

in the end survive, and that the truth cannot be evil, nor produce evil. "Fear not the new generalization," says the deep-minded Emerson. "Does the fact look crass and material, threatening to degrade thy theory of spirit? Resist it not; it goes to refine and raise thy theory of matter just as much." Science has its eye on the future, and holds that the highest point of view which the mind of man is capable of attaining will be sufficient for him, giving satisfaction to his thought, stilling doubt, allaying every fear, harmonizing all discord. It feels assured that in the end all will be well, for it is clear that existing beliefs and institutions can only be permanently supplanted, if supplanted at all, by higher ones. Science is full of hope, knowing that,—

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,"
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.

ART. IV.—THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM AS TAUGHT IN THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

BY THE REV. E. V. GERHART, D. D.

OF late the doctrine concerning the Sacrament of Holy Baptism has received special consideration, and called forth earnest discussions, both within the pale of the Reformed Church and to some extent also among other denominations, occasioned chiefly by the able article of the Rev. Mr. Rupp on Regeneration and Conversion. These discussions afford new evidence of the fact that the rationalistic tendencies of the prevailing theology have supplanted the old Protestant faith in the Sacraments as appointed means of divine grace. Claiming to be the faithful representative of Reformation ideas, the religious press of our day, generally at least, denies, respecting the efficacy and necessity of Baptism, what the most authoritative Confessions of the Protestant Church with one voice affirm, and affirms what these confessions explicitly

deny. Baptism is the seal of regeneration and of the forgiveness of sins. So these confessions of the sixteenth century all teach; and in this respect they are in harmony with the faith of the Church catholic in every age. But the religious press of our day commonly affirms that Holy Baptism is at most only a significant religious ceremony. The ceremony symbolizes forgiveness and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit; but the subject of Baptism, whether infant or adult, is not made a partaker of any positive spiritual gift through the medium of the Sacrament itself.

Taking the leading confessions of the Reformation period as the standard of true Protestantism, these low views of the Sacraments, and particularly of Holy Baptism, must be set down as unprotestant. They are the modern form of Socinian error.

In the Reformed Church the discussion of the historical question revolves around the Heidelberg Confession. What does this most authoritative formulary of the original Reformed faith teach? Has it any sympathy with Socinian unbelief? Does it give any support to the rationalistic opinions of the last century and of the present day? Or do its teachings harmonize with the faith of the Church as perpetuated from age to age in every branch of her communion?

To this general question we will endeavor to furnish an answer. Let us interrogate the Catechism itself. It devotes six questions to the subject of Baptism. These we propose to take up and consider in regular succession.

The more general doctrine of the Reformed Church, as taught in all her confessions, we presented in an article published in this Review, April, 1868, where the reader will find a collation of the teachings of all branches of the Reformed Church—Swiss, French, German, Scotch, Belgic, and other nationalities. They all affirm substantially the same view of the efficacy of Baptism which is given in our Catechism.

Question 69.—How is it signified and sealed unto thee in Holy Baptism, that thou hast part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?

Answer.—Thus: That Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

The terms of this question are connected with question 66, where it is said "*the sacraments are signs and seals.*" The conception of sign and seal runs through all the subsequent questions and answers, though that of seal, or of a sealing transaction, predominates. It is assumed that Baptism does two things: it *signifies* grace, and it *seals* grace to the subject.

How is this done? The terms of the question imply that it is done in Holy Baptism. These words, "in Holy Baptism," are significant. They are used in connection with the present tense—thou *hast* part. The language is not, thou *mayest* have part, or thou *shalt* have part in the one sacrifice of Christ. That would imply that Baptism is only a pledge of some spiritual good which is yet future. Nor is the form of the verb *thou hast had part*. The Catechism does not use the past tense. That would imply that divine grace, communicated at some other time and in some other way, has now Baptism added or attached to it by way of certification, as the seal of the magistrate is put on a legal document to certify its validity.

The present tense is used. The construction of the language means that Holy Baptism is a present sealing transaction, or rather, that Christ seals to us in Holy Baptism the redeeming virtue of His sacrifice. The question inquires how this is, or in what sense this is to be taken.

The answer is, first, that *Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise.* Here the appointment is referred to Christ, as also in question 68. In question 66 it is referred to God. The English expression, *outward washing with water*, is not as strong as the original, *Wasserbad*; literally water-bath. Compare Titus

iii. 5—"Bath of regeneration." To this water-bath is joined the promise. The word *promise* is to be taken in the sense explained in a previous article.* Promise expresses not something future, but a present spiritual good. It refers to the word of God joined to the outward washing. "Therewith" relates to water-bath; not to the water, but to washing with water; not joined to the natural element, but to the transaction including the element. To this transaction is joined the word. So the Reformers expressed it, agreeably to the well-known formula of St. Augustine: "Verbum ad elementum accedit et sacramentum fit." The word comes to the transaction and thereby constitutes the Sacrament. Certainly this word is not sound or external utterance, but denotes the contents of the word: that which the promise holds in itself is joined mystically to the water-bath.

The remaining part of the answer expounds the meaning of the foregoing general proposition. This is explicit, while the former part is implicit—"I am washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ from the pollution of my soul." Notice the term "*I*." Not the body is washed, nor the soul, but *I* am washed. The word *I* is the deepest and most comprehensive form of expression for the mystery of personal existence. *I* am washed from the pollution of my soul. Pollution is correlate to washing—and is therefore explained by the subsequent clause, "from all my sins."

We will not anticipate what must be taken up in a subsequent answer, but simply say that the words, "from all my sins," mean deliverance from the twofold power of sin, or the twofold form in which the power of sin reigns over us. One form is guilt, the other is corruption or disorder. I am delivered from the penalty of my sin and from the corrupting power of sin. This deliverance is effected by the blood and Spirit of Christ. The term blood has direct reference to Christ offering Himself as a sacrifice on the cross by the shedding of His blood; or to the laying down of His life for us under the curse of the

law, John x. 11, 18; and affirms the ground of salvation according to Question 67. The word Spirit refers to the Holy Ghost, and therefore to His regenerating work in us. These terms, *blood* and *Spirit*, express the twofold power of Baptism, remission of sins and the new birth, the negative and positive side of our salvation.

The mystical washing is as real as the water-bath. The Catechism says: "As certainly as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away." The answer distinguishes these two momenta: the water-bath and the mystical washing; or the outward ablution and the inward work wrought by grace in the life of the subject. But whilst the Catechism distinguishes it does not sunder these two things. It holds the one with the other. We may say the water-bath and the mystical washing go together. They prevail in one and the same moment of time. So much at least the Catechism warrants us in affirming. But we would rather say that they are one, sacramentally; for to say that the water-bath and the mystical washing go together means rather that the two run parallel; whereas the full truth, according to the New Testament, excludes such a parallelism, and involves a union of the natural and the supernatural. This union in its sphere corresponds to the union of the two natures in Christ. If the latter, the union of God with man in the person of Christ, be called internal and organic, then the former, the union of Christ by the Spirit with the natural element in the Sacrament, may also be called internal and mystical.

The Catechism does not only hold the one in conjunction with the other, but affirms the one to be as certain as the other. The inner washing from the pollution of sin by the blood of Christ is as certain as the outer bath, whereby the filthiness of the body is washed away. Were the inner work not wrought, there would be no warrant for the outward act. Thus the certainty belonging to the knowledge which we have through our senses attaches also to the knowledge of present grace which we have through faith. Neither one can be illusion or fancy.

* See *Mercersburg Review*, vol. xix., p. 553., 1872.

The motive of the Catechism in using this form of expression is to convey to believers the strongest certitude, that by Baptism they are made partakers, truly, of the full benefit of the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all their sins; so that what they come to possess by grace is adequate to all their wants as sinners, and it is not necessary to supplement the work of Christ done for them by any additional works of their own.

We have six questions on Baptism. Of these the first gives us the general conception of the Sacrament; the remaining five unfold the import of this general conception, sustain it by arguments drawn from the Scriptures, defend it against misconstruction and false inference, and affirm its relation to the children of believers.

Question 70.—What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

Answer.—It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross; and also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

The question takes up the leading expression in a previous answer: *washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ*. This language expresses the deepest meaning of Baptism. It supposes that the Sacrament possesses an interior and spiritual virtue. The Catechism affirms the interior efficacy figuratively by the use of the word "washing," because the language is ruled by the baptismal conception as given in the New Testament.

The answer resolves itself into two main parts: the first ending with the words "members of Christ." What follows is the second part. The first part teaches the nature of the washing

by the blood and Spirit of Christ in relation, on the one side, to sin, and on the other, to the new life of grace. The second affirms the necessary connection between the sacramental washing and the personal history of the believer, or between Baptism and holy living, the latter being the purpose and end which the Sacrament is designed to subserve. These two main parts have each two subdivisions. We will take them up in regular order.

To be "washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ" is to have the forgiveness of sins from God through grace. Baptism seals to us the forgiveness of sins. To forgive is to remit the penalty of sin. But the penalty is not attached to sin externally by an act of the divine mind, so that the penalty might conceivably be taken away whilst the sin remains. Sin and penalty materially inhere in each other. The relation is internal. Penalty is of the nature of sin; just as felicity is of the nature of spiritual life. Sin and penalty accordingly do not simply accompany each other, much less do they follow the one upon the other. They are so essentially connected that sin is not conceivable without the present suffering of its penalty, and penalty is not conceivable without the present force of sin. There can therefore be no remission of the penalty but in as far as there is a taking away of sin itself. Hence the forgiveness of sin must include here the removal or the incipient destruction of that mysterious indwelling power which subjects us to the suffering of the penalty.

Forgiveness is predicated of God. God forgives sins; and this forgiveness from God is sealed to us by the Sacrament.

The words "through grace" pertain to the source or fountain whence forgiveness and salvation flow. Grace is the unfathomable love of God revealed in Christ, and, without any merit on our part, realized in us guilty sinners by the Holy Ghost. It is through such love of God to us that the inward cleansing from sin is freely imparted in Baptism.

Then comes the expression which is so common in the Catechism, "for the sake of Christ's blood which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross." It is not necessary here to enter

upon an exposition of the language. Enough to say that the Catechism holds the redeeming work of Christ, as the ground of our salvation, to be all-sufficient; and in this redeeming work His sacrifice on the cross is a central act.

The forgiveness of sins, however, is only one side of the internal efficacy of Baptism. There is another side which is equally essential. Baptism makes the sinner a new man. Did the Sacrament not possess this supernatural virtue there could be no inward cleansing or real forgiveness.

The language of the Catechism is: "And also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost and sanctified to be members of Christ." The word "renewed" may be taken pathically. Then it means a new or changed frame of sentiment, another habit of mind. "Renewed" may be taken intellectually; it then means that there is produced in us a new and better knowledge of Christ, of God, and ourselves. "Renewed" may be taken ethically. It then means that the grace of Baptism generates in us a better will, a purer moral activity. "Renewed" may also be taken to include all these forms of meaning. But the renewing grace of Baptism, viewed under either one or all of these aspects together, would be only subjective. The manifestation of our life, as it obtains in feeling, thought and will, would be regarded as changed, the essence of our life meanwhile remaining the same.

The renewing efficacy of Baptism thus taken would be equivalent to repentance or conversion. But the Catechism does not hold that Baptism converts the subject, or of itself imparts to him a new spiritual experience; for it uniformly ascribes such experience to the exercise of true faith. The word must then, evidently, have another and a deeper meaning.

The word "renewed" in this connection has a different meaning. It is to be taken as affirming a new organic relation of the subject of Baptism with Christ, the Head of His mystical body. It means that we are made partakers of His life.

That this is the meaning of the Catechism is evident from the fact that the Catechism uses the term "renewed" in connection with the expression "sanctified to be members of Christ."

The subject of Baptism is both renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit renews him, and in renewing him, sanctifies him. The Spirit sanctifies him, but He sanctifies him in that He makes him really a new man. The new position which he occupies as renewed and sanctified by the Spirit, the Catechism expresses by the phrase: "members of Christ." The subject becomes by Baptism a member of Christ. The language is direct and positive. The Catechism does not intimate that to be members of Christ is an end to be reached by improving the grace of Baptism. The end of Baptism is brought out in the subsequent part of the answer. But it affirms that we are made members of Christ, in that we are renewed and sanctified; and this renewing and sanctifying work of the Spirit is the mystical washing of Holy Baptism.

The expression "members of Christ" must accordingly be construed, neither with *sanctified*, by itself, nor with *renewed*, but with both; for each word denotes but one aspect of the objective change wrought by the Spirit. Only when we hold both as essential and inseparable forms of one saving act in us, do we have the complete conception of the Catechism respecting the washing by the Spirit.

We may express the meaning in other words: The renewing and sanctifying of the Spirit constitutes us members of Christ. Before Baptism we were members of Adam, and subject to the curse entailed upon us by the fall. This is our position and character by nature. The Spirit takes us out of our natural position and translates us into a spiritual position. Spiritual, not in opposition to sense or understanding, but in opposition to the entire life of fallen humanity. The spiritual position is a position in Christ by the Spirit. It is new in contrast with our fallen life in Adam: and the real transition from the natural to the spiritual is a renewing, or a new birth.

The new position is holy in contrast with the sinfulness and corruption of our natural position in Adam: holy, not in a subjective but in an objective sense. We have not actualized the life of Christ perfectly in our actions, purposes, words,

thoughts, feelings, and in the hidden tendencies of our personal existence.

Holiness thus apprehended comes gradually with the progress of the Christian as he grows in Christ, and cannot become complete before the resurrection from the dead. But the position is holy in that He into whom we have been engrafted by the Spirit is holy. Engrafted into Him, He is for us and in us the principle and power of holiness, and we become *actually* holy in the degree that we in turn live in Him by faith and obedience. Thus the real translation from our natural state in Adam to the spiritual state in Christ includes both the renewing and the sanctifying work of the Spirit. The renewing necessarily involves the sanctifying; and the sanctifying necessarily presupposes the renewing. Without either the change of relation would not be real.

It is evident then that we are not first renewed and sanctified by the Spirit in order that by faith we may become members of Christ; but we are made members of Christ in that we are renewed and sanctified; and being members of Him we are, by virtue of this organic relation, to develop a new and holy life.

These two things, forgiveness of sins and renewing by the Holy Ghost, are, according to the Catechism, included in the mystical washing of Baptism. They express the sense which is attached to the words of the question, "washed by the blood and Spirit of Christ." This mystical washing, that is, the forgiveness through the blood of Christ, and the renewing and sanctifying by the Holy Ghost to be members of Christ, is affirmed in the previous answer, to be as real and certain as the outward washing with water.

The forgiveness of sins and the renewing by the Holy Ghost, taken together, complete the idea of the grace of Baptism. In the statement, they follow each other and must be separated, but they are not separated in idea. In idea they are one. We are not first forgiven and then renewed by the Holy Ghost, neither are we not first renewed by the Holy Ghost and then forgiven. But the forgiveness and the renewing are two aspects of one divine act.

According to the Catechism, the twofold grace of the Spirit, as now explained, is *sealed* to us in Holy Baptism. The word sealed is to be taken in the Scripture sense, as in John vi. 27: "For Him hath God the Father sealed." Compare Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30. To seal, according to the New Testament, is not merely to impress on something already existing—an external sign of confirmation or ratification—but it is to constitute the relation of a person to God by the Spirit in a real way. God the Father sealed His Son at His baptism, when the heavens opened and the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. The outward and sensible was only the manifestation of the inward and spiritual communication. The New Testament uses the word seal in no other sense.

According to the Scripture import of a sealing transaction, the Catechism asserts, as we have before seen, that the real communication of grace is as certain as the outward washing. That this may be so, the two things, the inward and the outward, must be simultaneous. When Holy Baptism is administered, then the Grace of the Blood and Spirit of Christ is communicated.

If this interpretation is not allowed to stand, then one of two alternatives must follow. The grace of Baptism must have been communicated at some time previous to the administration of the Sacrament. Going on this assumption, the grace of Baptism would not be certain; for forgiveness and the renewing by the Spirit would then depend, not on God, but on the subject. It would depend on repentance and faith; and if the repentance and faith were not genuine, the grace would not be conferred. Baptism would be a doubtful instead of a sealing ordinance.

Hence what the Catechism insists on so strenuously would fall to the ground. The grace on this assumption cannot be as certain as the baptismal act.

Let us assume the other alternative. The grace of Baptism is received *after* the baptismal act. The baptismal act is then no more than an outward pledge; and as in the previous case, the actual receiving of grace must depend on repentance and

faith. If the subject, as is often the case, does not repent and believe, the grace sealed in Baptism is of no avail in any sense. The grace depends on a contingency, on something that may or may not take place, and most truly cannot be as certain as the baptismal act.

If, therefore, we are to accept the language of the Catechism in its full meaning, the least we must hold is that the grace is simultaneous with the baptismal transaction. Thus only can the inward be as certain as the outward. The language of the Catechism is explicit and unconditional. It does not say we are certainly washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ, if we repent and believe. Nothing of this kind appears in answer 69 or 70, or in the remaining answers on Baptism.

We pass on to the second main part of the answer, which expresses the end whereunto we are baptized, "that so we may more and more die unto sin and lead holy and unblamable lives." This part, like the first, has two elements; the one negative, the other positive.

The negative side is "that we may more and more die unto sin," corresponding to "forgiveness of sins from God for the sake of Christ's blood" as expressed in the first main part of the answer. The positive side is, that we "may lead holy and unblamable lives," corresponding to renewing and sanctifying by the Holy Ghost.

As our sins are forgiven, we are to die unto sin, "ye länger, ye mehr." We, as related to sin, die. Death is predicated of us, not of sin. We cease more and more to live under the power of sin, as our personal life is determined more and more by grace; and, in turn, sin itself becomes relatively a weaker force. In other words, the old man, as St. Paul names the fallen nature, is in process of destruction; on the other hand, the new man, as St. Paul calls the spiritual nature, is in process of development and growth; we lead a holy life. The holy life we lead is the fruit of regeneration, or of our engrafting into Christ by the Spirit, and involves repentance, faith and personal consecration to Christ.

These two, the dying of the old man and the continued vivi-

fication of the new man, are only different aspects of one mysterious process. They reciprocally condition each other. But the dying depends on the living. To live in Christ is the power in virtue of which we die unto sin. But the negative side of the process must go forward commensurably with its positive side. If not, the positive process is itself checked, if not suspended.

Holy Baptism is accordingly the beginning of a real salvation. We are forgiven, but this does not supersede the necessity of subsequent forgiveness. We are renewed and sanctified, but this does not supersede the necessity of free activity in the service of Christ. We may say properly that in Baptism we are saved. So St. Peter, "The like figure whereunto Baptism doth also now save us." (1 Peter, iii. 21.) But it is a salvation which looks toward a higher salvation and a completion in time to come.

As the subject of the second part of this answer is taken up in Ques. 88, 89 and 90, under the head of Repentance or Conversion, it is not necessary here to consider at length the doctrine of the Catechism. We will, however, emphasize one characteristic feature of the doctrine.

The conception of the *blood and Spirit of Christ* is of fundamental force. On the negative side, these three are connected together, viz.: Blood of Christ, forgiveness of sins from God, and dying unto sin, each one presupposing and depending on the other two, so that neither one can be understood in the sense of the Catechism unless it be viewed in relation to the others. As the sacrifice of Christ is in order to forgiveness, so is forgiveness in order to dying unto sin. If we receive no forgiveness, the sacrifice does not avail for our benefit, and if we do not die unto sin, the forgiveness received does not accomplish its purpose in our personal history. The relation of these three is to be viewed also under another aspect. No man can die unto sin unless he receives the grace of forgiveness from God; and there is no forgiveness possible unless it is grounded in the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ.

On the positive side there are also three connected together in a corresponding manner. These three are: The Spirit of Christ, renewing by His Spirit, and leading a holy life. The gift of Christ's Spirit is in order to our renewing by the Spirit, and our renewing by the Spirit is in order to a holy and unblamable life. Were the Spirit of Christ not ~~given~~, and did He not abide in the Church, there could be no renewing by the Spirit; and were we not renewed and sanctified by the Spirit to be members of Christ, there could be no holy living. The third fact depends on the second, and the second on the first. No man can therefore lead a holy life unless he is a member of Christ; and no man can become a member of Christ except by the Spirit, who proceeds from Christ ascended and glorified.

The Catechism gives no countenance to the notion that any one can lead a life acceptable to God, who is not regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Nor does it countenance that other notion, which prevails among so many sects of the present day, that men are regenerated by the Spirit of *God*, that is, by the Spirit given at will by God directly from heaven. The Spirit that regenerates is the Spirit given by *Christ* glorified, now abiding and active in the communion and sacraments of the Church.

But there is another fact that requires special attention. The Catechism does not divide the Spirit from the blood of Christ, nor the blood from the Spirit of Christ. They are only two forms of one redeeming work. The virtue of the sacrifice becomes complete in the glorification of Christ, and the glorification of Christ in the coming of His Spirit. Were there no sacrifice possessing perpetual virtue in the communion of the Church, there would be no renewing of men by the Spirit, and in consequence no holy living. And were there no presence of the Spirit in undiminished fulness, there could be no forgiveness for the sake of Christ's blood, and no dying unto sin.

The Catechism affirms both sides of the truth, forgiveness and a new life, with equal distinctness and consistency; and affirms both in their connection with the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Question 71.—Where has Christ promised, that we are as certainly washed with His blood and Spirit, as with the water of Baptism?

Answer.—In the institution of Baptism, which runs thus: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

This promise is also repeated where the Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins.

The strong and explicit utterances respecting the efficacy of Baptism, as given in the previous answer, now lead the Catechism to inquire what warrant of authority there is in the word of Christ for such teaching. "Where has Christ promised?" is the question. We are referred directly not to the Old but to the New Testament; nor in a general way to the New Testament, but to what Christ Himself has taught. Christ has promised—what? He has promised two things: that we are washed by His blood and Spirit, and that we are as *certainly* washed by His blood and Spirit as we are with the water of Baptism. The aim of the Catechism is to maintain from the word of Christ that the inward washing, *i. e.*, the forgiveness of sins and the renewing by the Holy Ghost, is as real and certain as the outward washing.

The main part of the answer is drawn from the commission given by our Lord to His apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark: Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16. This is followed by two quotations from St. Paul—Titus iii. 5, and Acts xxii. 16.

From St. Matthew we have the words of institution: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" the latter part of the commission being omitted. From the com-

mission as recorded by St. Mark we have: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here the first part is omitted.

Then follows the repetition of the promise as expressed by St. Paul: in the words "*washing of regeneration*." The entire passage runs thus: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." From this passage the Catechism selects the most expressive clause—washing of regeneration; or, as the original may be translated, and as the German version has it, *bath of new birth*. "Das Bad der Wiedergeburt" is the descriptive title which St. Paul gives to Baptism; which is nearly equivalent to the phrase, sacrament of regeneration.

The equivalent expression, "*the washing away of sins*," is taken from the address of St. Paul to the people in Jerusalem, in which he rehearses the history of his conversion to Christ. Ananias came unto him and said: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

The Catechism does not comment on the words of institution. They are so direct and unequivocal that they are cited without comment to support the idea of the nature and efficacy of Baptism, as taught in the preceding two questions. But the purpose for which the words of institution are quoted shows unmistakably in what sense they are taken; for they are quoted from the institution of Baptism to prove that our Lord has joined to the water-bath the forgiveness of sins, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; or, that Holy Baptism is an outward washing with water, and an inward washing by the blood and Spirit of Christ, at one and the same time. The meaning is seen in the words themselves; and is evident also from a consideration of the connection in which the words are made to stand by the Catechism.

The meaning appears, moreover, from the language which follows the words of institution. The Catechism says, "This promise is also repeated." The words of Christ are sufficient

by themselves. The Catechism, of course, does not imply that they need any support or confirmation from St. Paul. But the design is to evince the harmony of apostolic teaching with that of Christ. Hence the writings of the Apostles are said to repeat what the words of institution teach. They repeat the same truth in other and equivalent forms of expression.

This answer confirms what we have said before in regard to the use of the word *promise*. In telling us what the promise is, and where it is to be found, the Catechism cites directly the institution of Baptism itself; and, in immediate connection therewith, the positive and unequivocal teaching of St. Paul. Hence by *promise* the Catechism cannot mean the grace of Christ disjoined from, and following after, Baptism; it cannot designate, merely, something that depends on what men may do, or may not do. Thus interpreted, the expression would contradict the central truth concerning Baptism, on which the entire argument of the Catechism hinges. But by *promise* the Catechism means the *word* of Christ indissolubly joined to the natural element. In virtue of this mystical conjunction of His word with the outward washing, the transaction becomes the bath of the new birth, or the washing away of sins.

Question 72.—Is then the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sins?

Answer.—No: for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.

The terms of the question are significant. The Catechism does not ask whether Baptism is itself the washing away of sins. This form of inquiry is studiously avoided; for *Baptism and external washing* with water (Wasserbad), are by no means equivalent expressions. In the Sacrament the Catechism recognizes two things as essential: the external water-bath and the internal grace. It inquires whether the outward washing, viewed by itself, possesses spiritual virtue; whether

the application of the natural element can take away sin, implying that the internal and external washing may be confounded. The interior substance of Baptism may be ignored, and the supernatural virtue of the Sacrament ascribed exclusively to the external washing.

The occasion of the question is a supposed objection to the explicit teaching of the previous questions. The objector alleges: if, as you teach, the renewing and sanctifying by the Spirit, as well as the forgiveness of sins, are just as certain as the outward washing, then you ascribe spiritual efficacy to an external ablution. The answer is, "No!" We ascribe no spiritual efficacy to the external washing itself. "For only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin."

The objection in this form may come from the spiritualistic tendency which was ripe in the Reformation period. Many had no faith whatever in the objective virtue of the Sacraments.

The question, however, may also refer to another objection. The strong teaching of the Catechism exposed it, in the judgment of many, to the charge of teaching the Roman error, viz.: the so-called *opus operatum* theory. Then the objection would be—if the grace of the Spirit is just as certain as the water-bath, you supersede the necessity of repentance and faith, or of inward spiritual religion, and Baptism itself does the whole work irrespectively of the interior spiritual state and activity of the subject. To such a misapprehension and perversion of the doctrine of the Catechism, the answer likewise says "No." It negates two opposite errors; the one making Holy Baptism an empty sign, the other ascribing to it a force *ex opere operato*.

In the answer we meet the same language which we find in Answer 69, the favorite and most comprehensive language of the Catechism. The Catechism does not by any means hold the external water-bath to be a matter of indifference, but, when taken by itself, refuses to ascribe to it renewing and sanctifying efficacy, and ascribes such supernatural virtue solely and exclusively to the Blood and Spirit of Christ.

Nor does the Catechism mean to ascribe such efficacy to the blood and Spirit of Christ, as such, or abstractly considered. It does not imply that the sinner may receive saving grace and be made a member of Christ by the Spirit, with or without Baptism, as though Baptism were a matter of indifference; but it insists only on this: that when we emphasize the distinction between the visible sign and the invisible grace, the spiritual virtue of the Sacrament must be predicated of the invisible grace, not of the natural element.

Question 73.—Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins?

Answer.—God speaks thus not without great cause; namely, not only to teach us thereby that, like as the filthiness of the body, is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token, He may assure us that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water.

In the question the word *then* is emphatic. It refers to the doctrine of Baptism as presented in the entire preceding argument, but more particularly to question 72, which at first view seems to deny what was before so positively affirmed. If the outward washing, a transaction essential to the Sacrament, can not take away sins, why call the Sacrament the washing of regeneration? Are not the two things incompatible? The argument has apparently been involved in a dilemma. The contradiction must be removed.

But the seeming contradiction is not in the argument. It prevails rather in the misapprehension of the argument which underlies the alleged objection taken up in question 72. Observe that the objection adroitly changes the terms of the doctrine.

In the first three questions the Catechism speaks of the nature of Holy Baptism, which includes the washing with water and the washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ; both being essential constituents of the Sacrament. Question 72 changes the subject of inquiry. Instead of asking whether Baptism is indeed the washing away of sins, it asks whether the *outward washing*, an act of which, when taken by itself, the Catechism has predicated neither forgiveness nor regeneration; is such washing away of sins. It is to this one-sided and false conception of Baptism that the Catechism replies categorically in the negative. No such outward washing is of any avail; not because *Baptism* is inefficacious, but because the outward washing with water is *not* Baptism.

In question 73 we are led back to the consideration of the subject proper; not to the contemplation of the external water-bath, but to that of Holy Baptism itself. "Why then doth the Holy Ghost call *Baptism* the washing of regeneration?" If such language is so liable to misapprehension; if we are in danger of ascribing a virtue to water that can be predicated only of the blood and Spirit of Christ, why speak of the *washing* of regeneration?

The answer proceeds to justify both the general doctrine and the language by which the doctrine is expressed. "God speaks thus not without great cause." There is a sufficient reason for the affirmation that Baptism is the washing of regeneration. What is it?

The reason is twofold; and the answer, in consequence, resolves itself into two members, the one being the protasis, and the other the apodosis at one general proposition. The protasis, or first member of the proposition, is negative, but involves a direct affirmation. The apodosis, or second member, is affirmative, but involves a direct negation of the previous implied affirmation as containing the whole idea of the Sacrament. Let us consider the two members in proper order.

The first member denies. What does it deny? The Holy Ghost calls Baptism the washing of regeneration, "not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is

taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ." This language involves the affirmation that there is an analogy between the washing of the body with water, which removes outward filthiness, and the inward washing by the blood and Spirit of Christ, which removes the pollution of our sins. The outward and natural is a figure or sign of the inward and spiritual; and thus aids us in apprehending the meaning and force of Baptism. We see the communication and efficacy of grace in the application and cleansing of water. The language of the answer implies also that Baptism is called the washing of regeneration for the purpose of *teaching* us that there is this analogy between the outward washing with water and the inward washing by the Spirit. Water is a symbol, and Baptism involves a symbolical transaction. The words "*not only* to teach us thereby," followed in the second member by the adversative formula: "but much more," clearly involves the idea that the Sacrament has symbolical significance. God teaches us by the Sacrament that our sins are taken away just as the filthiness of the body is taken away.

But the implicit affirmation is involved in a categorical negation. The negation is the prominent and ruling thought. Whilst the protasis means to imply that there is undoubtedly such an analogy between the application of water and the purification by the Spirit, the leading purpose is to *deny* that when the Holy Ghost calls Baptism the washing of regeneration, He teaches us this *only*, and no more. It is denied that Baptism is merely a symbol; or that the conception of an analogy between water and the Spirit takes up the true nature of the Sacrament. The denial proceeds on the assumption that the Sacrament is much more than a teaching symbol. It possesses a character, an interior power, which transcends the simple conception of an analogy between outward washing and inward purification; and thus postulates the necessity of progress in the argument; in other words, the necessity of the direct affirmation which follows in the second member of the answer.

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The answer proceeds to justify both the general doctrine and the language by which the doctrine is expressed. "God speaks thus not without great cause." There is a sufficient reason for the affirmation that Baptism is the washing of regeneration. What is it?

The reason is twofold; and the answer, in consequence, resolves itself into two members, the one being the protasis, and the other the apodosis at one general proposition. The protasis, or first member of the proposition, is negative, but involves a direct affirmation. The apodosis, or second member, is affirmative, but involves a direct negation of the previous implied affirmation as containing the whole idea of the Sacrament. Let us consider the two members in proper order.

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who accord to Baptism the force of a symbol only, and maintain that the Sacrament does no more than teach, by means of an impressive ceremony, that our sins are removed by divine grace. Did the Catechism design to affirm this truth, and nothing more, the affirmation involved in the protasis would itself express it, and there would be no occasion on the one hand to deny that the implicit affirmation exhausts the idea of Baptism, and on the other to pass on and assert positively that the idea includes "much more."

Let us now consider the second member of the answer. As stated before, the apodosis contains a direct affirmation, which involves a relative denial of the truth affirmed by implication in the protasis. The adversative formula, "but much more," plainly implies that whilst Baptism, as being the washing of regeneration, is a symbolical transaction, yet the conception of a symbol does not comprehend the peculiar nature of the Sacrament in distinction from teaching by word or symbol. The Sacrament is far more than either one or both. It does *not* only teach us, but it does much more than teach or symbolize. What is the *much more*? What is the reason that the Holy Ghost calls Baptism the washing of regeneration? What is the true and positive reason?

The *much more*, as the answer has it, is "that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water." The force of the positive assertion turns on the word *assure*, and is used antithetically to the word *teach* in the protasis. God does not only teach us; but much more than this, by calling Baptism the washing of regeneration, He also assures. The original is *willversichern*. God designs to remove all doubt or fear, and cause us to believe certainly and firmly that the invisible grace which the sacramental transaction symbolizes is not absent or wanting, but is a present fact. The answer, however, does not get beyond the conception of assurance. The visible and the invisible, the outward and the inward, are put and held in juxtaposition; and the reality of the one certifies the presence of the other; but the two things,

the supernatural and the natural, are not so related as to constitute one mystery.

Of what does God assure us? That we are really washed from our sins spiritually. The argument is approaching a climax; at least it aims at this. The answer to question 69 says that "I am washed from all my sins as *certainly* as I am washed with water." The German is, *so gewiss*. Question 71 continues the same formula: "Where has Christ promised that we are as *certainly* (*so gewiss*) washed?" But here the Catechism relinquishes this formula, and adopts another. It rises from the conception of *gewissheit* (certainty) to that of *wahrhaftigkeit* (reality). The spiritual washing is not merely *certain* but *real*, not *gewiss*, but *wahrhaftig*. The German *wahrhaftig* is much stronger than the English word *really* or *truly*. It means not only that the spiritual washing is a present transaction, but that it is as true and actual as the bodily washing. We are as really washed from our sins spiritually, that is, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, as our bodies are washed with water.

The English language does not allow a literal rendering of the German; and thus weakens somewhat the force of the argument. The English, in giving the analogy or parallel between the spiritual washing and the bodily washing, changes the subject. It says, "*We* are as really washed from our sins as *our bodies* are washed." But the German has the same subject in both relations. *We* are washed from our sins, and *we* are washed with water. As we are the subjects of a bodily washing, so really are we at the same time the subjects of a spiritual washing. Both are equally a present fact.

How does God assure us that we are really washed spiritually? He does it "by this divine pledge and token." A *pledge* is something that stands good for that which it represents. The two, the pledge and the thing pledged, stand together, and fall together. The one cannot prevail without the other. The relation is in this sense unconditional; but not internal and vital.

A *token* is of the nature of sign; but a stronger term; yet

token is not as strong a term as the German *wahrzeichen*, truth sign; that is, a visible object that is so connected with the invisible truth which it exhibits, that the former becomes the positive guaranty of the latter.

Pledge and token are conjoined. They do not express different conceptions, but two aspects of one common conception. They are conjoined in order to affirm the present grace of Baptism with more clearness and force; or, expressing the same thing in other words, Baptism symbolizes grace and makes certain to the subject the presence and virtue of grace.

The pledge and token are divine. The adjective qualifies both. The pledge is divine: the token is divine. Or rather that one act, designated as a pledge and token, is divine. Divine, first, because the washing with water in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost is instituted by Christ; and second, because there is connected with the outward washing a divine act. Holy Baptism is a divine transaction. The pledge and token given by God must be true. His word being joined to the outward washing, and God being true to His word, we have a transaction wherein the spiritual washing cannot but be as certain and real as the bodily washing.

Question 74.—Are infants also to be baptized?—

Answer.—Yes. For since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them, no less than to their parents, they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Testament by circumcision, in the place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.

To this question the Catechism replies unequivocally "Yes." Although infants for want of adequate maturity of life are in-

capable of repentance for sin and faith in Christ, yet they are to be baptized. The grace of Baptism may not be denied to them. This unequivocal answer affirms the catholic position of the Reformed Church relative to infant baptism; and in one view of the case it is entirely sufficient. But for the reason already given the answer proceeds to state more fully the sense in which the positive affirmation is made and the ground on which it rests. We have, therefore, in what follows, two leading thoughts. The one pertains to the nature and force of infant baptism, the other to the argument by which the practice of the Church is sustained and defended against the attacks of all classes of anti-pedobaptists.

The main thought comes out in the middle portion of the answer—"They are also by Baptism to be engrafted into the Christian Church;" and the force of the thought turns on the word *engrafted*. The original is *einverleibt*, literally *incorporated*; that is, made a member of the mystical body. But the Anglo-saxon term *engraft* suits the context better. By Baptism there is established a new life relation of the infant with Christ in His Church. So St. Paul: "Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. vi. 4, 5.)

The figure of engrafting is borrowed from the language of St. Paul, and is derived from a natural act. (Romans xi. 17-23.) A twig cut off from one tree is set into the body of another tree, and the two by a reciprocal life-action become one constitution. The twig grows as a member of the organism of the tree. It grows by virtue of the internal plastic power of the living, growing tree; but not by this plastic power exclusively. The living twig reacts upon the life of the tree, taking that life up into itself, and transfusing through itself all the mysterious energies of the tree. Then the twig grows as the tree grows. The tree grows in the twig, and the twig in the tree.

In the light of this rich analogy the Catechism affirms the nature and objective force of infant baptism. The infant is engrafted, or made a member of Christ's mystical body. It is translated from the kingdom and power of the devil into the kingdom and power of Christ, and then stands in the supernatural communion of Christ, where it possesses all the spiritual resources that are requisite to growth in grace. If it is rightly trained by the parents; and if, as it develops into consciousness and freedom, it does not renounce its spiritual inheritance, but avails itself of the resources of grace which it possesses, the new life relation will issue in complete salvation and eternal blessedness.

The Catechism says that the infant is engrafted *by Baptism*. Baptism on the one hand is the sacrament that breaks the power of the fall and the curse, or the power of the old natural relation in which the child stands by natural birth. On the other, it is the Sacrament that constitutes the new relation of life and salvation on the spirit, or that makes the child a partaker of the infinite fullness of Christ.

The engrafting is effected by Baptism "as a sign of the covenant." The covenant is the real economy or household of grace, or the supernatural communion on earth, created, ruled, and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit of Christ given on the day of Pentecost. Baptism, the washing of regeneration, being both an outward and an inward act, is a sign and seal of the supernatural communion, symbolizing the positive efficacy of the grace conferred, this grace by which the unconscious subject is adopted into the family of God. (Ques. 65.)

The argument by which the baptismal engrafting of infant children into the Christian Church is supported and defended is twofold. The one is, that the children of the faithful "belong to the covenant and people of God;" the other, that "both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them."

Infants belong to the covenant and people of God; the one term, covenant, designating the new objective order of life, in the bosom of which alone the salvation of Christ prevails, and

is accessible to sinners, whether adults or infants; the other, people of God, designating the community of individual members, of which the covenant or supernatural economy is composed. Infants belong to both. The word *belong*, *gehören*, may, however, not be pressed, or there would be a contradiction between the antecedent assigning the reason and necessity of Baptism, and the consequent affirming the force and benefit thereof.

Belong does not mean that infants as such are in the proper sense members of the covenant. Were this the case, then grace would be communicated according to the law of natural generation. Natural birth from Christian parents would, *ipso facto*, constitute the child a member of the supernatural economy. The idea involves a confusion of the order of nature and the order of grace, or of the natural and the spiritual. According to the law of nature the fallen life of mankind reproduces and perpetuates itself in the image of the first man. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John iii. 6.) If we assume that the Spirit of Christ works in and with the law of natural generation, then we are afloat upon the pantheistic current of thought, and surrender the broad, clearly defined scriptural distinction between the economy of nature and the economy of the Spirit.

But the term *belong* is to be understood in the sense of right or title. The natural relation of an infant to its believing, Christian parents, secures for it the right to a spiritual relation, or the right to a participation in the spiritual blessings which its parents, as the people of God, possess. The relation implies, on the part of the parents, obligation, and on the part of the child, a positive claim or title. The parents are bound to consecrate their child by Baptism to Christ, and thus bring it into the spiritual communion of the Church; and the infant, just as it has rights before the civil law, though unconscious, has a silent claim also, equally real and positive, though unable to assert the right itself, before the spiritual law, or at the altar of God, which the parents and the minister of Christ can as

little disregard or violate as they can the positive right of the infant to food and clothing. It has spiritual and churchly rights as really as it possesses natural or bodily rights.

The fact that the child of believing parents possesses such spiritual rights according to the law of the Christian faith is the first reason assigned by the Catechism for the Baptism of infants. The reason rests on an organic view of the human race. As in the natural order the child is bound up necessarily with the parents, so that it shares their blood, nationality, language, civil position and honors, the blessings of their morality and social culture, as well as the miseries of their vice and degradation, so also is it bound up with them in the spiritual order.

Through the divinely appointed means of grace not the isolated individual only, but the family, is to be made sharer in full of the gifts of the Spirit. To maintain that the infant is excluded, because unable to repent and believe, involves a contradiction. It is on the one hand to affirm that Christianity is adapted to the nature and all the wants of the human race, and on the other, to set aside and contravene the deepest law that informs and governs the organization of human society.

The other reason assigned for the baptism of infants is still stronger and more direct. It grows immediately out of the nature and design of the Christian salvation. "Redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost are promised to them." The Catechism recognizes in the infant the presence and power of sin, according to questions 7 and 8. Being organically one with the fallen race, it is under the curse from the moment of conception. "Conceived and born in sin," it is helplessly and hopelessly subject to corruption and death. Hence for the infant, redemption or actual deliverance from the kingdom of darkness, is as necessary as for the parents: and the redemption of Christ, being designed for mankind, not for single individuals, this redemption is promised to every rank and class of mankind; infants being as really comprehended as adults. The promise is indeed expressed in the written word, but it has a deeper ground. It lies in the very idea of the salvation of

Christ. The written word only utters and records the comprehensive truth which the salvation, as holding in the person and work of Christ, embraces.

The language of the Catechism, "redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost," is not here to be taken objectively. It does not mean merely, as some Calvinists maintain, that the value of the atonement is infinite, and therefore is in itself sufficient for all men, or that the merit of Christ's active and passive obedience is sufficient to cover the demerit of all possible sins; whilst the design and availability of the infinite merit of Christ does not, with equal certainty, relate to every individual member of the race. That the Catechism really holds the infinite value of Christ's redeeming work, and that no one will perish for want of an adequate salvation, objectively considered, is undoubted. But this view of redemption is not, taken by itself, the reason which the Catechism assigns for the baptism of infants.

The language is to be taken rather in a subjective sense. It means that the infinite value of the salvation wrought out by Christ is really a salvation for the infant no less than for its parents. The infant is to be made positively a partaker of redemption and the Holy Ghost. Grace is *promised* to it. It is the subject for whom Christ died and rose again, and to whom the Holy Ghost is to be given; the infant, though incapable of any free activity, being yet capable of receiving the Spirit, and of sharing the benefits of redemption, which the Spirit applies. Accordingly, in the sermon of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, the first evangelical sermon preached in the power of the Spirit, the relation of the completed salvation to the children of believers is unequivocally proclaimed. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

The baptismal gift of the Spirit works faith in the heart of the baptized child. Apprehended by the Spirit in Baptism,

and adopted into the communion of the Spirit, the infant is subject to the transforming and moulding power of the Spirit, who so works in the germinal beginnings of awakening personal existence, that the child is constrained to believe and rejoice in Jesus Christ, so soon as, developing gradually into consciousness, it gets a sense and a perception of Him.

The promise of redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost is referred "to the blood of Christ," or to the offering of Himself on the cross, which Christ, now glorified at the right hand of God, made when in the flesh. "He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in order that by His passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness and eternal life." (Ques. 37.) The guilt for which He thus atoned is not merely the guilt which the race incurs by actual transgression. He atones for the universal guilt attaching to the race in consequence of the fall. "He is our mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin wherein I was conceived." (Ques. 36.) The blood of Christ, being shed as truly for inborn sin as for actual transgression, whereby inborn sin is covered before God as certainly as actual sin is pardoned, the promise realized by the child in Baptism is, according to the Catechism, the direct and necessary effect of redemption as really as the personal justification of the adult sinner through faith.

The Catechism does not hold the doctrine of a limited atonement, as taught by the Decrees of the Synod of Dort and the Confession of the Westminster Assembly. Christ is the Saviour of mankind, not of some elect individuals only. As He has assumed the nature of Adam, which all men possess, so He has atoned for the sin of Adam, in which all men, by the common possession of a fallen nature, are involved. Such being the extent of the atonement affirmed by the Catechism, it can give no countenance to the notion of a supralapsarian decree, according to which some infants are from all eternity elected unto life eternal, agreeably to the sovereign pleasure

of Almighty God, whilst others are passed by, being given over absolutely as vessels of wrath to the power of the devil. For non-elect infants there is no Saviour, no atonement, no saving work of the Holy Ghost, and therefore no grace in holy baptism. They are lost irrecoverably, whether baptized or not baptized. Redemption not being promised to them, the sacrament of Baptism cannot make them partakers of redemption. Baptism can avail only for the spiritual benefit of the elect. Of such limitations of sacramental grace by the divine counsel, the Catechism knows nothing. It does not discriminate. All baptized infants are the subject of the promise; and all are thereby, in virtue of the redeeming work of Christ, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, who works faith in their hearts, so that, believing in Christ and abiding in faith, they may, one and all, be eternally saved.

Observe that the Catechism continues the distinction between the *blood* and *Spirit* of Christ which runs through the previous questions and answers on Holy Baptism; intending to teach thereby that the full benefit of Christ, the negative and positive efficacy of His work, on the forgiveness of sins and the mystical union with Christ, is for infants no less than for adults. For this reason we have the clear, positive affirmation that infants are by Baptism *engrafted* into the Christian Church.

Thus *engrafted*, the children of believing parents are "distinguished from the children of unbelievers." The distinction is inward and real as well as outward and nominal. The children of unbelievers do not as such possess the blessings of the Faith. They are not only not in the covenant; they do not only not possess the grace which prevails in the communion of the Church; but they do not, like the children of believers, "belong to the covenant and people of God;" that is, they do not, in virtue of their natural relation to their parents, possess any right or title to an engrafting by Baptism into the Christian Church. They stand in the old stock as in the wild olive tree; and as such being members exclusively of fallen humanity are, like their parents, the children of wrath. But the broad distinction made between these two classes of infant children

does not contradict the objective character and design of the Gospel, which, considered in itself, is adapted to the needs of all alike and designed for all. The distinction only emphasizes the positive spiritual advantages of the children of the Church over the children of the world, and by necessary implication condemns as sinful the indifference of parents to the means of grace. How fearful is the responsibility of those who through their unbelief not only close the door of hope against themselves, but, so far as their unbelief and negligence work their effect in the spiritual history of their families and of their posterity, also shut them out from the kingdom of heaven.

These, then, are the principal reasons of the Catechism for the baptism of infants. The children of believers are entitled to the blessings of the covenant, and the grace of the Gospel is promised to them in distinction from the children of unbelievers. They are therefore by Baptism to be constituted members of the mystical body of Christ.

In conclusion, the answer proceeds to draw a parallel between the Old and New Testament, between circumcision and the sacrament of Baptism, between the children of Jewish and the children of Christian parents; a parallel that serves both to illustrate and to support infant Baptism by a subordinate argument. The Mosaic economy foreshadows the Christian economy. Whilst it was limited to the Jewish nation it nevertheless comprehended every member of the Jewish family, being intended for the helpless infant as well as for the full-grown man. The Christian economy is not less comprehensive. Designed not for a single nation, but for all the nations of the earth, it as a matter of course includes the child. The substance does not contradict the shadow. The fulfillment of the promise in Christ cannot contravene the economy of the promise. Otherwise the Christian Church would not be the fulfillment of Judaism, but a contradiction.

Rights and duties under the Christian economy are analogous to rights and duties under the Jewish economy. What was then the duty of Jewish parents is now the duty of Chris-

tian parents. What were then the rights of Jewish children, are now the rights of Christian children. As the neglect of circumcision held the child in the state of nature and excluded it from the blessing of God bestowed in and through the Jewish communion, so does the neglect of Baptism keep the child in its original natural state, subject to the powers of the Kingdom of Darkness, and exclude it from a positive participation in the Grace of the Gospel, which is accessible nowhere but in the communion of the Christian Church.

CONCLUSION.

The results of our examination of these six questions and answers we gather up in the following propositions, which express in summary form a correct view, as we believe, of the doctrine of Holy Baptism as taught in the Heidelberg Catechism.

1. Holy Baptism is an ordinance wherein by the appointment of Christ the outward washing with water and the inward washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ are conjoined in one transaction, and so conjoined that the inward washing is always as certain and real as the outward washing.

2. The spiritual benefit conferred by Baptism upon the person baptized is the washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ. This grace is accordingly twofold, namely, the forgiveness of sins for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ offered for us on the cross, and renewal by the Holy Ghost; or remission of sin and the new birth.

Thus through Baptism they who worthily receive this Sacrament are separated from the unbelieving world, renewed and sanctified to be members of Christ, and engrafted into His mystical body. These several forms of spiritual blessing however, separation, forgiveness, renewal and engrafting are not divine gifts which are conferred one after another, but they are different aspects only of one act of the free grace of God.

3. The spiritual efficacy of Baptism is objective; being neither in the officiating minister nor in the person baptized, but in the ordinance itself duly administered and received. No

personal unfitness of the subject, nor moral unworthiness, can affect the nature of the Sacrament, or detract from the reality and virtue of the baptismal transaction.

4. But when the Catechism distinguishes between the external washing with water and the internal washing with the Holy Spirit, the spiritual efficacy of Baptism is ascribed, not to the external washing itself, for the external washing considered by itself is not the sacramental transaction, but to the blood and Spirit of Christ. Spiritual efficacy, however, is not ascribed to the blood and Spirit of Christ as such, or as abstracted from the external washing with water, but to His blood and Spirit as sacramentally connected with the external washing with water in the baptismal transaction.

5. The spiritual efficacy of Baptism is not tied to the moment of administration.

This proposition does not mean that the baptismal transaction may be an empty or purely external washing, the internal washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ being not sacramentally connected therewith.

But the proposition means that the cleansing and renewing efficacy of Baptism is not limited by the moment of time when the Sacrament is administered.

The grace conferred at the time of administration is efficacious retrospectively and prospectively; being effectual for the taking away of the sins of the subject that have been committed in time past or that may be committed in time to come.

6. The grace conferred by Baptism is efficacious retrospectively. The person baptized being through the medium of the Sacrament introduced into the covenant and engrafted into Christ, and thus joined to Him in His death and resurrection, receives the forgiveness of inborn and actual sins. The dominion of the kingdom of darkness is broken, and the guilt of his transgressions is taken away. He passes from the sphere of the curse and of death into the sphere of grace and of life.

7. The grace conferred by Baptism is efficacious prospectively. The efficacy of the Sacrament extends to sins that may be committed after it has been administered; and this efficacy

is as certain and complete in its relation to the future as it is in its relation to the present and the past.

As natural birth has force and effect for the whole period of natural life even unto death, the filial relation never being annihilated, so has the new birth, or the washing of regeneration, full force and effect for the entire subsequent, ethical and religious history of the subject, the virtue of the new spiritual relation being at no time absolutely abolished. The penitent prodigal, be he never so guilty, may ever recur by faith to the real relation wherein he stands as a child of God by adoption in Christ; that is to say, he may recur to his Baptism as the seal of God's saving grace, and the pledge of forgiveness which, for the infinite merits of Christ, God is willing freely to grant.

8. Although efficacious as the seal of forgiveness and of the new life both retrospectively and prospectively, yet Baptism does not save the subject *ex opere operato*. The blood and Spirit of Christ work no spiritual effect in the personal life and personal history of the subject mechanically or magically. The personal experience of forgiveness and the actual development of the objective spiritual relation involves the necessity of repentance and faith on the part of the subject.

The objective efficacious grace of Baptism must be met by a corresponding subjective appropriation of that grace, in order that the subject may actually die unto sin and lead a holy and unblamable life.

The whole truth is expressed in a twofold proposition. Whilst on the one hand we must say: no Baptism, no objective engrafting into the mystical body of Christ; on the other hand we must assert with equal decision: no personal faith, no experience of the forgiveness of sins and no actualized salvation.

Or we may express the truth thus: no Baptism, no adoption; no faith, no salvation.

The principle: no faith, no salvation, is not applicable, using the term *faith* in the ordinary sense, to baptized infants dying in infancy. They are saved in virtue of the gracious relation which they sustain to Christ by Baptism.

9. Baptism is the act of God whereby He adopts the subject

into the sphere of grace, thus giving him a new position, a new objective relation, and the rights of a child. Faith is the act of man, the act of the subject of Baptism, whereby he recognizes and acknowledges his new position and relation, and appropriates to himself the free grace of God by which he has been apprehended. Without the first, faith has no proper warrant, no real relation to validate and justify it. Belief becomes an imagination. Without the second, divine grace is only a latent possibility. The new position into which he has been translated does not and cannot become a transforming power in the heart of the subject, inspiring and governing his will and the whole sphere of his ethical and religious life. The old man is not mortified. The new man is not quickened.

10. The infant children of believing parents are to be baptized.

(1.) Because they need the benefits of Baptism. They need the forgiveness of sin and the new life of the Spirit.

(2.) Because they possess a right to these benefits of the covenant of grace in that they are the children of believing parents.

(3.) Because these benefits are promised to them as infants; and divine grace is able to apprehend them, although they are incapable of the conscious responsive activity of faith.

11. Infants are by Baptism engrafted into the Christian Church; and thus a real distinction is constituted between them and the children of unbelievers.

12. The Baptism of infants in the New Testament is analogous to circumcision in the Old. Baptism works an effect for them relatively to Christ and the Christian economy as real and great as the effect which circumcision wrought for the children of the Jews relatively to the Mosaic economy.

These theses are warranted, we think, by the sacramental theory in general and the doctrine of Baptism in particular as taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, and are sustained throughout by all the other confessions of the Reformed Church.