

tians met in secrecy, as they often did, to perform an act of homage to him who died for their offences and rose again for their justification, and to feast on the remembrances of his love, it never occurred to them to think, whether the validity of their simple act of duty and gratitude depended on the brother who officiated. The great object in claiming for priests qualifications necessary to render sacraments valid, is to encrease power, and history tells us that to augment the power of the church by making the efficiency of ordinances depend upon her ministers, is to destroy the gospel. It is high time that the institutions of the new economy, at once so sublime and so simple, were stript of every thing like superstition and priestcraft, and observed agreeably to their original intention, as means of presenting the Lord Jesus to the faith and the love of believers.

## OF BAPTISM.

The foregoing remarks have been made respecting Sacraments *generally*. Those that follow respect baptism in *particular*.

The parties concerned in the baptism of a child are three, the Church, —the parent or parents—and the child. To all three, baptism has an important reference.

I. Of Baptism so far as the Church is concerned.

It has been already stated that baptism, as being a sacrament, symbolizes certain important truths. Without aiming at great minuteness, the truths enshrined in the sacrament may be stated as the two following.

1. The Baptism of a child symbolizes the universal corruption of human nature.

Nothing can more clearly set forth the doctrine of original sin than the baptism of an infant. An infant, it is obvious, can have no sin of its own committing; it is not capable of entertaining a sinful thought, or a sinful wish, or of performing a sinful act. It is, so far as its own personal actions are concerned, an innocent creature, and yet that little innocent needs to be washed. There is about it, something which needs to be removed; and that something can be removed only by the blood which was shed for the remission of sins. (To attempt to explain how sin is in an infant is not at present intended; what we have chiefly to do with is the fact, that all men are by nature corrupted, and that this corruption can be removed only by the atoning blood of Christ. What is matter of fact now, has been matter of fact all the way back to the first birth.) The baptism of an infant is a public recognition of this fact by the church. Were we to search for proofs in support of the doctrine of original sin, where could we find any more conclusive, any more impressive than those which are furnished by infant baptism. These proofs do not partake so much of the nature of arguments, as of facts, which cannot be contradicted.

The doctrine of original sin lies at the foundation of christian theology, and also of practical goodness; and an avowal of it is the first thing done when a person is declared to belong to the family of Christ. The sacrament