

Infant Baptism.

Before the Reformation of the Church of England the Services of the Church were not to be found, as now, in one volume, but were in different books. Moreover, the same Services were not in use all over England, but there were various "Uses" in the different Dioceses. In other words, there was no "uniformity" as regarded the Services, but each Bishop had the ordering of the Services for his own Diocese.

In the Preface to the Prayer Book, "Concerning the Service of the Church," we find these various "Uses" referred to in the following words: "And whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in Churches within this Realm—some following Salisbury Use, some Hereford Use, and some the Use of Bangor; some of York, some of Lincoln,—now from henceforth all the whole Realm shall have but one Use." Now amongst these various "Uses" of the Church before the Reformation, that of Salisbury seems to have been the most general; that is to say, the Service books in use in the Diocese of Salisbury were used in a great part of the Kingdom. We will therefore refer to this "Use" and ask, Was there any provision in these Services for the Baptizing of Infants? Was Infant Baptism a practice of the Church of England before the Reformation?

We have already said that the Services of the Church were not to be found in one book, but in many. Thus the Service for the celebration of the Holy Communion was found in the "Missal." The Services for the different hours were in the "Breviary." The "Pontifical" contained those offices which could only be administered by the Bishop, such as the Ordination and Confirmation offices. Another of these Service books was the "Manual." This contained the occasional offices, and it is with this that we have more especially to do now; for in it, among others, was the Baptismal Service. We ask then, Was the Baptism of Infants recognized by this Service book? The very fact that a Baptismal Service appears there would seem to prove that it was. But to set any doubts at rest, let the Service speak for itself. At the beginning of that Service the question was asked of the sponsors, whether the *child* had been already baptized. Again, in the Service is an address to the sponsors, in English, as follows: "God-fathers and Godmothers of this *child*, we charge you that ye charge the father and mother to keep it from fire and water and other perils, to the age of vii. years; and that ye learn, or see it be learned, the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria and Credo, after the law of all holy Church, and in all goodly haste to be confirmed of my Lord of the Diocese."

Again (showing how necessary the baptism of children was considered in those days), this same Service enjoined that each parish priest should often, on the Sunday, set forth to his parishioners the form of baptizing, in order that, if need be, they might know how to baptize infants. The form which they were to use was this: "I cristene thee N. in the name of the Fader, and of the Sone, and of the Holy Gost, Amen;" sprinkling water on the child, or dipping it in the water thrice, or once at least.

These quotations are enough to prove that "Infant Baptism" was the practice of the Church during the use of this Service book. We ask now, When was this "Sarum," or Salisbury "Use," compiled? Concerning this there is little doubt, for history tells us. It seems that after the Norman conquest (1066) the best bishoprics in England were given to Norman Churchmen. These Normans brought with them into England a new style of chanting, which they endeavoured to force upon the Church of England in place of the ancient Gregorian chanting, which had been in use in England from the sixth century. The forcible attempt made by Thurstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, to introduce this innovation among the monks was resisted, and a scene of violence and bloodshed ensued. This outrage seems to have drawn the attention of Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, to the different services in use in the different Churches. When his new Cathedral was opened he undertook a revision of all the Service books in use. He collected together a number of Clergy learned and skilled in chanting, and carefully remodelled the existing offices; and so came about what has since been known as the "Use of Sarum," which was in general use in many Dioceses in England before the Reformation. This took place in the year 1085, that is, soon after the Norman conquest. This carries us back 800 years, or 500 years before the Reformation; and during these 800 years "Infant Baptism" was the undoubted practice of the Church.

But this "Service for the Baptizing of Infants" in the "Sarum Manual" was not a new Service; for it was, in turn, founded upon existing services, just as our present Baptismal Service was partly founded upon the Sarum.

We shall proceed, in our next issue, to show that "Infant Baptism" was the practice of the Church before the Norman conquest.

Sidesmen have been duly appointed at Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton, who will, amongst other duties, look after the comfort of worshippers at the mother Church. This is an excellent move in the right direction.

The "Chronicle" printed a very valuable table of Sunday School statistics in the March number, which no doubt will be added to.