

Christ. The head governs and directs each limb, and Christ is the sovereign lawgiver of each believer in him. To be joined to the head makes the whole body one animal frame, and to be joined to Christ makes the whole body of Christians one spiritual society. Communication with the head is necessary to preserve animal life, and communion with Christ is necessary to support our religious life. Christ therefore is to the Church what the head is to the body, and each person who belongs to the Church is a member of that body, or in the language of the Catechism, "a member of Christ." For he, as St. Paul tells us, is "the head, from which all the body having nourishment ministered, and knit together by joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God."

By the second privilege of Baptism we are made "the children of God" in a sense different from what we are by nature,—for we are "by nature born in sin and the children of wrath," that is, liable to the wrath or punishment of God. Adam our first parent was the Son of God by a strong resemblance to his Heavenly Father in original righteousness. But this resemblance was obscured both in him and his descendants by his fall, and in time was almost entirely lost by the prevalence of sin, so that men became, in general "enemies of God," and children of the Devil. But our merciful Father, pitying us even as a father pitieth his own children, appointed a method of adopting us into his family after we had cast ourselves out of it, and of restoring and gradually raising us to the same likeness and to the same favour as was enjoyed by our first parents. This inestimable blessing was procured to us through the means of Jesus Christ, and we become entitled to it by taking him for our head in the manner which has been already explained. For "to as many as receive him (says St. John) to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name." Being thus united to him who is in the highest sense, the Son of God, and claiming it, not in our own, but in his name, we are again admitted to be the children of God in such a degree as we are capable of, "by faith in Jesus Christ." "Behold then what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," especially when we consider the consequences drawn by St. Paul, "If children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." This is what is asserted in the Catechism to be third privilege of Baptism. That we are thereby made "Inheritors of the Kingdom of God." By an inheritor is of course meant an heir, and consequently a title to perfect and endless happiness both of body and soul in Heaven. Had we continued in the primitive uprightness of our first Parents, and never sinned at all we could even then have had no claim, except from God's free promise, to any thing more than that our existence should not be worse to us than non-existence.