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## THE MISSION OF THE COMFORTER.

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“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” — ST. JOHN iii. 8.



HERE is an important difference between the three first Gospels and the fourth. The three first speak of the facts relating to our Lord's Incarnation as historical truth: St. John deals with their mysterious and sacramental character. We may observe this difference in the very opening of the Gospels. St. Matthew, after connecting our Lord with the royal house of David, simply tells the story of his birth. St. Mark, omitting this as already told, enters almost at once on his ministry. St. Luke, after recounting more fully the history of St. John the Baptist, gives us the particulars which, possibly, he had received from the Blessed Virgin herself, of the Lord's Incarnation, and all the attendant circumstances. But St. John (as the fathers speak) lightens upon us at once like a flash from a thunder-cloud: “In the beginning was the Word.” And without pausing to explain why he made use of that expression, he adds, “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” What depths of eternal greatness and wisdom are here unfolded; what a mighty mysterious revelation of the Eternal mind, in a few verses, in language transparently simple, in depth of meaning wholly unfathomable!

The same difference of treatment is apparent in St. John's account of the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The three first Evangelists (with very slight variations) furnish us with the same account of our Lord's baptism; St. Matthew and St. Mark record the general commission to baptize all nations. All three Evangelists record the institution of the Lord's Supper; St. Luke according perfectly with the account of St. Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians. St. John does not record the institution of the Lord's Supper at