

The Beginning of the Mystery of Iniquity.—The Great Anchorage of Priestcraft.

The "mystery of iniquity" that began to corrupt Christianity in the days of Paul, (2 Thess. ii., vii.) was probably developed in the latter part of the third century, by the introduction of two monstrous errors relative to baptism. *First*, the mystical efficacy of baptism to remove original sin, change the moral state of the subject, and procure pardon. This error lies at the foundation of Romanism, Puseyism, the Greek Church, Lutheranism in Europe, High Church Episcopacy, and every ecclesiastical hierarchy in the world. A *second* error was, that if a person committed "mortal sin" after baptism, he could not be forgiven. The first error, by making baptism essential to salvation from original sin, laid the foundation for infant baptism, and for *affusion*, or copiously wetting the person in case of extreme necessity. The second error influenced many persons, for fear of sinning, to delay baptism till late in life.

The first great error, "the mystical efficacy of baptism," was taught by Cyprian, A. D. 254; by Ambrose, A. D. 330; by Chrysostom, A. D. 398 and by many other of "THE FATHERS." Yet infant baptism, when extensively introduced, was still performed on a *profession of faith*—not made by the unconscious babe—but by proxy, or sponsors! These persons, as surety, *professed*, on behalf of the child "to renounce the devil and all his works;" to repent, and believe the gospel!!! THE GRAND-FATHERS—the Apostles, taught no such absurdities.

The great principle that FAITH AND REPENTANCE *should precede and accompany the taking of the Christian name or profession* BY BAPTISM, is certainly here recognized, but with strange fatuity, and in the teeth of Scripture and common sense, the believing and repenting are, by a *foolish* PRIESTLY FICTION, assumed to be done by one person, and the rite, which according to scripture should be performed only upon the believing and repenting, is done to another! Why is this tom-foolery kept up from age to age? Why do rational beings submit thus to be hoaxed, when they have the Bible to enlighten and direct them?

"The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so."—Jer. v. 31.—THE ABOVE ERROR FORMS THE VERY SHEET ANCHOR OF PRIESTCRAFT. But the millions of "the orthodox"—Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and others—go even further aside in one particular than the other; for they dis-associate altogether faith and repentance from the rite of baptism, or in a modified sense, and by a silly fiction, ground it upon *the faith of the parents*! Why this tenacious adherence to an unscriptural usage on the part of religious teachers? Why? *Because Sectarian interests are sub-served by it*; numbers are kept up and the priests are sustained.—Hence the common expression that one is born a Presbyterian, another a Churchman, and a third a Methodist, meaning that as soon as born they are caught, in the Sectarian trap of their respective priests, and become, almost necessarily, just what their fathers were before them. "Train up a child in the way it should go," is a divine command: but it should not be trained to be a Sectarian, but a Christian. It should be directed to the Bible as the source of religious intelligence, and when the individual understands and believes the Gospel, he should be united to the Church of Christ by bap-

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