

the offices proper to that Ministry, to wit:—"baptism, and all things whatsoever I have commanded you," pledging to His Apostles, whom He had thus particularly called and commissioned, His special personal presence and sanction, to the end of time, and that—to the exclusion of all others, save those to whom, through their (the Apostles) delegated authority, the like powers were duly entrusted—the privileges of the Christian Priesthood were guarded as special and exclusive down to the close of the New Testament Canon.

Beyond the Old and New Testament Canon there has been, confessedly, no extra revelation of the Divine Will. It stands, therefore, as our necessary and ultimate authority, and the "*articles*," if agreeable to that Canon, must utter the same truth; and where they do, they must be received as declaring to us the *law of God*, not the law of man.

Now in her xxiii Art. the Church speaks thus expressly:—"It is *not lawful*" (i.e., according to the premiss laid down, contrary to the law of God "for any man to take upon him the office of . . . ministering the sacraments" (of which baptism is one) "before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same."

Why? Because the law relating to such ministrations is in Christ's *institution* of them! It bases itself on His declared will and command, and cannot by any, save Himself, be further limited or extended.

It reaches, moreover, equally to all the official duties embraced in the words of His commission, and may not be dealt with partially, as if one part of the imposed duty stood on lower or higher ground than another.

If, therefore, "Go ye," (Matth. xxviii, 19.) in its connection with "Lo, I am with you always," involves the exclusive right to the priesthood as transmitted by lawful authority, so much so that a man cannot be a Christian priest without it—then assuredly the same words as coupled with the duty of baptizing are of *equal force*, and by parity of reason, exclude all others, save those who are in that commission, from intermeddling with the sacrament.

It is not enough that a man "take not this honor on himself," or that he be "sent"—he must be "*lawfully called*," "agreeably to God's word" and "the institution of Christ." The Church, in her Article assumes that there is a Divine law on the subject, and that none save those "*who have public authority given to them*," i. e., the Bishops (see preface to the Ordinal) can dispense this law.

The question then arises—are lay baptizers duly or in any way thus "called and sent?" If not, they have taken this thing upon themselves, and the judgment of the Church is that their ministration is "*not lawful*," i. e., contrary to the law of God. Now, if it be contrary to law, for we here speak of the law of Christ, it must be *sinful*, [1 John iii, 4], and to admit "*validity*" as its result is to assume that the grace of God—alho' affected to be conveyed contrary to His will and commandment—is *actually given* through the medium of a sinful act; that the blessing of baptism, whose ultimate design and purpose it is to make men holy, is, by God's spirit, communicated by means openly antagonistic to the rule and spirit of holiness—an assumption altogether gratuitous, because not warranted by the word of God.