

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

MAY, 1850.

VOL. II.—NO. III.

THE ANABAPTISTS IN SWITZERLAND.

[From the unpublished History of the Reformed Church by the
late Lewis Mayer, D. D.]

From *Germany* the spirit of fanaticism and misrule penetrated into *Switzerland*. There were not wanting in this country combustible materials that needed only a spark to kindle them into a conflagration. The peasantry, who lived upon the lands which belonged to churches and monasteries, had long groaned under the burden of tithes and rents, and of fees that were paid to these institutions for every spiritual function, and for every act to which a religious aspect could be given, besides other oppressive exactions, and in addition to the taxes for the support of the civil government : and they felt their burdens more, and were more impatient under them, when they observed how their hard earnings were consumed, by crowds of priests and monks, in a voluptuous and profligate idleness, and how they were treated by these insolent ecclesiastics with haughtiness and disdain. Like their brethren in *Germany*, they sighed for deliverance, and were ready to rise against their oppressors, as soon as a prospect of success should appear, or the sanctions of religion should give firmness and vigor to their desire. Intelligence of the German insurrections, and of the new prophets

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“The preachers make no distinction, and do not drive sinners from the Lord’s supper, and use no ban.”

“For all these, and for other similar reasons, the Anabaptists must, as they say, separate themselves from us, and cannot remain with us, unless they would become partakers of our pollution and punishment. Wherefore their own salvation, and their safety from divine wrath, and, consequently, the highest necessity, constrain them to form their own separate Church, and to endure, on that account, whatever God may give them to suffer.”

There is in this form of doctrine a singular mixture of truth and error. Their fine sentiments on religious liberty would possess more value, if the Anabaptists, instead of being the sufferers, had been in a condition to prescribe terms to the rest of the christian world, and if they had not themselves talked of cutting off the heads of priests. Every sect has asserted the same just principles in its distress, and has forgotten them in its prosperity.

It may be questioned whether the Anabaptists would have adopted their odious opinions on the subject of civil government, if they had been left to indulge their religious opinions and to form their separate organization unmolested. Some of them, at least, professed a willingness to obey the civil authorities, if they did not interfere with their religious convictions. But when the government stood in their way where they thought their duty called them, there was an easy step to the thought, that the government was wicked, an enemy of God, and ought to be abolished. Hostility to secular rulers was, however, a primary principle with Munzer.

NOEL ON BAPTISM.

Essay on Christian Baptism. By Baptist W. Noel, M. A.
New York: Harper & Brothers; 1850. Pp. 308, 12 mo.

It is generally admitted, we believe, that this work is of no special weight for the controversy in whose service it appears. It presents nothing new, and it repeats but little of the old in any better form than it carried before. The work of a truth is emphatically lean and superficial. Still the highly respectable source from which it proceeds, and the widely public character

* *Füsilia* vol. 5, p. 131, &c.

of the occasion to which it owes its production, entitle it to something more than common consideration ; and altogether it may be taken as a very fit and fair opportunity for bringing to trial, in a general way, the theological and religious merits of the popular system to whose defence and recommendation it is so zealously devoted.

We call the system *popular*, with due thought and consideration. Its friends, we know, are fond of harping occasionally on the opposite idea ; as though it needed more than common fortitude and resolution to fall in with the Baptist theory, in contradiction to the old catholic faith. Mr. Noel evidently looks upon himself as something of a martyr, in the way of sacrifice and self-renunciation, for following his convictions into the bosom of his new communion, as much so as for following them in the first place out of the bosom of the Establishment ; and he is prone continually to resolve the backwardness of others to acknowledge what he holds to be the plain sense of the Scriptures, into the moral cowardice that shrinks from the thought of losing caste, or suffering damage in some outward view, for the sake of an unfashionable and unpopular cause. But it is only in one view, that the system of the Baptists is found to be thus unpopular. It goes against antiquity and the authority of the universal Church ; and in these circumstances it is hard not to feel, that it involves some loss of privilege, and some serious spiritual hazard, which men should not be willing lightly to incur. This however is only the same sort of prejudice which is found to hold, in christian lands, against other forms of religious profession which are regarded as still more broadly opposed to the ancient faith ; Unitarianism for instance or Universalism ; which at the same time are but seldom allowed to carry with them any presumption of truth and righteousness on such account. It requires generally still more nerve in this view, to become a convert to Unitarianism, than it does to espouse the cause of the Baptists. In neither case have we any right to infer from the difficulty any such contrariety to the natural mind of the world, as may be taken for the criterion of divine truth. On the contrary, it requires no very profound examination to see that the system held in both cases falls in strikingly with what may be termed the natural mind of the world, and in such view is exactly suited to gain popularity and credit. The Baptist theory excludes mystery, and turns religion into a thing of measurable intelligence and common sense. It falls in thus with the tendency of Protestantism to assert the rights of the individual subject in religion, over against the claims of objective authority ; a

tendency which *ought* to be asserted within right limits; while it is particularly liable also, for this very reason, to be carried to an extreme, destructive entirely of what belongs to the opposite interest. It is not to be denied, that such extreme subjectivity or individualism has come to form the reigning character of Protestant Christianity at the present time; and especially may this be said to be the case in our own country, the land of universal toleration and freedom, where the very idea of the Church is in danger of being swallowed up and lost in the distraction of sects as the only true and proper form of the christian life. With this reigning spirit, the Baptist view of religion stands unquestionably in very close correspondence and affinity. However it may have been persecuted in the beginning, under the mild theocracy of New England, it has long since ceased to be the faith of suffering exiles and martyrs. It has grown into a large world of christian profession, covering the length and breadth of the entire land. This is held together by no bond of unity indeed in other respects; for it belongs to its very nature to be as much as possible unchurchly and inorganic, a mere multitude of men and women following the Bible severally to suit themselves. But taking them simply as *Baptists*, sticklers for immersion and excommunicators of infants from Christ, they form collectively the most numerous religious body in the United States. They have the art of making proselytes, beyond almost all other people. The sect spirit, as it prevails in all parts of the land, has a wonderful propensity towards the Baptist system; for it is constitutionally unsacramental and rationalistic, and is always inclined to resolve religion into the thinking and working of man, to the exclusion of its mystical power as it lies on the side of God. Hence new sects are apt to take Anabaptist ground; especially where they have their origin, not immediately in some doctrinal interest, but in zeal rather for religious experience. It is but too plain thus that the Baptists have a strong popular feeling on their side, which needs only to be set free still farther from the force of mere outward authority, standing in tradition and custom, to bring the world generally to espouse their cause.

This favorable state of the public mind in regard to the theory of the Baptists is not to be measured simply by their actual discipleship, or the preparation there may be in different quarters to receive in form their particular system; it shows itself also to a large extent in the indifference and want of faith, with which the contrary system is too generally maintained. It is of small account to oppose a system, if the principle of it, that from which it draws its life and strength, be the meanwhile silently allowed

and approved. Opposition, in such case, may be kept up as a sort of outside fashion; but it will carry with it no real earnestness or power. It is in truth no better than treason at last to the cause it pretends to uphold. Of such character necessarily are all argument and practice against the Baptists, which do not rest truly on the old idea of the Church and its sacraments, but start from the premises of the Baptists themselves with regard to the nature of religion, virtually surrendering in this way the whole interest in debate. Very much of our existing fidelity to the old church practice, it is to be feared, labors under this grievous defect. It is a matter of outward form and ceremony, more than of true inward faith and conviction. It makes common cause with the general scheme of the Baptists in regard to religion and the Church, and is obedient only to its own tradition in refusing to carry out this scheme to the same consequences. In these circumstances, no great account is made of the variation in which the system stands from the proper church practice. So far as it may be considered wrong, it is still viewed with the utmost indulgence and forbearance; the difference is taken to regard a mere circumstance in religion, without reaching at all to its main substance; and the only cause for regret and complaint in regard to it is, that the Baptists themselves should be disposed to lay so much stress upon it, as they generally do, in the way of uncharitable exclusiveness towards others. Mr. Noel's transition to their ranks is taken indeed for a mark of some weakness and eccentricity; but it is still not allowed to qualify materially, in this view, the vast merit which all non-episcopal bodies are expected, as a matter of course, to see in his previous abandonment of the English Establishment. It is but too plain from the way in which the subject is frequently noticed, that for a large part of this interest among us, the acknowledgment of a churchly and sacramental religion is something altogether worse than the virtual renunciation of the sacraments as it holds among the Baptists. Noel the Baptist, to this system of thinking, is much more respectable and every way intelligible, than Noel the Episcopalian. The difference which has place in the first direction, is regarded as small and comparatively immaterial. The great matter is, that such a man has been able to leap the far more broad and serious chasm that yawns on the other side. Baptists and Paedobaptists, of the unchurchly stamp, have here common and like cause for gratulation. It is felt to be at last substantially one and the same gospel to which the illustrious convert has been won in either connection, and both unite accordingly in wishing him God-speed on his chosen way. For those who

consider it rightly, this is something very significant and instructive. It was not so always. The Baptist system, in the beginning, was held to be at war with Protestantism no less than with the faith of the ancient Church. Its deviation from the old church theory was felt to be something far more than a mere circumstance. How does it happen then that it should now be met with such easy toleration, as a thing of mere outward fashion and form? For the reason simply, beyond all doubt, that the view taken of the Church has undergone a material change. The sense of sacramental grace has to a wide extent passed away; and along with this, of course, the doctrine of infant baptism is to the same extent necessarily shorn of its proper meaning and force. The Baptist principle has come to prevail far and wide among those who are not Baptists; and in this way the opposition even which is made to their cause is found to be in truth too often but little better than a feint and a sham. The controversy is transferred to false and untenable ground, and so carries in itself the necessity of defeat from the beginning. It yields at the outset the main substance in dispute, and makes but a vain show of battle afterwards for its mere name and shadow. Here it is precisely that the Baptists of the present time have the greatest advantage. Their premises and principles are allowed extensively by the opposite side; and all that they need, in such circumstances, is to show that these principles and premises carry in them by necessary consequence the sense of their own system. Without faith in the Church, no consistent or effectual stand can ever be made against their pretensions.

The Baptist controversy, it is well known, falls mainly into two questions, the first regarding the *mode* of baptism and the second its proper *subjects*. The only valid mode, according to the Baptists, is by immersion. The only fit subjects, they tell us, are personal believers. Sprinkling they take to be of no force for the rite; and the application of it to infants they hold to be no better than a solemn farce.

It is truly unfortunate, in the case of the first of these questions, that the advocates of the present reigning practice have been led so commonly by polemical zeal to place themselves on extreme ground; furnishing thus in the end an advantage to their opponents, which they would not otherwise possess. When it is pretended to show immersion an abuse, and sprinkling the only legitimate mode of baptism, from the force of the original terms employed in the case, the general evidence of the New Testament, or the practice of the early Church, more is undertaken a great deal than can be accomplished, and more at

the same time in all respects than the argument properly requires; by which means harm only is done to the truth, and the cause of the opposite party made to seem far stronger than it is in fact. It needs but ordinary scholarship, and the freedom of a mind unpledged to mere party interest, to see and acknowledge here a certain advantage on the side of the Baptists. The original sense of the word *baptize* is on the whole in their favor. It corresponds with the idea of immersion much more than with that of sprinkling. This idea moreover undoubtedly lies at the bottom of the New Testament practice; although it would seem to be equally clear, for a candid inquirer, that this practice was not actually confined, under all circumstances, to the mode of immersion, in the literal and full sense. The allusion in Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, to the form of going under the water and rising out of it again, as being at least the primary and fundamental character of the rite, is too plain to be misunderstood by any unsophisticated mind; and it is only a melancholy exemplification of the power which theological prejudice has over the best men, when otherwise able and faithful commentators of the anti-Baptist order are found vainly endeavoring, in modern times, to torture the passages into another meaning. The practice of the early Church too, as far back as we have any notices on the subject out of the New Testament, must be allowed to lie prevalently in favor of the same view. The most that can be said with regard to it, which however is a great deal over against the exclusive doctrine of the Baptists, is that the form of immersion was not considered indispensable to the validity of the sacrament. This is sufficiently shown by what is termed the *clinical baptism* of the ancient Church, aside from all other evidence. Clinical baptism was employed in the case of the sick, who were confined to bed or otherwise unfit to endure the rite of immersion. It consisted of a partial application of water, in the way of substitute for this, by a more or less plentiful affusion or aspersion. Persons thus baptized, if they afterwards recovered, were not considered eligible to any sacred office, as their profession might seem to have been forced upon them by sickness and so to be of doubtful sincerity; but no deficiency was held to attach to their baptism itself, and it was never felt necessary or proper accordingly to baptize them over again in a more full way. On this point, the testimony of Cyprian is well known and conclusive, showing at once the fact of such baptism by aspersion in the early Church, and the acknowledgment of its sufficiency, as resting on the view that the application of water, in the sacrament, is efficacious not according to surface and quan-

tity, as in common washing, but according to the accompanying grace of the Holy Ghost. "In sacramentis salutaribus, necessitate cogente et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente, *totum creditibus conferunt divina compendia.*" It is not to be disguised at the same time, however, that this allowance and apology for the validity of clinical baptism goes directly to show the general prevalence of baptism by immersion; and also the general feeling that it was regarded as the regular and proper mode, from which only in cases of urgent necessity it was considered lawful to depart. Cyprian's plea for it is worded with great caution and reserve, and treats it throughout as something in broad exception to the reigning practice. In the Oriental Church this practice has been preserved without change down to the present day; and the completeness of baptism is made to depend absolutely on its being performed by immersion, and not by any less universal application of water. In the Western or Latin Church a more free conception of the sacrament has prevailed; and from the thirteenth century particularly we find the practice of affusion or plentiful sprinkling gradually supplanting more and more generally the earlier method. The change seems to have grown to a considerable extent from the preponderance which the baptism of infants gained over that of adults, as the nations became generally christian, and the main use of the ordinance was transferred thus from heathen converts to the offspring of parents already in the Church. It was natural to extend the allowance of the so-called clinical baptism in favor especially of very young infants, who might be regarded as infirm by reason of their infancy itself, and so rightly entitled to the privilege; and this way of thinking, once introduced, appears to have worked in no great time a general revolution in the practice of the Church. The Reformation, in the sixteenth century, found the Roman Church generally, (with the exception of the Church of Milan which still adhered to the old form,) no longer in the exclusive use of immersion, but allowing also in place of it, when preferred, a partial application of water only, by affusion on the head or some other prominent part of the subject baptized. The symbolical sense of the application was held to be the main thing; and this was supposed to be as fully secured by its being poured upon the head, or shoulders, or breast, as though it were made to circumfuse in full the entire body. The force of the symbol was not measured by its outward quantity.

The Reformers were disposed to prefer the ancient custom; not from any superstitious regard to the mere letter of the institution; but out of respect for antiquity, and from the feeling also

of a certain congruity between the letter or form here and its proper inward sense. They questioned not the sufficiency of baptism by aspersion, but held the use of immersion to be on the whole more suitable and significant. Luther says, in a sermon on Baptism (Walch x, p. 2593): "Though it be the custom, in many places no longer to dip the children whole in the font, but only to pour water on them from it with the hand, it were better still and fit, according to the sense of the word *baptism*, that the child, or any one else who is baptized, should be entirely sunk into the water and drawn out again. * * This would suit the signification of the thing, and furnish a fully complete sign." Both of Luther's formularies for baptism, accordingly, that of 1523 and the revision of 1524, include the rubric: "Then let him take the child, and *dip it in the font*"—with clear reference to immersion. Calvin allows also indirectly a certain priority of worth to this mode, with full assertion at the same time of the proper freedom of Christianity in favor of the other practice. "Whether the whole person be immersed," he says, Inst. iv. 15, 19, "and this be once or thrice, or the water be merely poured on by aspersion, is of little account, and ought to be considered free to the churches according to their different regions. Though the word baptize does itself signify to *immerse*, and it is known that the rite of immersion prevailed also in the early Church." Several of the earlier Protestant church services call for dipping. In the first English Reformed Liturgy, a. 1547, a *trine immersion* of the child is prescribed, cases of infirmity only excepted; and it was not till the beginning of the 17th century that sprinkling gained the upper hand, for reasons of convenience and health. Gradually the usage of all the Protestant Churches settled down upon the same practice which had already begun to prevail in the Church of Rome; with the exception only of the Anabaptists; who however rested their view on a different theory altogether of the nature and force of the sacrament itself, and for this reason were not regarded as any part of the Church, either Catholic or Protestant.

The freedom exercised, in this case, by the Western Church generally, we hold to be in full harmony with the true idea of Christianity; as the want of it on the side of the Greek Church is an evidence of its having lost the proper life and spirit of its own original faith. It has been throughout the lively apprehension of the spiritual realness of the sacrament, as the presence actually and truly of an inward grace under an outward form, which has enabled the Church of the West, whether as Catholic or as Protestant, to make an ἀνάφορον of the mere circum-

stances of the symbol, while continuing to hold fast with becoming reverence and faith the substantial matter of the symbol itself. This is something far more than either a rationalistic rejection of the rite on the one hand, or a slavish adhesion to the outward letter of it on the other. These two extremes might seem to be sufficiently far apart, the one forming the exact contrary of the other. And yet it is not so in fact. They start from substantially the same false posture, in regard to the christian faith; and they come in the end to substantially the same result. Either may claim to be, and has often claimed to be in fact, not only Christianity, but this also under its highest and most perfect style. In one view thus we have the spiritualism of the Quaker; in another view the spiritualism of the Anabaptist. Their affinity is shown strikingly by their tendency to flow together at particular points, both in the earlier and later stages of their history. Both are constitutionally rationalistic, notwithstanding the high wrought temperature of their first life, or rather for this very reason one may say, and sooner or later this defect is found working itself into view with clear historical evidence and proof. Quakerism runs naturally into Hicksite infidelity, and Anabaptism just *as* naturally into lifeless mechanism and form, the corpse of religion deprived of its living soul. The common principle of both is the want of faith in the true and proper *mystery* of the sacraments. The Quaker places religion wholly in the sphere of thought, the naked spirit of the subject, and so will have nothing to do with the letter and sign. The Baptist places it there too, but makes a merit at the same time of honoring the letter and sign in a purely outward way, in token of his mental respect for the authority by which it is prescribed. In both cases, the grace and the sign are completely sundered. The Baptist turns the sacrament into a powerless ceremony as truly as the Quaker. Only he chooses to exercise *his* spirituality and rationalism, by squaring his practice in the case to the outward rule which God has been pleased to prescribe as the *test* of his pious obedience. In such view, of course, all turns on the letter; and the more precisely circumstantial this can be made, the more satisfactory it is taken to be as a trial of christian character. The Baptist, in this way, becomes a Jew.

A right appreciation here of the old church faith, as holding in a living way between these two abstractions, while it leads us to do justice to the free practice of the Western Church within proper limits, will prevent us at the same time from approving such freedom beyond these limits. It cannot be denied that there is a strong tendency with our later Protestantism, especially

under the Puritan form, to run the liberty of sprinkling, as it may be called, into actual licentiousness, by reducing the quantity of water used in baptism to the narrowest practicable measure. The force of the symbol does not indeed turn on the amount of the water employed; but something is still due to the reality and the original sense of the service in this view; and it is very certain that a true sacramental feeling must always operate, where it prevails, to produce a due regard to the mystical idea of the holy ordinance as joined with the water, which will not allow it to be stripped of its proper outward honor in the divine transaction. The old Church, in allowing a partial use of water, still required always that it should be in its measure plentiful and free. So also the Protestant Church of earlier times, in sanctioning the change from immersion to affusion. It marks no improvement on this in our own day, that the application is so frequently reduced to a few drops; the minister simply dipping his fingers in the water perhaps, and flinging some particles of what adheres to them into the child's face, instead of taking up as the old formularies prescribe at least his hand full of the element, and so pouring the same on its head. We have witnessed the service with pain performed in this style, where it was some relief to be sure that only a solitary drop reached the face of the infant, so utterly careless did the officiating priest show himself to be of anything more than the mere ceremony of going through the outward motions of the solemn rite. Now we know it is easy to say, that all depends on the Spirit, and that a single drop of water may be just as efficacious in his hands as all the rivers of Damascus, and Jordan along with them; but it is just as easy to go a single step farther also, and to affirm that the mere motion of the hand in imitation of the act of sprinkling would carry with it all the virtue and force of baptism, even if no water whatever were employed in the case. When it comes to this, of course, all faith in the sacrament as such is gone; the only religious reality owned in it is the *thought* of a certain spiritual work of which it is taken to be the emblem and sign; and it is hard to see why this might not be just as complete with the sign wanting altogether, according to the view of the Quaker. This disposition to rest in the merest minimum of the outward symbol, is something very different from the old sacramental faith, and may be taken always as the sure mark of its comparative if not total absence and failure. Hence it is, that it lends likewise powerful help always to the Baptist cause; not simply as it serves, like all ultraism, to bring reproach on the interest it affects to represent, but as it actually involves also the very spirit

itself by which this cause is actuated. It argues an unsacramental habit; indifference or insensibility to the mystical import of the symbol employed in the transaction; and where this prevails, the only proper alternative is, no water baptism at all or else slavish confinement to it, as a purely outward law, after the Baptist fashion.

In this case we have a double cause for regret. First, that the question of *mode* should be made to seem the main point at issue, and be so managed at the same time as to array the practice of sprinkling or affusion against immersion, as though the last must be shorn of all right in order to justify the other; in consequence of which we have a great deal of false argument on this side, which only rebounds at last in favor of the opposite interest. Secondly, that the defence of sprinkling is too often based on so low a view of the sacrament as amounts well nigh to indifference itself, and thus in reality betrays the interest in whose service it appears. Any vindication of sprinkling which proceeds on the assumption that baptism in any shape is a mere ceremony, and that *therefore* no stress should be laid on the mode, must be regarded as a virtual surrendry of all that is material in the controversy, from the start.

The great question in truth however, in this Baptist controversy, is that which relates to the proper subjects of the ordinance, and which is concerned particularly with the right of *infants* to be comprehended by means of it in the communion of the Christian Church. It is here, still more strikingly than in the other case, that we learn the distinctive character of this unchurchly system, and are brought to face in full at the same time the monstrous consequences to which it leads. Mr. Noel's book is occupied mainly with the lawfulness of infant baptism. He finds it a superstitious corruption, contrary to the Bible, contrary to reason, and contrary to primitive Christianity; and only wonders that all sensible and sober men, in so plain a case, should not long since have come to look upon it in the same light.

Mr. Noel professes great reverence for the authority of the Scriptures. He has thrown himself, he tells us, entirely on their guidance; carefully avoiding indeed all communication with Baptist writers, that his judgment might be formed in this way solely by divine teaching. He claims accordingly to be an original witness in the case, fresh from the fountain of all truth in the Bible. "Not having read a single Baptist book or tract, I publish the following work as an independent testimony to the exclusive right of believers to Christian baptism" *p.* iv. The

book itself too shows the use of the Scriptures almost on every page. It abounds with quotations and texts. In this respect however it is only a striking exemplification of the vanity and nonsense of the pretension, on which it is thus ostentatiously made to rest. Mr. Noel affects to come to the Bible like an empty vase theologically, leaving behind him all other education and tradition, in order to be filled purely from its gushing contents; and yet it comes only to this at last, that he divests himself of the old universal church faith, the substance of catholic thought as we have it embodied in the Creed, and brings along with him another different habit of his own, which after all is the result too of education, and in this respect as far removed at least from independence as the most sound church feeling. It is perfectly idle for him to pretend, that he has studied the Bible without prejudice or pre-occupation. His study has been throughout from a given theological standpoint, carrying in itself from the start the necessity of just such views and aspects as it is found then to offer to his eye. Another standpoint would clothe it with a very different sense; and it is sheer impudence, when *such* private judgment undertakes to make its observations of universal value, as the very mind of the sacred volume itself, and requires all other judgment, however widely and long established, to fall respectfully into its wake. Allow the premises of the Baptist, grant him his theory of Christianity to begin with, (as Puritanism is prone always to do, holding in truth too generally the same theory as its own,) and it becomes a comparatively easy thing for him to establish his favorite conclusions and also to find them satisfactorily reflected from many passages of the Bible. The universal necessary first condition for the right understanding and right interpretation of the Scriptures, is sympathy with the general fact of Christianity, and a living comprehension in its true catholic mystery as it has stood from the beginning. Without this, the more independent and single the expounder may be, the more empty and jejune ordinarily will be the character also of his expositions. Mr. Noel, we are sorry to say, furnishes no exception to this rule. His piety has no power to redeem the impotency of his false position. The use of the Bible in his hands is superficial in the extreme. We have text upon text, and quotation on quotation; the *sound* of the Bible forever ringing in our ears, from one end of the book to the other; but it is the Bible for the most part turned into mere commonplace and outside talk, with almost no regard whatever to its interior substance and sense.

The book exemplifies again the vanity of the pretence, that

the unsacramental system is more favorable to religious *spirituality* than the catholic. The Quakers and Baptists both claim to be more spiritual than the Church generally; and they try to make good this claim, by reducing religion as much as possible to the actings of individual mind and will, in the case of those who are its subjects. But spiritualism, in this form, is not true Christian spirituality, when all is done. On the contrary, it is just the reverse of this, and left to itself is sure to end in rationalistic misery and starvation. Without faith in catholic realities, there can be no true Christian spirituality. Mr. Noel's book affects to move in the highest region of experimental piety; and all the world knows him to be a truly pious man; but we find no quickening, elevating spirit whatever, in what he has here written. It is an irksome, insipid task, to follow him in his views of religion; so dreary and dry is the region through which they carry us; so cold and cheerless the results to which they bring us as their necessary end. The freshness and depth of a truly spiritual mind form no part of this plea for "believer's baptism." On the contrary, it is altogether mechanical and outward in its spirit. We feel ourselves surrounded, in reading it, with the atmosphere of rationalism. We seem to be feeding on husks, or vainly endeavoring to satisfy ourselves with the substance of the east wind.

The fundamental controversy in this case lies quite back of all Mr. Noel's argument. The question of the proper use of the sacraments, must depend in the first place on the true idea of their nature. The difference of the Baptists from the old catholic faith begins here; and unless it be properly met where it thus begins, it is of comparatively small account to make it the subject of contention at any other point. The controversy regards the existence of the sacraments themselves. The Baptists allow no sacrament at all *in the old church sense*. Mr. Noel's book proceeds throughout on the assumption, that baptism is no such sacrament, but a mere outward rite of divine appointment, carrying in it a different import altogether. Allow the old idea of a sacrament to retain its force, and his argument would be at an end. The great question then, and it is one of the very highest solemnity, resolves itself into this: Is baptism a sacrament, as the Church catholic has always believed, or is it only an outward law and sign?

A sacrament in the true church sense is not a mere outward rite, made obligatory by divine appointment. It carries in itself a peculiar constitution of its own. It consists, according to the old definition, of two parts, one outward and the other inward,

a visible terrene sign and an invisible celestial grace ; not related simply as corresponding facts, brought together by human thought ; but the one actually bound to the other in the way of most real mystical or sacramental union, causing the last to be objectively at hand in one and the same transaction with the first. Dissolve this mystical bond, and at once the old conception of a sacrament is gone at the same time. You may still retain a rite or ceremony which you dignify with this venerable name ; but you will not have what the Church, from the beginning, has understood herself to possess in the holy mysteries of baptism and the Lord's supper.

Now Mr. Noel acknowledges no such bond whatever, in the ordinance of baptism. It is for him purely an outward institution, the whole sense and value of which turn on its giving the believer an opportunity to show his obedience to the authority by which it has been appointed. It is very significant, that the Baptists generally are so prone to speak of the ordinance as a rite or law ; showing themselves to have no sense of its being anything more, in this view, than an outward rule imposed by Christ. The "law of baptism," as they are fond of styling it, sinks into a full parallel with the services of the Old Testament, and due regard for it is then made to stand, naturally enough, in an exact compliance with all that may be supposed to belong to the letter of it in such view. The idea of a living power in the ordinance itself, seems to have no place at all in their minds.

Mr. Noel appears never to dream of the possibility of any such objective grace in baptism. It is for him mainly an act of mere profession on the part of the believing subject. "A true faith must manifest itself, and baptism is one appointed mode of its manifestation" *p.* 45. "Since faith is said to save us, because it is the instrument through which God saves us, so baptism is said to save us, because it is the necessary expression of true faith" *p.* 46. "Baptism is the profession of faith, the public confession of Christ, without which confession there is no true faith and no salvation" *p.* 97. "If baptism be simply a profession of repentance and faith, then the expression, 'Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins,' is equivalent to, 'Repent and believe for the remission of sins.' Remission of sins attends baptism simply because it attends faith" *p.* 101. Could language well make the thing more explicit ? The religious force of baptism is purely and wholly subjective ; it is nothing save as it serves to represent and manifest a certain state of mind in the believer ; the idea of any *other* power belonging to it as a Divine act is wholly excluded, as being no better than vision-

ary superstition. In this way it ceases to be a sacrament altogether; for a sacrament carrying in it no objective grace, is a contradiction in terms. To abjure the idea of baptismal grace, is to break with the old idea of baptism throughout, and to treat it as an idle dream.

A certain relation to grace, indeed, the system is still willing to allow. But this is taken to be wholly outward. Baptism signifies something spiritual; only however in the way of suggestion to the human mind. No inward, necessary, present bond is allowed to hold between the sign and the thing signified. The transaction outwardly considered enters not at all as an essential factor, into the constitution of the fact which is consummated by its means. It is merely appended to this as an accidental badge. So Mr. Noel takes it throughout. But this is not the form in which baptism, from the beginning, has claimed to be acknowledged as a sacrament. Most clearly in the New Testament, it is made to enter efficaciously, as a divine act, into the mystery of the new birth. Whatever of difficulty may attach to this conception, we have no right to thrust it violently aside for the purpose of accommodating a different theory. The letter of the Bible is too plain, and the sense of it too awfully solemn, to bear any such spiritualism as that. Baptism here is no mere sign, no simply outward adjunct or accident. It is the washing of regeneration; it saves us; it is for the remission of sins. The mere ceremony of course is not this *per se*; but it goes actually to complete the work of our salvation, as the mystical exhibition in real form of that divine grace, without which all our subjective exercises in the case must amount to nothing. Such is the doctrine of the New Testament; and so accordingly the whole ancient Church believed. We have this faith formally proclaimed in the Creed; for the article there affirming the *remission of sins*, as may be easily shown, refers to this as a fact accomplished in the Church by baptism. The objective presence of such supernatural grace in the mystical transaction, is the very thing which faith is required to embrace; as without it indeed there would be no room for its exercise. That the Church otherwise attributed such grace to the sacrament, universally and at all times, is too well known to admit any dispute. Mr. Noel then, and the Baptists as a body, are completely at issue here with primitive Christianity; and the difference is one of vast magnitude and moment. It regards not simply the mode of baptism and its proper subjects, but its essential nature and constitution. Whether agreement in other respects can or cannot be shown, is after all comparatively immaterial; as the grand

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discord, and that which must forever mar all harmonies besides, lies here at the very bottom of the entire subject. What the primitive Church owned and saw in baptism, Mr. Noel neither owns nor sees in it at all. It is for him no SACRAMENT whatever, but only a rule or sign dignified with such title.

He has one chapter devoted to the "effects of baptism," which sets this in the clearest light. Christianity, he tells us, stands in the pardon of sins through Christ for such as trust in his grace, and a life of subsequent consecration to his service. It is meet, in this case, that the believer should openly profess his faith. The Church too, "the society of Christ's disciples," needs some public guaranty of right behavior, on the part of those who are admitted to its fellowship. "Both these objects are secured by the appointed rite of baptism" *p.* 264. It works well besides on the subject himself, on the congregation he joins, and on spectators generally. The subject of so public and solemn a rite, by proclaiming his faith to the world, is laid under bond to follow Christ truly, and by such decision gains strength for the duty. "A thousand checks to sin and a thousand aids to godliness are that day assumed; faith, hope, and love are likely to be confirmed" *p.* 266. The sight is edifying to the church; as it serves to revive and quicken old associations. Witnesses, on the outside of the church, may be affected by it also in the way of salutary reflection. The rite serves the purpose of a key moreover, in the hands of a church, to lock out the world from her communion, *p.* 269, 270. These good effects however belong only to the ordinance as applied to actual believers. Infant baptism works very differently. It sets aside the other practice, with all its connections so admirably suited for effect. "Through the baptism of unconscious infants, the solemn, affecting, and salutary baptism of repentance, faith, and self-dedication to God, has nearly vanished from the churches" *p.* 272. And what benefit has been gained by the substitution? Mr. Noel can find none whatever. Under the Mosaic economy, circumcision admitted its subject to great privileges from which the uncircumcised were excluded. But Christianity owns no such exclusion. The child, baptized or unbaptized, occupies the same ground. Parents too derive no help from the rite. "Pious parents do not need this new inducement to educate their children well; ungodly parents cannot feel its force" *p.* 273. The churches themselves regard it with no interest; "except as far as superstition has invested it with imaginary spiritual power, it seems to have dwindled into a formality." Even in this view however it works mischievously, as fostering always the notion

of a saving relation in some way to Christ, in the case of all its subjects. Still worse, it runs naturally into the figment of down-right baptismal regeneration.

Our object in this sketch of Mr. Noel's theory of what belongs, and what does not belong, to the efficacy of Christian baptism, is not to make it the subject of formal trial; but simply to show, how completely it excludes every thought of anything like grace or power, mystically present in the ordinance of itself; how it nullifies, out and out, the idea of its objective force as Christ's act, and resolves it wholly into a thing for effect, in the way of pure subjectivity, on the side of men; how, in one word, it overthrows its character as a *sacrament* altogether, in the old church sense, and mocks us in place of this with a rationalistic shadow played off in its name.

Such a view of baptism is inseparably joined with a corresponding view of the Church. This is no longer the living revelation of Christ in the world, the mystical body of which he is the glorious Head, but takes rather the character of an abstraction, signifying merely the general faith and union of those who embrace the gospel. This involves again a corresponding view of Christ's person, and so in the end of the whole system of Christianity. All has a tendency to quit the form of concrete fact, and run into the form of abstract thought.

Where theology comes to be of this sort, we have a dry mechanical separation perpetually between the objective and subjective factors of the christian salvation, which has the effect in the end of thrusting the first out of the process altogether. Redemption is made to be a plan or device, over which God presides precisely as the mind of man may be said to rule a machine; and Christ comes in simply in the way of outward instrumental help, to carry out the scheme. The objective side of the salvation is wholly beyond the world, in the Mind of God; the subjective side of it holds in certain exercises brought to pass in particular men, in view of God's grace and by the help of his Spirit; Christ serves only to make room, in some way, for the ready communication of one world in such style with the other. One of the worst results of this way of looking at things is the notion of a *limited atonement*; according to which Christ is taken to have come into the world and died, not for the race as a whole, but only for a part of it, the election of grace as it is sometimes styled, culled out from the general mass beforehand by divine decree. Where Christ is made to stand on the outside of our salvation, and this is felt to have its principle in God's purpose and will touching men in a direct way, it is not possible

indeed to avoid this consequence; unless by swinging over to the other extreme of such an indefinite atonement, as either turns Christ's work into a Pelagian show or lands us in the error of Universalism.

The only full refuge from these false abstractions is found in the right sense of Christ, as being himself the sum and substance of the salvation he has brought in the world, and in this view the organic comprehension from the start of its whole compass and extent. The new creation is complete in him as a boundless whole, bringing our human life in full into union with God, independently of its triumphs in particular believers. So it comes before us in the Creed. Here are no abstractions. The world is saved in Christ; and this salvation is, in its own nature, as wide as the world. It challenges our faith and homage, as a power of redemption really and truly present in the Church, and fully commensurate in such form, at the same time, with the entire tract of our general human misery and sin.

Here it is now that we reach the grand argument for infant baptism. It lies not in the letter of the Scriptures, but in the life of Christianity itself, the true idea of the Church, the mystery of Christ as the Second Adam, in whom redemption and salvation are brought to pass for the race. Let it be felt that Christianity is a new order of life constituted by the Fact of the Incarnation, and that men are saved only by being comprehended in it in a real way; and it will be felt at the same time, that it must be, in this form, fully commensurate with the fact of humanity itself as a whole. The conception of a partial Christ, a Mediator representing in himself thus a part only of our general manhood and not the whole, strikes directly at the realness and truth of the whole mystery. What a gross imagination it would be, for instance, to limit and bound the capacity of this Mediatorial constitution, by any merely chronological or geographical line in the history of the race; allowing it to be of force for one certain tract of time, but not for another; restricting it to one country or continent with the exclusion of the whole world besides; making it a sufficient source of redemption for Caucasian blood, but not for that of the Negro or Malay! But can it be any more tolerable to right christian feeling, we ask, to limit and bound the force of this salvation by a line sundering in fancy and childhood from riper age, and to make it of real effect on one side of this line only and not on the other? Humanity is not merely our mature human life, but all the stages also through which this is reached. It includes infancy and childhood as a necessary part of its constitution; a large proportion of it exists

always under this form ; nearly one half of it perhaps is cut off by death before it comes to any higher state. Now the question is not simply : Can such infants be saved if they should happen to die ? but this rather : Is there any real room for them, living or dying, in the concrete mystery of the new creation, in the communion of Christ's Mediatoral Life, in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church ? Does the nature of the Second Adam take in one half of the necessary life of the race only, while it hopelessly excludes the other ? Such a thought goes at once to undermine the whole fact of the Incarnation. Christ must be of the same length and breadth in all respects with humanity as a whole, in order to be at all a real and true Mediator. He must be commensurate with the universal process of humanity from infancy to old age, as well as with its mere numerical extent. This is implied in the manner of his incarnation itself. His manhood was a process, starting in the Virgin's womb ; and in this character it took up into itself, as a power of redemption, the entire range of our existence. He sanctified infancy and childhood, says Irenæus, by making them stages of his own life. This expresses a just and sound feeling. It grows forth from the true doctrine of Christ's Person. It lies involved in the Creed. It filled the heart of the ancient Church ; and it found its natural, we might say almost necessary expression, in Infant Baptism.

This is more than any merely outward rule. The Baptist is forever harping on the letter of the law ; and insists that a case which is not provided for in express terms by this, must be taken to be without force or right. We hold however that there is monstrous falsehood, as well as miserable Jewish pedantry, in pretending to get Christianity like so much clock-work from the text of the Bible, in such purely outward and mechanical style. Christianity has a life and constitution of its own, in the bosom of which only, and by the power of which alone, the true sense of the Bible can be fairly understood ; and in this view it is, that the practice of infant baptism by the universal Church from the beginning comes to its full significance and weight. We not only infer from it the authority of express precept and example going before, in the age of the Apostles ; but we see in it also, (and this is its main value,) the very soul and spirit of Christianity itself, actualizing and expounding in a living way the sense of its own word. If it could be clearly made out that the household baptism of the New Testament included no infants ; nay, if it were certain that the Church had no apostolical rule whatever in the case, but had gradually settled here into

her own rule; we should hold this still to be of truly divine authority, and the baptism of infants of necessary christian obligation, as the only proper sense and meaning of the New Testament institution, interpreted thus to its full depth by the christian life itself. in this way too the analogy of the Jewish covenant, embracing as it did infants as well as adults, and the analogy we may add of our universal human society, organized everywhere after the same law, bring with them at last their true force. On this subject Mr. Noel is exceedingly superficial and flat. True, Christianity is not a secular institute; its sphere is the spiritual world; its privileges are for the soul mainly and not for the body. But still, is it not a perfectly *human* order; nay, the absolute end and perfection of humanity; and must it not, in this view, show itself proportional and true throughout to the actual organization of man's life in its universal character? Make it an unearthly system, playing into the world's economy without any regard to its natural structure as this holds in other spheres, and you do as much as you well can to turn it into magic. As such a human constitution in Christ then, the new creation, with all its spirituality, must of necessity take up into itself the entire compass and power of the old creation; not destroying its constituent elements and laws, but fulfilling their inmost sense rather and raising them to their highest power. In harmony with the principle that underlies the covenant of nature, as well as the Jewish covenant, binding the state of children to that of their parents even in the lowest and most outward temporal interests, Christianity too, the end of all other covenants, in order that it may be found to be such universal truth in fact and no lie, must show itself able and willing to embrace children as really as adults in its bosom, thus covering with its grace the whole extent of our nature as it lies defiled and defaced by sin. If infants were not comprehended in the law of sin, there might be some reason for holding them to be also shut out from the law of life in Christ Jesus. To make them participant of the curse, and yet incapable of having part really in Him by whom it is removed, would be absolutely monstrous. Every such view is in full contradiction to Rom. v. 12-21; where we are plainly taught, that the grace of the Second Adam is, in its own nature, more than commensurate with the ruin of the First. The economy of salvation must necessarily be so framed, as to make room at least for every necessary class and state of our general life. Like its antitype in the days of Noah, the ark of the Church must be able to save infants and children, as well as persons of higher age. So the Church felt

in the beginning; and on this ground, with the fullest right and reason, proceeded to incorporate infants into her communion by the initiatory seal of holy baptism. Not to have done so would have been to belie the profoundest instincts of the christian life itself, and to jeopardize at the same time all firm and constant faith in the objective mystery of her own constitution.

Here we see the lean and abstract misery of the Baptist system. Christianity, according to its apprehension, has no power to take up infants, (a large part of the world at any given time,) in a direct and real way, into its constitution. It has to do immediately and properly only with believers, personally conscious subjects. Are infants then incapable of salvation; or do they need no salvation? The Baptist is not prepared to rest in either of these alternatives. Infants he holds to be naturally sinful and unregenerate. Those that die in infancy moreover, he tells us, are saved. How? By the fiat of the Almighty changing their bad nature, as he might bid stones to become children of Abraham. And so it is allowed, that he may in rare instances regenerate also infants that do not die. In both cases the regeneration is *for Christ's sake*, so far as motive is concerned in the Divine Mind; but in neither case can it be said at all to fall within the actual scope of the christian salvation, strictly so called, as we find it going forward in the Church. This is for believers only, and has no power to reach children in any natural organic way. If saved at all, they are saved out of Christ, and beyond the Church, by a grace for which he may be considered in some sense the occasion, but of which he is in no sense either the medium or source. And so as a general thing infants have no part or lot in his kingdom, no right, or title, or power, to be incorporated into his family. That saving grace of which baptism is the sign and seal, cannot be made in any way to come near to their fallen estate, or to fold them lovingly in its merciful embrace. They have no power yet to think, to understand, to repent, to believe, to accomplish in full the subjective side of this salvation; and so there is no room to conceive of their being set in any real connection with it under its objective view. They are by their very nature inaccessible to all its provisions and powers; as much so as though they had no part in the life of humanity whatever. They are disqualified constitutionally for *christian* salvation.

We see no escape from this conclusion, on Baptist premises. If children may not be baptized, they cannot in any way be gathered into the bosom of the Church. Then it cannot be said that Christ has room for them at present in his arms. His

grace may have regard to them prospectively ; but where they are just now, by the fearful disabilities of childhood, it cannot reach them or touch them in the way of help. Their only hope is in the "uncovenanted mercies of God," and his power at pleasure to save *without Christ*.

Dreadful, terrible thought ! It is truly wonderful, that it should ever be endured at all by the heart of any Christian parent. The old catholic faith, with its ideas of sacramental grace and educational sanctification, the powers of heaven underlying and supporting the process of piety in a real way, through the Church, from the hour of baptism onward to the hour of death, as compared with this, may well seem like the land of Beulah, full of green pastures and springs, in contrast with a wilderness of sand.

Infant baptism belongs essentially to the theory of Christianity, as this stood in the beginning, and as we find it uttered in the Apostles' Creed. This is generally admitted by such learned men as Augusti, Neander, Gieseler, &c.; who at the same time are found sanctioning the opinion, that it did not come into actual practice probably before the third century ; and to whose authority accordingly the Baptists are now in the habit of appealing triumphantly, as in some sense settling the historical argument on their side. They run away with what is thus granted to them as a bare fact, without the least regard to the form and inward reason of it ; and at once construe into a plump innovation and abuse, what these authorities take to be intelligible only as the fair and legitimate outbirth of the christian life as it went before. Allow that infants were not generally baptized before the third century, and the cause of the Baptists is still by no means made out. The question returns, How came such baptism *then* into quiet general use ? Was it in full antagonism to the genius of Christianity as it stood before ; or did it spring spontaneously out of this, in the way of natural and necessary derivation ? In the last view, the fact is intelligible, and offers no offence to historical criticism. So it is taken by the learned men, Neander and others, to whom we have just referred. This however suits not at all the object of the Baptists. They insist on the other view, as the only one that deserves to be considered correct. Here however they part from their authorities altogether, and set themselves at the same time in broad and open conflict with the truth of history. They assume that the Church started with a theory of Christianity identical with their own, and that the practice in question crept in consequently in opposition to this as a gross downright corrup-

tion. But with the Baptist theory to start from, such as we now find it, not only in regard to infant salvation, but in regard also to the whole constitution of the Sacraments and the Church, it is fairly inconceivable that in the course of a single century any such change as this could ever have come to pass. The Baptist theory is root and branch unchurchly and unsacramental, spiritualistic, rationalistic, and opposed to all thought of mystical objective efficiency in the means of grace outwardly considered. How then could it generate in so short a time the idea of infant baptism? This would be, in such a case, no growth or development in any sense whatever, but direct contradiction and revolution; as much so as though we should fancy the doctrine of transubstantiation springing from the dry loins of Quakerism itself. It is most amply clear however that this whole most unnatural and unphilosophical hypothesis of the Baptists, is an *assumption* purely and nothing besides. However infant baptism came in, it never had a theory of Christianity behind it like that which stares upon us from Mr. Noel's book. There is not a trace of it to be found in the primitive Church, unless among the Gnostics. If anything in the world be plain, it is that the entire genius and faith of the early Church, from the very age of the Apostles, lay in the direction of this practice, and fell towards it with natural gravitation, instead of looking or leaning in any other direction.

But, says Mr. Noel, the Church fell also into the practice of infant communion, and continued it for centuries; which however has since come to be acknowledged universally an abuse; and this must neutralize completely the force of the view now presented. Not at all, we reply. It only goes to show it more certainly true and correct. With the Baptist theory to start from, so easy and general a lapse of the early christian world into this practice must be counted still more inexplicable than the rise of the other superstition; as it must go still farther also to strip ancient Christianity of its last title to rational sympathy and respect. Allow however in the mind of the Church from the beginning the presence of a different theory, including the sense of an organic power working objectively in the christian communion, and concentrating itself especially in the mystery of sacramental grace, and it is no longer difficult to comprehend how it was possible to extend the use not only of the first sacrament, but of the second also, to infants as well as adults; while the judgment is still approved as wise and right, by which in the end a distinction was made between the two cases, and infant communion disallowed while infant baptism was suffered to remain in

force. The Baptist theory could never have made any such distinction ; just as little as it could have had power to originate either the one side of it or the other. Sympathy with the sacramental faith of the early Church, will enable us to apologize here for this excess in her practice ; while at the same time we have no difficulty in seeing and allowing it to have been an excess ; and are not for this reason tempted at all to resolve the just conception from which such excess grew, and by which only it is made intelligible, into a baseless figment of superstition ; as little precisely, we may say, as we are tempted to part with the whole mystery of Christ's presence in the Lord's supper, because it has been carried by some to the manifest extreme of transubstantiation. After all, even infant communion, properly set aside as it has been by the christian world, is far nearer to the first life of Christianity, and less revolting we will add to the sensibilities of a sound church faith, than the error which will not suffer infants to come to Christ in the Church at all, but by refusing them the sacrament of holy baptism virtually places that whole age, by physical calamity, beyond the pale of his redemption.

We do not allow however, in the view of the matter now presented, that the practice of infant baptism came in only with the third century. The concession as made by Neander and others would not save the cause of the Baptists, if it were true ; for it rests on an entirely different view of early Christianity from that which *their* use of it requires. But the concession itself, we are well satisfied, goes altogether beyond the line of justice and truth. The most that can be allowed is, that infant baptism in the beginning was overshadowed, and thrown out of sight to a great extent, by the far more prevalent and prominent use of the sacrament for full grown converts ; and that no strict rule prevailed, making it of binding authority and necessity as in later times. That it was in actual use however, under such secondary and free aspect at least, even from the age of the Apostles, seems to admit of no serious question. It went hand in hand with the doctrine of native depravity, and gathered force more and more in proportion as this grew into distinct statement, and carried along with it the sense of its necessary counterpart in the doctrine of a real objective remedy for this ruin in Christ.

As presented to our view in the third century, the practice of infant baptism, as all scholars know, is no new or rare thing, but a fact of general and seemingly long established force. Origen never thinks of vindicating it as something lately introduced, but on the contrary appeals to it as an acknowledged church

usage, of apostolical derivation, in support of other truth. He does not argue from the doctrine of native depravity to the necessity of infant baptism; but from this last rather, as a sure and solid ground at hand in the universal sense of the Church, he draws proof for the certainty of that doctrine. "As baptism is given for the remission of sins" he says *hom. viii. in Levit.*, "the grace of it must seem to be superfluous when extended to infants also, *as it is by the usage of the Church*, if they have nothing in them that calls for remission." Again *in Luc. evang. hom. xiv.*: "Little children are baptized for the remission of sins. Of what sins? When have they sinned? Or how can any use of the laver apply to their case, unless in the sense of what we have just said, that no one is clean according to Job *xiv. 4.* And because by baptism the pollution of birth is removed, *little children also are baptized.* For except one be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Again, *on Rom. v. 6.*: "*The Church received from the Apostles a tradition, to baptize little children also.* For they knew, as stewards of the divine mysteries, that there existed in all the true stain of sin, which needs to be washed away by water and the Spirit, whence even the body itself is styled a body of sin." Such is the clear testimony of Origen. That of Cyprian, in the same age, is if possible still more explicit and overwhelming. He indeed sets before us a dispute in relation to infant baptism. But this did not turn at all on the lawfulness or fitness of the thing itself. That was granted on all sides. Nobody then dreamed, it would appear, of calling it in question. The only doubt was, whether it was necessary to observe the analogy of the Jewish rule, fixing circumcision to the eighth day. Must infants wait at least that long for the sacrament, or might they be baptized at any time after birth? What a question this for the theology of our modern Baptists! Cyprian, supported by the unanimous voice of a whole council at Carthage a. 256, most distinctly affirms the latter view. The grace of God, he says, should be considered open and free to all, as it is needed by all; and we are bound accordingly to bring all, if possible, within its saving scope. If even grievous sins in the case of adults form no bar to their gracious acceptance in this holy sacrament, "how much less should the infant be debarred, which being recently born has not yet sinned at all, save as being naturally born from Adam it has contracted in its first nativity the contagion of original death, and which is the better prepared more easily to receive the remission of sins, for the very reason that the sins to be remitted are not of itself but from abroad, (*non propria sed aliena.*)"—*Epist. LIX ad Fidum.*

Origen and Cyprian, it will be borne in mind, belong to the first half of the third century. Their testimony then makes it clear, not only that infant baptism was in use at that time, but also that it was no partial nor new thing brought in a short time before. They refer to it as of general, everywhere acknowledged authority, and treat it as part and parcel of the ecclesiastical tradition handed down from the age of the Apostles. Now in these circumstances, it could not possibly have taken its rise only in the latter part even of the second century. Such a state of things of itself implies, that no memory ran to the contrary of it in the Church, and so that it must have started historically with the rise of the Church itself; and it is a strange judgment certainly which Suicer is quoted as uttering, when he says: "For the first two centuries none were baptized, save such as were instructed in the faith and imbued with the doctrine of Christ, because of those words, '*He that believeth and is baptized*;' afterwards the opinion prevailed, that no one could be saved without baptism." With the practice of Origen's time before us, and the quiet faith that prevailed in regard to it, we need no very explicit testimony to assure us of what had place during the century before. It is enough, that no opposing voice is heard, that the positive presumption already secured is met with no contradiction under a different form. The Baptists affect to make light of the historical authorities quoted from the second century in favor of infant baptism; they are so few and of so little force. Mr. Noel cites them from the pages of the learned Bingham, with two marks of admiration in every case, (thus!!) in token of his profound surprise, to find so vast a superstructure made to rest on pillars so very slender and slim. But it should be remembered in the first place, that we have but little patristic literature to quote from in the second century, on any subject. And then it should be remembered again, in the second place, that the *onus probandi* here, the burden of citing witnesses and authorities, lies on the Baptists themselves, and not on the advocates of infant baptism; who have the clear practice of the universal Church on their side at the going out of the second century, and most full right accordingly to take the same thing, for granted of the century throughout, unless cause to the contrary can be shown. The paucity and leanness of proof, in this view, fall wholly to the side on which Mr. Noel himself stands. All turns at last on a single passage from Tertullian; and this so little pertinent to the purpose it is employed to serve, that we might well bestow all Mr. Noel's marks of admiration upon it singly and alone. In the passage referred to, as is well known,

(*de bapt. c. 18.*) Tertullian takes occasion, on a view of his own, to recommend a delay of baptism in certain cases and states. Children in particular, he tells us, should wait till they are able to come on their own profession. Unmarried persons too he recommends to use a similar procrastination. And what now, we ask, follows from this strange oracle of the African Father? That infant baptism was a new thing in the Church, or of only narrow custom and use? Just the reverse. We know from the testimony of Origen and Cyprian, who join hands with him in time, that the fact was quite otherwise; and the same thing is implied most clearly in this passage itself. Tertullian offers no objection to infant baptism, as being an innovation, or a thing against common rule; which he would have done most certainly, if there had been room for objecting to it in this way. He tacitly allows its general ecclesiastical authority, and simply sets over against this his own private speculation, resting on the danger of post-baptismal sins. Strange theology too he makes of it, in order to carry his point. "Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum?" The passage besides is as much against the baptism of the unmarried, as it is against the baptism of infants; and in this way, if it proves anything at all for the Baptists, it must be taken to prove vastly more than they want. Plainly, Tertullian stood here against the Church; and his voice passed off accordingly, almost without echo, in the progress of her subsequent history.

It is not necessary here to notice specifically the authorities back of Tertullian, that are brought forward by Bingham and others in favor of infant baptism. They are readily acknowledged to be somewhat vague and uncertain in their character; and taken simply by themselves they would be by no means sufficient to establish its practice. But we have no right so to take them by themselves. They must be taken in connection with the light thrown back upon them by the known practice of the Church at the close of the century, as well as from the theory of sacramental grace answerable to this practice which we find in the Church from the beginning; and so taken, we have no hesitation to say, they are altogether relevant and full of force.¹

It has been sometimes said that the practice of infant baptism gained credit and became general finally, through the influence particularly of Augustine's dogma of original sin. This how-

¹ See the subject well presented in the work entitled: *Das Sakrament der Taufe nebst den anderen damit Zusammenhängenden Akten der Initiation*: By J. W. F. Hölling. vol. 1, p. 98-123.

ever is altogether unhistorical. The necessity of it was not felt to lie in any relation to the special view of Augustine on this subject, but in the pressure of the universally acknowledged need of regeneration, as affirmed by our Saviour, John iii. 5 ; as we have had opportunity to see already in the quotation from Origen and Cyprian. Augustine himself moreover, like Origen argues not from his doctrine to the necessity of infant baptism, but just in the reverse order. Infant baptism stands, in the controversy between him and his opponents, for a given sure and certain fact, of apostolical credit and force ; and on the ground of this broad *datum* he plants one of the main pillars of his doctrine. The mystery must be taken, here to be fallacious he says, and not trustworthy, when infants are baptized for the remission of sins, if there be in them no sin to remit. Pelagius and his party felt themselves sorely embarrassed with this argument ; but they never ventured to quarrel with the fact on which it was built. On the contrary, they allowed it also in its full length and breadth, showing plainly thus their sense of its impregnable settlement in the previous history of the church back to the time of the Apostles. For nothing certainly would have suited their cause better than to have been able to show the whole thing a superstitious corruption and abuse, brought in a few generations only before, *against* the universal practice of the primitive Church, and without mention till the time of Tertullian ; as all this has now come to be clear and plain, in this age of telescopic vision, to the eyes of such men as Mr. Noel, looking back through a vista of more than fifteen centuries to the same period.

In this controversy with the Baptists, all depends on taking right ground. It regards not simply the difference of practice with which it is immediately concerned in an outward view, but falls over as we have seen on a difference back of this, and of far more inward and profound character, touching the nature of the Sacraments themselves and the true idea of the Christian Church. The true issue in the end is : Church or No-Church ; sacrament or mere moral sign. The rejection of infant baptism turns on a full renunciation of the theory of Christianity, out of which the practice grew with inward necessity at the beginning. The modern Baptist is inwardly at war, in the whole posture of his faith, with the true sense of the Apostles' Creed. He has given up the whole idea of sacramental grace as an obsolete superstitious figment. What the ancient Church took to be the sense of a sacrament, and what in this view the Reformers also felt themselves bound to hold fast as a necessary part of Christi-

anity, he most deliberately gives to the winds. A sacrament is for him another thing altogether. This it is, we say, that forms the real significance and the true deep solemnity of this controversy; and on this ground should it be made always to rest. It is of little account to contend with the Baptists, and the contest is likely always to have but small success in the end, if its true ultimate sense be not felt and asserted firmly in this way.

It is not to be concealed, however, that no small amount of the opposition which is made among Protestants to the system of the Baptists, at the present time, is not planted on the great ultimate issue here noticed at all; but on the contrary takes side in regard to it with the interest opposed, as though that primary issue were fully antiquated and no longer of any force whatever; in consequence of which all such defence of the truth, (the outward shell of it only forsaken of its proper soul,) is found to be more or less powerless and vain. It is a poor business to contend for infant baptism, if all the principles on which it rested in the beginning and that of right still lie at the ground of it, be in the first place rationalistically surrendered. Of such practical treason, secretly aiding and abetting the very enemy with which it outwardly makes show of battle, we have melancholy exemplifications on all sides. It is lifting itself into view continually among all our sects, as far as the Puritan principle has been able to gain onesided and separate supremacy at the cost of the Catholic. It fights the Baptists; but in doing so grants them all their principal premises, and so leaves nothing to fight about that deserves any true zeal. It eviscerates the sacraments of all objective force; denies their mystical character altogether; turns them into simple signs and ceremonies, that have no inward connection whatever with the spiritual realities they represent. What are we to think of a Presbyterian minister for instance, taking pains at the Lord's table, without the fear of Calvin or the Westminster Confession before his eyes, to guard his people against the danger of fancying any *mystery* at all in the transaction; or carefully reminding them, over the "laver of regeneration," that they must not dream for a moment of any *grace*, exhibited or conferred through the holy institution. And all this too, in token of his zeal for evangelical spirituality, poor man, as contrasted with the far off mummeries of Puseyism and Rome! When it has come to this, the defence of infant baptism is indeed reduced to bad plight; for its outworks are gone, and its main garrison is virtually delivered into the enemy's hands. It cannot be defended any longer as a sacrament, as the thing it was counted to be in the beginning; and so its defence

cannot be made to rest on the grounds and reasons which originally brought it to pass. It is changed into a new sense. It has become a mere outward rule. It carries another relation altogether to the true and proper life of Christianity; and by such shifted position it is in fact shorn of its stays and props, whether in the form of testimony from the Bible or as offered in the voice and practice of the early Church.

Such unsacramental Pædo-baptism labors, in truth, under a threefold fatal defect, in its war with the Baptists. *In the first place*, it puts a hammer in their hands to break its own head with, by yielding their false principle that the Bible *per se* must settle, in purely outward and mechanical style, this and all other points of christian faith and practice. That is not the way in which the Bible is to be used. It is not constructed on any such mechanical plan, and never offers itself so to our faith. Such slavery to the letter is Jewish, not Christian. By consenting to it, in the case before us, the unsacramental advocates of infant baptism kill their own cause at once. It is perfectly vain, to think of making out a clear plea for it from the letter of the Bible. It never came into practice that way at first, and there is no such foundation for it to rest upon now. Recourse is had accordingly to indirect and circuitous proof always, based more or less on analogy, inference, and presumption; and to crown all, the subsequent practice of the Church is lugged in as a sort of supplemental voucher. But here the Baptist falls in with a loud protest; and he has fair right to do so, on the *common* ground occupied by the parties. "The text, the text, and nothing but the text; no gloss, no hypothesis, no tradition; nothing less than a direct *Thus saith the Lord* can be entitled to confidence in so grave a case." Thus runs the everlasting watchword, and the mouth of the adversary is fairly stopped. He may talk on indeed; but his talk is to no purpose, unless it be simply to reveal the nakedness of his own self contradictory posture.—*Secondly*, the advocacy in question is still farther at fault in the use it allows itself to make, supplementally, of Christian antiquity. The practice of infant baptism in the early Church grew forth, organically we might say, from a certain theory of Christianity itself, which stands out more or less clearly to view in all the doctrines and institutions of the Church at the time. It was no separate fact merely, resting on naked precept and tradition; it belonged to the life of the universal system in which it had place; its proper significance and force stood in its relations, its theological connections, its ecclesiastical surroundings. But now, in the case before us, no sort of regard is paid to this most obvious

and simple thought. Puritanism as a general thing, if we may believe at least *some* of its witnesses, owns no agreement or sympathy with the mind of the early Church, as this meets us in the Apostles' Creed, considers its theory of Christianity superstitious, and repudiates especially out and out its imagination of grace in the Sacraments. And yet, in controversy with the Baptists, this same Puritanism appeals to the practice of the early Church in favor of infant baptism, and tries to eke out its *Bible* argument, otherwise most impotent and lame, by the convenient help here offered in the way of tradition! But this is unfair, and may be justly charged with practical equivocation. It is like the trick of arguing from the mere sound of a text in the Scriptures, without any regard to the sense required by its context. What right have those who refuse the ecclesiastical context of infant baptism, as it stood in the early Church, to go thither in quest of testimonies and authorities in favor of it, as it now happens to be in authority among themselves under a wholly different view? They pervert in such case what they are pleased to cite and quote, by sundering the fact in question from its necessary connections, and forcing it to stand in other connections altogether, that actually make it to carry a new sense. When Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, &c., are pressed into service as witnesses, by this unchurchly and unsacramental school, they are always of course turned more or less into the character of wire-worked puppets; and the shrewd Baptist may well be excused for his smile of sarcastic triumph, as he charges home on *such* adversaries the double inconsistency, first of calling in the aid of any tradition whatever, and then of wresting this tradition out of all its living articulations to make it fit for their own use.—And this brings into view finally the *third* defect belonging to the school. In thus refusing and disowning the connections out of which infant baptism sprang in the beginning, it shows itself insensible also to the true interior sense and reason of it in its own nature. Only in the character of a grace-bearing sacrament, according to the view taken of it by the early Church, and only in connection with the idea of an objective salvation in Christ commensurate with the entire tract of our human life from infancy to old age, can baptism be vindicated rationally as the proper privilege of infants. Renounce this old theory of Christianity, and it is no longer possible to make any satisfactory stand here against the plausible reasonings of the Baptists. If baptism be a mere outward confession on the part of the subject, or if it be a sign simply of certain things which must be brought to pass by human thought and will, no good

reason certainly can be assigned for employing it in the case of infants. Those accordingly who deny baptismal grace, making the rite thus to be in reality no sacrament at all but only an outward law or rule of Divine appointment, show themselves unable always to meet the demands of this controversy, and in truth betray it, as we have before said, into the hands of the Baptists. As a mere sign, infant baptism has no authority in the Bible, no sanction in ancient church practice, and no apology in reason or common sense.

Where such low view of the sacrament has come to prevail, pædo-baptism falls necessarily into the character of a simple ecclesiastical tradition, and is looked upon as a sort of outward custom only, which it is not becoming to make the subject of any very earnest zeal one way or another. No special stress accordingly is laid upon it in a practical view; no special regard is had to it in the subsequent training of children. Pains are taken rather to make it of no effect for the purposes of Christianity. It is treated as a nullity. All faith in it as Christ's act, is carefully discouraged; and the first object oftentimes would seem to be to smother and crush in the baptized child all sense of privilege on the score of such adoption into God's family, and to substitute for it the sense of membership only and wholly in the family of Satan. We have heard a Presbyterian minister say publicly on this very subject: That he would consider it a calamity to have his children make any account of their baptism in this view. The sacrament to his mind palpably had no force whatever, except as the thing signified by it might be brought to pass subsequently, from a wholly different quarter and in a wholly different way; in order to which, the more it could itself be kept out of sight, in the meantime, the better. How is it possible, where practice thus gives the lie to all the mystery should mean, to show any proper zeal, or constancy, or ability, in its defence? Infant baptism, like the question of sprinkling, becomes a mere circumstance, lying on the outside of the "evangelical system," in which all spiritual christians, be they Baptist or Pædo-baptist, may still join happily with one and the same mind; provided only they have grace enough not to fall out by the way, over a matter of such subordinate worth. No wonder in these circumstances, that the cause of the Baptists, should eat like a cancer, and send its rationalistic roots forth far and wide into the life of the Church. No wonder that the ceremony of baptizing infants, even among those who are still nominally its friends, should seem to grow more loose and rickety in actual practice; though we confess we were not pre-

pared for some astounding results on this subject, which have been lately brought into view from an examination of the statistical reports published by the last O. S. Presbyterian Assembly. The Episcopalians quote the fact in proof of a sad falling away from sound church feeling: while the Baptists echo it triumphantly, as a lively illustration of the variance which exists between the piety of the age and the force of this old tradition, as well as a pleasing evidence that it is destined soon to pass away entirely in the universal prevalence of their own truly rational faith. In any view it deserves attention.

Infant baptism taken as a mere abstract rite or usage, can never maintain its ground. As it grows from the church system, so it can never thrive or prosper truly save in the bosom of this system. It is properly but the initiative of all that is comprehended in a true church life, as a process of preparation for heaven. Take away the idea of this process, as something needed to carry forward and complete what is thus begun, and the true sense of the sacrament is gone. Infant baptism assumes the possibility of educational religion, under the special appliances of the Church, and looks to it as its own necessary complement. The idea of *confirmation* is required to bring it to its true and full sense. Where faith remains at all in its character as a sacrament, it will be felt to carry in it a demand for such personal acknowledgment and response on the part of its subject, at the proper time, under the hand of the Church; which in such case will not be viewed as a new and independent transaction, however, but rather as the natural and suitable close of the baptismal act itself. Let the idea of confirmation, on the other hand, be strange to the mind of any part of the Church, and the continuity lost sight of thus that should hold of right between the beginning of infant baptism and its proper end, and it will be found that to the same extent the institution itself is shorn of its significance and turned into an empty form.

Mr. Noel advocates free communion, as it is called, in opposition to the more strict practice generally observed among his Baptist brethren. His liberality in this respect rests, consistently enough, on the low view he takes of the sacraments. They are both for him mere acts of profession appointed by Christ, which have their whole use in the opportunity they give for "fulfilling righteousness" or complying with a rule of duty. Christianity itself, standing in the work of the Spirit and a corresponding experience in the believer, has place before and beyond all such profession, when it is sincere, and is just as complete without it as with it. Baptism ought indeed to precede the use of the

Lord's supper. But still a good profession may be made under this last form alone; and in the case of really pious persons, baptized in infancy, or rather according to this system not baptized at all, but afterwards self-devoted to Christ at the Lord's table, Mr. Noel thinks the rule in regard to the first sacrament, (or *sign*,) may safely be overlooked, in favor of Christian brotherhood and peace. And over against the strict theory as held by Baptists, this way of looking at the matter strikes us certainly as very reasonable and right. For what can well be a greater contradiction, than first to sunder the sacraments completely from the life and substance of Christianity, making them to be in truth no *sacraments* at all but only signs or statutes; and then to make the use of them under a given form notwithstanding the rule and measure of all full Christian communion, to the exclusion of a large proportion of the actually acknowledged piety of the world. To make at once so little of the sacraments, and yet again so much, is no better than letter-stiff pedantry of the most thoroughly Jewish type. We once heard a Baptist minister take great pains, on a communion occasion, to strip the service of every sort of mystical sense, setting it in full parallel finally with the Monument of Bunker Hill; and yet when all was done we were not allowed to come nigh it, although just before invited to participate in the services of the pulpit in front of which the monumental transaction took place. We felt it a real relief however to be thus excluded; for so utterly shorn of all true sacramental character did the altar appear in our eyes, that we could hardly have felt at liberty in our own mind to approach it as an altar at all. Strange and absurd exclusiveness, we felt at the time and still feel, which *includes* for its central mystery so poor a shadow!

We do not like the system of the Baptists. It overthrows the true idea of the Church. It makes the sacraments of no effect, and virtually destroys them altogether. It turns the whole gospel thus into a form different from that which it had in the beginning. The mystical side of Christianity is made to perish under its hands; while in every direction a cold calculating rationalism is offered to us in its stead. We do not wonder that it found so little favor in the eyes of early Protestantism; and the change which has come over much of our later Protestantism in regard to it, we hold to be an occasion for anxiety and alarm rather than for congratulation.

In all this article, it will be observed, we have carefully refrained from the question, What specifically is the power of baptism in the case of infants? This question is now moving the

Church of England to its very foundations; and it is one undoubtedly of the most profound and far reaching interest, for the general theology and church life of the age. But we meddle not with it here, any farther than to assert the fact of grace objectively present in the sacrament under *some* form. Allowing this, there is room still for a difference of view in regard to its precise nature; just as there is room for a similar difference also in regard to the specific power of the Lord's supper. All such difference however comes of right *after* the question, whether there be any such mystic force at all in these solemnities *under any form*. It is with this first general question only, that we have been here concerned. The Baptists, and a large class besides whom we may style Crypto-baptists, as agreeing with them in principle while opposing them in form, most deliberately and distinctly empty the baptismal laver of all mystical sense, see in it only common water, and acknowledge in it no power or force whatever aside from the mental exercises of the baptized subject; which of course turns it into idle mummery as applied to infants. This sweeping and wholesale judgment it is, as it meets us in Mr. Noel's book, that we wish to protest against as unscriptural and false. It is at war with the Bible, with the true idea of the Church, with all Christian antiquity, and with the proper voice of the Reformation. We know that there are great difficulties attending the subject of baptismal grace. But let us not think to escape these, by throwing ourselves into the arms of Rationalism. Whether we can solve them satisfactorily or not, we are still bound, in the way of preliminary faith, to accept the mystery of such grace itself; since the only alternative to this, is to give up the doctrine of the holy sacraments altogether, in the old church sense, and so to bring in another gospel.

J. W. N.

THE OLD PALATINATE LITURGY OF 1563.

(Continued.)

Under the impression that the summary of the Catechism, named in the former article upon this subject, consisted of extracts from the "*Compendium*," attached to some of our English Hymn Books, (as also to those of the Reformed Dutch