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THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,
AND
THE BAPTISTIC QUESTION.

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This is a small work of 81 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 Baptist 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 that 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 leads 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 onesidedness 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 æquivoca*, 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 aequivoca*, 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 CHRIST. 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, has 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 apostolical 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 Baptistic 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 relick, 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 embodies 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.¹ 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.²

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H. H.

¹ Walch X, 2579.

² Walch X, 2582.