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THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND THE BAPTISTIC QUESTION.

By DR. H. MARTENSEN, *Prof. of Theology in the University of Copenhagen.*

This is a small work of 51 pages, part of which is here presented to the English reader—the remainder shall follow. The occasion and design of it, will be best understood from the Author's own words in a short preface. "The by no means unimportant baptistic movement in the Danish Church—a movement which has not yet run its whole course—is the direct occasion of this church pamphlet. Inasmuch as the Baptistic Theory has manifested itself also, in many points, in the Evangelical Church of Germany, and has become matter of attention, the author hopes that this small work may also be of interest to German readers. It asks to be permitted to take its place among those contributions, which have already appeared, and are designed to lead to a more definite understanding of the dogmatic substance of this matter." It will be easily seen that

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it suits equally well the theological meridian of the American Church. It lends forth a host against the Baptist Theory, from a point which is comparatively new in American polemics; and the controverted system must marshal an entirely different set of arguments if it would keep its ground. Our own comments on its merits must be reserved to the close of the translation. It may only yet be necessary to remind the reader that the author is a Lutheran. If the doctrine of the tract is true Lutheranism, it will be seen that it differs, in its theory of Christianity, as far from what goes under that name in this country, as it does from the Baptist theory itself. Without any farther preliminary observations we commend this treatise to the theological times, as a little book to be desired to make one think, if not even to make one wise.

Introduction.

The inquiry whether the baptism of infants can be dogmatically justified, has, through the baptistic movement, become matter of special attention; the more so, since views begin to appear in the bosom of the church itself, which, however much they seem to be opposed to the Baptist system in a civil and moral point of view nevertheless share with it dogmatically in the same principle. The baptistic rejection of infant baptism rests upon the view, that baptism has significance merely as a free self-conscious act, as in baptism of adults, who have previously been regenerated and are believers, in whose case baptism is only an outward sensible demonstration of the inward gift of grace, of which the subject has become partaker in another way independent of baptism. A self-conscious personal life of faith, received immediately and direct from the operations of the Holy Ghost in the soul, is, to the baptistic system the very germ and substance of Christianity, while it views the Sacraments as mere symbolical signs and adumbrations. Although this view comes most easily into favor through the Reformed Church, in its views of the relation of faith to the sacraments, yet the one-sided prominence of mere subjective and purely personal Christianity, has for some time past also found entrance into the Lutheran church. The manner of thinking which has been extended through Pietism as well as by Rationalism, has generated views of the church and of the means of grace, which have not only prepared the way for the Baptist theory, but carry the germ of this in their own bosom. If we

turn our attention towards the Protestant sermons of the latest time, from which the reigning doctrine is necessarily reflected, we shall find historical ground for the assertion that the significance of Baptism has been handled prevailingly with reference to its subjective side, while its objective side, that which is properly Sacramental, has been left in the back ground. Infant baptism, as such, upon the whole, has been handled with a certain reserve and caution, only in a passing way alluded to from some subordinate point of view, but not proclaimed as carrying with it the unconditional necessity of an article of faith. As, agreeable to the reigning views, free personal conviction seemed to be the first foundation for the evolution of the Christian life in the individual, it was natural that confirmation should be overvalued at the expense of infant baptism. Baptism, as infant baptism, seemed placed in an oblique position in relation to faith, since it was presumed that a well grounded faith alone could give the subject of it a right to baptism; hence baptism seemed more appropriately joined with confirmation as its seal. This apprehension of the nature of Baptism is without dispute baptistic, and hence the baptistic system is associated with a one-sidedness which may be designated in general as having forgotten what religion presupposes and by what it is conditioned, in its zeal for free self-conscious religion. In the baptistic system, however, this one-sidedness appears in its most destructive form, inasmuch as it breaks formally with the church, and thus withdraws itself schismatically from all reforming conservative influence. It seeks to secure its error, by separating it from the great stream of historical development, and preserving it in a permanent form by an isolated church-communion. But just in this very way it places itself, as far as possible, beyond all means of correction. Instead of suffering itself, and its subjective Christianity, to be taken up in the general flow of church life, and in this way to penetrate through to the truth, it must now sooner or later pass over into the list of historical petrifications.

The point at which this sect is joined in agreement with the true church, is its consciousness of sin and need of grace, its belief in regeneration by the Spirit of God, its workings towards sanctification; but, with foolish trust in her own superior wisdom, the daughter has separated herself from the mother-church, vainly imagining that she can complete her own sanctification in her own strength, independently of that which must previously be at hand in the order of Christian life. And so far does she go in her fanaticism, that rejecting infant baptism, she

openly denies the mother. For this reason the whole of this singular controversy between the church and the baptistic system, hinges substantially upon this point. It is a controversy between mother and daughter in regard to the birth and proper beginning of the Christian life: whether the new created consciousness comes to life through the medium of a *generatio equivoca*, or whether it has a regular mother. The question in other words, is this: Is faith the first, the original; baptism the second, the derivative; or whether the reverse is not rather the case, viz: that faith is the fruit of baptism, and hence presupposes baptism: whether it should be said that the baptism of adults is the true regular baptism, and that infant baptism can not be dogmatically maintained, or whether it ought much rather be said that infant baptism is the true orderly baptism, and that the baptism of adults, when regarded dogmatically, is to be viewed as an exception to the rule, hence in substance as an infant baptism. Precisely with a view of giving a more particular answer to this question, have these pages been written. We designate the object of our investigation more nearly to be, to set ourselves right in regard to the fundamentals which the believing consciousness presupposes—those presuppositions, without which no regenerated consciousness is possible—and to recognize or designate infant baptism as the plenary point of these presupposed fundamentals. And, as the doctrine of infant baptism evidently belongs more immediately to the third article of faith, viz: to that of the Spirit, it must nevertheless, at the same time, be placed in organic union with the articles of the Father and the Son, in order that the reigning oneness may be counteracted in its ground; in other words: Infant baptism must not only be viewed in its connection with the operations of grace, but at the same time also, with the election of grace or predestination, and with the personal revelation of grace in Christ. That the doctrine of election has an inward connection with the doctrine of baptism, is already evident from the great significance which the first doctrine has with the Baptists, when these have reached only to some measure of development in doctrines. That the doctrine of the person of Christ stands connected with baptism is a fact of which all are conscious; but the principal thing is, that this connection be felt to be not merely an apparent one, but a real one. And, as these several factors or forces—eternal election, the manifestation of Christ, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the operations of grace,—are bound together in one living organic unity in the idea of the CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH, we shall, in our attempt

to point out the relation of baptism to this idea of the Church, reach the comprehensive stand-point from which we shall be able to give to each of these several factors or forces its truth, and assign to it its proper bounds.

I. Baptism as a Church-founding Sacrament.

Faith alone saves us; not dead, but living faith—not foreign but individual, personal faith. To have faith is the same as to have assurance of salvation—it is the same as to have eternal life, as well present as future. But just for the very reason that faith includes in itself an eternity, it can have no temporal, contingent or accidental source; it must have a divine foundation. On this account Christian faith must regard itself as a work of divine grace. Divine grace is made known and apprehended, not only in the advent of the Saviour into the world, it is equally as much apprehended in the gift to man of faith in the Saviour. For, to use an expression of Luther, a Christian knows that he cannot, by his own power, or through his own reason, come to his Lord and Saviour. If he comes to his Saviour, it is because his Saviour has first come to him; is he to apprehend Christ, then he must first be apprehended of Christ. Hence, although faith is in one respect the freest and most personal of all acts—that which is in the deepest sense human—it nevertheless has not its deepest ground in human personality and freedom. For this reason consequently the believing personality, in the Scriptures, is designated as a new creature; by which it is declared that the Christian lives his life of faith not from himself, but that this life is something given, something derived, something imparted.

If now the question is asked in what way faith is wrought in the heart, the best answer seems to be this: That it arises through the operation of the Holy Ghost in the inward man by means of Christian preaching. "Faith cometh by hearing," says the Apostle Paul; and upon this passage the Baptists ground their argument that baptism is only to follow faith as an outward rite. In order, therefore, that faith may be generated in the human heart, it is only necessary to have a preacher who has himself been apprehended of Christ, in whose inward man the Christian life of faith is active, and who by his personal testimony is able to waken up that life in his hearers. While we acknowledge the full weight and force of the above apostolic declaration, we will show that this declaration, is, by the

Baptists, perverted into an untruth; because it is only true after certain other truths which are presupposed by it, which truths, however, the Baptists do not acknowledge.

We ask here if faith comes from preaching, whence does preaching itself come? Is christian preaching merely the private communication of one individual to another in regard to his christian frame or condition, or in regard to his inward dispositions or spiritual emotions? Is it a mere private undertaking when one goes forth to preach the gospel? All sects profess that they come not in their own name, but in the name of Christ, and that every preacher must be conscious of a call, of a mission and commission. The christian preacher must, therefore, recognize himself as the organ of Christ, as one who has a function to fulfil in the name of Christ. But how can he be the organ of Christ, unless he has previously been incorporated into the organism of Christ, that is, the church? Christ stands related to the individual only through the general; and every true fellowship with Him, is a fellowship with him only as the HEAD of the body—that is, of the Church. True preaching can, therefore, only be that, which proceeds from Christ through the Church. The Christian preacher is only he, in whom THE CHURCH IS GROUNDED; and his preaching, in so far as it is directed to those who do not belong to Christ, can only have for its object, *to found the Church in them*.

When we say that no preacher can be the organ of Christ, who is not at the same time an organ of the Church, we have not in our mind, in making this assertion, a definite spiritual ORDER or RANK, to whom the act of Christian preaching should alone and exclusively be reserved; we recognize the Protestant idea of the universal priesthood of Christians; we accord to every Christian the right to testify of his faith, only it must be laid down as a universal requirement, that no one put himself forward as a private organ of Christ, but that he speak forth from out the communion-life which has been founded in Christ, and which has been developed in history. The error of the sects consists precisely in this, that they would unite themselves with Christ without the Church, the great historical medium. In this system the individual stands only in a private relation to Christ, after he has reached this position through a purely inward and mystical moving of the Spirit, or through his own reading and understanding of the Bible. It is religious sympathy alone, which draws individuals together in a conventicle for mutual communication and interchange of personal experiences. To them preaching proceeds only from individuals, not from the

Church. For they do not view the Church as *preceding* the individual, but regard it only as result, as *product* of the holy struggles of the individual. The sects would form the whole, by an atomistic bringing together of the parts; while it is the very secret of an organism, that the whole precedes the parts, therefore the *communion* of saints must precede, in order, the individual saints. Instead of viewing the Church as the holy mother of faith, and as the body of the individual members, the sects regard her exclusively as a product, an off-spring of faith, and of the body of individuals.

Is, therefore, faith to arise, not by a *generatio aequivoeca*, but in an organic manner, then the principle that faith comes from preaching, must be more particularly qualified thus: It comes from that preaching which goes out from the Church, and which invites men into the Church. When Christian preaching calls Jews and Gentiles into the Church, it is only done in order that they may there attain to the true *beginning* of faith—to that beginning which is, at the same time, the *principle*, the inward life-bearing possibility, from which a progressive evolution and growth in Christ shall proceed. That beginning of faith, which can find place in the individual before he is incorporated into the Church, is only a preliminary, a preparatory beginning, which is, in and for itself, an unfruitful and powerless beginning, and one which contains in itself no guarantee for its actual continuation, for its true progression. The individual who stands out of the Church, can, so to say, merely make a religious onset, can only impel himself towards the kingdom of God in a kind of infinite approach, without ever actually, in this way, getting into it. The *true* beginning of faith is effected alone in this, that the movement does not proceed from the individual, but that the Church secures to itself a beginning in the individual, that the great communion life implants itself into the individual life. When we say that the beginning of faith is planted in the individual by the Church being planted in him, or by the individual being appropriated by the Church, we wish nevertheless to be understood to say, that this beginning is only the true beginning of faith, in so far, as the Church is itself appropriated of CHURCH. Only when the proposition, 'The Church gives itself a beginning in the individual,' is resolved and explained by the other, 'Christ, too, gives himself a beginning in the individual, makes him His organ by founding His Church in him'—only then does it designate the correct mode in which true faith has its true beginning.

We here go back, in our consideration, to the idea of the constitution of the Church. That Christ has *constituted* the Church does not merely mean that he has given it an historical beginning in time, but that he has, in time, given it an eternal beginning—that beginning which has secured to the Church an eternal life and an eternal growth, the power of triumphantly unfolding itself to salvation. That Christ has given to his Church this eternal beginning farther includes that he has made himself the *principle* of its spirit—that he, the God-man, the only begotten, in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily, has placed himself in an organic relation to his Church, as well to the whole as to each individual member. As founder of his Church, Christ is not merely the subject or object of faith, but he himself is the founder of faith. His Church has not been constituted in an accidental or sporadic way; it is no conventicle of persons who have gathered around Christ, and elected him as Lord and Master, but the Lord himself has elected and prepared for himself his Church. Were faith only grounded in this, namely, that the first disciples gathered around Christ, based their faith upon their own agreement and sympathies with him and each other, and then proclaimed and extended his doctrines from themselves—in that case a religious sect or school would have been established, but no Church. But just as little as Christ appeared as a private individual, just so little is faith in Christ a private matter. And as the appearance of Christ is presupposed by an eternal decree, which was made before the foundation of the world, so also faith in Christ is not a human matter, but the faith of man in Christ is included in the same eternal decree. Christ is only the perfect fulfilment of this eternal decree, in so far as he is not manifested merely as object, but at the same time also as founder of faith. The faith of the Church is, therefore, not only faith in Christ, but faith through Christ and faith by means of Christ. The Church builds the certainty of her eternal election, not upon the purity or strength of her subjective life of faith, which is subject to that which is temporal and contingent, but upon the foundation out of which the subjective life of faith proceeds—upon the constitution of Christ. Not upon her own love to Christ, but upon his previous love to her, she rests the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

If we look back to the time when Christ himself wandered upon earth, we find that the faith of the disciples in him was not brought forth by means of a rational reflection upon his doctrines, which, as is well known, they did not fully compre-

hend, but by means of the theanthropic power of Christ's *personality*, through which he constituted them his own, and prepared them as his organs. It was the personal, loving power of the only begotten, which guaranteed to them the truth of his doctrines; and their confidence in Christ, their assurance that nothing should pluck them out of his hands, sprang not out of the relation in which they, the weak and infantine disciples, had placed themselves to Christ, but out of the relation in which he, the personal grace and truth, had placed himself to them. It was the Lord himself who helped them to faith. For this reason also their Lord and Master, in the consciousness of his divine power, testifies, not, *Ye have chosen me*, but, *I have chosen you!* The faith of the disciples was, therefore, in the deepest and purest sense of the word, a faith of authority; because Christ himself was the founder of it. Personal self-consciousness and free faith unfolded itself in them only after the outpouring of the Spirit. The Spirit, however, never ceased to point them back to Christ: freedom ever pointed back to authority—the idea to the fact. This history of the generation of faith, its foundation by Christ, its development from authoritative to free personal faith, which nevertheless still rests upon the fact of its divine constitution, must in substance repeat itself in all following generations, since the order of grace cannot be for them substantially different from what it was to the first disciples. It is this continuation of the order of grace which is wrought by means of holy Baptism. What the personal election of Christ was to the first circle of disciples, that Baptism is for the successive Church, the divine fact through which Christ gives to his Church its true and eternal beginning in the individual. For this reason the Apostles of the Lord, in whom he himself personally founded his Church, needed not Baptism; and for this reason the Apostle Paul had to be baptized, because he alone had not been with the Lord in the days of his flesh. By means of Baptism the Church propagates itself from generation to generation, so that every new generation which is added to the Church, is appropriated by Christ in just as primitive a way as were the first disciples, and become partakers of the endless beginning of faith in as fresh and living a way as those first Christians did. For it results from the *Kingly* office of Christ, that he, although he no more goes in a sensible form from Galilee into Judea, nevertheless substantially and personally moves on in the history of the world, from generation to generation, and that he is still, as he was in the beginning, the founder of true faith upon earth. Baptism is

therefore a transaction, not of the absent, but of the present, Christ. It is the *risen* Christ himself, who, in Baptism, extends his arms towards all generations of men with a view of effectuating the decree of the Father, the eternal election—with a view of founding faith, and of imparting the Spirit which proceeds from himself and the Father.

The proposition, that faith comes from preaching, must, agreeably to what these considerations have now developed, be interpreted as meaning that it comes from that preaching which goes out from Baptism and which invites to Baptism. But preaching calls to baptism in order that Christ may found his Church in the single individual—give to the Church an endless beginning in him. That faith comes from preaching is, therefore, by no means irreconcilable with the proposition that *faith comes from Baptism*. It is only the exoteric apprehension of the matter which is here taken up into the esoteric. For, in so far as faith, in a Heathen or Jew, begins through means of preaching, this beginning is only the temporal, finite beginning of faith, which is neither more nor less than the vehicle by which the proper central beginning, which carries in its bosom the plenary promise of the future, is introduced. Everywhere in the Kingdom of the Spirit, everywhere, where reference is made to spiritual productiveness, we can discern this twofold beginning—the relative, which is only of a preparatory nature, and the central, having life powers and being really creative. In the language of the world the central is called the generative beginning, because it is not the subject which by way of inclination moves itself towards the idea, but is the idea itself, the thing itself, which itself, in its individual fulness, takes a living energetic beginning in the subject, and opens in him the source of spiritual animation, the mystery of productiveness. The generative consists not in this, that the individual elects for itself its own idea, but in this that the idea elects the individual as its own organ. That individual which seeks to elect his own idea, without having been elected of the idea, is either fanatical or rationalistic. What the generative beginning, which may easily be present without the individual having a clear consciousness of it, is in the sphere of human activity for that individual who has a special mission to fulfil: that Baptism is for the sphere of the christian religion, in its reference to the fundamental problem of human life. For it is the Church-forming Christ himself, the principle, which includes in itself the whole fulness of Church-life, which here constitutes the generative power of the individual. In so far as faith comes from the word preach-

ed, it is partly only the preliminary unproductive faith, and partly that which follows and is active in the Church; in either case it is that faith which comes forward in time and experience. The *MYSTERY* of faith, however, its endless foundation, originates from the election of Christ in Baptism, while he, as Head of the Church, places himself in an organic relation to the individual, and in this way, opens to him the source from which alone faith can be developed, and from which alone Christian life and productiveness flow. Hence Christian preaching rests upon the fact that there is a Christian Baptism—that the Church is founded, and is ever being founded anew in unregenerated men. Without Baptism, preaching would be only a subjective function, a mere conventicle business, which does not unfold itself out of the act of Christ. It would be, at best, only a work of accidental power a work effected by Scriptural wisdom, or by some indefinite spiritual movements, but not a work of that Spirit which proceeds from the founder of the Church. That we have still at this day evangelical and apostolic preaching, rests not, *most immediately*, upon the apostolic Scriptures, but most directly on this, that we are appropriated of Christ in a way equally original or primitive with the Apostles—that Christ has given us the same beginning of faith, the same source of faith, if not the same measure of the Spirit, as he gave to them, and has, in this way qualified us to perpetuate a communion with the Apostles by means of the holy Scriptures. The conception of Apostolic preaching, according to the Scriptures, can only be determined in connection with the conception of Baptism; and we accordingly find that the office of preaching was instituted at the same time with Baptism. If, now, preaching is to be in the Apostolic spirit, it can assume no other mission than this: partly to lead those, in whom faith is not yet founded, to Baptism; and partly, also, to unfold the mystery of faith in those, in whom it has already secured a ground through the *medium* of Baptism.

The error of the Baptist system consists in this, that it denies the *mystery* of faith, and regards Baptism merely as something to be added to preaching, instead of regarding preaching as unfolding itself upon the ground of Baptism. For this reason the Baptists have no holy office of preacher, such as grounds itself only in the constitution of the Church. Their preaching can only be regarded as the private communication of one individual to another. One individual awakens faith in the other, and by this reciprocal awakening is the Church produced. This awakening is confounded with regeneration, and Baptism

is to follow after only as a declaration—an outward sealing of that regeneration which has already taken place. Nothing *begins* in Baptism, no new evolving principle comes into power. Baptism is merely the outward conclusion of that which is already accomplished within. It is only an act of faith, not an act of Christ. It is the act by which the individual declares that he has elected Christ—through which the congregation declares that it has received the individual: but it is not the creative election of the Lord himself, not the formation of faith by Christ-himself.

This error can be traced back to one more general: to this, namely, that it betrays a one-sided conception of the religious cultus. The Baptist system goes upon the supposition that cultus (worship) is that, in which a man places himself in a relation to God, but overlooks the fact that cultus is even so well that in which God places himself in a relation to man; and that this last form of this relation is the deeper of the two—the one in which the first itself has its ground. This one-sided conception is, moreover, considerably spread in the pale of the Church itself, and this shows that the baptistic system is not a phenomenon standing entirely separate and alone. Many members of the Church are under such a conception of the cultus that their attendance at church can have, for them, no other meaning than participating in a conventicle constituted by the State. The Church is for them nothing more than a pious convocation for the purpose of mutual edification. They collect around a preacher whose religious individuality pleases them, but the idea of a holy preaching-office, and of the Sacraments, has for them lost its signification. They hold literally that cultus means *service* of God; and therefore they regard God exclusively as object—as object of the religious acts of men, without remembering that man can make God the object of his cultus only so far as God himself cultivates man. In consequence of this view the congregation seeks to raise itself in devotion to God, hears a sermon about God, but God himself, is, in the whole cultus, represented as unproductive; he only receives the offerings of the spirit, without himself giving, acting, working. In so far as, in their cultus, God is set forth as active, it is only through the indefinite representations of the divine Spirit, who is present in the human consciousness, in the feelings, and in the believing disposition; but Christ, the centrality of religion, is only regarded as the remembered object.

If however, Christ is to be more than the historical promulgator of a principle, which, after his departure, is to unfold itself,

he must rather be considered as the unseen Head, who stands related to the Church, as his mystical Body—as the personal mediator between God and the race, from whom the Church must ever anew receive the Spirit; thus he cannot be regarded merely as the object of cultus for his church, but rather he must be viewed as the eternal and constant founder of this cultus, who never ceases to *officiate* in his church. We must have in view not only an objective Christ, but a living, ever-present, subjective Christ. Precisely this is the conception of the Kingly Christ, the fundamental mystery upon which the church rests, namely, that the separation, of which the senses can take cognizance, existing between this and the future life, is already taken up, or superseded through communion with him, who is the personal centre in the whole sphere of personality, and who has promised to be not far from his disciples, who can be one only *in him*. As Head of his Body he takes part, in an endless way, in the fortunes and circumstances of his church; and in his creative power he is the all determining, all-pervading central *will* in the whole organism—the principle of the Spirit in the church.¹ Now as certain as the conception of cultus includes the conception of real Christ-functions, so certain does it also give the conception of determinate Christ-acts,—acts which are independent of faith, but through which faith is grounded and unfolded. It is the conception of the SACRAMENTS which meets us here. The Sacraments, which to the outward view, are only emblematic acts of the church, are according to their unseen substance creative and redeeming acts of the risen Christ. It is not merely a holy thought, a divine idea which has enveloped itself in the sacraments; it is a personal *will*—not a representing, but a working will. It is the all-organizing will of Christ, which here reveals itself in its centrality. The Sacrament is not merely a making visible, an explanation, a pledge, of the grace; but, while it is all this, it is at the same time, the real

¹ The more the dogma of the Kingship of Christ, has, in these last times, been neglected, while the dogma of the Spirit has in a one-sided way been made prominent—because it set aside the true way in which Christ must be pre-supposed—the more important are, in our time, such works as Dörner's "History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ." In this work, the apprehension of the Person of Christ, as the God-man Head of humanity, is not only in a historical and ethical, but also in a metaphysical and cosmological sense, the leading fundamental thought, which is authenticated scientifically by a consideration, equally thorough and comprehensive, of the christological conceptions which have constituted an epoch in history.

communication of the grace—the communication of that by which alone a life evolution is possible. Of course the Sacraments would be nothing to the church without the revealed, historically attested *word* of God; but, on the other hand, only in the view which presupposes the Sacraments, does the revelation of Christ in his word become more than a past history or a mirror of common thoughts and feelings.

The holy delivery in the word affords us only his *historical* presence, his remembrance, his image; the devotion of the congregation, its feeling and its thoughts, contains only his *mystical* presence in the depths of the soul, by means of the operations of the Spirit; these forms, however, find their living centre, and their higher unity, in the *Sacramental* presence, in which Christ himself, through the medium of his institution, substantially reproduces his historical presence. Should at any time the Sacraments, in their inseparable connection with the word, vanish from the church, then also would the subjective life of faith die out of the church. For, it is through these means of grace that Christ makes himself ever anew the pre-requisite of the life of the Spirit in the church; it is through the medium of these, not only that the Spirit once went forth from Christ—in which case Christ would have been merely the historical instrument of the Spirit—but that the Spirit ever anew goes out from him as from his living source. If the being or essence of the Spirit is designated as action, evolution, process, then it must be said that the Sacraments and the word contain the firm and enduring, namely, the fulness of Christ, out of which the Spirit draws. If the Spirit, in his divine presence in the church, is always bound to a relative historical stage of the development of the church consciousness, then the Sacraments and the word contain the eternal source, the unconditional beginning of all development, as well in the present, as in the future world.

In consequence of the reigning conception in the Protestant church, there is only an *image of Christ*, but no real Christ. The rationalistic conception, which still counts many disciples, would have us believe that Christ ended his functions with his departure from the earth: it surmises that he is perhaps now active upon some other planet, but for his church he lives no more: it regards the Sacraments as sensible means, by which his image is enlivened for the church, and it believes that in this way they continue to exert a moral influence. The later speculative conception, which is not satisfied with a historical relict, teaches that Christ is present in his church as an omnipresent Christ-idea, as an universal immanent principle in the

faith and knowledge of the church; and the kingly office is placed in this, that Christ, having vanished as an individuality, is present in his church as *Spirit*. But as, in this cultus, not only a general relation to the Spirit is to find place, but also a personal relation to the personal Christ, this again can only be a relation to his image, not to Christ himself. For, as fixed personality, he has passed away, and has only a presence with his church as the general Spirit. The higher conception, however, of the kingly office of Christ, which unites and reconciles what is here divided, is the primitive christian conception, according to which Christ, as Head of the Body, as personal prototype of humanity, cannot be separated from his organism, but makes himself present by means of his image, and himself operates *in, with, and under* his institution. That the Lord rose from the dead, means not merely that his individuality evaporated in the universality of the Spirit, but that he, who includes in his individuality the entire fulness of divinity and humanity, has in his operations risen above, and superseded, the limits of time and space. He is lifted up to draw all unto him; he has ascended above all heavens that he might fill all things. Eph. iv. In his church, spread over the whole earth, the risen Christ makes himself present in a way which is not less objective than was his sensible presence on earth, although it is a veiled, mysterious presence. His earthly appearance, his image in the word, his historical institution, he himself appoints as means for his mysterious operations; his own historical appearance must become the visible element in which the risen Christ embosoms his unseen presence.

The Sacraments are the most holy parts in the christian cultus. The individuality of the minister, which in the publication of the word, preserves an independent significance, here draws back, while the Lord himself officiates as eternal High Priest. With Baptism, as the Sacrament of election, the christian cultus begins, while Christ himself, once for all, prepares man for the true worship. The universal priest-hood arises from Baptism, and only as those who have received this consecration, can they bring to him the sacrifices of the Spirit. As the church-founding Sacrament, Baptism cannot be repeated, while the Lord's Supper, as the Sacrament of renewing and sustaining, must be ever repeated anew. Baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost introduces the natural man into the communion of the triune God. It is the eternal gracious election of the Father which here introduces itself into historical reality through the medium of the Son,

who as mediator, imparts the Spirit. The Son appears here, as everywhere, as the living middle between the Father and the Spirit. His Baptism points back to the eternal decree of the Father, it points with promise to the future, when the fruit of the Spirit shall appear, but it is itself the fruitful germ out of which the growth and evolution emanate.

The position which Baptism takes in the christian cultus, and the relation which exists between Baptism and faith, was seen by Luther with great definiteness and clearness. That Luther knew how to estimate living personal faith, the freedom of a christian man, and the inward testimony of the Spirit, no one will deny. No less, however, did he know how to value that in the church which is independent of faith, and his reformation did not only give new life to free personal christianity, but at the same time he gave also to the church her original pre-supposed Christ in the word and Sacraments, the reality of which does not depend upon faith, as little as the personal appearance of Christ upon earth is to be regarded as the product of the believing church. As he had to remind the Papacy that the Sacraments did not benefit man without the right appropriation of them by faith, so he had to contend for the truth against the fanaticism of mysticism, and the one-sidedness of the understanding, which reigned prominently among the Swiss Reformers, that faith did not create the Sacraments, as little as faith was able to raise up its own Saviour. Luther's view of the relation of faith to the Sacraments can, for this reason, not be fully learned from his controversial writings against Catholicism, which course has of late been too much pursued. In these, where, to him, in opposition to the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, every thing seemed to depend upon contending for the right appropriation of the Sacraments, the stress is necessarily laid chiefly upon faith, and the Sacraments are represented with strong prominence in inseparable union with faith. Just as important, however, was it, in his estimation, to hold fast to the distinction between the Sacraments and faith—to contend for the divine substance of the Sacraments in their independence of the use of them, which is especially carried out in those controversial writings which are directed against the Protestant subjectivity. So, for instance, he contends in those sermons, which in the year 1535, he published in honor of holy Baptism, against the error that Baptism is only a Sacrament in so far as those who receive it have faith. From this error, he says, arises the diffuse and dangerous disputation about infant Baptism, which was stirred up by the Anabaptists, and the strongest argument by which

these fanatics sustain themselves is that they say: You were baptized when you were yet a child, and when you did not yet believe, therefore your Baptism is vain. And now, in showing that the whole confusion, in this article of belief, has its foundation in this, that no distinction is made between the substance and the use of the Sacraments, he lays down the rule: These two, Baptism and Faith, ought to be separated as far as heaven and earth, God and man, are separated. For what God does is firm, sure, and unchangeable, as he himself is unchangeable and eternal; but what we do is unstable and insecure as we ourselves are, so that we can found or build nothing thereon. In order now that our Baptism may stand and be sure to us, he has not founded it upon our faith, because this is uncertain; yea, it may be even false, but he has grounded it upon his word, and upon his own institution, that it may stand and not become weaker even when we have not faith. Whoever, therefore, will be undeceived let him hold to this doctrine, that he may say understandingly and with discrimination: That I am baptized is not my work, neither is it the work of the priest who gave me Baptism, for it is not my Baptism, nor the priest's, nor any other man's, but the Baptism of Christ my Lord; and the Baptism of the Lord needs neither my purity and holiness nor yours, for neither I nor any man is to sanctify and hallow Baptism, but we all are to be purified and made holy through it. For this reason I will not ground Baptism upon my faith, but just the reverse, my faith will I found and build upon my Baptism.

Lancaster, Pa. H. H.

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always directed to the mere letter of the law and its outer shell, but that we should rather consider its more perfect import. It often happens that a person may be acquitted by the law, who nevertheless is not guiltless before God, since the divine laws are appointed for the maintenance of external intercourse and peace in ways of which the pious do not always avail themselves, even if they might do so, preferring rather to yield their rights to the advantage of others, than insist upon them for their own. They forgive therefore even though the law might allow them to demand redress, &c. They consider the difference between divine and human justice.

Diligite inimicos vestros, nam si eos dilexeritis.—Christ does not by any means forbid here our recompensing those who may do us good, but simply that doing so cannot be claimed as an evidence of having attained to perfection. If you do nothing more towards those who benefit you than the ungodly and unbelievers do, you are still very far from perfect righteousness, and the nature of your heavenly Father, who does good even to the wicked.

Let us now sum up what has been said, in concluding this chapter. In the perfection of the law which God prescribes for us we see our spiritual impotency, imperfection and impurity as in a glass. For we may learn how wicked, on the one hand, are all hypocritical pretences of keeping the law, whether we make them for vain glory, gain, or under the influence of other evil affections, and on the other how condemnable it is to neglect and despise the law. At the best we are miserable sinners, even when we act under the incitements of the Divine Spirit, and in the exercise of faith; for our best works are always defective. For even though we may strive in true faith, we can never meet the full demands of so perfect a law. Our righteousness must therefore remain defective, imperfect, and impure, until by faith we apprehend and appropriate the righteousness of Christ.

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J. H. A. B.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND THE BAPTISTIC QUESTION.

Translated from the German of Dr. Martensen.

II. INFANT BAPTISM.

WE have the conception of Infant Baptism in the relation of Baptism to faith, which has been developed in the previous Section. If faith be the fruit of baptism, then every baptism, whether performed on adults or children, is, in its conception, an infant baptism. If now, it can be shown that this apprehension of the relation of baptism to faith has its ground in the Scripture, then it is also shown that infant baptism is founded in Scripture. To ask any other scripture proof than this is an unhistorical demand. For it is of itself clear, that in that period when planting the church was the real mission, many things must needs have taken a different form, than in succeeding times, when the church had taken firm root in the world, and when the kingdom of God has become nature. Thus baptism, although its sacramental essence, and its fundamental relation to faith, must ever be the same, must come forward in another form when the kingdom of God is to be extended through missions—where it is introduced into the public mind from without—than where it is to be spread through the medium of an already existing *inhabitation*; where it inhabits the public mind, and is to unfold from within outwardly its world-transforming powers.

Where the kingdom of God is planted through missions, baptism must appear principally as adult baptism, because the existence of a mother church is the fundamental condition of a really blessed use of infant baptism. Since now the Holy Scriptures are written most directly from the missionary standpoint, where it was the more immediate mission of the apostles to establish the mother church, without which the baptism of infants, which is inseparable from Christian nurture, would have been a meaningless work, it cannot be reasonably asked that positive commands to baptize infants should be found in the Scriptures; still less so, since it is not merely the letter but the spirit which is to bring us to a correct understanding and use of the Divine institutions. The silence of the Scriptures in regard to infant baptism can therefore by no means set it aside, unless we deny all force to the spirit of the Scriptures, and go by the rule that not only all is true which is in the Scripture, but that nothing is true but what is contained in the letter of the Scrip-

ture. Without therefore seeking literal references to infant baptism, and appealing to such passages as Mark x: 14, 15, 1 Cor. vii: 14, 1 Cor. i: 16, &c., we will confine ourselves to the proof that the relation between baptism and faith, which we have developed in the previous section, is grounded in Scripture.

If now we consider the Saviour's own declarations in regard to baptism, we find the first in Matth. xxviii: 19-20. Here we find that the Lord gave to his disciples, in whom he himself had founded faith, and whom he had elected to plant faith in the world, the command: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In the exposition of this passage we must repeat, what has often been remarked, that the common translation, Go ye and "teach" all nations, &c., is not entirely correct. That word, in the text, which has been translated "teach," has a far more comprehensive signification, viz: to "make them to disciples." To become disciples of Christ means not merely to receive his teachings, but to be personally united with him. Hence it is afterwards said in strict accordance with the original: "teaching" them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." If, now, we observe these words of Scripture it is evident, in the first place, that *all nations* are to be made into disciples. Since, according to this declaration, not merely small conventicles, but large national masses are to be disciplined, it plainly points out the universality of election in the most definite manner, and excludes all particularism. Secondly, it is plain also, that the general command to make disciples includes both baptizing and teaching, so that the church, if she will in all time remain faithful to the Lord's command, must, as the Saviour has done, place baptism first, teaching and the self-conscious life of faith second. This also the church has done from the beginning, but the complete realization of the Lord's command, even in reference to the outward form of baptism, can only find place where infant baptism is introduced. The more infant baptism becomes general in the world, the more completely will the words of the Lord be fulfilled, which commands that the *nations* shall be disciplined by baptism and teaching.

Again, we read in Mark xvi: 15-16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that be-

¹ μαθητεύσατε.

² διδασκοντες.

lieveth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This passage, which evidently lays chief stress upon faith, may in a superficial view, seem Baptist. If however we deduce from this passage the well-grounded proposition, that bare baptism does not save—yea, if we, in accordance with other declarations of Scripture, correctly teach that faith only saves, have we then contradicted what this and the previous passage plainly presupposes, namely, that baptism is that *means of grace* through which faith is at first truly established? No. On the contrary, the more livingly it is acknowledged, that salvation and damnation have their source in the depth of freedom, in faith and unbelief, so much the more significance has the question, How may weak and sinful man attain to saving faith?—so much more significance must be attached to that divine grace, through which Christ himself aids man to the attainment of faith. Hence, in the passage quoted, Christ says: Only faith, a free, deep giving up of ourselves, saves; but no one can believe unless I myself give him faith. Therefore he does not merely say, He that *believeth*, but he that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved. Of course, in those who are admitted to mission-baptism there must be present a preliminary receptivity, an inclination of the spirit towards Christ. This beginning of faith, however, is related to that which has its source in the institution of the Lord and the living fulness of the church, only like shadow to substance, like longing to fulfilment.

If we may gather from the Acts of the Apostles that the apostolical mission has in a certain sense made baptism to presuppose faith, the principal question still is how this faith was regarded by the Apostles. Apostolic baptism was not a forced baptism; and a mission, for instance, like the well-known Saxon mission of Charles the Great, is without any apostolical ground. But just as little is apostolic baptism Baptist; which is, in the history of the church, the opposite extreme of compulsory baptism. A glance at the apostolic practice shows conclusively, that the apostles regarded no one as regenerated before he was baptized, but that they demanded of those to be baptized only the general susceptibility, not a finished faith in the kingdom of God. The expression "believe," when it comes forward in Scripture in this connection, designates therefore rather the wish for, and the longing after, faith, than faith itself. Had the Apostles been Baptists, and had they regarded it as necessary that no one should be baptized unless he actually believed and was born again, their whole practice would have been different. How

entirely differently, from what we know was the case, would they have had to examine the applicants for baptism in all the most insignificant details? Were the Baptist theory, that baptism may only be granted to those already regenerated, correct, then the Apostles must be charged with unpardonable indiscretion, because they forthwith and without hesitation admitted whole hosts to baptism; whereas they should, with the utmost caution, have taken each one separately, instructed, prepared and proved him, in order to be fully convinced that he really stood in faith. For we are not warranted in making the Apostles heart searchers, and to suppose them to have had the supernatural gift of seeing into the souls of those individuals with whom they had to do, although the Baptists sometimes have recourse to this evasion. On the contrary, the apostolic practice is consistent on the principle which presupposes that the personal life of faith only begins truly by means of baptism, and that accordingly, as a preliminary to baptism, there is necessary only a general susceptibility for the kingdom of God. It is only under this supposition that the practice of the Apostles becomes intelligible, when they join the baptism, both of individuals and of whole masses, immediately with their awakening; whereas the Baptists, to be consistent, must defer baptism, until the evidence of regeneration is placed beyond all doubt.¹

If, as a final resort, the Baptist theory seeks to strengthen itself by such passages as Acts x: 44, where it is related that the Holy Spirit, *before* baptism, fell upon those who heard the word, we reply that that passage refers only to a general awakening, and not a real regeneration. The operations of the Spirit, which manifested themselves in this instance, consisted in this, that Pagans who were arrested by the apostolic preaching fell into an extatic condition, and spoke with tongues, a manifestation of spiritual conviction which was common in the apostolic age, and analogous to which much is exhibited in the periods of awakening which followed. This speaking with tongues was the expression of the mighty movings of spiritual powers in the depths of the soul, the streaming out of the first, as yet irregular, outbreathing of spiritual energy, which had more the character of an exalted natural condition, than of clear conscious-

ness, and which could therefore only attain to its true significance by passing over into the divinely constituted order of the church, and by being taken up into the historical process of evolution which characterizes God's kingdom. Had this extatic condition, in an isolated way, been adhered to, it would have manifested itself only in the promotion of confusion and fanaticism, as has been shown in every period of awakening, where religious nature-powers have not been brought under a churchly organization. Hence this special gift of the Spirit only reached its true significance through baptism, which the general gifts of grace presuppose—those gifts of grace which are to be continued in the church, and which belong to the sober and considerate historical life of the Christian; those, namely, of faith, and hope, and love.

If, further, the Baptist system would stay itself upon Rom. x: 17, that faith comes by hearing, it will be remembered that we have, in the previous section, treated in a general way of the sense in which that passage is to be taken. Here we remark more particularly, that the apostle in the determining context of the passage is considering the world-relation of the mission of Christianity, and in this connection understands by faith only the willing reception of the Gospel, which he places in contrast with that hardening rejection of it which he complains of as existing among the Jews. But the same Apostle, when he looks out upon the church in the process of development, clearly derives the beginning of the life of faith, the participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, from baptism; and sees, in baptism, a "laver of regeneration," and the revelation of the eternal love and mercy of God towards man, Rom. vi: 4, Col. iii: 4, 6. Further, where another apostle calls baptism "the answer of a good conscience toward God," 1 Pet. iii: 21, and the Baptist system attempts to show from this that baptism is only a moral agreement between men and God, then let it be considered, that the whole context shows, that the apostle grounds the obligations of baptism in its promises, and that he considers it as the "answer of a good conscience," in so far only as he regards it, at the same time, as the "laver of regeneration," and attributes to it a "saving" significance.

Hence, if the apostolical mission, excludes the Baptist theory of baptism, just as well as its opposite, compulsory baptism, then the peculiar substance of apostolic baptism must rest upon the peculiar relation between baptism and that receptivity, of which a compulsory mission makes no account, whilst the Baptist System maintains its necessity in an unlimited way. If,

¹ Hoffman's "Baptism and Re-baptism." Luther already called attention to this point—to this deferring of baptism to an indefinite period, which re-baptism necessarily involves; so that baptism, strictly taken on the ground of this theory, can never be performed, because it can never arrive at an absolute certainty as to the condition of the subject.

now, we say, that the receptivity, which apostolic baptism presupposes in adults, is, in its conception, none other than a receptivity for the kingdom of God which is already to be found in the child, the knowledge of this is not to be reached certainly by stopping in the fact of baptism, but only by descending into its interior nature. The more profoundly the church enters into the dogma of baptism, and thus into the biblical and Christian fundamental truths of the world and the kingdom of God, nature and grace, original sin and salvation, of the fall of our race in the first Adam, and its restoration in the second Adam, the more clearly will the perception come to a full consciousness that the baptism of adults, in its true conception, is an infant baptism. It lies in the Christian view of sin and redemption, as this has reached its classic development in Paul, Augustine, and Luther, that the opposition between the old and the new man, as it comes to view in baptism, is not merely a moral opposition, not the opposition of two processes of the development of moral freedom, but the opposition of two *natures*, unfolding themselves from two important grounds, which lie behind all development, and behind all moral life and action. Not single sinful actions of man are to be destroyed by baptism; but the possibility of all sinful actions, the sinfulness of the race, the depraved nature of man is to be broken by means of baptism, in order that his sinful nature may not be a hindrance to his salvation. And the new, which is to be brought into existence in baptism, is not a definite degree of holiness and of moral perfection, an implantation into the body of the new-created human race. In baptism, therefore, we are not most immediately concerned with the *person*, but with the *nature*; not with the finished *I*, but with the process of becoming, with the birth of an *I*; not with freedom, but with the active natural conditions of true freedom. In the other view, baptism must presuppose freedom as inward possibility, as receptivity for its gracious gifts. But the receptivity which baptism presupposes, is not a receptivity for this or that single gift of grace, which refers to one definite stage of conscious development: not a receptivity for one of the many special graces, which is bound down to one definite activity in the Christian communion-life. It is merely the general susceptibility for the new creation, and is therefore, in its conception, not yet an actual personal receptivity, because it has not yet specified itself as receptivity for any one special grace. The receptivity of which we speak is not the expression of a peculiar natural aptitude in the individual, which may lead to peculiar grace. It can only be considered as the general sus-

ceptibility of human nature for Christ; as its possibility of being redeemed and perfected in the direction of its destiny. And in this it differs from that receptivity which is presupposed in the Lord's Supper. The holy Supper is a believing reception and enjoyment of a personal communion with Christ; it establishes a real reciprocation between Christ and the believer. Baptism on the other hand is not reception of, but a divine *consecration* to faith. Therefore the receptivity which the holy Supper presupposes is one already specified and defined, since it is only found with such as have already attained a definite grade of the communion-life; and which seek, in the use of the sacrament, a strengthening of their personal life of faith, to the end that each one may be individually glorified in the love of Christ and of the church. But the receptivity, which is presupposed in baptism, can only be regarded as purely general, slumbering as yet in the personal peculiarity of the individual; and in this indefinite, twilight-like generality, it can only be comprehended negatively. First of all, it manifests itself in this, that the baptized one do not withstand or resist the grace; and we can here appropriately adopt the catholic formula: "*obicem non ponere*." This, however, must not be regarded merely as dead careless passiveness, for no receptivity can be destitute of all activity. Although we cannot, of course, regard this activity as a personal one, which would confound the relation of the person to baptism with his relation to the holy Supper, we must nevertheless regard it as a *living* activity; and this active moment in the indefinite receptivity we designate as the "bent or bias to the kingdom of God," which constitutes the divine in human nature, but which can only be formed, unfolded into a personal *will*, and rendered truly ethical, in an actual communion with Christ and the Church. But that receptivity which thus belongs to or flows from the conception of baptism, is just the same which is found with the child. For just as the bent or bias of this world moves in the child from its birth, so also does the bent or inclination to the kingdom of God move in the nature of the infantile life; and as the human nature in the child is averted from God and diverted to the world, so does also that nature contain the dark earnest longing of the creature after Christ. In substance it is therefore also this receptivity which must be required in the adult subject of baptism, because it only, in this way, agrees with the true conception of baptism. But that receptivity which is originally in the child must first be waked up in the adult, which is done when his old world passes away, and he is brought to that point where he despairs of him-

self, and seeks a new foundation for his life. The adult subject of baptism cannot, in reference to redemption and the kingdom of God, appear as an independent personality; the steps of development in his moral life, to which he has attained, his acts and works, which he has accomplished in the civil communion-life of his nation, are, over against baptism, a vanishing quantity; for the reason, that the conceptions of duty and virtue, of communion-life and moral actings, only receive their true signification and importance where baptism has gone before—only have their true reality in Christ and the Church, in the kingdom of spiritual gifts. Since, therefore, he must thus look away from his actual personality, and forgetting that which is behind, must seek to begin his life anew, he places himself, in reference to redemption and the kingdom of God, upon a level with the child which is to be born into the new world of Christianity. Although he in reality differs from the child, yet his relation to baptism is in substance the same. This will become clear when we view the adult subject of baptism, not only from the stand-point of redemption, but also from the stand-point of sin. For, as he must be viewed in regard to grace or the idea of goodness, not according to his actual personality, but according to the possibility in him of attaining to a new personality; so also, in reference to sin, he must not judge himself according to his actual sins—which would be but a superficial view of sin—but he must go back to the origin of his sinful self-consciousness, to his Adamic nature, to his birth. The main problem of Christian missionary preaching must therefore be this, to bring the heathen or Jewish subject of baptism to such a consciousness of sin that it shall be possible for him to place himself on a level with the infant—a demand, which according to the teaching of Scripture, appeared already to Nicodemus such a great paradox, (John iii: 4) because he could not escape from his personal *I*, from his Scripture-wise, legal self-consciousness, from his acts and works,—because he has not as yet a correct idea of the sinfulness of the *race*, and consequently also no correct idea of the sinfulness of *his own nature*. This consciousness of the necessity of salvation gives, according to the principles of the apostolic mission, admission to baptism—a consciousness, which need not be present clearly in the thoughts of the subject; yea, which cannot even be so present, but which only makes itself valid practically in the form of feeling. Where now, the doctrine of general sinfulness, and of general salvation in Christ is gladly received, so that the hearers willingly permit themselves to be baptized, as we see it described in so many places in the Acts of

the Apostles, there the bent towards the kingdom of God has come to an actual issue, and the old self and the old world can not hinder baptism from becoming what, in its conception, it must become, an infant baptism. Since therefore the idea of infant baptism is always hovering before the Christian mission, it is plain that infant baptism stands most directly opposed both to Baptistic and to compulsory baptism; because namely, both these forms of baptism in fact deny the identity of adult and infant baptism. Both extremes meet and agree in this, that they hold fast to the idea that in baptism they have a finished and definite personality—only with this difference that the Baptistic theory regards this finished self (*Ich*) as a new man which has already attained to a definite stage of moral perfection; on the other hand the compulsory baptism regards this finished self as an old man, which has already established himself in the worldly consciousness, in which he has awakened, and now offers, a natural resistance to that which would drive him out of that position. Both mistake in this way, forgetting that not a finished self, but one beginning, a germinating self is to be baptized, or that the baptism of adults is an infant baptism: the Baptistic theory, because it improperly *defers* baptism, and proposes only to baptize a full-born new man; the compulsory mission, because it makes too great *haste* with baptism, and seeks to baptize an old man rooted in heathenism or Judaism, without allowing to itself time to awaken in him that receptivity which sets aside the natural resistance of the heart, and makes it possible for him to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. Since both these extremes mistake the substance of baptism, they both become defective executors of the divine purpose; for while the Baptistic theory, in baptism, attributes to human subjectivity such a significance, that it makes, in substance, baptism but an act of the individual freedom, instead of an act of Christ, the compulsory mission pays no respect whatever to individual freedom. It considers the persons to be baptized, not as subjects, but only as substrata for baptism; and while it accomplishes baptism with sword in hand, this baptism has so little the character of being the execution of a divine gracious election, that it comes upon the nations rather as a fate. The divine decree, therefore, receives its true execution, neither where baptism appears as a work of Baptistic arbitrariness, nor yet where it appears as a work of fate; but only where creating grace lays the ground for human freedom. Freedom must therefore be presupposed in baptism; but since it is presupposed as that freedom which is yet to be established, it must be presupposed only as

possibility; as bias or inclination towards the kingdom of God. In virtue therefore of her doctrine of the universality of grace, the Church is justified, and it is her duty, to baptize children in every place where mother-churches are established, and it would be absurd to continue missionary baptism in the bosom of the Church, instead of turning it into the form of infant baptism.

Only when baptism is made to hold its place in its form of infant baptism, can the operations of baptism completely unfold themselves, since then the whole life can appear as a divine growth in Christ. The conception of *following Christ* only reaches its full signification through infant baptism. In order that the perfection of Christ may penetrate, with fructifying power, every natural stage in the history of human life, baptism must be conferred in the beginning of life. The direct antipode of this, is the error of deferring baptism to the end of life; an error, by the way, which is backed by distinguished authority, as Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor, gave it the force of his own example. This notion proceeds upon the supposition, that by deferring baptism to the farthest point, the subject may secure to himself a Christian, that is, a blessed death. It is not remembered, however, that a Christian death only attains its true significance through the Christian life which precedes it. But the Christian life begins, according to the divine order, like Christ's own life, with infancy. In this, that the God-man himself was a child, that he increased in wisdom and grace, that his whole life and actions were nothing else than the free development of the divine fulness which slumbered in the child—in this lies clearly the fact that the human nature may be united with the divine, not only at a certain stage of its conscious development, but in its inmost ground, *previous* to all consciousness. What the child Christ, is, in his original nature, that all the children of men are to become, by grace; and the childhood of Christ would have been useless, if it were not possible to change the Adamic infant nature into the image of the child Christ. To reject infant baptism, upon the ground that the period of infancy, on account of its innocence, does not need the Saviour, is Pelagian. This denies the universal depravity of human nature, and regards the infancy of Christ as redundant, and of no meaning, in the work of redemption. If, on the other hand, we take in earnest the dogma of sin and natural depravity, and yet nevertheless defer baptism until later life, because redemption cannot begin to work upon the child, and because it is supposed that its operations can only begin later in life—this is a Manichean conception of infancy; for, in this

case, a period of human life is designated, in which, although it is subject to the general defection of sin, it is, according to this conception, excluded from the system of redemption, and from the communion of Christ. In this way vanishes the heavenly glory from the infancy of Christ. The reality of the incarnation is denied, and we are carried back into the old heretical conception, that the divinity only then united itself with Christ, when self-conscious thoughts had arisen in his soul. It is therefore clear, that where infant baptism is denied, there also are the most important fundamental truths of Christianity, concerning the human and divine nature, denied. But where these truths have been in a living way appropriated; where, namely, a Christian family-life has been constituted, there also was the child, which was born in the bosom of the family, regarded as holy, (1 Cor. vii: 14); that is, not as one which is already holy by natural birth, but as one which is destined to become holy through baptism.

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one but read the New Testament for the first time from this standpoint, and he will be amazed at the light which it will reflect upon the sacred page, making the obscure plain; much of the mysterious simple; and will discover multitudes of palpable yet hitherto unnoticed beauties to his astonished and delighted spirit. Let no one condemn this view until he has piously subjected it to this test, and see for himself whether his Bible does not reveal to him a present Saviour, the bread of heaven, the way, the truth, the life, bound up and concluded in his once crucified, but now risen and glorified divine-human person.

S. N. C.

ART. V.—CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND THE BAPTISTIC QUESTION.

From the German of Dr. Martensen, Prof. of Theol. in the University of Copenhagen.

(Continued from the previous volume.)

III. PREDESTINATION.

THE doctrine of predestination belongs to the most difficult problems of Christianity and will ever continue to be an inexhaustible subject to human thought, but this doctrine finds its practical expression, in a way so plain, that the whole Church can comprehend it, in infant baptism. In infant baptism the eternal decree has its endless beginning in time. Here lies as well the religious comfort of the doctrine of predestination as also its demand for individual activity and growth in a holy life, which are inseparable from the true doctrine of predestination. The true doctrine of predestination, which, at least to our conception, has its purest exhibition in Lutheranism, regards the divine decree not as a distant unfathomable power, that hovers in enigmatical obscurity over the history of human life, but rather as a gracious merciful will, which rules and reigns in history, which is revealed in Christ, which has embodied itself in his word and sacraments, which sanctifies us in baptism, and which thus does not hold

us in doubt and uncertainty in regard to his design with us. In Calvinism predestination is a finished crystalized conception, concluded from eternity, and the revelation of it in history is only a reappearance, without any self-subsistence. The substantial world-historical life, Christ's manifestation, his word and his sacraments, are only the outward vehicles thro' which the eternal decree, like the thread of the Paracæ, is spun off with inflexible necessity. According to the Lutheran view, however, predestination is not something finished and stationary, but something living, and therefore becoming,—a conception that completes itself in history. The Lutheran view acknowledges the reality of *time*; it acknowledges that not only the race and each individual person, but also that the divine decree itself has a *history*. Hence the appearing of Christ in time, his word and the institution of his sacraments, and the relation of human freedom to these, has a true and real significance, and in its living history, not in its stiff and motionless eternity, is faith to lay hold upon the mysteries of the gracious election. As however the true doctrine of predestination differs from the fatalism of Calvin, it differs no less from the Pelagian doctrine of freedom, according to which the appearing of Christ and his institutions are merely means by which man determines his own destiny, and which regards history only as the history of human decrees. Every theoretical error, in reference to predestination, has its practical expression in the doctrine of baptism. That conception of baptism which is evolved out of Calvinistic predestination is that of *particular baptism*, whereas *universal baptism* is the creature of the Pelagian view of predestination.

It is known that Calvin starts out not only from a finished, but at the same time also from a two-fold predestination, according to which men are created either for eternal life or for eternal death, and are hence by nature either children of light or children of darkness. It is of itself plain that, in this view, baptism must lose all its true significance. Assurance of election it cannot give, because there are many found among those baptized who in consequence of that unalterable destination which they have by nature, stand sure for unbelief and rejection. The little flock of those actually elected, has no other certainty of grace but that which lies in their own mystical feelings. Just as little can baptism be that which precedes and begins the actual development of freedom. For, is predestination finished from eternity, then freedom is also

finished; but a finished freedom, the stages of whose development is determined step by step before it, like the track of a planet, is not freedom, but nature. The religious conception of *time*, as that which is given to man, in order that he may make a decision in that which pertains to his highest concerns, falls away; for with Calvin, there is nothing undecided, and he knows, therefore, in a spiritual sense, no time, but only pure eternity. The different stages of human life, from infancy to old age, have no ethical, but only physical significance, and are not to be regarded as actual epochs, as new sections in the inner self-determination of freedom. The transition from one age of life into another is no moral crisis, but only a natural occurrence. The child which Calvin baptizes, is not a child of freedom, in which still slumbers the two-fold possibility of good and evil, of salvation and damnation, but one already predestinated, one whose salvation or damnation is already unalterably fixed, the person so fated being already pre-formed in the child. The possibility existing in the new-born child, is for Calvin, not the two-fold possibility of good and evil, which the moral conception of the world implies in the child, but the possibility is here as good as the finished actualization. Since infancy is thus a mere semblance, and is nothing else but the hull which encloses unseen either the fruit of life or of death, and since therefore in a moral point of view no infant exists, or which is the same, since the infantile life need pass through no real history, no actual infant baptism can take place in which the divine will as protecting grace, as watchful providence, makes itself the preliminary of the critical future which awaits the infantile life. From this stand-point we cannot at all speak of a critical future. Here no other crisis is acknowledged but the eternal separation of the elect and the damned, and every human individual is in the moment of his natural creation already judged. Since, therefore, nothing *begins* in baptism, it can be of no consequence at what time it is performed, whether it is bestowed upon the regenerate or unregenerate; for every point in time is in and for itself a matter of indifference, and vanishes in the presence of pure eternity. In order, however, not to profane the holy signs of baptism, in bestowing them upon rejected natures, it appears to be most proper to defer baptism until the marks of eternal life have become distinctly visible in the elect. Thus this doctrine of predestination is, in its deepest root, baptistic, and on account of the particular election this baptism is designated as *partic-*

ular baptism. True, it must be said, that Calvin did not himself run out his doctrine of predestination to the whole of its baptistic consequences. That great Christian and churchly sense, which we in so many respects behold with admiration in him, preserved him on this point from running into the entire practical error which follows from his theory, and by a praiseworthy and Christian in consequence he retained infant baptism, and defended it against the fanatics. That the sect of the particular baptists grew out of the Church of Calvin was in exact consistency with his doctrine of predestination. This doctrine of predestination, as also the baptistic mode of thinking which is bound up with it, moreover, repeats itself in that physico-philosophical Manicheism which manifests itself also in our day, and which divides the human race into psychical and spiritual natures, the former of which are appointed to actualize the kingdom God and of the idea, while the latter are predestinated to dullness and unbelief, and are by their birth excluded from the kingdom of the idea. We are here reminded of the views of antique paganism, according to which there was an impassable gulf fixed between Barbarians and Greeks, or of the ancient Scandinavian ideas which hold to an eternal separation between the races of the Jetties and the Ases. It is not to be denied, that there is a remarkable difference in spiritual natures, distinguishing races, families and single individuals, impressing upon them an indestructible type, the power of which affects even the relations of men to holiness. Everywhere, when that which is holy enters the sphere of history, an opposition of human nature manifests itself similar to that between the stony and the good ground; everywhere the old saying is verified, that in a large house there must be as well vessels of silver as of earth, as well vessels of honor as of dishonor. Not only has this difference its great significance from "the seed of Abraham," which was to be the seed of the election, but the same is in a manifold way repeated in the history of the world under other forms. If, however, it must be confessed that the redeeming operations of Christianity are limited, by the conditions of nature which it finds existing, this view will still be Manichean and particular baptistic, if instead of regarding the above mentioned opposition and difference in nature as one relative, which in its last ground is taken up in the generality of freedom and grace, it is regarded as absolute. In this it is denied that the impulse or bent towards the kingdom of God, which in its innermost substance does not

differ from freedom, is the general moving power in human nature, which must reach over every particular determination; and on the other hand, it is contended that Christianity in the case of a part of the human race must forever find an absolutely unconquerable barrier, not only to the bestowment of this or that definite measure of spiritual gifts, but also to the implantation of its principle. The divine grace itself is reduced or degraded to a particularity, as human freedom is also regarded as a particular attribute. The same objections that have force against Calvinism also meet us here. Infant baptism is turned into a mere form or pretence, and the Church, in the application of this sacrament, is always exposed to the vanity of bestowing its substance upon those in whom the motion towards the kingdom of God is entirely wanting. Even in the case of the elect, infant baptism will be an empty ceremony without any inward fruits; for the election is once for all complete by the great crisis of nature, by which the separation of the spiritual and psychical natures is effected. No one in this view becomes a believer by means of baptism, but only by means of his natural descent from any "seed of Abraham."

As particular baptism develops itself out of the Manichean view of liberty, the universal baptism does so out of the Pelagian. Pelagianism is the natural enemy of all fatalism, but in its controversy with fatalism it goes so far, that it does not only deny the omnipotence of fate, but also the omnipotence of grace. From this point of view it is quite clear of itself that all are destined to salvation, because freedom is the inalienable attribute of man. That, however, freedom is grounded in *grace* is a conception which can only receive a figurative significance, because it is in truth man who by his own activity is to secure salvation to himself. Since, accordingly, the Manichean predestination must undervalue baptism because freedom is already complete in nature, Pelagianism must undervalue baptism because freedom by nature *can* render itself complete. Surely Pelagianism, which in our day appears in the form of rationalism, must acknowledge that the development of the life of the individual is conditioned by the development of the race, that the freedom of the individual is merged into the necessity of history. And as Pelagianism cannot be pure paganism, but seeks to unite the heathen and Christian view of freedom, it regards it as a gracious arrangement of Providence that the child is born in the midst of the Christian Church, where the light of divine truth shines in its purity, and

where the most effectual means of nurture are afforded to the human spirit. These means of nurture, which according to the language of the Church, he calls means of grace, have only importance or significance for the work of freedom, for its labor and longing, but are not regarded as means of creative grace, by which freedom itself is established. Grace does not use man as means to its own creative activity, but has only the one-sided significance, to be itself an outward means for the activity of free man. It is the above considered one-sided conception of cultus,* which here again comes to view. Where, however, predestination starts out, not from grace, but from freedom, where the means of grace are considered only means to advance, to build up, to educate religious and moral activities, there can be no reasonable need of infant baptism. For since the means of grace have only significance in so far as they can be *used* as means by the individual human personality, it is most proper and consistent to defer baptism to that period when the consciousness of the child is so far ripened, that it can itself determine itself for grace, make its own "vows" and establish its own "covenant." This is the view of *universal baptism*, be it that it remains in the Church, and retains infant baptism as a venerable custom, or when it asks that men shall, in *form*, choose grace for themselves, and thus builds up a sect which does not regard infant baptism as good as any, but declares it invalid. Since, in the latter case, it commonly casts itself upon the doctrine of repentance and conversion, and thus connects faith with inward operations of grace, it differs in this respect from civilized Pelagianism or Rationalism. The more, however, that the inward enthusiastic assurance of the holy, must develop itself in opposition to the reigning Church and the worldly power, the nearer does it again approach to Manicheism. Where Baptismus has become fanatical and has reached the full measure of the extravagances of fanaticism, it will find its strongest nourishment, not in the Pelagian, but in the fatalistic doctrine of predestination, in the representation of the little flock of the elect in the midst of the world predestinated to destruction, in that Chiliastic expectation of the perfection of the divine kingdom, which looks for it to come suddenly from the clouds, for the judgment and destruction of the world, but to the joy and triumph of the saints.

Since now the fatalistic as well as the Pelagian doctrine of predestination are both destructive to infant baptism, the first

* See a previous article.

because man by nature is predestinated, the second because man by nature *can* predestinate himself, the sacramental doctrine of predestination regards infant baptism as the beginning of the solution of the antinomy between divine pre-determination and human self-determination, as the starting point of unity of grace and freedom. The general grace of God (*gratia universalis*) is present in baptism, not only as supporting and co-operative, but as pre-determining and pre-forming for salvation. This sacrament is not a declaration of the decree finished once for all; the eternal decree does not hover over baptism in distant eternity, but has taken hold in a living way in the transaction. There has, therefore, been an inward advance in the decree of God itself. In that it has out of eternity penetrated over into time, it has entered upon a new stadium of its life-process, and has attained to a new increase of grace and truth. As in the child Jesus, which was born for our salvation, we possess infinitely more than in the eternal pre-existing Logos (*λογος αειγενος*) so we have also infinitely more in infant baptism than in the eternal decree. For this reason infant baptism is also not merely the prophetic *promise* of the grace of God, but actual gift. Neither is it a bare *calling* to the kingdom of God, the mere offering of grace—for in that case it would still be in substance man that would have to predestinate himself for the grace, using baptism as mere means and vehicle to that end—but rather it is in reality predestinating through this, that Christ places himself, not in an outward and transient, but in an immanent and enduring relation to the individual soul, so that his will enters into a redeeming *FUNCTION* for the individual human life, in order to make it partake of its own substance and nature. For man does not merely take upon himself the nature of that which he consciously unites and assimilates to himself, but just as well also the nature of that which unites and assimilates him to itself. In baptism the lower nature is assimilated by the higher. It is not a powerless wish, a human blessing, which is expressed in baptism; neither is it only a prophetic command or a prophetic promise; Christ's kingly will is not most immediately a wishing or commanding, but a creative, producing, operative will. In so far the child is, therefore, unconditionally predestinated, and appears in baptism not as subject, but only as "vessel" of grace; it is only the creature material out of which Christ, the heavenly master, will constitute his work. This is the true point from which to view infant baptism—a paradox for the mere understanding—that Christ here uses the human spirit as material, as means

for his unconditional gracious will, just as an opposite paradox forms the real point of view for the Holy Supper, namely that Christ here condescendingly bestows himself, his eternal personality as means, as element, and as nourishment for man. In baptism it is Christ which assimilates the natural man, in order afterwards in the Holy Supper, by means of its reception in faith, to permit himself to be assimilated by man. In saying, however, that in baptism the child appears not as subject but only as vessel, we can nevertheless not stop here; for as vessel, not of the operations of nature but of the operations of grace, the child is the *beginning* of the subject, which is to predestinate itself to freedom in Christ. On the one hand, the child is unconditionally predestinated; a higher unchangeable will has imparted to it in baptism a *character indelebilis*, an indissoluble spiritual sign; and that will, which in baptism sanctifies the infantile life in its inmost natural ground, and thus prepares a place for itself there, does not fail to make valid its inalienable rights in that which is revealed and in that which is hidden. This power, however, is not that blind fate which chains man within the limits of a natural necessity, but that living providence which, as the redeeming will of Christ, has raised the fallen nature of man above the law of natural necessity, and transferred him into the source of freedom. Herein lies, however, the fact that predestination is not ended and closed in baptism, but that on the contrary it only *opens* itself, and that, as the unconditional decree, it is at the same time the *conditioned*. If then we say that baptism is not merely a calling, but actual predestination, this actual predestination is not to be apprehended as one finished; for out of the gracious election in baptism comes the gracious call to freedom. And when we say that baptism is not merely promise, but actual gift, we at the same time hold fast the truth, that this gift is not a finished gift, but equally also one which involves the duties belonging to a process of redemption, extending over the whole of life; or to speak with Luther: "All that we live is to be our baptism." The kingly will of Christ includes at the same time his prophetic command, and his promise, and since the new covenant stands in a new relation to creation he does not ignore the law but establish it; for the holiest duties are established through baptism, even though these themselves cannot establish baptism. Thus the election of grace in baptism is unconditional and conditional, positive and hypothetical, at the same time. In this mode of viewing the matter, in which,

moreover, the Lutheran Church has preserved a general harmony with the Catholic Church, which, in the same way, in the doctrine of predestination, occupies not the abstract metaphysical, but the sacramental stand-point, comfortless despair, as well as pagan, worldly security—the necessary consequence of every one-sided predestination dogma—is destroyed. As a whole we have here the only doctrine of predestination which can be appropriated by the militant Church. For on the one hand our election stands sure, and our baptism must stand; but inasmuch as baptism is not only the creative election of grace, but just as much also the calling of grace to freedom, the development of the fruit of baptism is conditioned by spiritual watching and working, in the use of the word and of prayer, and through the communion-life of the Church and the Holy Supper. Since the life of faith is not only a progressive victory over the world, but is itself also partially overcome of the world, the sacrament of the election of grace is at the same time also made the true sacrament of *repentance*. "For to repent aright is nothing else than a return to our baptism from which we have fallen. When we become unfaithful, the Lord still remains faithful, and with outstretched arms he will receive every one who returns to him."* The sacramental predestination unites thus both the demands made upon the believer, to be joyful and of good cheer not doubting his salvation, and also to work out his soul's salvation with fear and trembling.

We cannot here overlook the question in what relation the doctrine of infant baptism stands to the dogma of the *Apokatastasis*, or the dogma of the restoration of all moral beings to a blessed life in God. It lies in what has already been said that every apprehension of restoration which rests upon the conception of a finished predestination must be rejected. The abstract restoration does not differ from the Calvinistic predestination, only that it transposes the Calvinistic dualism into the form of unity. The finished predestination dogma, however, is common to both. When a universal restoration appears as a consequence of a natural necessity, freedom is just as much destroyed as where rejection is a natural necessity; here the true development of freedom, here *time* and what is wrought and sought in time, has lost its significance, and in this way baptism also has become only a sign of that which must necessarily appear even without baptism. It is the uni-

* Luther, in his treatise concerning "the Babylonian captivity."

versal baptism which here again comes to view but under the form of fatalism. It was in this fatalistic form that restoration appeared among a part of the old ana-baptists in the time of the Reformation, which is upon good ground rejected in the 17th article of the Augsburg Confession. As now that restoration which starts with the conception of a predestination finished from eternity must be rejected, so also must that form of restoration be rejected which rests upon a magical representation of baptism, namely upon the conception of a predestination concluded in baptism, through which the unconditional in the decree is not conditioned, and thus time, and the idea of a life of probation, is virtually ignored. But whether infant baptism, which manifestly aims at a general restoration is irreconcilable with every form of restoration, also with that which is supposed to be effected not by means of a natural process but by means of a moral crisis in the human will: whether it is irreconcilable with the idea that the will of Christ must stand and finally conquer if not with compulsory still by irresistible necessity; whether the doctrine of infant baptism carried out, which is one with the calling of all nations, that is, the whole human race, *demand*s the doctrine of a general, not a fatalistic and immediate, but a free dialectic restoration as its eschatological counterpart—this question of course presents itself as worthy of our consideration. For surely the supposition that Christ may eternally lose any of those whom the Father has placed in his hands—a loss which can only base itself upon an eternally unconquerable opposition of human freedom—seems to lead us from fatalism over into the opposite extreme. For now we stand in danger of losing the unconditional of the divine decree in its conditions, and of making a mere hypothetical matter out of salvation, and through it of the actualization of the divine will. As, however, baptism thus ceases to be actual, positive predestination, it becomes only an abstract calling, or a moral covenant, by which we are again cast back upon the Pelagian universal baptism. A mere hypothetical predestination the Church also rejects; but the Church, in rejecting the notion of a mere positive predestination, still holds fast to the stand-point of development, of the militant Church, without finishing its doctrine of predestination, and giving to it its final solution. It is as if the Church had had a feeling of the fact, that this doctrine, from the stand-point of struggling freedom, not only could not be finally resolved, but also that it *must* not be. Even though,

it appears, that a solution can only be found in a restoration developed dialectically, it is certain, on the other hand, that speculation has too often been over hasty in solving this problem; and in general, it must be acknowledged, that the supposition of a general restoration as proceeding from the omnipotence of divine love extending over the human will, and the counter-supposition of a partial rejection, as proceeding from the free opposition of the created will, has developed itself rather into a great antinomy for the dogmatic sense, than into a knowledge giving a finished result. As we, in this connection, do not enter any further into an examination of the metaphysical side of the matter, but stand fast on the sacramental standpoint, we must here confine ourselves to the following determinations or definitions. As the general election of grace in baptism is at the same time positive and hypothetical, so first, every restoration which is set forth in a naked thesis must be rejected, because it ignores the significance of time, which is in infant baptism established and retained,—because also it ignores the significance of the strugglings of the spirit for freedom, towards which baptism plainly points. If salvation has not its hypothetical, the conception of the militant Church loses all its earnestness. An actual conquest is only possible where there is something actually to risk and to lose; and the hope of salvation would be only weak and spiritless, were it not for the ominous possibility of rejection. Just as truly also must we reject a mere hypothetical restoration, because it ignores the divine thesis which in infant baptism embraces the whole race. If this divine thesis is made feeble and wavering, then infant baptism will have no firm foundation, then we must seek another foundation for our faith and our hope. The same thing is repeated in a satisfactory manner in the doctrine of eternal damnation. A purely positive damnation of some individuals is to be rejected, because it annuls for the individual the reality of baptism, and leads to particular baptism; positively the devil alone can be damned, who, in whatever way we apprehend him, must in this respect be considered as finished, but no human child which in baptism begins its life of freedom and has a future before it can be so regarded. Do we now consider damnation as hypothetical, then the question arises, whether salvation is also in the same sense a hypothesis. This must be denied, because in that case we would fall back upon the Pelagian-baptistic conception. Notwithstanding this damnation must be considered as a necessary hypothesis, be-

cause otherwise we would fall back into the magical conception, and consider baptismal grace as the finished predestination. It is now the problem to unite these definitions in one conception, to join together the incontrovertible *thesis of the gracious election*, with the equally incontrovertible *hypothesis of damnation*; for in the believing consciousness, which works at its salvation under the advantage which is secured to it by baptism which went before, they are practically united, even as also their separation—thesis without hypothesis, hypothesis without thesis—leads either to a magical or baptistic conception, be it that the latter comes forward under the form of universalism, or under the form of particular baptism.

Have we now in this way reached a definite knowledge of baptism as the sacrament of predestination, we can now proceed to the right conception of baptism as the sacrament of regeneration. This point is, of course, already involved in the preceding exhibition, it must, however, as such be brought out in its proper prominence.

IV. THE NEW BIRTH.

If baptism is not only calling, but also election, then it is also, in its essence, the new birth. For essentially born again is every one in whom the new creation is grounded, who is under the power of the endless beginning of eternal life, and who has passed over from a child of this world into a child of God. A closer definition and limitation of this conception is furnished us in the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST. A child of God is one to whom is reckoned and appropriated the righteousness of Christ. Although according to his actuality he is sinful, yet essentially he possesses that righteousness which God accepts, because Christ, i. e., the personal divine-human righteousness itself, which is the principle of all human righteousness and holiness, has appropriated him. God, then, does not look upon the individual according to his earthly and sinful nature, but regards him in Christ, who has overcome the world and sin, and has made himself the principle of all holiness and victory over the world, for the individual man. As we have now, on the one hand, developed the doctrine of baptismal grace as the rightly apprehended doctrine of predestination, we must also on the other hand exhibit it as the rightly apprehended doctrine of justification, a point of view which the Church also makes prominent, in that it has always associated the doctrine of baptism with the doctrine of justification.

If now we inquire more narrowly into the connection between baptism and justification, that symbolical view, which has attained its purest expression in the Reformed Church, answers: that the justifying act of Christ is in baptism merely imaged forth in a sensible manner. Baptism is thus set forth as the real witness of God's gracious will, as the sensible pledge, that God for Christ's sake, receives the child into grace. It is the visible sign of grace in Christendom, as the rainbow was in the old world, or as circumcision was to the children of Israel. It thus points out the forgiveness of sins; but is not this forgiveness itself. We do not deny that the apprehension of this sacrament as a pledge contains an essential part of the truth, only we cannot find in this the whole truth. In so far as baptism is not only regarded as an act of the transient historical, but as the present will of Christ: in so far as it is acknowledged that the kingly will of Christ is *with* the visible transaction: so far is the mere symbolical view abandoned and a higher view introduced. For now there is a peculiar relation acknowledged to exist between the visible transaction and the present will of Christ, a relation which is not to be regarded as accidental but as essential. But are we to consider it as essential, this can only mean that the present will of Christ must be regarded as the *principle* of the visible transaction. It is therefore not enough to say that Christ's will is *with* the visible transaction, but we must say it is *in* the transaction,—that it is invisibly active *under* the visible transaction. Thus however, the conception of this sacrament is not exhausted by the idea of a pledge. The pledge must at the same time be regarded as a true gift; for beneath the pledge of the forgiveness of sin is found the sin-forgiving will itself. In the sign of the forgiveness of sin is comprehended the objective forgiveness of sin itself. We must hence say that the child through baptism is placed in a living relation to the justifying will of Christ. But how can we conceive of the justifying will of Christ placing itself in a living relation to the sinful individual, without there is introduced at the same time a relation between Christ's *essence* and sinful man, between the glorified life and the unnatural life, between the righteous *nature* and the unrighteous human nature? If we represent the justifying transaction of Christ as a mere expression of will, or as a judicial declaration, then his righteousness is still something out of the individual, and the atonement has not truly come in power. The justifying transaction of

Christ must at the same time also be regarded as a true imputation. To put on Christ in baptism, does, therefore, not merely mean the attainment of a righteousness outwardly reckoned to us, a naked *justitia imputativa*, but it means to become partaker of the righteousness of Christ, as the substantial, fructifying principle of a new life in his Church. Only in this way, and in this sense, does baptism contain the true new birth, although we in no way teach by this that it effects a transubstantiation of the human nature, a one-sidedness from which the Catholic Church cannot be pronounced free. For in teaching that the righteousness of Christ is not only reckoned to the individual, but also appropriated to him, the Catholic Church apprehends the matter thus: she regards it as an immediate infusion of the righteousness of Christ (*justitia infusa*) through which the nature of the individual is changed from a sinful into a pure and holy nature, so that original sin is not only broken in upon, but destroyed. In this way a mechanical relation takes the place of an organic one, and instead of establishing an essential communion with Christ, baptism is thought to effect a transubstantiation of the nature of the child. The fault of this magical conception consists in this, that it applies the categories of the sensible actuality where it ought to apply the categories of the essence. It constitutes the direct opposite to the symbolical view, which can only think of abstract essence out of which no actuality can be born. If therefore we say, that in baptism a real immanence of the nature of Christ and of human nature, a mysterious oneness of his holy essence and the sinful essence of man, is brought about, we also on the other hand, hold fast to the idea, that this is not to be regarded as an immanence finished and immediate, but one endlessly *beginning*. In that Christ, as the unseen *Head*, stands in an inward indissoluble relation to the Church, as his mystical body: i. e., that total organization of souls which has its point of personal unity in him, receives the power of life from him through which it renews and animates itself, and the members of which are all his organs—he, by means of baptism, causes this universal organic relation to become effectual in each single new point of life which he appropriates to himself and his kingdom. As he continues his life through the Church as a whole, so he also continues it through this particular mode of individual life, and therefore makes himself the true beginning of life to it. The human nature is thus not changed, but the child, by means of baptism, is constituted

Christ's *organ*. The righteousness of Christ is not infused into the infant's life immediately, but is, in its fruitful fulness, turned over upon the infantile life of the child. The infantile life is made the unconscious *bearer* of the objective righteousness of Christ, the heavenly ideal of human nature, to use an expression of churchly antiquity, becomes a Christophoros, a Christ-bearer.* What is related in the well-known legend of Christophoros, who went out to seek for himself the Lord, and without being aware of it was counted worthy of the heavenly grace of carrying the Child-christ, and thus the Lord and Saviour of the whole world, upon his shoulders through the waters of a stream, has not only transpired in the world of dreams and of fancy, but is an actual event in the Church. This also has not only taken place in the case of the northern barbarians in the migration of nations, who went out to seek "the strong one" whom they would serve, and who in the mission-baptism of the middle ages received Christ without knowing what they were doing, and carried him through subsequent history without knowing him; but it happens yet at this day in the case of children which are taken into the bosom of the Church where they are born. For through baptism every child becomes a Christophoros without itself knowing it. The Child-christ has associated itself with the child of nature unknown to it, and desires to be borne through the world by it, and on the way grows up to be a man, and at last reveals its glory.

Since the child, by means of baptism, is placed in an organic relation to Christ, the germ of *faith* is already given herewith. Faith unfolds itself out of the objective justification, out of the gift the receptivity for still further gifts is developed. We do not here speak of the general indefinite receptivity, which always in human nature precedes baptism, and in this sense must go before it, but of the special receptivity, which in its own activity is able to lay hold of Christ, after it is itself laid hold of by him. "Justification by faith," this fundamental doctrine of the Evangelical Church, has not—as it is often misunderstood to do—the signification, that justification is the product of faith, but that faith is the receptive organ through which justification is subjectively appropriated. All Pelagianism, all false Mysticism, all Rationalism and Baptismus in regard to this article of faith arises from this, that it has been severed from its living connection with

* In the letters of Ignatius Christians are called *Χριστοφοροι*, *Σεφοροι*.

the sacrament of baptism. Justifying baptismal grace is not a child of faith, but the reverse, it is the mother of faith. As, on the one hand, it is to be regarded as an implantation into Christ; it is, on the other hand, to be looked upon as *impartation of the Holy Ghost*. For the Holy Ghost is the principle of the development, the principle of all susceptibility for Christ; it is his work to mediate the proper use and the right application of the gifts of Christ. But Christ only gives the Spirit, as that Spirit which works and reigns in the Church. That the child receives in baptism the Holy Ghost, is therefore, as viewed from another side, the same as its incorporation into the Church, where the Spirit leads souls to Christ, and establishes them in their baptism.

What we have above intimated in regard to the sacramental relation to the Lord, here repeats itself in relation to the Church and to the Spirit. To be incorporated into the Church of Christ, is not merely to enter into a moral or historical relation to him, but to be placed in an inward essential relation to the mystical body of Christ, the unseen esoteric organization of holy spirits, whose lives are hid with Christ in God. As sure as the child, through baptism is essentially united to Christ, so sure is it also, by this means placed in a solidary connection with the whole organism, in which the Spirit develops the fulness of Christ, and unfolds the whole wealth of his redeeming and sanctifying powers. That the child receives the Holy Ghost means, therefore, most immediately, that it is placed under the influence of the Spirit, under the workings of the kingdom of God. As Christ in baptism imparts himself wholly and undivided to every one, so also he gives to every one the whole Spirit. That Spirit who discharges his functions in the Church, does not live merely in a general way as a whole, like the pantheistic world-spirit, which stands related equally to all persons, but the Spirit of the Church is, on this very account the Holy Spirit, because he is the Spirit which *cultivates the person*, because, as such, he stands related to the individual singly, and because he everywhere officiates in his centrality—ubique totus. The general immanence of the Spirit in the Church becomes, by means of baptism, an immanence in the single individual. For, where Christ is, there the Holy Spirit must be also; in every soul in which he, by means of baptism, prepares for himself a new habitation, there is also prepared for the Holy Spirit a new opening, or outlet. In heathenism, where the consciousness of the indi-

vidual has for its principle of evolution merely the national spirit or the general human spirit, the Holy Spirit reveals himself in transient fulgurations and sporadic workings upon single select individuals. But this is the grace of baptism that in it the Spirit of the Church enters into a definite organic function to the single individual, places himself in an immanent relation to him as a reviver of the true sense for Christ, and as guide into all truth. As, in reference to the whole, he officiates for the Church, so he now begins to exercise for ever his function in reference to this individual, and accompanies him as special providence through life. The experience that many baptized ones are not true believers, that as well their life as their mode of thinking bears rather the impress of the world than the impress of the Holy Spirit, proves nothing against the reality of baptismal grace, or against the essential and immanent relation of the Holy Spirit to their souls. With the same propriety we might deny the essential immanence of the Spirit in the entire Church, because there are seasons, when a general decline manifests itself, when unbelief seems to triumph over the ruins of the Church. And yet we know that the Spirit is never absent from the Church. That a falling away can take place, only shows that the relation of the Spirit to the Church is not only an elevated relation in nature, but just as truly also an ethical relation. But that the Church after such falling away should be able again to reform itself; that, after every error both in life and in doctrine, she should be able to gain back her original fundamental consciousness; that such seasons of carelessness and lukewarmness of spirit are ever banished by powerful resuscitations—shows, that the Spirit, which leads to Christ is only repulsed or driven back, but has not died out. The same is true of the relation of the Spirit to single individuals. Does even a single individual fall away from his baptism, he still retains the inward possibility of faith, the possibility of being united again in fellowship with Christ. Just because he is born again through baptism, is he to renew himself again according to the inward man; and that Spirit which began his work with him in baptism, will not forsake his own work. The Spirit does not exercise his functions in the Church only as the Spirit of love and of peace, as the comforting Paraclete; it must be just as well regarded as a fruit of baptismal grace, that he is active as the Spirit of awakening and reproof, as judging Spirit, who exercises his infallible scrutiny not only upon the great whole

of the Church, but also on each individual heart, convincing the world of error and sin, (John 16: 8.) of unbelief and lukewarmness of heart. The law is not abrogated through the Gospel, nor is righteousness abrogated through love, even though, of course, it must be confessed that the scrutinizing revelation of the Spirit, or the revelation of righteousness, are only means for the revelation of redeeming love. But in the case of every baptized one, the Church can reckon on another, and a more fundamental receptivity, as well for the law as for the Gospel, than is found in the case of those who are yet outside of the Church. She can reckon so, not only from the general ground that all baptized ones have experienced more or less the cultivating co-operation of the Church, but on the special ground that the *Lord himself* has already acted in their case. The historical activity of the Church finds its point of commencement in that central relation, which already exists between such souls and the Lord. And so sure as they have not only part in Christ as the universal Logos of humanity (*λογος αληθινος*)—in which sense all men have part in him—but are placed in a special relation to him, through this, that the mystery of his incarnation and resurrection are appropriated to them: so sure also has the general relation that exists between all human souls and the Spirit of God, in this case been fixed, from the beginning, as a particular and specific relation. As these individuals have, in baptism, received a particular divine gift, so also the Spirit, if I may so express myself, has a particular duty in reference to this individual, in that he must not only work and move, through outward applications, but also inwardly in the depths of the soul, that the mystery of the atonement, which is begun in them, may also become complete in them, that it may be known and acknowledged by them.

The conception of the real immanence of the divine grace in the child founded through baptism gains new and fruitful light, when it is viewed from the christological standpoint. There is an inward parallelism between the mystery of regeneration and of the incarnation, between the Christian child, and the Child-christ. As in the consideration of the Child-christ all depends upon holding fast to such an unity of the divine and human nature, that neither of these two sides shall fall short or be left out of view, so also the same is true in regard to the union of grace and of nature, which is established through baptism. And as the Child-christ originally is, what the sinborn child of the world becomes by copy through the

redeeming grace of baptism, the extremes in the doctrine of baptism may be traced back to the Christological extremes. The symbolizing view, which teaches that the child is only figuratively born again in baptism, because the new birth comes only with self-conscious faith, and thus makes not only the personal appropriation of the righteousness of Christ, but the justifying act of Christ itself, dependent upon faith, thus carrying in itself the germ of Pelagianism—we may designate as the *EMIONITIC* view of baptism. It points back to that view of the Child-christ, which regards his supernatural conception as a myth, and will only see the divine-human in the religious self-consciousness of Christ, in his doctrine and acts. If in this way the divine-human is placed merely in the self-conscious life of Christ, then his unconscious infancy has no absolute value in itself. If, on the contrary, it is acknowledged, that not only the self-consciousness of Christ, but just as much also his divine-human nature is the germ of all Christian doctrine, then an unconditional value must also be attributed to his unconscious infancy. All that is predicated of the exalted Redeemer must be predicated of the babe in the manger. The Christmas joy of the Church, is not merely a joy over the acts of Christ as a man, but a joy also over the child as such, over the unity of the divine and human, which is not only in thought, but in reality, born into the world. It is not merely a joy over the future of the child, over that which it is to become, but over what it already is, which is expressed in Luther's Christmas hymn:

It clothes itself, the highest good,
In our poor human flesh and blood.

In a similar way, we say, is the mystery of the atonement established in the Adamic child in a real way by means of baptism; it is a child of God although it is not conscious of being such. As we cannot attribute to the new-born Christ an actual divine consciousness and self-consciousness, as he is not actually *knowing*, although he bears with him the fruitful germ of all the treasures of knowledge, the undivided fulness of knowledge, so also we cannot call the newly baptized child an actual *believer*, and yet we say in the strictest sense of the word that it has the *substance* of faith and the *Spirit* of faith. It has the substance of faith; for Christ, the substance and the germ of faith, is substantially appropriated to it. It has the *Spirit* of faith; for as Christ is the objective, so the Holy Spirit is the subjective developing principle of its growing personality.

Here the magical or *doctetic* conception of baptism, which changes the human nature of the child into a sham, is at once excluded, because it predicates of the child either objectively a transubstantiation, or attributes to it subjectively a faith, a consciousness which is psychologically impossible. This conception of regeneration in baptism points back to that conception of the Child-christ, which, in order to exalt the divine nature, ascribes to him an empirical use of the divine-human attributes, which could only unfold themselves in the manhood of Christ, and in his exaltation. To attribute to the child in baptism an actual faith, to assume that it does itself secretly make a covenant with God, is parallel with the assumption, that the new-born Child-christ in a secret way, made use of divine-human knowledge, through which his childhood is made an untruth. If young children can actually believe in baptism, then they must also very soon be admitted to the Holy Supper; and yet the idea of an infant communion has never met with a general acknowledgment in the Church, and is rejected by the Evangelical Church.

The question whether infants can believe has, moreover, been variously answered in the Catholic and Evangelical Dogmatic. The Catholic Dogmatic has here, where the question most immediately concerns the subjective side of baptism, escaped from Docetism, of which objectively, in reference to the dogma of original sin, it has made itself guilty. It answers the question, according to Thomas Aquinas, thus: that infants have themselves no faith, but that the Church believes in their stead. In a spiritual respect, accordingly, infants are still in an embryonic condition, they are only in the Church like the child in the womb; since they have not yet separated themselves from the mother, they live not yet their own life, but it is the spiritual life of the mother, which immediately penetrates or infuses itself continuously into their souls. Assuredly this mode of conception has its relative truth. Not merely in the natural, but also in the spiritual, an immediate organic relation between the child and the mother is seen to exist. Our psychical relation to the public mind or national feeling, the historical spirit of the age, to which we belong by our natural birth, is in our early childhood so immediately organic, that it may very truly be represented as an unconscious life in an ideal womb, from which we draw secret sustenance, which manifestly exerts a determining influence upon our whole spiritual habit, even after we have attained to a free indepen-

dent life. Luther, in the first period of his theological career, approved of this answer to the question, but afterwards rejected it, inasmuch as he taught his disciples that the child itself did, in a certain sense, believe, because there existed in the spirit of the child, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, certain mystical movings which are to be regarded as faith. Do we ask, what induced Luther to change his views? it was no doubt effected by what is called the Protestant principle of subjectivity, which is not satisfied with the idea, that individuals born in the Church, in regard to the personal development of their faith, should only be placed in an inward relation to the Church, but asks that each individual soul shall itself also be placed in a direct relation to God the Holy Ghost. It was, therefore, a farther carrying out of his principal opposition to Catholicism, whose motherly Church does only too often place itself not only in the place of the children, but also in the place of the Holy Spirit; and, viewed from this point, the change in the Lutheran view must be regarded as an advance. But if, in the doctrine of the mystical operations of the Spirit, we do not sufficiently distinguish between the soul of the child and the consciousness of the child, a distinction which is just here of great importance, we frequently merge over into the Docetic. Without entering here into the uncertain investigation of that which may in a secret way transpire in the infantile, unconscious psyche, we take our stand dogmatically, on the sure ground, that the child in baptism receives the substance and the spirit of faith. We hold not, then, to a "pouring into" of the Spirit and of faith, but to an organic FUNCTION, through which the Spirit makes himself the spirit of the soul. We do not hold to an immediate existing immanence, but to the living beginning of an immanent relation.

Is the substance of faith and the spirit of faith bestowed in baptism, then the proposition is also valid, that *baptism is necessary to salvation*. This proposition, however, like every other one, has its truth only in its limitations. Is it maintained outside of this, then we have only the return of a new form of the magical, since in that case the invisible divine transaction is placed in a mechanical dependence upon the visible human transaction. But experience develops here a casuistry, before which the magical conception must vanish and be lost. The sensible transaction is, like every thing else, which comes under the conditions of sense, subject to contingencies. If now through

oversight of the Church a baptism has been neglected without the omission being discovered and the deficiency attended to, is then the salvation of the individual lost, although his inward life, by means of the communion-life of the Church has been developed? And is faith, which has developed itself, amid the manifold co-operations of the Church, in the individual, a mere semblance? Or must we not much rather acknowledge that such an one has received the baptism of the Spirit without the baptism of water? Or, to take a definite historical example, which appears already in the ancient Church:* An individual, who had not received proper baptism, did, upon the supposition that he was baptized, partake of the Lord's Supper. Must we now regard this communion as invalid, because baptism had not taken place? Or shall the Church, when the omission is discovered, bestow baptism after that it has given the communion; shall the Church give the first sacrament after the second? If the Church wishes not to make itself guilty of this disorder—through which she would annul her second sacrament—then she publishes that salvation can also be bestowed without the means of baptism. A similar example, of a larger type, can also be taken from later Church history: In a certain period of the French revolution, the Church in that country appeared to be destroyed, since even baptism was put away. When the Church was afterwards restored and revived again, those who had been born in the republic during the reign of the religion of reason, had necessarily to be baptized. According to the common course of things, however, it must be assumed that many were not baptized who at a later period nevertheless took part in the Lord's Supper, and in other parts of the Christian cultus. Were these now not incorporated into the Christian Church, and brought into a substantial relation to the founder of the Church? These, and similar instances of casuistry, show adequately that the above proposition concerning the necessity of baptism cannot be held as an abstract proposition. It must be acknowledged that it is not in accordance with good order to confer baptism upon any one who has already partaken of the Lord's Supper. It must farther be confessed that the Lord can give that which constitutes the proper substance of baptism, without any definite sensible form. The above proposition has also been limited by the rule, ever acknowledged by the Church, that not the innocent deficiency of the sacrament, but only the undervaluing of

* Neander's Church History, vol. 1, Section 2, p. 381.

it, is damning. But when we say that the absolute necessity of baptism is not an abstract necessity, this proposition is not brought in from without, but we exhibit by it only the inward consequence of what has been thus far developed. The sacramental revelation is a free revelation of will, not a necessary process of nature. Christ's royal will *gives itself* a presence in and under the sensible transaction. The sensible transaction, as such, is only the creaturely element, which grace employs as *means* by which to impart itself. Herein lies the reason why the divine will cannot be bound in the outward forms which it arranges for itself; but as it comprehended itself freely in these, so must it also reach *forth beyond* them. If Christ were confined or enslaved in the sacrament, then would the sacrament cease to be *means* of grace, and the sacramental presence would be merely the expression of an immediate natural necessity, as pantheistic sects have regarded their nature—Christ as existing in the whole visible universe. The sacrament is *means* of grace only as the expression of a divine WILL-*immanence*. The operativeness of the sacrament has, therefore, its inward measure and its inward limits in the divine will, but the divine will is not exhausted and not limited through the sacrament. The divine will has not exhausted its potentialities in any one of its outward actualizing forms; but, as according to its substance it *must* manifest itself, and can only will its kingdom, it must, by virtue of its inward infinity, be inexhaustible in possibilities, in new modes, and new means by which to secure entrance and advancement to its kingdom in the world. Inasmuch as not only single points of actuality, but the actuality entire, can be penetrated by the divine will, it must be said, that God can change every thing into a sacrament, that he can make means of grace out of every thing. It is this truth, that is laid hold of in an one-sided way in speculative mysticism, which has, in various forms, repeated itself in the speculations of our times, when it is taught that all actuality can be sacramental. Men will, hence, hear nothing of confining the human spirit to a few definite forms of the sacramental presence. The divine centre is every where, and can therefore every where come to a presence; every revival may become a baptism, every pure and holy employment can become a Lord's Supper. In so far as reference is had, in this, exclusively to the divine possibility, it has its truth. But mysticism overlooks the fact that the divine will is not a formless, but an *economic* will, a will that is only satisfied in a re-

vealing-economy. It is an all-ordering will, which seeks to imprint its fundamental type in the historic total-organization of redemption. The idea of *dispensing with* the historic instituted means of grace can therefore only have validity in a sense which presupposes the necessity of these means of grace. The idea of the possibility of an infinite number of other means of grace, can only have validity dialectically, within the *actuality* of the regulated revelation-economy. Within these bounds, however, and with these presuppositions, the idea has relative truth. For, then it verifies merely the priority of the unseen fountain, before the actual, the *over-reaching* power of the unseen principle, over each of its visible forms. In all historical organizations the proposition is valid: that it belongs to the established order of things, that something will also come in, which stands outside of the established order.* This proposition contains no apology for the principle of formlessness and empty arbitrariness, it only points out the reality of the all-organizing, truly royal principle, which has no need to exclude from its state that which is arbitrary and accidental, because it has possibilities enough, to conserve these, and lead them back to its own eternal fundamental forms. Free irregularity does not destroy the positive rule, but establishes it. In this sense we say, then, that baptism is both necessary and dispensable to salvation. If we place ourselves on the stand-point of the Church, the *established organization*, we must say that baptism is absolutely necessary: for the Church is bound to the historical institutions of the Lord; she must receive the divine gift as it is given; she is directed to seek the Lord there where he himself will suffer himself to be found. Do we, on the other hand, consider the question from the stand-point of the *organizing will*, under the infinite view of Christ and the Holy Spirit, we must say, that the sensible transaction is relatively dispensable, because that which makes baptism, baptism, can also be given without the sensible element. Should now any one take occasion from this to undervalue baptism by water, this would be only a self-deception. For it is one thing for a person willfully to place himself into an irregular relation to the institutions of the Church, and another to be placed in such irregular relation through the general commotions and crisis, which occur no less in history than in natural life, and temporarily derange the quiet process of evolution in the spiritual organizations. While now mysticism, and with it all one-

* Ordinatus est interdu fieri aliquid minus ordinate.

sided idealism, looks exclusively on the infinite possibilities of the idea, the crass orthodox realism holds alone to the positive instituted churchly organizations, without looking up to the infinite fountain of organization. In this view divine grace is so to say, crystalized in the baptismal water, and we come to the fearful consequence, that every one who does not receive the baptism of the Church is irrecoverably lost. Inasmuch as, according to this view, unbaptized infants cannot be saved, it becomes absolutely necessary in all cases of danger to resort to *Nothtaufe*-baptism in a hurried, and somewhat irregular way, as by Lay-persons, when danger of death is apprehended. The doctrine of the absolute necessity of the *Nothtaufe*, is the direct opposite of that of the free spiritual baptism, which regards all definite outward form as redundant. In so far as these opposites exclude one another, so far are they both equally false. The conception of *Nothtaufe*, has only validity in so far as it at the same time acknowledges the possibility of the free spiritual baptism. Only then does the demand for *Nothtaufe* not arise out of a fatalistic conception of salvation, but out of a conscientious faith, which feels itself bound to the institution and to the command of Christ. But the idea of the mystical spiritual baptism has only validity so far as it is regarded as meeting the deficiency of churchly baptism, as an irregularity in the historical revelation-economy, which can itself be regarded as a kind of *Nothtaufe*, and which therefore points to the baptism of the Church as to its canonical model.

Do we place ourselves on the normal stand-point of infant baptism, and take up our proposition that the child in baptism has received the principle of faith, as well objectively as subjectively, then real faith must be gradually developed from this point. The Church must now be active in her entire maternal and pedagogical character. The problem of Christian nurture appears here in its full significance. The fundamental mission of the Church here, can be none other than to unfold in the child that central grace which is imparted to it in baptism, namely, faith. If all nurture must have in view the development of its abilities, of its peculiar natural gifts, this special mission is taken up into one higher and more general; namely, to evolve the child's abilities of faith, its organ for the kingdom of God, and thus to develop that which is to be the centre-point of all single powers. If the educator is often in uncertainty as to whether the child is possessed of a particular talent, he can always safely assume the talent for the king-

dom of God, not as an indefinite, but as a living possibility. Just here it is seen in a practical way, how much the deeper churchly fundamental consciousness is in our day repulsed. For that infant baptism is not now the starting point and principle of Christian nurture, as it was in the blooming days of the Church, is a matter of fact. Since the more particular development of this asserted principle would lead us into a sphere of ethical discussion which is not here in place, we confine ourselves merely to bringing out the principle religious point. Inasmuch as it is said, that the evolution of the child's faith, must be the evolution of the *justifying faith*, we must here correct a one-sidedness widely spread in the Protestant Church. Not only the error which places faith as the ground of justification, instead of regarding faith as the subjective appropriation of the objective justification, finds its correction in the dogma of infant baptism; but also the one-sided depreciating language which is not seldom heard inside of the Protestant Church in reference to *historical faith*. We have not here more immediately reference to the historical contents of faith, but to the form of appropriating these contents. The Evangelical Church found it necessary in its controversy with Catholicism to contend against the prevailing *fides historica*, the spiritless tradition in which Catholicism was petrified. It considered justifying faith valid as spiritual faith, which unfolds itself amid the conflicts of conscience, through the inward depths of self-consciousness. The complete, the highest conception of faith is here defined; faith is the comforting assurance, the heart-felt apprehension of the atonement, that spiritual hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which finds its satisfaction alone in Christ. Although we hold fast always to the fact that herein the plenary point of faith is designated, although we acknowledge it as proper and well-grounded that our Church will know nothing of the dead historical faith of Catholicism, yet we cannot in every sense discard historical faith. If we acknowledge no other form of faith as justifying, except that which has the complete subjective inwardness, the necessary consequence will be a religious overstraining, the faith of the child must be condemned and cast away, and we fall back again into the baptistic confusion. The first real form in which faith can appear in the infant, can only be historical faith. That which the consciousness is to attain to itself in an inward way, it must first possess in an outward way; freedom must unfold itself out of authority, self-consciousness

must unfold itself out of tradition. Faith also must, to use a well known expression, have its *phenomenology*; but at every stage of its development it must be true faith. Only when the historical faith will not advance to a free inwardness, as in the case in Catholicism, but excludes itself against all advancement, it becomes false and a hindrance to the healthy religious life. In itself, however, historical faith is a necessary moment in all sound development, just as much as infancy, be it in individuals or in nations, is necessary in actual human life, and is not in a Manichean fashion to be condemned, because it is not full, ripe, manly age. The imperfect is not to be rejected because it is "not yet" the perfect. The imperfect is evil only when it remains at a stand in its imperfection. For this reason the presence of justifying faith must not only be recognized where it is completely unfolded, but every stage of development must be regarded as a stage in the development of justifying faith. If the disregard of historical faith not unfrequently springs from a deep, though one-sided Protestant religiousness, it has in our day especially been advanced through Rationalism, from the effects of which we are still suffering. Is religious development only to begin at the same time with reflection, because only then a sort of free appropriation can begin, then a necessary stadium of the life of faith is overleaped, and an uncertain fluctuation in religious representations is the inevitable consequence. Do we consider the way, which revelation in all its economy takes, we see that the evangelical *history* of the outpouring of the Spirit takes the precedence; in the life of single individuals the *fact* of baptism precedes the spiritual consciousness of it; and so also, in the development of the consciousness, the tradition and the historical mode of appropriation precede the reflection and the deeper feeling. In this we do not intend to say, that the churchly creed must be presented to the young, in a mechanical way, as a lifeless history; for the idea of development presupposes, that faith in every stage, must be living; historical faith must contain spiritual faith as in a fruitful germ. But that this fruitful stadium has been wholly overlooked and left behind by the present generation, is seen in the great defect in sound catechetical instruction, which is so general in our day—especially among the more cultivated, whose consciousness moves only too much in indefinite feelings, in accidental reflections, in a mixture of philosophical and religious atomistic thoughts. But that this link has been passed over has resulted from this, that

the development of faith has not been organically connected with baptism, that baptism has not been regarded as the true and proper beginning of faith. That, moreover, this overleaping of the historical faith has by no means its ground in the substance of Protestantism, is shown by Luther's own example. For he, who possessed the inwardness of faith in a measure which reminds us of a Paul, shows himself, that he, although he had become an old Doctor, still felt the daily necessity to keep a Catechism before him. The personality of the great Reformer stands here as a type of the true development of the Church. The historical faith has, namely, not only validity upon the lowest stage of development, but must also be carried over into the higher. As long as the Church has not yet reached completeness, she must be conscious of the fact, that the measure of her subjective appropriation of Christ, in every given period, is only relative. Although the Church is the wise mother, the teacher expert in Scripture, rich in spiritual experience, rich in faith and knowledge, she does still not cease, in her relation to the word and to the ordinances of the Lord, to regard herself as a catechumen, which must hold fast to that which she has received. She never forgets that she is richer in her objectivity than in her subjectivity, and that she must ever anew fall back upon the objective beginning of Christianity.

V. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH AND CONFIRMATION.

The general confession of faith of the Church is contained in the ancient Apostolical Symbol, which is held in common by all Christian confessions. In this confession the Church attests the word of God in baptism, acknowledges God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The word and institution of the Lord cannot be without the witnessing Church, and for this reason this testimony, which the child itself is in future to give, must at each baptism, at least in a silent way, be presupposed, and where the Church is properly organized, must also be brought out in form. According to the old custom this confession is made in the way of questions; the Articles of faith are directed to the child in the form of questions, and are answered by the witnesses of the baptism in the name of the child. How can this mode of presenting the Creed in questions, in the conception of baptism, be justified? We bring forward this liturgical point especially, because it has just been a subject of particular consideration in the Danish Church.

The use of the question-form cannot possibly be taken as an intimation that there is present in the child a freedom of choice, so that a yea, or a nay, on the part of a child, can here have place. The idea of such a freedom of choice has no foundation either in reason or authority. Is it from interest in the freedom of choice that it is proposed to hold fast to the question-form, then it would be more consistent, to defer baptism, until that period, when the child may be properly asked, and when a real choice can find place. But since this would be the same as ignoring infant baptism, it is plain, that the question-form cannot be defended from the ground of freedom of choice.

In opposition to the Docetism, which is evidently contained in the representation of an elective subjectivity in the child, it would seem more correct, to direct the questions not to the child, but only to the witnesses of the baptism, or to change the question-form entirely, into the pure declarative form. But to this it may be objected that then the child is regarded as the purely dependent subject of the transaction. But the child is not a negative object, but a personality begun, the germinating possibility to an individual self; and this moment must also be expressed in the form of the transaction.

Do we now, instead of the freedom of choice, which cannot exist in the child, put the *substantial* freedom, the question-form appears to be that form which best accords with the substance of baptism. What the witnesses of the baptism do in the name of the child, in that they desire the baptism of the Church for the child, *that* the child in reality denies itself. For just as the whole race, so has the child, a substantial relation to Christ. It is born into the world that it may confess Christ; and for this reason it desires in its inward nature, to be developed to that faith which the universal Church confesses. Even when the question-form is used in the baptism of adults, it is not really asked whether they already *have* that faith which the Church expresses, but whether they desire to attain to this faith. For should the making of confession of faith on the part of adults before baptism, declare that they have the faith already, this would be manifestly baptistic. Since now, in the baptism of infants, the question is directed to the child immediately; it intimates thus, the presence of substantial freedom, of the germinating personality. It is intimated that the child is not merely the negative subject of the transaction, but that it has substantially a will in the matter.

From this view of the subject it would appear that the question-form is the most perfect. But the liturgical diversity which, in reference to this point, exists in Evangelical Churches, does in no way affect the substance of the sacrament. The sacrament remains the same whether the question-form, or declarative form, be used; yea even when the confession of faith is not formally made. For the substance of baptism rests alone on the word and institution of the Lord; but the confession of faith is, according to its form, a work of the Church. It is only the *testimony* of the Church in reference to the word of God, and must, therefore, as testimony, not be confounded with the thing itself.

To the confession of faith is joined the churchly transaction of Confirmation. Confirmation is an institution of the Church, not of the Lord himself, and is therefore not a sacramental transaction. It is of purely ethical nature. That faith which is established in the sacrament has now attained to that point, when it may begin in a free self-conscious way. Confirmation is, therefore, the personal ratification of the confession of faith, and gives a right to the participation of the Lord's Supper. In Confirmation the catechumens give an account to the congregation of their appropriation of baptism, and the congregation accounts to itself in regard to her religious and ethical productiveness in the nurture of the young. A Confirmation in spirit and in truth is therefore the ideal, which Christian nurture must ever have most directly in view. Confirmation is the first finished result of the efficacy of baptism through the medium of the efficacy of the congregation. As a work of the congregation, it is subject to the same relativeness as the congregation's own life of faith, which at different times may be weaker or stronger. Confirmation has, therefore, at different times, a different value, whereas baptism has always the same value.

If now Confirmation is to have its proper worth, it must not be confounded with baptism, nor be placed in an oblique relation to it. When we, as is commonly done, designate Confirmation as "a renewal of the baptismal covenant," the truth of this is conditioned by the representation we make to ourselves of the "covenant." Do we, in harmony with the baptistic idea of Cultus, think more immediately of a relation of man to God, and not of a relation of God to man, then the transaction of Confirmation must itself become the true baptism. An opinion which in modern times has been considerably

spread, assumes that Confirmation is, it is true, not baptism itself, but yet the supplement of infant baptism; that infant baptism is only then a proper and complete baptism when Confirmation has been added to it. By this it is, in substance, declared that the baptism of adults is the normal baptism. Even Schleiermacher thinks, that infant baptism as dogma is not tenable, and censures the older Church fathers, because they have undertaken to justify it in and for itself, instead of justifying it upon the ground of being a church custom. He makes even the remarkable assertion, that in order to come nearer again to the institution of Christ, it would have been very proper, in the Reformation, to have given up infant baptism, and that we might still do it, without by so doing tearing ourselves loose from the fellowship of that period, in which there was only infant baptism, if we only did not pronounce infant baptism invalid. The validity of infant baptism he then establishes by considering that it receives Confirmation as its completion, and that both these transactions, Infant Baptism and Confirmation, separated in time, are conceived of as joined together in *one* transaction. In accordance with this he thinks, it would be natural to leave it to every evangelical family whether they would offer their children in baptism after the common custom, or not until they make their profession of faith; and that we should revoke the sentence of condemnation pronounced upon the Anabaptists so far as it concerns this point, and that we ought on the other hand also to be prepared to restore church fellowship with those of the present day who have baptistic views, if they will only not declare invalid our infant baptism which is completed in Confirmation; in regard to which, according to his opinion, it ought to be easy to come to an agreement.*

We think, that such a mutual understanding between the Church and Baptismus would be beset with great difficulties, because by it, nothing less is demanded, than that the Church give up its dogma of infant baptism, and declare it as a matter dogmatically of indifference. When Schleiermacher, who in so many respects has wrought for the resuscitation of the churchly consciousness, and who must be considered as the one who has restored to us the idea of a Christian community, contends in this way, such meeting and favoring of the Baptist theory, is only to be explained upon the ground of his union tendency, and of the Reformed sacramental conception; which he has adopted rather more in harmony of spirit with Calvin

* The Christian Faith, vol. II. page 423.

than with Luther. When it is said, that infant baptism only becomes a complete baptism in Confirmation, this idea rests upon a confounding of the "substance" and the "manner" of the sacrament, and upon a one-sided application of the protestant idea of faith, which manifested itself early in the Reformed Church. The divine act, which constitutes the substance of the sacrament, is through infant baptism executed, and this, whether Confirmation is added or not, is a proper and complete baptism. By this the churchly necessity of Confirmation is by no means denied, but it is only contended that this necessity is of another kind, and in *toto genere* different from the necessity of Infant Baptism. Confirmation is an institution that is necessarily to grow forth in the evangelical communion-life as a fruit of infant baptism, by means of the productiveness of the congregation, and it has, as well for family-life as for church-life, ever carried with it an incalculable blessing. The Pietism of Spener has, by its zeal for catechization, established for itself an enduring memorial. The significance, however, which in an ethical point of view, belongs to Confirmation, rests on the objectivity of the Sacrament. The purer the objectivity of infant baptism is acknowledged, the greater is the significance of Confirmation, as the free, independent appropriation of this objectiveness, and the value of Confirmation is therefore conditioned by its forming a fundamental antithesis to baptism. If farther it has been said, that baptism might appropriately be deferred until Confirmation; it is the same as in other words to say, that the congregational life and the family-life can effect that *without infant baptism*; which, according to the earlier ideas, it could only effect where infant baptism has gone before. In this way, however, the Church is manifestly over-rated, and Christ is under-rated. Indifference in regard to infant baptism, which originally springs from an over-rating the human liberty of the individual, comes here to view as an over-rating of the general, since the Church regards the infant world as merely an appendage to itself, without admitting the substantial independence of the children. The deeper respect, however, for the substance of personality in the child, for the individual worth of the new-born being, manifests itself in this, that its right is acknowledged and appropriated by Christ in a way equally central as the community itself. The Christian community must acknowledge, that it cannot itself be to the child what it needs; the Church cannot merely desire to make the children partakers of herself, but must know them to be partakers of that

which is more, higher, better than it is itself, of the election of CHRIST in baptism. Hence the whole catechetical instruction with a view to Confirmation assumes a different tone, when it is conducted with baptized catechumens, from what it does with such as are not baptized. For while the unbaptized catechumens are first to be led to Christ, the baptized ones are only to be established in Christ, as they are already appropriated by him. It is, therefore, an error when baptized candidates for Confirmation, are wholly instructed to look forward, without looking also back upon the holy act, which at the beginning of their lives was executed with them—when the central motive to faith, if I may so express myself, the religious *argumentum ad hominem*, which may be developed out of this act, is not adequately used. Does any one reply to this, that the children of the Christian Church are Christ's own, whether the outward act is accomplished or not; then it is only too plain that in the minds of such the Church-constituting act of Christ is under-rated, and the sacrament is regarded as a mere emblem. Is it said by such, that the sacrament is not regarded as emblem by them; but that the gifts of Christ cannot be used by children before they can receive these in faith; then this rests only upon a confounding of baptism and the Lord's Supper; for, of the latter sacrament, to which Confirmation opens the door, it is certainly true, that it presupposes self-conscious faith: but this is not true of baptism.

The same confounding of baptism and Confirmation, which is still pretty general inside of the Church, lies at the foundation of sectarian opposition to the Church, and just on this account is this a false opposition. This opposition to the Church, has undoubtedly a certain kind of right on its side, inasmuch as there exists among a large number of members of the Church, a sharp contradiction between faith and baptism. If now this opposition would confine itself to the assertion that many members of the Church need a new Confirmation, instead of contending that the whole Church needs a new baptism, then the assertion (not literally, but in spirit) would contain a reasonable sense. For then it would express, that the proper appropriation of baptism has with many not taken place; and they would make the demand of the Church, that she should exert a reforming power in order to make good this neglect and deficiency. At all times Judaism and Paganism bestir themselves inside of the Church. That which exists before Christianity is repeated in Christianity itself, and although it can attain to no historical objectivity, it nevertheless repeats itself

psychologically in the thinking of individuals. This is true in an eminent degree in our time. If Paganism consists in this, that the universe is taken for God, that world-powers are resorted to and used in Cultus, it will not seem impossible to a psychological observation, that we should be able to trace in our time the whole cycle of Pagan religious systems, from Fetishism, which cultivates earthly "things" and makes divinities of materials and industrial interests, on to the religion of science and philosophy, in which not the things, but the thoughts, the "ideas" are worshipped. It would be interesting, should any one undertake it, to trace at length the heathenish reflection, this reappearance of all mythology in the new sphere of culture, as well in the life of nations as of individuals. Mythologies are the necessary expression of the religion of the natural man; and, as human nature is ever the same, and no man can exist without some religion, those individuals in Christendom, who do not hold to the religion of revelation, must naturally reproduce some pagan type of religion. What kind of heathen images of divinity will arise in their consciousness, depends upon the original natural diversity of individuals and nations; and here the important difference between the low barbarian, and the more exalted paganism manifests itself. The reappearance of heathenism has, in our time, become so strong, that it is not strange that many Christians think the ancient heathen world is risen again, that entire Christendom is only to be regarded as a heathen mass, in which the old idols are still reigning. Hence also there are not wanting those who, after the example of the Apostles, desire to travel about and preach the Gospel to these heathen, and seek, in the midst of Christendom, to preach missionary sermons, and introduce mission-baptism. But just here it is evident that the sect-spirit suffers itself to be deceived by appearances. It sees not the baptized psyche, through the heathen larva. The fact, that the spirit of infant baptism in its quiet, unseen movements, is more powerful than the stormy spirits of the world, is hidden to the sect-spirit. The sect-spirit manifests itself here as Judaism, repeating itself in the Church, which, in its particularity, cannot discover the pure paganism in that which surrounds it. That Christian observation, which looks at things with the eye of love—and it is only love that has the true keenness and delicacy of perception—does not conceal to itself those heathen phenomena which cannot be explained away; but in the individuals, in which these manifest themselves, it perceives at once the re-

pressed Christian features, the traces of the new creation of Christianity, which can be retained in its development, but from whose influence no one can entirely withdraw. It perceives and acknowledges, that it is here, not baptism, but Confirmation which is at fault. And here the point of view presents itself which the Church has to a great extent lost, but from which the great mass of individuals must be contemplated. The Church dare not give them up, since she would thus make herself guilty of an under-rating of baptism; but she must go on, to regard them as catechumens, as such as either through the fault of the Church, have not been truly enlightened, or as such as have rendered themselves, in reference to the Church, minors; and who are thus, in every case, to be regarded as standing upon UNCONFIRMED ground. The Church must, therefore, in the case of these, continue its catechetical activity, which, however, receives a more universal character. For since these individuals, although they are in a religious respect minors, are nevertheless of age in worldly education and culture, and many have by reflection of science been led away from faith, the catechetical zeal and activity, which we are here contemplating, must, to a great extent, be active by means of Christian science and literature. In this respect our time presents a point of similarity to churchly antiquity, when adults were brought over to Christianity, after the time of inspiration and immediate revivals has passed by. For, as a great number of those who desired to be taken up into the Church, came out of a developed and refined sphere of culture, and many of these catechumens had a philosophical education, yea stood upon the very height of ethical intelligence, it was necessary that they should also, in the way of reflection, be first persuaded of the unsatisfactoriness of the pre-Christian stand-point, and be led, from their heathen knowledge, to that point where they feel themselves to know nothing, a state of mind which must be found with him who would, through baptism, become a member of the Church. Catechization had, therefore, in various respects, to assume the character of scientific apologetic. It is plain of itself, that we dare not overlook the essential difference between unbaptized and baptized catechumens, between the God-forsaken world of culture, which *those* have left, and that world of culture ennobled by the Church to which *these* belong; on which account, also, the Christian Apologetic of the present time, must assume another, and an essentially different character. H. H.

Lancaster, Pa.

ART. VI.—SHORT NOTICES.

A LACONIC MANUAL AND BRIEF REMARKER, containing over a thousand subjects alphabetically and systematically arranged. By Charles Simmons. pp. 525.

A GOOD book of laconics is certainly a desideratum in the English language. It should embody, in a convenient form, the most important pithy sayings and sentiments, which have been uttered on various subjects, by the most distinguished men of every age and nation. To accomplish this, is certainly no unimportant or easy task. It requires a knowledge of various languages, and an intimate acquaintance with the literature of the past as well as of the present. Great care and an accurate discrimination also must be exercised in the selection and arrangement of the matter, that may present itself from various quarters. If sentiments of a doubtful character should be admitted, it will poison the whole work, and defeat its most important design. Should the remarks themselves be too protracted, it will rob them of the very character they are intended to assume, and not only make the use of the work troublesome, but also, by means of the great amount of space they necessarily occupy, push out much important matter that might otherwise be inserted. What is looked for in such a work, is, that, in all cases, much should be expressed in a very few words.

That the work of Mr. Simmons is such, in all respects, as that just delineated, we are not prepared to say. Its design and arrangement are certainly most happily conceived. It contains also a vast amount of most excellent aphorisms, some of which are very handsomely expressed; and the moral and pious tone by which they are pervaded is undoubtedly a very high commendation. It strikes us, however, that the work is defective in several respects. In the first place, the author, from some cause or other, seems to have been too limited in the range of his selection, to accomplish fully the design of such a work. A comparatively large proportion of the remarks are supplied by the author himself. The rest are selected principally from New England writers, or such works as would be readily within the reach of almost any New England divine. We find but very little draught made upon German sources, which are known to be exceedingly fruitful in this kind of literature, and whose aphorisms are often of the most forcible and striking kind. Then again, the selections, in many instances, are too lengthy to be entitled to the name of laconic sayings. They frequently occupy as much as a half a page, and, in some cases, they fill out even a whole page or more. We also sometimes find selections, which it seems difficult to regard as coming properly within the range of such a work; such, for instance, as brief biographies under the head of biographical sketches.

Notwithstanding these defects, as they strike us, the work has still many excellencies, and must be esteemed valuable as an honest effort in the particular direction in which it looks. The author has a peculiar tact for the preparation of such a work; and if he should be dis-