

The figure and phraseology employed are, beyond all question, purely legal. "*instrument,*" "*signed,*" "*sealed.*" The impression, therefore, to be conveyed, unless these words are used lightly or without meaning, must be correspondent with the terms employed. Moreover, the *benefits* are not made receivable under *any* circumstances, but are carefully restricted to one specified and unvarying condition viz.—"That receive baptism *rightly.*"

To the due execution of this "*instrument*" there must be two parties—1st Christ (*for the grace is His,*) acting either personally or by his accredited attorney, on the one side—for who can sign and seal on the part of God, save he who is commissioned by him to that effect? And the party baptized, acknowledging by himself or proxy, the sacrament ministered!

Admitted—that a "*pledge*" can be given vicariously [this is the dissenter and layman plea], it is yet necessary that he who represents the *principal* should have and show warrant for what he does. He is dealing with that which belongs not to himself but to *another*, and the *will* or *consent* of that *other* must be assured to us, before we can take for granted the *validity* of such action. The Apostolical Ministry of the Church have unquestionably that authority and commission. [Matth. xxv. 19. 26.] It acts by special provision of the law of Christ. These acts, therefore, we receive as "*lawful,*" and by equal reason *valid* and effectual.

But where the actors are not accredited, have, in fact, no certified authority to sign and seal for Christ, there we, who have as our guide the Holy Scripture which give no such license, must account such ministrations as intrusive and invalid. We may not, even in our charity, go beyond the word of God, and *that word* gives no authority to laics to baptize.

This, evidently, is implied in the language of the article above quoted.

The xxxvii Article is of the same purport.

"We give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's word, or of the sacraments." Why? because these officers are, [Art. xxxiii], by a Divine order, the peculiar and exclusive prerogative of those who are "*lawfully called and sent to execute the same.*"

They are spiritual and divine, and no mere secular person, however exalted in rank, may trespass upon them.

The Prince is, unquestionably, the representative layman of his realm—*i. e.* if a churchman. Certainly, as a layman he has not less privilege or right, in this matter, than any of his subjects. As the territorial and political head of the Church he has the very first place. Yet—whether it were the insanely aggressive Henry VIII—or the somewhat mongrel followers who, in latter days, claim his sovereignty, the laic stands excluded.

The very prince, the representative man of laymen may not, by the law of the Church, minister a sacrament—for we give it not even to our "*Princes*"—a very strange exclusion, if the validity of baptism by laics be, in any wise, admitted.

To say that he may take what is not "*given*" is to do violence to the plain teaching and law of the Church. For, in the preface to the Ordinal, which to us clergymen is of legal obligation, the Church unequivocally determines that "*no*