

decide for itself what is or is not for its interests, or whether an aggression on the part of its neighbour is or is not justifiable. If the conclusion arrived at is that the national welfare, independence, or dignity is at stake, and may be compromised by yielding to what is demanded, resistance must be offered; and if no compromise is possible, war becomes inevitable. No doubt the guilt of the rupture lies at the door of the nation which allows ambition or the lust of conquest to prevail over the dictates of justice and moderation, but considerations of this kind do not in practice operate very strongly. If the aggrieved party submits, the national honour may be compromised, if it does not, this means war. Accordingly, Scripture contains no prohibition of war, and, indeed, furnishes examples of eminent piety in the military profession (Luke vii. 5; Acts x. 2). But although Christianity does not abrogate this ultimate arbitrament of nations, it has done a great deal in mitigation of its attendant horrors. As in every department of human agency, so in this, it has introduced a new spirit into what it does not forbid. The cruelties practised by conquerors in ancient times are not tolerated by Christian nations, and appliances in relief of suffering, never thought of by the polished nations of antiquity, now form a regular accompaniment of belligerent operations. Nor can it be doubted that the condemnation which the Gospel pronounces on wars undertaken from purely ambitious motives has done much to discredit frivolous and unnecessary appeals to arms.

### MEANS OF GRACE

The local churches, of which visible Christendom consists, have a bond of union in their relation to the one true Church, or body of Christ; but this latter is replenished and sustained by outward means, ordained by Christ Himself to be channels of His grace, and committed to each local Church to administer; viz., the pure teaching of the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments, and common prayer in the name of Christ. These means of grace, as they are usually called, may be considered under a threefold aspect; as (especially the Sacraments) signs of admission into, or continuance in, the Church (*tesseræ*); as pledges of the presence of Christ, by His Spirit in the Church (*pignora*); and as forming the material of visible Christian worship. In idea they may be thus distinguished, in fact, each, in a greater or less degree, combines these aspects. If the Church were purely invisible, a union of sentiment merely, or, as Schleiermacher terms it,<sup>1</sup> of operations<sup>2</sup> (*wirkungen*) of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Christliche Glaube, §§ 126, 127.

Ghost, these outward means might be dispensed with ; but since it is not only the effect but the instrument of Christ's saving work, and has a mission to fulfil as well as to promote its own edification ; and, since man is to be approached as a complex being, consisting of body as well as soul ; the means at the Church's disposal must be of a complex character, appealing to the senses in their application, but accompanied by invisible effects. As the Word Himself became man, in order to establish His Kingdom on earth, the Church too, without claiming to be the Incarnation of Christ, needs a system of external worship, and external means of edification and extension.

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### A.—THE WORD

#### § 85. PREACHING

It was the command of Christ that, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles should preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark xvi. 15), for faith, the appointed condition of salvation, comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. x. 17) ; and this they considered so essential a part of their office, that before long they declined other spiritual employments which they thought might be a hindrance to their ministry of the Word and of prayer (Acts vi. 4). S. Paul declares that Christ sent him not primarily to administer sacraments, or regulate the affairs of Christian societies, but to preach the Gospel to the heathen (1 Cor. i. 17) ; and it is obvious that by no other instrument but the Word could the heathen be gathered into the Christian fold. But this means of grace is not to be confined to missionary effort ; the work of edification in constituted Christian Churches is emphatically ascribed to it. The commission to teach all nations, with a view to Christian baptism, prescribes also the duty of instructing the converts thus made in the whole compass of Christian doctrine and practice (Matt. xxviii. 20) ; and accordingly we find that the first Christians, among other religious exercises, continued steadfastly under the teaching of the Apostles (Acts ii. 42). S. Paul commends the Ephesian elders, in view of impending dangers, ' to God and to the Word of His grace,' which Word was able to build them up in everything that concerned salvation (Acts xx. 32). And the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, more immediately connected with the Word, are by the same Apostle said to have been given specially for the edification of the Church : if Christ ' gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers '—it was ' for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

body of Christ' (Ephes. iv. 11, 12). As it is by the Word that the seed of eternal life is sown in the heart (1 Pet. i. 23), so it is by the same Word that the new-born spiritual babe is nourished, and grows into the measure of the stature of Christ. If any means of grace, therefore, is of direct institution by Christ, this may claim the character; if any is essential to the well-being of the Church, the chief place must be assigned to this; and hence in defining the notes of a true Church, our Article makes 'the pure preaching of the Word' one of the two essential ones. A sacramental character, too, belongs to the ordinance of preaching. It cannot, indeed, be said to have an 'outward and visible sign' in the same sense in which the two sacraments have: the winged words of the preacher do, in fact, make themselves wings and fly away: the vehicle is spiritual, and appeals to the understanding rather than to the senses; but unquestionably 'an inward spiritual grace' accompanies it. It is the principle instrument of the Holy Spirit in the work both of regeneration and sanctification. Not the human agent, but Christ Himself by His Spirit speaks in His Word, and communicates to it its saving power. Hence it ought to constitute, and in Christian assemblies conducted after the Apostolic model, in one shape or another, whether as oral teaching or as the reading of Scripture,—ever has formed, an indispensable part of Christian worship.

But what is this Word of God, and where is it to be found? Considered as immanent in God, it is the Divine plan of salvation through Christ; the *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος* of Philo and his Christian disciples. Revealed, this Word becomes a *λόγος προφορικὸς*, and addresses itself to man through human agency, in history, type, prophecy, inspired oral teaching; and in so doing becomes affected with the limitations which attend every such outward vehicle. As the Trinitarian Word in becoming incarnate exhibited His Divine glory under a veil, so the Word of revelation, in accomplishing its end, adapts itself to human comprehension, and is no longer quite identical with the Word as it existed from eternity in the Divine Mind. Hence there is an element of truth in the statement that Scripture is not, but contains the Word of God; <sup>1</sup> though it is sometimes employed to insinuate serious error. In Scripture, or in the oral teaching of the Apostles, the Word clothes itself in an inadequate form of expression: no human language, only that which

<sup>1</sup> It is found in the first sentence of the Homily on 'the reading and knowledge of the Scripture': 'Unto a Christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable than the knowledge of Holy Scripture; forasmuch as in it is contained God's true Word, setting forth His glory, and also man's duty.'

S. Paul heard in his rapture to the third heaven, and which he describes as 'unspeakable,' and not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter (2 Cor. xii. 4), is capable of conveying it in its fulness; not to mention that human speech can never quite dissociate itself from the peculiarities of the speaker or writer, his habits of thought, his mental culture, his personal history and surroundings, his particular spiritual experience. And this applies especially to instruction by type, or typical persons, such as the Old Testament abounds with. One safeguard against error is to remember that the canon of Scripture consists not of one book but of a sacred library; in each portion of which we have indeed the Word of God but not the whole of it. It is only, therefore, by a collation of one part of Scripture with another, and a comprehensive view of the whole, that we attain to such a measure of knowledge as we can in this life expect.

To us who live in these latter times, the inspired volume is the only authentic source of what the preacher has to deliver. Types are fulfilled in Christ; inspired oral teaching in the Church has ceased; but the record of what that teaching was is to be gathered from Scripture, and from that alone. The preacher, therefore, ought to be, above all things, an expositor of Scripture.

#### § 86. PRAYER IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

The essence of religion resides in the belief of a Supreme Being, distinct from the material universe, and of the possibility of establishing relations between this Being and the rational creature. When this belief is called out into active exercise, it expresses itself in prayer. Only to the atheist, who acknowledges no God, and to the pantheist, who identifies the universe, and himself as part of it, with God, can prayer seem superfluous or irrational. This converse of the soul with God, as it appears both in the Old and in the New Testament, presupposes on the part of the worshipper that he is addressing a personal God, and not the blind Fate of heathen mythology; and further, that this personal God is accessible, and that the expressed feeling of dependence and the exercise of faith are pleasing to Him: 'He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Our Lord recognized the duty and the importance of prayer, both by precept and by example; and furnished to His disciples a model which the Christian Church in all ages has followed; but it was not until towards the close of His ministry that He unfolded the essential idea of *Christian* prayer: 'Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. xviii. 20); 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the

Father may be glorified in the Son ; if ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it ' (John xiv. 13, 14) ; ' Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name ; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full ' (*Ibid.*, xvi. 24). The Apostles, though accustomed to prayer, had not asked anything in the Name of Christ, because the work of atonement was not accomplished until the words ' It is finished ' were uttered on the Cross ; and because the accomplishment was not publicly attested until Jesus, after His resurrection, proved that all power in heaven and earth was given to Him by the mission of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to take His place. Thenceforward, *Christian* prayer is to be offered through Him as the only Mediator between God and man ; and by the assistance of His Divine Vicar, the Holy Ghost, who prompts petitions acceptable to God : and to pray in the Name of Christ is not only to pray in reliance on His atoning sacrifice, but to pray under the guidance and suggestion of the Holy Spirit, Who is Christ, with and in us. The best comment on these promises of Christ is Rom. viii. 26 : ' Likewise the Spirit, also, helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' Christ in us, not without our own co-operation, but employing our natural faculties and quickening our spiritual desires, and yet the real Prompter of prayer—prays for us ; and since ' He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit making intercession for the saints,' all such prayer must surely be heard ; and therefore our Lord could say, ' If ye shall ask anything,' without exception, ' in My Name I will do it.' This implies that prayers may be offered which are not ' in the Name of Christ,' in the sense explained ; and this need occasion no surprise when it is remembered that the Christian, though delivered from the dominion of sin, is by no means free from its approaches, and may prefer requests which are not according to the Will of God, or which, at least, for reasons hidden from us but known to Omniscience, would not, if granted, promote the spiritual benefit of the suppliant, or the advancement of Christ's kingdom, or not in the way marked out by Divine wisdom. Such prayers may be natural, but they are mistakes ; and to grant them might not be a real token of the Divine favour. Hence the example Christ Himself should ever be present to us : ' If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt ' (Matt. xxvi. 39). In every prayer, except those framed after the model of the Lord's Prayer, there must be a reservation of this kind ; there must be expressed or implied resignation to His Will, who alone knows the issue and determines the course of events. It is on this condition

that Christians, as individuals, are encouraged 'in everything by prayer and thanksgiving to make known their requests unto God' (Ph. l. iv. 6).

But prayer, as a means of grace, is essentially common, or united, prayer; prayer expressive of the common feeling of the Church, as distinguished from the circumstances of individuals. It is to it as such that the promises of Christ are attached. And to it as such the Lord's Prayer has a special reference. In the first three petitions, 'Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' Christians, noting the incomplete fulfilment of prophecy, pray that whatever hindrances stand in the way, social or political, may be removed<sup>1</sup>; in the three last, the growth of each believer in grace is the subject of supplication, so that when Providence opens the way the Church may be prepared to seize the opportunity, and under a second Pentecostal effusion achieve spiritual victories of a magnitude unknown since the apostolic age. Prayer for these objects, expressing the common desire of Christians, never can be a mistake; they cannot fail to be according to the mind of Christ and in His Name; they aim at the same objects that Christ Himself is carrying forward; and so can confidently plead the promise in its most unlimited extent. In fact, they are the necessary condition, on man's part, of the fulfilment of prophecy; for since Christ works through the Church, the union of Christians in fervent prayer for an outpouring of the Spirit is itself a sign of the Church's becoming alive to her duty, and girding up her loins for the spiritual conflict.

Public prayer, as a means of grace, assumes the form either of silent assent (with, as in our Church, occasional responses) to the officiating minister, or of psalmody, which is, in fact, the congregation praying aloud. Whether it finds expression in liturgical forms, or in the unwritten outpourings of the heart, is immaterial. Its connection with the solemn assemblies of Christians on the first day of the week is obvious. Those who on the plea that they can pray always and in all places neglect 'the assembling of themselves together' (Heb. x. 25) on the stated occasions of public worship are likely not to pray at all; they certainly cannot expect the special blessing which Christ has connected with this duty, and which, even

<sup>1</sup> 'Withal praying for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am an ambassador in bonds' (Col. iv. 3). 'I exhort therefore that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty' (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2).

if He had not done so, may be naturally anticipated from the joint action of Christians in the work of prayer and praise.

## B.—THE SACRAMENTS

### § 87. DEFINITIONS

The derivation of the word Sacrament, by which the other class of Christian ordinances is commonly described, is doubtful. In classical usage *sacramentum* signifies either the sum of money which the plaintiff and defendant in a suit deposited with the authorities, the share of the defeated party being devoted to religious purposes,<sup>1</sup> or the military oath of allegiance. Tertullian seems first to have used the word to denote the Christian Sacraments ; he describes the Christian as enlisted in the service of Christ, and his baptismal vow as corresponding to the oath by which the Roman soldier bound himself to obedience.<sup>2</sup> From him it passed, in the Western Church, into the current language of theology, though at first in a very extended meaning. It was applied not only to the sacraments of the Gospel, but to any rite or ceremony which bore a symbolical character, and even to passages of Scripture which might be interpreted allegorically. Thus Augustine calls the additions to baptism, prevalent at that time, viz., exsufflation and exorcism, sacraments ; and he applies the term to the chrism at confirmation, to circumcision, ordination, marriage, the sabbath, and the water and blood which issued from the side of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Still, amidst this looseness of expression, baptism and the Lord's Supper occupy in ancient writers a position peculiar to themselves. It was not before the twelfth century that the definition and number of the sacraments became fixed ; and particularly by P. Lombard and T. Aquinas. In the Eastern Church the Greek word *μυστήριον* is used for the Latin *sacramentum*, but it conveys a different meaning. It is probably derived from the verb *μύω*, to initiate into the mysteries (Eleusinian, etc.) ; and since the ceremony took place in secret, the word came to be applied to any ordinance or doctrine of a recondite meaning ; and, particularly in the Eastern liturgies, to the two sacraments.

By the schoolmen various definitions of a sacrament are given. They will be found enumerated by Bellarmine, and are essentially founded on Augustine's statements : ' A sacrament is a sign of a

<sup>1</sup> Either from *sacrare* to devote to the gods, or because the sum was placed in loco sacro. Varro, L.L., v. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Credimusne humanum sacramentum divino superduci licere, et in alium dominum respondere post Christum ? De Cor., c. xi.

<sup>3</sup> ' The holy Catholic Fathers have made mention, not only of seven, as M. Harding here accounteth them, but, also, of seventeen sundry sacraments.' Jewell, Def. Ap., c. xi., div. 2.

sacred thing,' instituted 'as a token of Christian fellowship,' 'a visible word,' for it is the word, not which is spoken, but which is believed, that 'transforms the element' (the material part) into a sacrament. 'A sacrament' (that is, the visible element) 'is so called because of its similitude to the thing signified; for if this resemblance did not exist, the sacrament would not be entitled to the name; and on account of it the signs commonly bear the name of the things signified' (as, *e.g.*, the bread and wine are called the body and blood of Christ). The symbolical element of the sacraments, which Augustine thus so strongly enforces, did not commend itself to the founders of the scholastic theology, by whom the doctrine of an inherent virtue in the elements was generally held, and accordingly the necessary additions were made. By Hugo de St. Victor the symbolism of the ordinances is not denied, but the remark is appended that the sacraments, by virtue of consecration, 'contain a certain invisible and spiritual grace.' Or, as he expresses it in another work, 'The sacrament not only signifies, but also confers, that of which it is the sign.' And so, though more concisely, his contemporary P. Lombard: 'A sacrament is in this sense a sign of invisible grace that it is both a representation and a *cause* thereof.' The theory was more fully worked out by T. Aquinas. 'Sacraments,' he says, 'are applied for the sanctification of men, their medicinal properties being proportioned to the twofold nature of man, body and soul.' 'They are the cause of grace in the soul, not, however, the primary cause, for God alone is that, but the instrumental: the difference may be thus illustrated; fire by virtue of its own form produces heat, and the effect is similar to the energy; in this sense God is the Author of grace, and this grace is nothing but a communication of the Divine nature, according to 2 Pet. i. 4; whereas a mere instrumental cause does not operate by virtue of its own form, but only by the motion which it receives from the principal agent; as, *e.g.*, the carpenter's axe does not cut from itself, nor is there a resemblance between it and the work produced. It is in this latter sense that the sacraments of the new law are the cause of grace.' If the question be asked, what is the grace of which the sacraments are the cause? the answer is, not the increase of ordinary sanctifying grace, but a grace peculiar to each sacrament. 'There are three applications which the word grace admits of: abstractedly, *secundum se*, it perfects the essence of the soul so far forth as it communicates participation of the Divine nature; and from this proceed various gifts and virtues which co-operate with the powers of the soul: but over and above these there is a sacramental grace, communicated only by the sacraments, which produces certain special effects



necessary in the Christian life ; as, *e.g.*, the special grace of baptism is a kind of spiritual regeneration, and so as regards the other sacraments.' 'The sacraments of the new law *contain* grace, not merely as signs thereof, but as instrumental causes' (that is, grace is attached to them physically as distinguished from morally). On the subject of the baptismal character, which is to be distinguished from the grace peculiar to each sacrament, T. Aquinas proceeds as follows : 'The sacraments are appointed for two ends, as a remedy against sin, and to perfect the soul in matters relating to the worship of God. But whoever is deputed to a certain secular function usually receives a visible sign thereof : as, *e.g.*, soldiers in former times were stamped in the body. For spiritual functions the stamp must, of course, be spiritual, or on the soul ; and on its powers as distinguished from its essence since it is conferred for spiritual actions. Upon those who receive the character the Divine bounty confers grace for the due performance of such actions. The character, being a participation of the priesthood of Christ, is indelible and unchangeable, unlike grace which is subject to variations. Only three of the seven sacraments impress the character, *viz.*, baptism, confirmation, and orders, for they only are not repeated. The sin of the minister does not interfere with the efficacy of the sacrament, though he may thereby be himself guilty of mortal sin ; but the intention of the minister, strictly so called, may, if of a certain kind, be an effectual bar. The mere outward act, as, *e.g.*, in baptism the ablution of water, may be variously applied ; to the cleansing of the body, or for sanitary purposes, or with a spiritual intention ; therefore it is necessary that it be determined to the specific effect which it is intended to produce. Hence there must be an intention on the part of the minister to baptize ; but if this be present, lesser defects, such as inattention to what he is saying, administration for sinister purposes, even absence of faith, especially if it be concealed, will not invalidate the ordinance. But a celebration in mere sport does so ; for in this case there is no intention of doing what the Church intends. A secret unbeliever may intend to do what the Church affirms ; and heretics may likewise so intend, because, however erroneously, they consider themselves to be the true Church, or part of it. They confer the *sacramentum* but not the *rem sacramenti*, *viz.*, remission of sins and sanctifying grace.'<sup>1</sup> These concessions were intended to obviate the difficulty, that if the efficacy of the sacrament were made to depend on the intention of the minister in every sense, no one, however devout, could be sure of receiving sacramental grace.

Such was, on the doctrine of the Sacraments, the elaborate

<sup>1</sup> Sum. Theol., P. iii., QQ. lx.-lxiv.

structure which had gradually grown up, attaining under the great schoolmen its full proportions and symmetry: Augustine laid the foundations, his successors carried it on, and the Aristotelian philosophy was applied by T. Aquinas with boundless ingenuity and great dialectical power to complete the edifice. The sacramental theories of the middle ages, sacerdotal throughout, fell in naturally with the hierarchical tendencies then coming to a head. Not, however, without opposition from various quarters. To say nothing of Berengar of Tours and Ratramnus, some of the earlier schoolmen endeavoured to rescue the symbolism of the Sacraments, or, at least, to purge the popular system from its worst excrescences. Even at the Council of Trent great differences prevailed between the leading schools of thought on this subject; and particularly on two points, the inherent causative power of the Sacraments (*continent gratiam*), and the intention of the minister, the Dominicans and Franciscans took opposite sides. Ambrose Catharinus, a leading theologian present, forcibly pointed out the inconveniences that might arise from an undue pressing of the doctrine of intention, nor did he conceal his opinions even after the decree of the Council on the subject had assumed its present shape.<sup>1</sup> The majority, however, favoured the Dominicans, and the Canons of the Council prove how exactly they were framed after the decisions of the schools. ‘Since,’ the Council says (Sess. vii.), ‘it is through the Sacrament that true justifying righteousness commences, or is increased, or, if lost, is restored; it is important, especially since various heresies on the subject are prevalent, to lay down the following Canons: “If anyone shall affirm that the Sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify; or do not confer this grace on those who interpose no bar,<sup>2</sup> as if they were merely signs of grace or justification already received, let him be anathema.” (vi.). “If anyone shall affirm that grace is not conferred by the Sacraments *ex opere operato*, but that faith in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace, let him,” etc. (viii.). “If anyone shall affirm that in the three Sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders, there is not a character impressed on the soul which is indelible, let him,” etc. (ix.). “If anyone shall say that in celebrating the Sacrament an intention is not required of doing at least what the Church does, let him,” etc.’<sup>3</sup> (xi.). Thus the floating theories of individual writers, or schools of writers, were transformed into articles of faith, and the Sacraments of the Gospel, which were designed to be bonds of union among

<sup>1</sup> Sarpi, L. ii., § 66.

<sup>2</sup> The bar, or obex, is mortal sin; if this be absent, the bonus motus of the recipient is immaterial.

<sup>3</sup> Conc. Trid., Sess. vii.

Christians, became the occasion of a rupture apparently irreconcilable.

Next to the doctrine of justification by faith, or rather as a consequence of it, that of the sacraments could not fail to claim the attention of the Reformers. Yet it was only by degrees that they freed themselves from the yoke of ecclesiastical tradition, and arrived at the conclusions which appear in the Protestant Confessions, particularly those of the reformed type. The Augsburg Confession merely lays it down that 'the sacraments were instituted not only to be notes of profession amongst men, but also to be signs and testimonies of the will of God towards us, for the purpose of stimulating and strengthening faith. To the right use of the sacraments that faith which accepts the promises is necessary. We condemn those who teach that the sacraments justify *ex opere operato*, and who do not teach that faith in the remission of sin is necessary.'<sup>1</sup> The Apology of the Confession (Melanchthon) adds that, 'As regards the number of the sacraments we do not attach much importance to it, especially since the ancients differ on this point. If we define sacraments to be rites appointed by God, and with a promise of grace attached, three such are found in Scripture, Baptism, the Supper of the Lord, and Absolution. We condemn the whole tribe of the schoolmen who teach that the sacraments are vehicles of grace *ex opere operato, sine bono motu utentis*, to those who interpose no bar to their operation.'<sup>2</sup> Here the doctrine of the *opus operatum* is condemned, but the number of the sacraments is not yet defined. In the articles of Smalcald and the two catechisms (minor and major) composed by Luther, the sacraments in general are not treated of, and baptism and the Eucharist but briefly; and not without reason, for, in truth, Luther's own opinions on the subject had varied from time to time. It is seldom that a reaction against prevalent errors recognizes the particle of truth which they may contain, and the early history of the Reformation presents no exception to this remark, nor was the temperament of its leader likely in all cases to recommend moderation of statement. The revival of the doctrine of justification by faith, Luther's great work, was naturally accompanied by a protest against the scholastic doctrine of the infusion of justifying grace in and by the sacraments, with its kindred tenets, the *opus operatum* and the powers of the priesthood. The symbolical nature of the sacraments, which had been well nigh lost sight of for many ages, came to the front, and in insisting on this vital point, Luther and Melanchthon, to say nothing of the Swiss Reformers, at first lay under the temptation to consider these ordinances rather

<sup>1</sup> Conf. Augs., § 83.

<sup>2</sup> C. vii.

as signs and pledges of the remission of sin than as channels of grace. But Luther's controversy with Carlstadt and Zwingli, which at one time threatened to produce a rupture between the Saxon and the Swiss Protestant Churches, resulted in his modifying his earlier views, so far at least as regards the connection of the elements (*sacramentum*) with the grace conveyed (*res sacramenti*): he retraced his steps in the direction of the system in which he had been nurtured on the subject of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and finally enunciated a doctrine on the identity of the sign and the thing signified, to distinguish which from that of transubstantiation as taught by the Church of Rome, requires some dexterity.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the Swiss reformers on the sacraments passed through a similar process of development, though it stopped short of the Lutheran in sundry material points. Zwingli's conception of the sacraments is that of their being signs of Christian profession, certifying to the Church that the recipient is a believer; commemorative of a past redemption, but not channels of present grace.<sup>2</sup> But this exclusively symbolical view was not adopted by the Helvetic confessions. In the first of them, 1553, with which the others substantially agree, sacraments are described as 'mystical symbols, consisting of the Divine word (of promise), the signs, and the things signified; by which God preserves in His Church the remembrance of Gospel blessings, and from time to time renews them; by which also He seals His promises, and so strengthens and increases our faith.'<sup>3</sup> Calvin himself, whose position was that of a mediator between the earlier Swiss teaching as represented by Zwingli and Æcolampadius and the Lutheran, adds little of any moment to these statements, except in one point. A sacrament he defines to be 'an external symbol, by which God seals the promises of His goodwill towards us, in order to strengthen the weakness of our faith; and we, in turn, testify before Him, the angels, and men, our devotion to His

<sup>1</sup> Confitemur quod in cœnâ Domini corpus et sanguis Christi vere et substantialiter sint præsentia et quod una cum pane et vino distribuuntur atque sumantur. Form. Concord., c. vii., B. i.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sunt sacramenta signa vel ceremoniæ quibus se homo probat aut candidatum aut militem esse Christi; redduntque ecclesiam totam potius certio rem de tua fide quam te.' De ver. et fals. rel. Occasionally, however, he speaks otherwise. See Möhler, Symb., § 31. Also see infra p. 523.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. the following confessions: Vanitatem eorum qui affirmant sacramenta nil aliud esse quam mera et nuda signa esse omnino damnamus. Conf. Scot., A. xxi. Sunt sacramenta symbola et sigilla visibilia rei internæ et invisibilis, per quæ cœu media Deus virtute S. sancti in nobis operatur. Conf. Belg., § xxxiii. Sacramenta sunt sacra et in oculos incurrentia signa et sigilla, ob eam causam a Deo instituta, ut per ea nobis promissionem Evangelii magis declaret et obsignet; quod scilicet non universis tantum verum etiam singulis credentibus gratis donet remissionem peccatorum. Cat. Heidelberg., § lxxv.

service.'<sup>1</sup> The point which he more prominently brings forward is the independence of the thing signified of the sign : ' Augustine's distinction between the *sacramentum* and the *res sacramenti* not only implies that figure and reality there meet together, but that they are not so connected as to be inseparable. Hence that thou mayest receive not an empty sign but the thing signified with it, the Word which is therein included thou must receive by faith. Thus in proportion to thy communion with Christ will be the benefit which thou wilt receive with the sacraments.'<sup>2</sup> Whatever minor differences exist between the Reformed and the Lutheran churches, all Protestants agree in holding that the sacraments are not only symbols (*signa*), but seals (*sigilla*), or pledges (*pignora*), of what they symbolize. And thus we may the better understand the definition of our Church (which is of the Reformed, not of the Lutheran, family) : ' Sacraments are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us ; by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also confirm and strengthen our faith in Him . . . the promises of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signed and sealed ' (AA. 25-7).

#### § 88. NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS

Melanchthon, in the passage already quoted, dismisses this question as of little importance, on the ground that the ancients differed on it. The ancients used the term sacrament in a looser sense than afterwards prevailed, but they did not define the number. This omission, like others, was supplied by the schoolmen. T. Aquinas lays it down that the sacraments are seven in number, viz., Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony.<sup>3</sup> He is followed by the Council of Trent, which, under an anathema, pronounces them to be neither more nor less than seven. The same Canon ascribes them all to the institution of Christ Himself.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that both baptism and the Lord's Supper answer to this description, but as regards the other five, the evidence fails. Confirmation appeals to no higher sanction than the fact that the Apostles were accustomed to lay hands on persons recently baptized, that they might receive the extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> Inst., L. iv., c. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Inst., L. iv., c. 14, s. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Sum. Theol., P. iii., Q. lxxv.

<sup>4</sup> Si quis dixerit sacramenta novæ legis non fuisse omnia a Jesu Christo instituta ; aut esse plura vel pauciora quam septem . . . anathema sit. Sess. vii., Can. 1.

gifts of the Holy Ghost <sup>1</sup> ; ordination, as practised by the Apostles, can plead no institution by Christ ; nor can penance, nor extreme unction, still less matrimony. If it be urged that, at any rate, these latter are apostolic, and so far may be referred to Christ ; even in this modified sense two only fulfil the definition, viz., confirmation and ordination. For though an Apostle recommends anointing the sick with oil (Jas. v. 14), this was not as a sacramental ordinance cleansing the departing soul from venial sins here contracted, but with a view to *the patient's recovery* ; and on his recovery penance would be, according to the Church of Rome, the appropriate rite to obtain forgiveness of sin. The penitential institute itself, consisting of contrition, confession, and satisfaction on the part of the penitent, and absolution by the priest, is not of apostolic appointment, much less of Christ's. The only passage which Bellarmine can allege in favour of his position, is that in which Christ is said to have breathed on the disciples, authorizing them to remit and retain sins (John xx. 22, 23), but the parallel passage in S. Luke's Gospel proves that the commission was not given to the Apostles alone, but to the *disciples* assembled. 'On the first day of the week at evening, the eleven being gathered together and *them that were with them*,' Jesus appeared and said unto them, 'Peace be with you' (Luke xxiv. 33, 36). Whatever, then, the meaning of the commission may be, it is plain that it contains no power of absolution confined to a priestly caste : it is the whole Church that was addressed. All that can be traced—distinctly traced—to Christ is the power of discipline, conferred on the whole congregation (Matt. xviii. 18) ; the ministry of the word which proclaims forgiveness of sin on repentance and faith, and retention of it on persistent impenitence ; and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in His manifold gifts, for the exercise of these functions. But no rite of ordination, of a sacramental character, can claim Christ as its author. As regards matrimony—an institution which dates from creation can be a sacrament neither of the law nor of the Gospel. It probably never would have been regarded as such but for the use of the word *sacramentum* by the old Latin Version and the Vulgate as a translation of the Greek word *μυστήριον* ; which, however, never signifies an ordinance but a doctrine or interpretation before hidden but now revealed. Thus S. Paul speaks of 'the mystery of Christ which in other ages was

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 17. That the spiritual gift here mentioned was an extraordinary one appears from verses 18, 19, and c. x. 44-46. Simon can hardly be supposed desirous of purchasing the ordinary gifts of confirming and strengthening ; the power of miraculous gifts (such as healing) he might have turned to profitable account.

not made known unto the sons of men, but is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,' viz., the extension of Gospel blessings to the Gentiles (Ephes. iii. 4-6) ; Christian ministers are described as stewards of ' the mysteries of God ' (1 Cor. iv. 1), and the context proves that the Apostle is speaking not of sacraments but of the preaching of the Word. ' Great,' he affirms in another place, ' is the mystery of godliness ' ; but the mystery consisted in the facts of the Incarnation and Ascension, as expounded by him in their various relations (1 Tim. iii. 16). In the instance before us the ' great mystery ' of Ephes. v. 32 is to be understood, not as a sacrament, but as a hidden truth which was now first brought to light, viz., that the marriage tie was intended to be a symbol of the union betwixt Christ and His Church.

It thus appears that three of the so-called sacraments of the Church of Rome, Penance, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony, cannot lay claim even to apostolic precedent ; but supposing they could do so, we may still ask whether Apostolic appointments can be placed on a level with those of Christ Himself. That the general promise that the Apostles should be led by the Holy Ghost into the whole truth (John xvi. 13) includes their regulations as well as their teaching may with some limitations be admitted ; and, indeed, in one instance this is claimed by them (Acts xv. 28) ; but we do not find this claim advanced beyond matters of polity, or questions affecting the discipline of the Church, or decisions on important practical points, such as the obligation of the Mosaic law on Gentile converts. Apostolic decisions or appointments of this kind are not lightly to be set aside ; we are sure that they were the best for the time being, and the burden of proving that they are no longer necessary rests on those who would abrogate or alter them ; and in fact the greater part of them do remain to this day acknowledged by Christians. That is, they are *relatively* binding ; but when it is affirmed that they are absolutely binding, we appeal to the practice of the Church itself in disproof. Several undoubted apostolic appointments have been allowed to fall into abeyance ; as, for example, the prohibition of eating ' things strangled ' or ' blood ' which at the time was expedient, the anointing of the sick with oil, the kiss of charity, the love-feasts of the Apostolic Church, and the washing of the saints' feet after the example of Christ (1 Tim. v. 10). If every apostolical ordinance is to be held of Divine institution, it would seem that Christian Churches, our own included, have erred gravely in abandoning those just mentioned. But the Church has judged rightly in declining to place them in the same category with the positive institutions of Christ Himself, such as baptism

and the Lord's Supper ; partly because the latter do proceed directly from Christ, and partly because, in fact, they symbolize and seal the fundamental verities of the Gospel, the atonement of the Cross, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. And the subsequent additions of ritual, such as in baptism exorcism, exsufflation, milk and honey ; in confirmation, anointing with oil, and the sign of the cross ; bear the same relation to the apostolical precedents as the latter do to the appointments of Christ. They may, or may not, have been devised in an apostolical spirit ; but, in any case, they are merely ecclesiastical additions, and have no claim to rank even with the apostolical appointments. Christian polity and ritual are elastic as compared with those of the Mosaic economy ; and the Church is not debarred from expanding or modifying her outward forms according to circumstances, provided always that such changes are apostolical in spirit. But they must not be invested with an authority which they do not possess. And the peculiar danger to which Catholicism, in its various forms, is liable lies in this point. Instead of justifying itself on grounds of order, adaptation to circumstances, legitimate, if human, developments of the primitive arrangements, it has always been tempted to allege some secret tradition handed down by the Apostles ; or to assume that Christ's discourses during the great forty days must have been occupied with such matters ; or to appeal, in support of its claims, to spurious literature, such as the Apostolic constitutions. A frail foundation, and as needless as it is frail ; for all such developments, if legitimate, can appeal to the Scriptural principle that ' where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.'

A second alleged note of a sacrament is, that it is an instrument whereby justifying grace is infused into the recipient. With four of the seven, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, such grace may conceivably be connected, but, surely, not with orders and matrimony. The sacrament of orders, besides the impressed character, is said to confer grace ; but grace of what kind ? Not either justifying or sanctifying grace (which according to the doctrine of Rome are one), but a mystical grace of priesthood for the valid performance of holy functions. This grace contains nothing *moral* in it ; for the most immoral priest may possess it equally with the most holy ; it is a grace not *gratum faciens* but *gratis data*. This note, therefore, does not belong to orders. No more does it to matrimony. This natural union is indeed elevated to a special dignity by its being chosen as a figure of union with Christ, and, like all natural relations, needs grace for the due discharge of its duties ; but how can a special sacramental grace, and especially of a justify-



ing nature, be ascribed to it? The only Scriptural proof which the Council alleges is Ephes. v. 23, on which sufficient has been already said. Indeed, since the sacramental character of matrimony resides in its indissolubility, it is plain that actual holiness is not necessary to confer this character on it.

From another point of view the same conclusions follow. By the schoolmen each sacrament is held to consist of two parts, matter and form. For example, the matter in baptism is water, and the form is added by the recitation of the words: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'; in the Eucharist the matter is bread and wine, and the determining form the words of institution, 'Take eat,' etc., pronounced by the priest in the act of consecration. The whole doctrine of transubstantiation, philosophically considered, rests on this distinction, which has no actual existence, and is merely a logical abstraction. But in the other five sacraments we can discover either no matter or no form, or neither matter nor form. What, for example, is the matter in confirmation? Not the laying on of hands, for that ceremony was used both by Christ and the Apostles on a variety of occasions; by Christ in blessing little children (Mark x. 16), and performing miracles (*Ibid.*, viii. 23), by the Apostles in healing the sick (Acts xxviii. 8), in communicating the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and in ordaining ministers. A rite common to many spiritual acts loses its appropriation to any one of them. The chrism, and sign of the cross, have no Scriptural warrant. So that, to say nothing of the lack of an efficacious word impressing the 'form,' no specific 'matter' can be found for this alleged sacrament. The same remarks apply to orders. The oil in extreme unction may indeed supply the place of 'matter,' but here the 'form' is wanting, for nothing is mentioned by S. James in connection with the unction but prayer, and prayer differs essentially from a word endued with power. With respect to the sacraments of penance and matrimony the difficulty is still greater. What can be the matter and form of penance? It has confessedly no symbol like the water in baptism, and the schoolmen were sore put to it to discover a matter of another kind. A distinction was drawn between those sacraments which convey some positive grace, and those which merely remove post-baptismal sin and its effects; in the former an external matter is necessary, in the latter the acts of the penitent himself (contrition, confession, satisfaction) constitute the matter. If it be objected that baptism itself comes under the latter class, the reply is that baptism confers not only a plenary remission of sin, but the gift of regeneration. By some writers the sins of the penitent, as the lignum or material for the

consuming fire of the sacrament, were held to be the matter ; but the other opinion was the more common one. As regards the ' form,' it consists in the words of absolution, *absolvo te*. It is needless to observe that no institution by Christ, or precedent by the Apostles, could be pretended in this case. That of matrimony was still more perplexing. Neither matter nor form, in any proper sense of the words, could be found here. T. Aquinas makes the consent of the parties the matter, and the words expressing this consent the form ; while others consider the persons of the contracting parties the matter, and the words the form. Both the Council of Trent and the Catechism observe a prudent silence on this point. Bellarmine's opinion, founded on a distinction between the sacrament as it becomes a sacrament, and the same sacrament afterwards, is that, under the former aspect, the words of consent are both matter and form, under the latter the persons are the matter, since their continued union is a symbol of that betwixt Christ and the Church. Recourse was finally had to the mystical import of the number seven, and to analogies from nature. There are seven sins, or forms of sin, for each of which a particular remedy is needed ; seven cardinal virtues ; seven gifts of the Spirit. The blood of the red heifer was to be sprinkled seven times (Numb. xix. 4) ; Naaman was told to wash in Jordan seven times. The correspondence between the natural and the spiritual life, as expounded by T. Aquinas, seems a favourite argument with Romish writers, from Bellarmine to Möhler.<sup>1</sup> In the natural life, Thomas observes, a person may be considered either as an individual or as a member of a community ; and further, his progress towards perfection may be either positive or negative, either by natural growth, or by the removing of impediments thereto. We thus arrive at seven principal functions or epochs in the natural life. By birth we come into active existence, and to this the new birth by baptism corresponds. Strength to labour and repel enemies comes with growth ; the counterpart of this is confirmation. For growth we need nourishment ; the Eucharist furnishes the nourishment of the soul. We are liable to bodily infirmities, sickness, etc., which demand the aid of the physician ; the sacrament of penance is for the healing of the soul that has sinned. We need proper diet for a complete restoration to health ; in spiritual things extreme unction discharges this office. We are members of a community, which involves the exercise of authority and the discharge of public duties, with corresponding ability ; the sacrament of orders qualifies for similar spiritual functions. By such membership the race is propagated ; the

<sup>1</sup> De Sac., L. ii., c. 26. Symbolik, § 30.

sacrament of matrimony confers grace for the conjugal relation, and the due training of children, if any. So runs the parallel ; but it is far from being satisfactory. Confirmation, it is said, confers spiritual strength, the Eucharist spiritual nourishment ; but nourishment and strength are so intimately connected with, and dependent on, each other, that they can hardly need two distinct sacraments to produce the effect. The Eucharist presupposes repentance for sin and seals to the penitent the promises of forgiveness ; a special sacrament of penance seems superfluous. Confirmation, or some ordinance resembling it, has a necessary place in every church which practises infant baptism ; the immaturity of the subject rendering it expedient that, before being admitted to the Holy Communion, he should give a public assurance to the Church of his intention to ratify the vows made for him in his baptism. But this does not constitute it a distinct sacrament. Men, as members of a State, need to be governed ; but since the sacrament of orders applies only to the clergy, the civil magistrate receives no benefit from it. The duties of the matrimonial state need only the aid of common grace ; and further, only those who enter that state receive the sacrament. But the sacraments of Christ are intended for all Christians. The dying Christian needs, indeed, special consolation ; but the Eucharist supplies all that is here needful. In short, as Nitzsch observes,<sup>1</sup> in the natural life birth admits only of one parallel, viz., growth ; the child is born into the world, the babe grows into a man, these are the two essential conditions of the discharge of the various duties of life. If there has been no birth, the functions of a human being have never been performed at all ; if the life, thus begun, is not maintained by the proper means, they cease to be performed. No subordinate differences of relation or function can be placed on a level with these essential conditions of existence, which are the same for all men, savage or civilized, governors or governed, married or single. The analogy, therefore, from nature confirms the Protestant position, that two, and only two, Christian rites are, in the proper sense, sacraments of Christ. Christ is the Author of sundry gifts and graces, but spiritual life, and the maintenance of spiritual life, lie at the foundation of their exercise, and are common to all Christians, private and official. Regeneration, and growth in grace, comprise every spiritual blessing. It was in an unhappy moment, therefore, that the Tridentine Council transformed what had been a speculation of the schools into an article of faith, and thereby added one more to the many differences which stand in the way of a reconciliation between the Romish and the

<sup>1</sup> Prot. Beant., Möhler's, p. 182.

Protestant churches. The Council and the Romish theologians claim tradition in their favour. In point of fact, no fixed, certainly no authoritative, doctrine touching the number of the sacraments appears before the Council of Florence, A.D. 1439. The leaders of the Reformation demanded, and rightly so, that when the question was concerning the covenanted means of grace, the seal of Christ Himself—His institution, His promise—should be produced; and they proved that to only two out of the seven did this description apply. Indeed, if a sacred meaning is all that is necessary to constitute a sacrament, there are other observances better entitled to the name than several of those selected by the Council. Such, for example, as prayer, the sign of the cross, almsgiving, the Holy Scripture, the kiss of charity, the washing of the saints' feet recommended by the example of Christ Himself (John xiii. 5).<sup>1</sup> The selection seems an arbitrary one, resting on no consistent principle.

#### § 89. OPUS OPERATUM

The Council of Trent lays great emphasis on the efficacy of the sacraments *ex opere operato*; it is proper, therefore, that what this doctrine means should be understood, especially since the Council, perhaps from prudential motives, furnishes no explanation of it.<sup>2</sup> To suppose that it expresses nothing but what our Article does, when it declares that the 'unworthiness of the minister does not hinder the effect of the sacraments' (Art. xxvi.) would leave unexplained why an anathema should be launched against those who deny it; for no Protestant Church does deny it in this sense. Möhler expends labour in vain in attempting to prove that *ex opere operato*, as understood in his Church, is equivalent to saying that the efficacy of the sacraments is owing to their institution by Christ, and not to any worthiness of the minister or meritorious co-operation on the part of the receiver.<sup>3</sup> Every Protestant Confession teaches that it is Christ's institution, Christ's word of promise, Christ's Spirit, that are the efficient causes of whatever grace the sacraments confer. The real meaning of the term is to be sought in the distinction which

<sup>1</sup> The washing of the disciples' feet by Christ causes embarrassment to the Romish theologians. It seems to possess greater claims to be a sacrament than Matrimony or Orders. As Bellarmine observes, it has a visible sign, a promise of grace ('If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me'), a mysterious meaning ('What I do thou knowest not now,' etc.), a command ('I have given you an example,' etc.), and Patristic authority. His attempt to reply is not very successful. De Sac., L. ii. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, there was so much discussion on the subject when discussed at Trent, that it was thought safer, while retaining the term, to leave its meaning more or less an open question.

<sup>3</sup> Symb., § 28.

the later schoolmen, and after them the Romish theologians, make between the sacraments of the old law (Circumcision and the Pass-over being assumed to be sacraments) and those of the new. The latter are said to be superior to the former, in that they confer grace *ex opere operato*, while the others conferred it *ex opere operante*, or rather, *operantis*; that is to say, to the efficacy of the Jewish sacraments a right disposition on the part of the receiver was necessary, and in proportion to his piety was the blessing received; but the Christian sacraments produce their effect irrespectively of the spiritual state of the receiver, by virtue of the *opus operatum*,<sup>1</sup> the mere act of receiving, provided only that no impediment (*obex*) of mortal sin is present. No positive preparation of repentance and faith (in the Protestant sense of faith) is required; only the negative one of the absence of the bar. It must be remembered that by mortal sin is meant gross delinquency, either existing or intended, as, *e.g.*, either living in adultery or an intention to do so.<sup>2</sup> That this is the true meaning is plain from the explanation of Gabriel Biel, the last of the great schoolmen. 'Sacraments,' he says, 'are said to confer grace *ex opere operante* (*operantis*) when it is in the way of merit, that is, when the outward reception does not of itself benefit, but over and above this there is required in the receiver an inward good disposition, in proportion to which, after the manner of merit of condignity or congruity is the grace given; to such grace nothing is added by the outward rite. But *ex opere operato* means that by the very act of receiving, grace is conferred, unless mortal sin stands in the way; that beyond the outward participation no inward preparation of the heart (*bonus motus*) is necessary.'<sup>3</sup> It is true that, to conceal the obvious inconsistency of this doctrine with Scripture, it was added that, by the sacrament itself, an inward qualification is infused, *viz.*, *fides formata* (faith actuated by love);<sup>4</sup> but the point at issue is, What is the antecedent condition of sacramental efficacy? or, Is

<sup>1</sup> Another sense of *opus operatum* is found in the schoolmen, *viz.*, the official power of the priest in the mass, as distinguished from the benefits which the *pious* priest may obtain for communicants by his prayers, etc.; which latter may be called *opus operantis*. But this is a secondary sense, and does not need further notice.

<sup>2</sup> *Peccatum quod secundum se repugnat dilectioni mortale est ex genere; sive sit contra dilectionem Dei, sicut blasphemia, perjurium, et hujus modi; sive contra dilectionem proximi, sicut homicidium, adulterium, et similia.* T. Aqu., P. Sec., Q. lxxxviii., A. 2.

<sup>3</sup> L. iv., Sent. dist., 1, 93. Quoted by J. Gerhard, Loc. xix., c. 7, § 86.

<sup>4</sup> In sacramentis novæ legis non per se requiritur quod homo se disponat, ergo per *ipsum sacramentum* disponitur. Peter de Palude. *Ibid.* It will be observed that here two questions are confounded: (1) Does man dispose himself?—to assert which would be Pelagian; (2) Does the *sacrament* confer the disposition, the latter being supposed not to exist antecedently to reception?

there any condition beyond the absence of mortal sin? and the answer is in the negative. Nor is its unscriptural character disproved by Bellarmine's rejoinder to the Protestant objection, that faith as a condition of beneficial reception is, on the Romish theory, dispensed with; viz., that the Council does make faith a qualification; for the faith meant by it is not the apprehensive faith of Protestantism, laying hold directly, under conviction of sin, on the promise of forgiveness through Christ, but a passive reception of the dogmas of the Church. The Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum* rests on the notion that the sacraments contain in themselves a physical virtue to heal the maladies of our nature as the medicines of the physician possess a power to heal those of the body; an apprehensive faith being as little needed in the one case as in the other. The sacraments thus become, not signs of spiritual life already existing or means of spiritual growth, but, by an inherent virtue, the instruments of implanting that life.

#### § 90. INTENTION OF THE MINISTER

If the sacraments produce their effect *ex opere operato*, as above explained; in general, no *bonus motus* on the part of the recipient, in private masses no recipient at all, in infant baptism no conscious one, being required—it is difficult to understand what can remain but a mere rite, destitute of any value in a spiritual point of view, or with no higher significance than the christening of a bell or other inanimate object. To obviate as far as might be this objection, the doctrine of the intention of the minister was devised. The fathers of the Council found themselves, in fact, in a difficulty. That the moral unworthiness of the priest or minister does not hinder the efficacy of the sacraments was admitted on all sides, Protestant as well as Romish: now, if in addition the sacraments work *ex opere operato*, they seem in the celebration to be destitute of any vivifying principle raising them above mechanical acts of ritual. And this in a religion the main characteristic of which is that it is a religion 'of spirit and of truth' (John iv. 23). The Protestant escapes the difficulty by transferring the validity of the sacraments from the minister, whether worthy or unworthy, to the recipient; whose faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, is the condition of beneficial reception, and that which communicates life and meaning to the outward act. Questions touching the worthiness of the minister are thus dispensed with. But from this mode of explanation the Romanist is shut out by his doctrine of the *opus operatum*. Nothing remained for the Council, in order to secure to some extent the spiritual nature of the sacraments, but to attach to the priest an inward qualification, how-

ever inferior in nature to a believing reception ; he must, at least intend to do what the Church intends. Thus he became not only, by virtue of the impressed character, the indispensable consecrator of the Eucharist, but the depositary also of whatever preparation of the heart was still supposed necessary. The intention of the priest stands for the repentance and faith of the communicants. It is to the credit of Bellarmine, and some of his successors, that they endeavoured to soften down the scholastic doctrine of the *opus operatum*, and to present it in a more Scriptural form ; but whether in so doing they have delineated it in its real spirit may be a question.

#### § 91. EFFECT OF THE SACRAMENTS

It has been a point of controversy whether the sacraments convey a special grace, different *in kind* from ordinary, and which, as a rule, cannot be obtained except through the sacraments. The question must be narrowed by setting aside what is admitted by all Christians. All agree that the sacraments are visible signs of church-membership ; not until a catechumen is baptized is he a member of the Church, and not until he receives the Holy Communion is he a full member thereof. That they symbolize the two leading truths of the Gospel, regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the life of faith in the atonement, is beyond doubt. And, further, that they make over to individuals the Spiritual blessings which the Word proposes generally is not disputed. But the question remains whether a special *inward* grace is attached to each sacrament, a grace *sui generis*. By the schoolmen two effects of this kind are alleged ; sacramental grace, and the impressed character ; the former belonging to all the seven sacraments, the latter to three only. Some remarks have been already made on the impressed character (§ 89) ; to which the following may be added. It is evident that it is not the same with sacramental grace, since only three sacraments convey it. The character is defined as ‘ an emanation from the priesthood of Christ, by virtue of which the faithful are qualified for certain acts of Divine service (*cultus*, etc.), and are distinguished from others upon whom it is not impressed.’ It is of the nature of an internal sacrament. For example, in baptism the water is the outward sign (*sacramentum*), and the stamp on the soul (in part) the inward effect (*res sacramenti*) ; but although this effect is not justifying grace, but of a neutral character, existing equally in the faithful receiver and in the insincere (*fictus*), yet it is itself a kind of sacrament, that is, an *inward* sign of qualification for the discharge of certain ecclesiastical acts. Justification (infused) is

the grace, or *res*, of the whole sacrament, of water and the impressed character together. The character is indelible, and this is the ground on which it is maintained that baptism cannot be repeated ; whereas the true order of things is that since baptism, as corresponding to natural birth, cannot be repeated, therefore the character is indelible. The sacramental grace is a different thing : it is an effect of all the sacraments, which are said to 'contain' it, that is, to convey it *ex opere operato*. But, equally with the impressed character, it is morally neutral in nature, that is, it is not, nor is it a pledge of, *sanctifying* grace. The reasoning of T. Aquinas plainly proceeds on this supposition. He supposes a person to possess ordinary sanctifying grace, and, moreover, various gifts of grace ; and (such is his argument) since these may be present antecedently to the sacrament, if the latter conferred no special grace, it might be dispensed with altogether. Sacramental grace then, is something different in kind from ordinary ; a grace which, in the regular course of things comes only through the sacrament ; a grace which, since it is expressly distinguished from *gratia gratum faciens*, is morally indifferent. What, then, is it ? Obviously no easy question to answer ; which may be the reason why neither the Council nor its Catechism alludes to the subject. T. Aquinas lays it down that grace considered in itself affects the essence of the soul ; considered as gifts and virtues, it directs the powers of the soul to their proper objects ; and considered as sacramental grace, it crowns the whole with something peculiar to itself, so that it stands to gifts and virtues in the same relation as these do to grace *secundum se*. But what the 'something' is ; what the special effect is of which sacramental grace is the cause ; he does not explain.

The Protestant churches reject not only five of the seven Romish sacraments, but the whole doctrine of the impressed character. Möhler, the most adroit champion of his church in modern times, passes over the subject *sicco pede*. No trace of it can be found in Scripture. Bellarmine endeavours to account for this by remarking, that since the knowledge of grace is more important than the knowledge of the impressed character, it is no wonder that Scripture is comparatively silent on the latter topic. In fact, he can find only three passages which seem to bear upon it. S. Paul tells the Corinthians that God had 'sealed them, and given the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts' (2 Cor. i. 22) ; and he uses the same figure in Ephes. i. 13, and iv. 30. It is needless to observe that by the sealing or the earnest of the Spirit is meant, not a sacramental effect, but, what the same Apostle elsewhere describes as the witness of the Spirit, that we are the children of God, whereby we cry, 'Abba,



Father' (Rom. viii. 15, 16),<sup>1</sup> and which is never possessed apart from sanctifying grace. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption'; this surely implies something different from a stamp on the soul, of which the subject is unconscious, and which has no necessary connection with moral renovation.

As regards sacramental grace, it is not easy to form a clear notion of it. An esteemed writer of our Church, in a work on baptism, devotes several chapters to prove that in Scripture, in the Fathers, and in the schoolmen; to say nothing of the divines of the Reformation; regeneration implies actual and not merely potential goodness; a state as well as a relation; one of real, however imperfect, holiness.<sup>2</sup> Nothing can be more cogent than his reasoning, more decisive than the authorities on which he relies. Regeneration, in its Scriptural sense, is the union of conversion and justification; and is inconsistent with the dominion of sin in the heart or life. But the same writer speaks of regeneration as 'the grace of baptism' (chap. iii.), as 'the *res sacramenti* of baptism' (chap. iv.), as 'unquestionably the grace of baptism' (note 8). Does he, then, mean that the actual goodness which he had just proved regeneration to involve is by baptism infused into the baptized person, who was previously destitute of it? But surely the repentance and faith which are the necessary conditions of an adult baptism, the normal one of Scripture, are also the essential elements of moral regeneration, regeneration as a state of actual goodness; and since they exist antecedently to baptism, they cannot be the special grace of it.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the writer, to be consistent with himself, can only understand by 'the grace of baptism' a mystical grace, undefinable except as a something superadded to ordinary grace, which, as we have seen, is the description that T. Aquinas gives of it. No such notion appears in our Article on baptism. By this sacrament they who receive it rightly 'are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God'; but no mention is made of a special grace conveyed by it. That

<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, communicated by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, be not rather meant. 'In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise' (Ephes. i. 13. Comp. Acts x. 45).

<sup>2</sup> Mozley, *Bapt. Cont.*, chaps. v. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Here and in other parts of this section Litton is hardly fair to Mozley or consistent with himself; for in reality he agrees with Mozley. To say that Regeneration is the grace of Baptism is not inconsistent with its existing antecedently to Baptism, as is evident from Acts x. 44-48 and from the Office of Adult Baptism. The full meaning of Baptism is Regeneration, but this does not imply that Regeneration invariably results from Baptism.—ED.

existing faith is confirmed, and existing grace increased, is a different mode of expression from saying that a new and peculiar grace is the effect of the sacrament. Nor does Scripture give countenance to the notion. In fact, the Holy Ghost, the Author and Giver of all spiritual grace, is seldom mentioned in direct connection with either baptism or the Lord's Supper. That the worthy reception of these sacraments, depends upon a preliminary work of the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied with further measures of His grace, is unquestionable; but wherever a distinct gift is mentioned, it is in connection with the laying on of the Apostles' hands. 'Repent,' says Peter, 'and be baptized, and' (afterwards) 'ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts ii. 38). Of the disciples of Samaria it is said that 'the Holy Ghost was not yet fallen upon them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus' (*Ibid.*, viii. 16). Although in John iii. 5 it is said that a man must be born both of water and the Spirit, it is not said that the latter is the invariable accompaniment or consequence of the former.<sup>1</sup> As regards the Eucharist, neither do the words of institution, nor any subsequent allusion to this sacrament, mention a special spiritual gift or grace of the Holy Ghost, as connected with it. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' (1 Cor. x. 16); however these words may be interpreted, they are not applicable to a *gift of grace*, to which physical conceptions are foreign. Let it be repeated that the question before us is not whether a spiritual blessing may not be expected from a devout reception of the sacraments; who denies this? We may rest assured that any ordinances of which Christ directly is the Author must be channels of grace. We must fear that they who from prejudice, or worse motives, neglect these appointed means of grace, deprive themselves, to what extent we know not, of what Christ intended for them. The present question is a very limited one; whether some undefined grace, different *in kind* from ordinary, is or is not attached to the sacraments?

#### § 92. CIRCUMCISION AND THE PASSOVER

The Council of Trent pronounces an anathema on those who hold that the sacraments of 'the new law,' or the Gospel, differ from those of the old, only in respect of the external rite; or, to put it otherwise, who deny that a difference exists in the mode of their operation.

<sup>1</sup> No inference to the contrary is to be drawn from the absence of the article (*ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος*). See Westcott *in loc.* ὕδατος could not admit an article (comp. John i. 26, 33), and therefore Πνεύματος is without one. In ver. 6 Πνεύματος has the article because it stands alone.

This difference, according to the Council, is, that the former produce their effect *ex opere operato*, the only condition being the absence of mortal sin, while the latter work *ex opere operantis*, in proportion to the faith and devotion of the receiver.<sup>1</sup> The anathema is directed against the Protestant theologians, who, for the most part, place circumcision and the Passover on a level with baptism and the Eucharist, both as regards the inward qualifications required, and the spiritual blessings attached ; differing only in the visible signs, and in the object to which they refer, in the case of the former a promised Saviour, in that of the latter a Saviour actually come. That each covenant had its sacraments, in the strict sense of the word, is on either side assumed. And by Protestants circumcision and the Passover are held to be sacraments because they belonged to a dispensation, and were not merely occasional tokens such as the fleece of Gideon, or the sun-dial of Ahaz ; and, further, to a *remedial* dispensation, having a reference, though under the form of type and prophecy, to the future salvation of Christ. The correspondence, indeed, of these legal appointments to the Christian sacraments is obvious ; of circumcision to baptism as being an initiatory rite introducing to the privileges of the Mosaic covenant, as baptism is the door into the Church visible ; of the Passover to the Lord's Supper, as being a perpetual commemoration of redemption from Egyptian bondage, as the Lord's Supper is a perpetual commemoration of redemption from spiritual bondage. The law, therefore, had its sacraments and yet they may differ from those of the Gospel, as the legal dispensation itself differs from the Christian.

The distinction, indeed, which the Council of Trent draws between the inward qualification in either case required (*ex opere operantis* and *ex opere operato*) is not tenable. Circumcision as the sign of the covenant with Abraham, previously to the giving of the law, was a token of the Divine approbation of the patriarch's faith and obedience, exercised under difficult circumstances ; the acceptance, or the counting righteous, of which it was the seal, implied no mere absence of mortal sin, but positive pious dispositions, such as operative reliance on the promise ; and this is precisely the condition on which the Christian sacraments are effectual, so far as they are effectual, to salvation. The rite was afterwards incorporated into the Mosaic law as a token of the national covenant with Jehovah, but there is no reason to suppose that its original office was thereby affected. It still remained the sacrament of faith in the promises of God, the seal of justification by faith, and the symbol of what the Jew ought to be and what he was, so far as he was of the spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Sess. vii., Can. 2.

seed of Abraham ; for ' he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit ' (Rom. ii. 29). And so as regards the Passover. Appointed in Egypt, it was continued under the law, in perpetual memory of a deliverance effected by God Himself, under the shelter of blood sprinkled, and signalized by the destruction of the people's foes. Grateful remembrance of these mercies, a sentiment of fraternal union and love, and possibly the dim hope of a future redemption founded on better promises, formed, we may suppose, the conditions of an acceptable celebration of the feast ; as they do of a worthy reception of the Eucharist. It is one thing, however, to reject the distinctions of the schools, and another to assert the identity of the legal and the Christian sacraments. Not to speak of the difference of outward sign, which excluded a moiety of mankind from one of the sacraments of the law, the object was not the same in either case, or only the same as type and antitype are the same ; and it is going beyond what is written to describe either circumcision or the Passover as channels of grace.<sup>1</sup> Yet such is the common language of divines. According to J. Gerhard, circumcision equally with baptism had a promise of grace, of which the proof alleged is Gen. xvii. 7, ' I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.' The meaning, he says, of this promise is, I will forgive you your sins, receive you unto the adoption of sons, give you the Holy Spirit, raise you from the dead to eternal life. ' The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head ' (Gen. iii. 15) ; ' In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed ' (*Ibid.*, xxii. 18)—here, he continues, we have the same justifying God, the same justification, the same promise of grace, the same faith, the same righteousness, the same salvation, in Christ and through Christ, in the Old as in the New Testament ; only promised in the former, exhibited in the latter. ' God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed ' (Deut. xxx. 6)—he here finds the doctrine of regeneration, and even the *fides infantum* of the Lutheran Church : ' as baptism is the means of regeneration and salvation, so also is circumcision. But, " thy seed " means thy infants ; whence we see that not only adults but infants received by circumcision remission of original sin, and the implantation of faith.' As regards the Passover, he quotes no

<sup>1</sup> Here again Litton is hypercritical. Though the Old Testament saints had much less light and looked dimly forward to the coming Christ, yet they did look forward and did by faith receive grace from God. Though ' fragmentary and incomplete,' the revelation was real and *in principle* identical with the full Christian grace.—ED.

passages, and for the best of reasons, because he could find none. Assertion takes the place of proof: 'The passover was not only a type of Christ, but also a confirmation of the Divine promise of a Redeemer, a guide to the spiritual feeding on Christ, and consequently a salutary sacrament, whereby the faith of the Israelites was strengthened, and the benefits of Christ applied to believers. Therefore the sacraments of the Old Testament were efficacious means of spiritual benefits bestowed on believers.'<sup>1</sup> Thus does this eminent theologian persuade himself, and attempt to persuade his readers, that the Gospel was revealed and understood even in the earlier times of the Jewish dispensation, and not merely that the ancient Fathers did not look only for transitory promises, which may be quite true, but that little remained for the final revelation of Christ by the Holy Spirit to disclose.

Such errors might have been avoided had he and his followers in modern times borne in mind their own correct maxim, that the Mosaic economy had for its subject a Saviour promised, while the Gospel testifies of a Saviour come. For what does this amount to? That during the preparatory dispensation the great Atonement was not an accomplished fact; that the Holy Ghost was not yet given as the fruit of Christ's ascension (John vii. 39); that the resurrection of the body had as yet no positive pledge. Could it be expected that the *revelation* of these Gospel facts, certain, indeed, in the counsels of God, but not yet accomplished, should be otherwise than fragmentary and incomplete? So it was, in fact. It proceeded by gradual stages; 'in many ways'; e.g., by type and prophecy (*πολυτρόπως*); in many partitions (*πολυμέρως*); as Divine wisdom thought proper to impart it (Heb. i. 1). It grew in fulness and clearness *pari passu* with the approach of the actual event. It is quite true that since the fall of man there has been no remission of sin except through Christ: He is the Lamb of God, 'slain from the foundation of the world' in the Divine purpose (Rev. xiii. 8): this atonement was ever present to the mind of God, and availed, before it was actually made, for the justification of the ancient believers. The glory of the cross shed its rays backwards as well as forwards. It is also true that the Holy Spirit must have been operative wherever there were saints of God, whether patriarchs or apostles, for without His influence no true sanctification has ever existed. But anticipation is not fulfilment, and typical or prophetic adumbrations are not explicit revelation. The distinct offices of the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity could not be clearly enunciated until the doctrine of the Trinity had been laid as a foundation:

<sup>1</sup> Loc. xix., §§ 64-69.

which was not the case, at least explicitly, until the advent of the Saviour. The mistake, a natural one, of many Christian writers is that of unconsciously transferring *their* knowledge of the scheme of redemption to the Jews under the Mosaic law, and even to the first ages of the world. It is forgotten that although *hints* of a Redeemer were vouchsafed, and directly after the fall ; and the leading ideas of redemption, atonement by sacrifice, and a future gift of regeneration, were prefigured in the ceremonial law, and still more explicitly announced in prophecy ; the knowledge thus imparted fell vastly short of what every catechumen in the Christian Church is expected to possess. A greater among the ancient saints, both as regards knowledge and sanctity, had not arisen than John the Baptist ; yet, on the testimony of Christ Himself, the least in the kingdom of heaven (the new dispensation) is greater than he (Matt. xi. 11). In the caskets of the law and prophecy there were hidden treasures of spiritual knowledge, but the key was wanting to open them, and the Holy Ghost alone could, and in due time did, furnish a key. That the passages adduced by J. Gerhard are insufficient for his purpose is obvious. ‘ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head ’—in this prophecy, the first link of the chain, some one in human nature is promised Who, at the cost of personal suffering, should destroy the power of the serpent ; but who He should be, and how He should reverse the effects of the fall, is not revealed ; to say nothing of the mysteries of His Person, His atonement, and His resurrection from the dead. ‘ I will establish My covenant with thee, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed ’—to Abraham an assurance is here given that God would stand in some special relation to him and his posterity ; further than this the words do not carry us. ‘ I will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed ’—Israel, afflicted for its sins and repentant, is consoled with the promise of a more effectual Agent of renovation than the law of Moses could supply, a renovation of which circumcision was the figure ; the other details are due to the pious fancy of the commentator. ‘ Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad ’ (John viii. 56) ; that some special revelation concerning the promised Saviour was vouchsafed to the Patriarch may be inferred from our Lord’s words, whether it were a disclosure of the typical import of the commanded sacrifice of Isaac, or given on some other occasion ; but the point is that no record of it is contained in the Book of Genesis : whatever it was, it was not incorporated into the public documents of the Church ; it formed no addition to the existing stock of revealed knowledge ; and, in fact, the memory of it had perished until the authoritative declaration of Christ made it known. In like manner,

the inference which Christ drew from Exod. iii. 6, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' that there is a resurrection from the dead, however cogent it may be, when pointed out as it was by Christ, is no proof that it was so understood by Moses, to whom the words were originally addressed ; it is plain, indeed, that not even by the Jews of our Lord's time was the truth latent in them perceived. Thus was the scheme of salvation gradually unfolded, in separate portions, as the ages advanced towards the fulfilment of the first promise in Gen. iii. 15 ; in which, indeed, all was implicitly contained, but not wrought out into particulars. Nor is this any disparagement to the faith and piety of the ancient believers. Their faith in the immediate temporal promises was the same *in kind* as the faith of the Christian believer which appropriates the Gospel promises ; for it is not clearness of knowledge but the state of the heart that is of value in the sight of God. As a profound writer remarks, 'When it was said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," that general promise of Divine favour was the sufficient bond and motive of obligation. The duty was perfect, though the Patriarch knew not the nature, or the manner, of the retribution secured to him.' But more than this ; the Jew was not left without intimations that might well lead a reflective mind beyond Canaan, and the law under which he was placed. 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed'—if Philo and his school had pondered more deeply the import of this promise, they would never have supposed that it could be fulfilled by the submission of all nations to the law of Moses. To what purpose, the pious Jew might ask, was this complicated system of sacrifice and purification established ? It must surely point to something beyond itself. In a word, the surmises and hopes of the ancient believer were, far from being discouraged, stimulated by the law and prophecy combined. Still, they remained, for the most part, surmises and hopes.

To apply these remarks to the subject before us—circumcision was the sacrament of Abraham's faith, but we cannot say that the *object* of his faith was explicitly Christ ; nor does S. Paul say so when using the passage in Genesis to illustrate his argument on justification. Herein it differs from Christian baptism. The same remark applies to the Passover. That the pious Jew in celebrating it had Christ and His atonement before his mind as distinctly as the Christian has in the Eucharist, is not told us in Scripture. Neither is it declared that either circumcision or the Passover were channels of grace ; further than that all acts of obedience to the Divine command must be supposed to bring a blessing with them. The

grace of the Holy Spirit was not a purchased and covenanted gift of the Jewish dispensation. On still less evidence does the opinion, sometimes advanced, rest, that the sacraments of the law were *types* of the Christian. Scripture does not warrant the assertion.<sup>1</sup> Circumcision and baptism correspond as initiatory rites ; but that the former is related to the latter as type to anti-type, or that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, we are not told. Col. ii. 11, 12, the passage usually quoted to prove that baptism is Christian circumcision, hardly bears out the conclusion. 'You are circumcised,' the Apostle says, 'with the circumcision made without hands' ; that is, with an inward, spiritual circumcision, of which the Jewish rite was a figure ; 'in putting off,' he continues, 'the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ,' by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. In proof of this, and not as drawing a parallel between the two ordinances, he reminds his readers, as he does in Rom. vi., of the import of their baptism, a dying unto sin and a rising again to a new life. Baptism is a manual act, though not of the same kind as circumcision, and could hardly be described as 'a circumcision made without hands.'

#### § 93. BAPTISM

After His resurrection, and immediately before His ascension, our Lord instituted the initiatory sacrament of the Church, in the command given to the eleven Apostles to make disciples from all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and when thus incorporated into visible Christian societies, teaching them to observe whatever He had commanded (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). The order then was this ; by the preaching of the Word men were to be brought to repentance and the acknowledgment of Jesus as the promised Saviour, just as Christ had gathered to Himself out of the Jewish people a company of disciples (*μαθηται*), before either the Christian Church or sacraments existed ; the converts thus made were to receive Christian baptism, and then to be placed under the ministry of the same Word, but not only as it proclaims the Gospel, but as it explains the mysteries, privileges, and duties of the new covenant. From the words of Christ it is obvious that baptism is more than a sign of Christian profession, and stands on a different footing from a mere ecclesiastical, or even apostolic, ordinance. Much, as regards worship

<sup>1</sup> Here again Litton pushes his point to a wrong extreme. It may possibly be right to say that the Old Testament rites are not positively types of Christian sacraments. But he wrongly depreciates their correspondence which he cannot help admitting.—ED.