which already has been amply shown. The whole current of church practice and authority was against them in this particular.

Baptism administered by women, as has already been noticed, was singled out by Ursinus as especially irregular and objectionable. The validity of Baptism by women must follow the recognition of that administered by *laymen*. The one follows the other logically and necessarily. Maskell says: "Necessity has always been regarded by the Church, as a fit reason why men, neither priests nor deacons, should baptize: and if the same necessity exists, where no man happens to be at hand, what is there in the nature of the thing, which should prevent the administration of this Sacrament by a woman? Doubtless it must be ventured upon, only in the last extremity, only when life appears to be fast ebbing away, and no hope left."†

The irregularity of Lay-Baptism has been strongly urged against its integrity. An act, irregular in some of its particulars, may nevertheless be valid. Exigencies making it imperative, its integrity and binding force are in no way affected by such irregularity. During the recent civil war, the exigencies of the case demanding it, the President of the United States suspended the writ of *Habeas Corpus*. The act was *irregular*—an extraordinary stretch of authority. But the Congress, at the session ensuing, conceding the extraordinary and necessitous circumstances under which the President was called to act, recognized its validity and confirmed the course adopted.

* *Zurich Letters*, p. 274. *Parker Society, Cambridge*, 1846.

† *Holy Baptism*, by Rev. W. Maskell, M.A., p. 263.

The subsequent public and official recognition of such necessitous Baptism, in case the persons thus baptized lived, was deemed the necessary complement and seal of its former lay-administration. And in the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican Churches, a special form is provided for the public ratification of all such irregular Baptisms.*

Baptism looks forward to its personal and voluntary ratification in Confirmation. It only reaches in this supplementary rite its last sense and meaning. The apostolic name of this rite, admitting the catechumen into full membership with the Church, was "the laying on of hands;"† in the sub-apostolic age, it was known as "the sealing," or "the anointing." It was conceded by the ancient Church, that all the defects of an irregularly administered Baptism were covered by this supplementary act. Hence, in the primitive ages, Baptism was immediately followed by confirmation; this was the practice, whether the person baptized was an adult, a youth, or an infant.‡

From the authorities presented, and the stream is singularly constant and strong in one direction, Baptism, we have learned, was accounted valid when administered, *first*, with water, *secondly*, with the prescribed form, and *thirdly*, both regular and valid, when in addition to these absolute requisites, administered by an ordained minister. And the voice of the Church, as it comes down through the ages, bears, with wonderful unanimity, unmistakable testimony to the validity of the lay-administration of Baptism in extreme cases; that is, it was recognized, and no repetition necessary, provided that it had been given with the proper matter and the proper form.

* The Palatine Liturgy affirms that no unordained man ought to assume the office of Baptism, without however expressing any opinion on the validity of its lay-administration in exceptional cases.

† Acts viii. 12-17, xix. 5, 6; Heb. vi. 2.

‡ *Sacraments and Sacramental Ordinances*, by Rev. John Henry Hunt, p. 96.