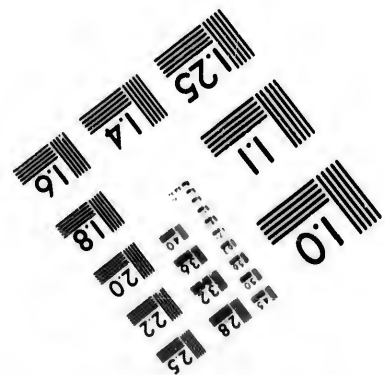
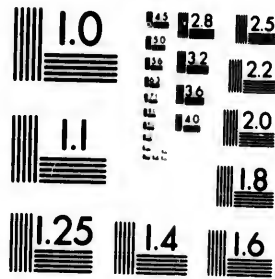


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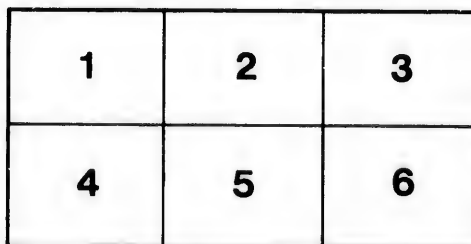
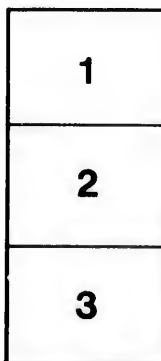
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TWO LETTERS

TO THE

LORD BISHOP OF ONTARIO

ON THE QUESTION

IS LAY BAPTISM VALID?

—BY—

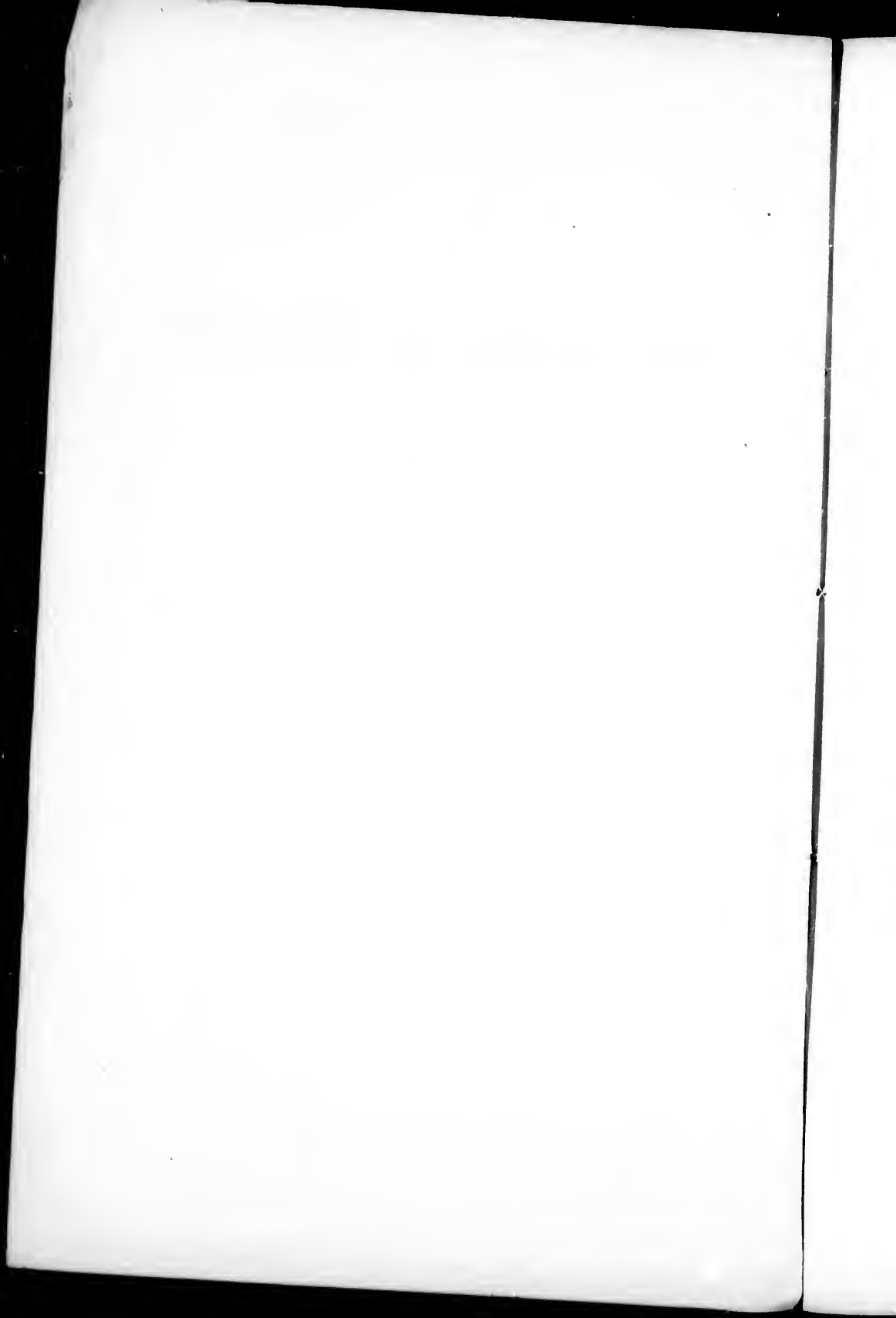
CHARLES FOREST, M.A.,

*Rector of Williamsburgh, Ont.*

Ottawa:

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1876.



*To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Ontario :*

My Lord,—Often as the season for confirmation comes round, serious doubts arise as to the baptismal qualification of certain candidates for that solemn rite. Persons present themselves of whom, as touching their baptism, it is impossible to say that "all has been well done and according to due order," inasmuch as the agency, by which it was alleged to be administered, was *not* a "lawful" one; and *no inherent or derived right* existed in the agent, to "*sign and seal for Christ.*"

With some, if such there be, who regard Baptism as little more than a *ceremony*, as simply a passport to external Church fellowship, these doubts may not be oppressive; but to those who regard it purely as a *Sacrament*—a deeply solemn covenant act, involving spiritual issues, and obligations binding on both contracting parties,—the burden of doubt is *very grievous* indeed.

Both reason and conscience forbid the belief, on their part, that indefiniteness as to the truth involved, or absolute license as to the means of realizing that truth, can possibly characterize the economy of Christ. On the contrary, they firmly hold that the dispensation of "the manifold wisdom of God,"—and surely the sacraments find place here!—has been given to "the Church" (Eph. ii. 9, 10) and that, apart from this divinely instituted organization and ministry, they have no warrant for assuming that God will co-operate with man in rendering available the wonders of His grace.

The question then arises, has the "Church" in her *full corporate* capacity ever given authority for the practice of lay-baptism? Can any *General Council* of the Church, *i. e.*, which is properly received as such, be quoted as justifying it?—or any Ecclesiastical action, prior to that taken, on a wrong basis, by the Church of Rome, be pleaded in vindication of the theory, "all men, aye, or women, may baptize?" If not, on what grounds are such unauthorized acts recognized? In how far can we honestly be parties to the supposition, that grace—as yet unreceived in the divinely appointed way—can be recognized and strengthened in the subsequent ordinance of confirmation. *Men usually confirm that which exists*, not that, the existence of which they doubt.

The rebaptization of heretics in early days, and, in one instance, the occurrence of a lay-baptism, (A.D. 305), have served, with many, to encourage a laxity of thought as to this subject. It will be the purpose of these letters fairly to discuss the merits of these exceptional cases, and—so far as may be—to set forth the present position of the Church of England on this important matter.

I begin with the exceptional cases—

(a) The case of heretical Baptism.

The right to minister in Divine things was, by the early Church, (*see Iqna-tive's Epistles, passim*), held to consist not in personal, but in *authoritative* qualification for the ministerial office. It was based exclusively on the *Apostolical Commission*. It was considered that faith and piety, although required of all who would obtain, through Christ, grace and blessing, from God, did not of themselves ensure *Ministerial* authority: else every Christian man would, by his very Christianity, be also (as to all official acts) a Priest of the Church; but that his *comission*, duly derived from those qualified to impart it, *did convey a right of office*, and qualify the recipient for the discharge of every duty, which properly fell within the compass of that office.

Now, the heretics, above referred to, were not Laymen, but *bishops, priests* and *deacons*, men who had indeed lapsed into various degrees of error, and had, in some instances, seriously corrupted "the faith," but who, nevertheless, could claim and prove their right, through Episcopal consecration or ordination, to a part in the Apostolic Ministry.

I mention this, because passages are often quoted from the controversies of that early day, which forbid re-baptization: but which, in fact, have nothing to do with the question of Lay-baptism. This may be made clear by the following syllogistic argument of S. Basil:—

1. Those whom a Laic baptizeth are to be re-baptized:
2. But, those whom a Heretick baptizeth, a Laic baptizeth:
3. Therefore, such also are to be re-baptized."

This Syllogism was met by *denying the minor* proposition: *e.g.*—Baptism by Hereticks is not Lay-baptism, inasmuch as there exists in them the qualification of orders:—therefore Baptism by Hereticks, thus qualified, is not to be iterated. (*Hieron. Dial. adver. Lucif.*)

(b) The next exceptional case is that which involves Baptism as administered by Laics, in communion with the Church, and acting (in cases of *necessity*) under warrant or *sanction of their bishops*.

How far bishops, who—under Christ—are the source of all legitimate authority and action to the Church, in Divine things, can act *vicariously*, is a question perhaps not easy to determine. Nor is it necessary to our argument that it should be here discussed. It is enough if we prove that in the solitary instance (so far as we can find) in which Lay-baptism is formally recognized in primitive days, its efficacy is made dependent—not on the good will, faith or any other inherent quality in the baptizer, but—on the *sanction and authority of the Bishops*.

By that special sanction the Bishops assumed that it became *their act*. It was, in intent, an extension, under peculiar circumstances and to a specific end, of their official powers. And, by consequence, cannot be pleaded in justification of acts which are performed *not only without Episcopal license, but in open defiance of it*.

The instance to which we refer is that afforded by the Council of Eliberis, Spain, A.D. 305. In its 38th Canon, it says, "A Christian who is *not under penance*, nor a bigamist, may baptize, in case of *necessity*, those who are *on a journey*, being at a great distance from a church, upon condition that he present him to the Bishop, if he survive, to be *perfected*, by imposition of hands."



It may be remarked here: 1st That this rule is purely a *Provincial* one, and as such never had, or could have, force beyond the immediate jurisdiction of the bishops who enacted it; 2nd that, if it availed at all (which is questionable) it could avail only to those who were "Christians" in due and approved communion with the Church—["*not under penance, &c.*"]; 3rd that it is altogether exceptional in its provisions and cannot extend beyond them; 4th that its sanction involves submission to Episcopal authority both as to the act itself of baptizing, and as to the after presentation of the baptized for confirmation by the Bishop. 2

I may, perhaps, be pardoned if a remark be introduced here on the word "*perfected*," as used in the above Canon.

It has been thought by some to imply that *what may have been lacking or improperly done*, in the act of Baptism, might (on the strength of this word) be supplemented and *made good by the further act of confirmation*. This was not the meaning of the ancient Church! They meant what the Church means now, what the apostles meant in the case of the baptized in Samaria, viz:—that Baptism had not received the fulness of its blessing; until the apostolic grace had been superadded to the earlier grace of "new birth"; until the *seven-fold gift of the Spirit* had been sealed to them, strengthening and establishing them in their now freshly consecrated life; and (as to the general body of the faithful), until *evidence, given before the highest officer of the Church*, warranted their admission to those higher privileges which, in truth, constitute the greatest, because *heavenly*, riches of Christ's people.

In all this, however, we find no warrant for Lay-baptism in its indiscriminate or modern form.

I pass by those cases of Miric Baptisms, *e. g.*, that by Athanasius when a child at play, as given by Sozomen (*Ecc. His. lib. 2*) from *hear-say*; and that of the Histrionic players at Alexandria, as recorded by Vossius (*de Baptism. disp. 2*). We set aside also the decisions of the many councils which, during the Cyprianic controversy, took action against Heretics and Schismatics,—for the presumption holds good that these possessed the grace of orders.

As bearing immediately upon the point at issue, I quote the following authorities:—

The Third Council of Carthage, A. D. 398, Canon 100, says: "A woman ought not to take upon her to baptize."

S. Chrysostom, (*Lib 3, de Sacram. c. 5*) says that Baptism can be "no more administered by a *Laiic* than the Eucharist; . . . all these are things which can be administered by *no other hands*, but by those *sacred hands alone*, the hands, I say, of the *Priest*."

S. Basil, Bishop of C. . . . A. D. 369. "Those whom a *Laiic* baptizeth are to be re-baptized."

Apocryphical Canons 38. "We order, that a bishop, priest or deacon, who has received Baptism from an heretic, be deposed." Why?

Can. 39. "If a bishop or priest do again baptize one who *has really* received Baptism before; or if he *do not baptize* one that has been polluted by wicked men, let him be deposed, as one that makes *no distinction* betwixt *priests* and *pretenders*."

The 8th Canon of the Council of Arles, A.D. 314, and the 19th of that of Nicea are [so far as the officiant is concerned] to the same effect.

(c) The third point above referred to—the dogma, from which originated the past and present practice of the Church of Rome—remains to be considered, viz: that the reception of Baptism is *absolutely necessary* to salvation.

Forgetting that *positive* Divine institutions impose obligations only in proportion to man's ability to act upon them; that "God requireth according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which a man hath not," the Roman Church assumed that, in every case, and under all possible circumstances, baptism was indispensable. Even *infants*, who had committed no actual sin, yet dying unbaptized, were consigned to a special division of the infernal world, called the "limbus infantum."

This gave rise to an intense anxiety in regard to this sacrament, an anxiety which, urging men beyond Primitive or Catholic usage, forced them—through mistaken charity—to adopt any agency, however unhallowed, rather than incur the penalty of a doom so fearful and apparently so certain.

"Minister hujus Sacramenti est sacerdos, cui ex officio competit baptizare. In *constr* autem *necessitatibus*, non solum Sacerdos, vel diaconus, sed etiam *Laiicus*, vel *mulier*, imo etiam *Paganus* et *Hereticus* baptizare potest."

So spake Rome by the mouth of Pope Eugenius in his decree to the Arminians. Hence, then, the practice, afterwards so prevalent in the Romish Church of lay administration of baptism, a practice which through Rome, and on the basis of her authority, came into the Church of England.

That it was an error, however, is evident from the judgment of the Primitive Church in regard to those who, being yet *unbaptized*, had suffered martyrdom for Christ. Their *faith* and *constancy* were deemed a guarantee of their acceptance with God. So also in the case of Catechumens who died without this Sacrament. No doubt was entertained of their being within compass of salvation by Christ.

S. Bernard, as quoted by Hooker, [*Lib. v. cap. 60*], is clear on this point:—  
 "If a man desirous of baptism be suddenly cut off by death, in whom there wanted neither sound faith, devout hope, nor sincere charity, [God forgive me if I err], but verily of such a one's salvation...despair I cannot, nor induce my mind to think his faith void, his hope confounded and his charity fallen to nothing, only because he hath not that which not contempt, but impossibility withholdeth."

S. Ambrose also—"Tell me, I beseech you, what there is in any of us more than to will, and to seek for our own good. Thy servant, O Lord, did both." [For Valentinian the Emperor died before his purpose to receive baptism could take effect.] "And is it possible, that he which *had purposely Thy Spirit* given him to desire *grave*, should not receive Thy grace which *that Spirit did desire*?" "Doth it move you that the outward accustomed solemnities were not done?" "As though converts that suffer martyrdom before baptism did thereby forfeit their right to the crown of eternal glory in the kingdom of heaven. If the blood of martyrs in that case, be their baptism, surely his religious desire of baptism standeth him in the same stead. [*Lib. v. cap. 60*]."

In opposition to the error of the Church of Rome, the belief of the Primitive Church, and as truly the belief of our own, is given with sufficient distinctness, by the judicious Hooker. [*Lib. v. cap. 60*].

"Seeing, that to all professors of the name of Christ, this pre-eminence above  
 "infidels is freely given, viz,—that fruit of their body bringeth into the world  
 "with it a *present interest* and *right* [*Cor. vii. 14*] to those means wherewith  
 " [the ordinance of Christ is, that] His Church shall be sanctified, *it is not to be*  
 " *thought* that he which, as it were, from Heaven, hath *nominated* and *assigned* them  
 " unto holiness, by *special privilege of their very birth*, will Himself deprive them  
 " of regeneration and inward grace, only *because necessity* depriveth them of the  
 " outward Sacrament."

Bishop Taylor, treating of baptism by mid-wives, *i. e.*, Lay-baptism, is still more express:—

"This custom came in at a *wrong door*. It leaned upon a *false and super-*  
 " *stitious* opinion; and they [*i. e.* the Romanists] thought it better to *inval* the  
 " *priest's office*, than to trust God with the souls which He made with His own  
 " hands, and redeemed with His Son's Blood. But this custom was not to be  
 " followed, if it had still continued; for *even then* they confessed it to be *sin*.  
 " ["*Factum valet, fieri non debuit.*"] And evil ought not to be done for a good  
 " end. "No man baptizes but he that is in *holy orders*," said Simeon of Thessa-  
 " lonica; and, I think, he said truly." [*Ductor Dubitantium*, 4th edition, page  
 638].

And the good Bishop [page 198 of the above] says further:—

"In all *moral actions* there must be a substantial potestative principle that  
 " must have proportioned power to the effect. A thing cannot be done without  
 " a cause and principle in morality, any more than in nature. If a *woman* goes  
 " about to administer the Holy Eucharist, it is an *ineffective* hand. And it were  
 " wiser and better, if men will think the same thing of their giving baptism,  
 " *unless* they will confess that to *baptize children* is a *mere natural and secular action*  
 " to which natural powers are sufficient: or that women have received *spiritual*  
 " *powers* to do it, and that whether a priest or woman does it, is no difference, but  
 " matter of order only. If an *effect be spiritual*, the *agent* must be *spiritual* too."

The language of Bishop Taylor, above quoted, may be taken as a fair exposition of the judgment of the Church of England, as given in her rubrics, prefaces, articles, &c., as I hope hereafter to show.

Here, however, I would close this letter—first offering [in proof that Lay-baptism rests especially on the protection of the Church of Rome] the following authority:—

In the year of our Lord, 1166, *Lucas Chrysoberges*, held a General Council of the *Greek Church*, in Trullo, in the Imperial Palace at Constantinople, at which were present three Patriarchs, Lucas of Constantinople, Athanasius of Antioch, and Nicephorus of Jerusalem, together with fifty-seven Metropolitans, besides other bishops (*Cave's Hist Literaria*, Vol. 1, p. 676, and Vol. 2, p. 418).

Now in this Council of the *whole Greek Church* (vide Beveridge's *Pandects*, Vol. 2, p. 42, as taken from Blastar), Manuel, Bishop of Heraclen asked, "Whether he ought to receive, as one of the faithful, a person who had been baptized by a *Layman* who pretended to be in *Holy Orders*? Because there was such a case in his diocese." And the Council determined that such were to be re-baptized: because the ministry of baptism was committed *only* to *Bishops* and *Priests*, according to the 46th and 47th Apostolical Canons."

The voice of antiquity as well as the utterances of the Eastern Church of our later day, is evidently *against* the Romish dogma of Lay-Baptism. It will be my duty to show hereafter that the Church of England *equally* protects against Rome's innovation in this behalf.

I am, my Lord,

Yours respectfully,

CHARLES FOREST.



To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Ontario :

MY LORD,—It remains to be shown that the Church of England in her "prefaces," "rubrics," and "articles," protests—equally with the Greek Church—against mere lay-agency in the administration of baptism.

The "articles," be it remembered, are not simply terms of agreement, having only the significance which expediency or political utility may give them, but "*articles of religion*," essentially matters relating to God and His laws; and to all who subscribe them, they are of obligation as "containing the true doctrine of the Church of England *agreeable to God's word.*"

It follows, therefore, that what they account "*licit*" or "*licitum*" is to be understood by us as being, in the judgment of the Church, lawful or unlawful on the principles of religion:—otherwise, they cannot be "*agreeable to God's word.*"

In order, then, properly to appreciate their force, it may be well to consult that superior authority on which they profess to be founded, on reference to which certain most important facts, (all of them involving the same principle) are forced upon our attention, viz:—

- 1st. That under the Mosiac economy, no man—whatever the emergency—dare approach the Divine presence in the administration of His *positive institutions*, except those who were first duly called and authorized by God so to do.
- 2nd. That ministration in Divine things; and in the Christian dispensation, was founded on the axiom, "No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron," that is, by an *external commission* first given by God to Moses, and then by Moses, by Divine command, to His chosen priest.
- 3rd. That even Christ Himself, the great High Priest of our profession,—pressed as he was by the fearful necessities of a dying world, whom he came specially to save—even Christ Himself abstained from all official acts, and took not this office on himself, until, in the established order of God, He received His *commission* and inauguration thereto, from the hands of an officer, duly authorized to that end.
- 4th. That, in like manner, He, the Great Head of the Church, was pleased on the basis of the same principle of *external commission*, to perpetuate His own Ministry; committing to *it* (and so far as His words reach, to it *only*) all

the offices proper to that Ministry, to wit:—"baptism, and all things whatsoever I have commanded you," pledging to His Apostles, whom He had thus particularly called and commissioned, His special personal presence and sanction, to the end of time, and that—to the exclusion of all others, save those to whom, through their (the Apostles) delegated authority, the like powers were duly entrusted—the privileges of the Christian Priesthood were guarded as special and exclusive down to the close of the New Testament Canon.

Beyond the Old and New Testament Canon there has been, confessedly, no extra revelation of the Divine Will. It stands, therefore, as our necessary and ultimate authority, and the "articles," if agreeable to that Canon, must utter the same truth; and where they do, they must be received as declaring to us the *law of God*, not the law of man.

Now in her xxiii Art. the Church speaks thus expressly:—"It is *not lawful*" (i.e., according to the premiss laid down, contrary to the law of God "for any man to take upon him the office of . . . ministering the sacraments" (of which baptism is one) "before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same."

Why? Because the law relating to such ministrations is in Christ's *institution* of them! It bases itself on His declared will and command, and cannot by any, save Himself, be further limited or extended.

It reaches, moreover, equally to all the official duties embraced in the words of His commission, and may not be dealt with partially, as if one part of the imposed duty stood on lower or higher ground than another.

If, therefore, "Go ye," (Matth. xxviii, 19.) in its connection with "Lo, I am with you always," involves the exclusive right to the priesthood as transmitted by lawful authority, so much so that a man cannot be a Christian priest without it—then assuredly the same words as coupled with the duty of baptizing are of *equal force*, and by parity of reason, exclude all others, save those who are in that commission, from intermeddling with the sacrament.

It is not enough that a man "take not this honor on himself," or that he be "sent"—he must be "*lawfully called*," "agreeably to God's word" and "the institution of Christ." The Church, in her Article assumes that there is a Divine law on the subject, and that none save those "*who have public authority given to them*," i. e., the Bishops (see preface to the Ordinal) can dispense this law.

The question then arises—are lay baptizers duly or in any way thus "called and sent?" If not, they have taken this thing upon themselves, and the judgment of the Church is that their ministration is "*not lawful*," i. e., contrary to the law of God. Now, if it be contrary to law, for we here speak of the law of Christ, it must be sinful, [1 John iii, 4], and to admit "*validity*" as its result is to assume that the grace of God—alho' affected to be conveyed contrary to His will and commandment—*is actually given* through the medium of a sinful act; that the blessing of baptism, whose ultimate design and purpose it is to make men holy, is, by God's spirit, communicated by means openly antagonistic to the rule and spirit of holiness—an assumption altogether gratuitous, because not warranted by the word of God.

To take a further step.—In the xxvi Article, the Church speaks yet more clearly :—Treating of the personal unworthiness of ministers as no bar to the efficacy of the Sacraments, she sets forth *that* on which efficacy naturally and necessarily depends, viz :—that what he does he does not in his own name, but in *Christ's* and by His “*commission and authority,*” and that the Sacraments are effectual “*because of Christ's institution and promise.*”

It is very evident, from these words, that neither worthiness nor exigency of man is received as a groundwork for the conclusion, (viz.—efficiency and validity), which she imposes upon us. She recognizes but *one* reason for such efficiency, *i. e.*, “*Christ's commission and authority.*”

Take away this reason, *i. e.*, the commission, and what, in the judgment of the Church becomes of the result, “*they be effectual?*”

But more ; the Church is singularly, nay elaborately careful to be ever in harmony with Holy Writ. She trusts, on this question, *only* to “*Christ's institution and promise.*” What institution ? What promise ?—unless those already referred to as the *sole warrant* of ministerial action, “*go ye, &c.*”—“*Lo, I am with you always?*” The *unsent* and *uncommissioned*. Have they the protection of these?—if *not*, they are left, by this Article, without power or privilege to make Sacraments “*effectual!*”—Ergo, such Sacraments, so far as Divine provision, or Divine Law, is concerned are “*invalid.*”

The words “*not in his own name,*” by referring us to the “*form,*” by Christ appointed, have also a deep significance. What is meant by “*in the name* of the Father, and of the Son, &c., &c. ?”

When David, [Ps. cxviii, 26], said, “*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!*”—the meaning was—with His authority and commission. When David's young men spake [1 Sam. xxv, 9] “*in the name!*” of David, the inference was, he had *sent* them. When Haggai [Ezra v, 1] prophesies “*in the name* of the God of Israel,” it is understood he had *warrant* from God so to do.

When *Christ Himself* says, “*I am come in my Father's name,*” it is equally clear He asserts His divine appointment and authority :—When S. Paul judges “*in the name* of Christ,” [1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5], it is admitted by all that he claims the special authority of Christ for what he does.

Now what means the “*form!*” in Baptism—but that *special commission and authority,* by which His ministers are duly empowered to deal with men “*in things pertaining to God?*”

There can be no sacrament save as administered “*in the name, i. e.*, by the commission and authority derived from the adorable Trinity, and if any, who have not this commission, affect to Minister, as unhappily they do, on what ground can we assume the validity of their acts?

The next proof, from the xxvii Article, bases itself on the very nature of baptism itself.

It is not merely “*a sign of profession, &c.,*” but of “*New birth whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, and the promises, &c., &c., &c., visibly signed and sealed.*”

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. 20.] 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 Scriptures 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 offices 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



man might presume to execute any of these offices, except he were first called, . . . approved and admitted thereto by lawful authority"—and that "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest, or deacon, or suffered to execute any of the said functions!" baptisms included, "except he be called and admitted thereto by Episcopal consecration or ordination."

The case supposed in the 63rd Canon, viz:—"If any minister being warned of the weakness and danger of death of any child in his parish and required to come to the place and baptize it, do refuse, or neglect to comply, and the infant die unbaptized, the said minister shall be suspended, &c., &c."—goes clearly to show that no other baptism is thought of by the Church save that ministered by one lawfully sent or his curate or substitute—for, in case of their neglect, the suppositum follow—"and it dieth unbaptized."

Again, in the following rubric [*Offic. priv. Bap.*]

"But if the child were baptized by any other lawful minister than the minister of the parish, . . . shall examine and try whether the child be—not simply baptized, but—lawfully baptized, &c., plainly implying that [although prior to certifying to the congregation that all was "well done and according to due order?], it was necessary to test the merits even of this baptism, by inquiry [see the 1th Question] as to the authority [by whom], and the form and matter, by and in which the Sacrament was conveyed. If the baptism had been ministered by an unlawful or unauthorized person, there was no need for questionings, but the minister was to proceed to baptize.

As to the significant change in the 3rd Rubric preceding the office for private baptism,—it speaks for itself. Roman and Mediæval influence had become outworn. Catholic fact and truth demanded an accredited officer for the discharge of an ambassadorial act. The words "any person present" were expunged, in short, lay-baptism was ignored, and a "lawful minister" was, from that time, and is now by the Book of Common Prayer held to be essential to the conferring of the high Blessing and privilege of baptism.

It is not denied, my Lord, that from an early date, this practice of baptism by Laymen, did, in certain cases of extremity, obtain in the Church of England, Burn, in his Ecclesiastical Law gives evidence of the fact. But this touches not the question at issue! The practice was wrongly and superstitiously brought in. It stood then, as it stands now, unwarranted by any authority binding on the Church of Christ. It was a violation, on utterly mistaken and therefore inexcusable grounds, of the sacred rights of the Christian Ministry. The voice of the Primitive Church condemned it: and it has been intelligently and of set purpose repudiated by our Church—as witness her thorough exclusion from her rubrics of every clause and word which once may have seemed to countenance so anomalous a custom;—and the vigilant guard which she has established over the rights and functions of her ministry in her articles of Faith and Book of Canons.

Why she should practically shew less jealousy on this important subject than do those who can claim no such historic connexion as hers with Apostolic and Primitive Christianity, it is indeed difficult to conjecture. But that such is the fact the following brief authorities will determine—

"That Baptism administered by an unordained person is wholly void and null." Book of Discipline of Reformed Churches in France, cap. 2, Canon 1.

On, "whether he be an minister or no, dependeth not only the dignity, but the being of the Sacrament, so that I take the baptism of women to be no more the Holy Sacrament of baptism than any other daily or ordinary washing of the child."—[T. Cartwright, the Puritan, as quoted by Hooker Ecc. Pol. lib. 5, 62.]

"Baptism is not to be administered in any case, by any private person, but by a Minister of Christ." [Puritan "Directory"]

"There be only two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord, in the gospel; that is to say Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the word lawfully ordained." [Confession of faith, cap 27.]

I remain, My Lord

Yours respectfully

CHARLES FOREST.



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Author, Title Forest, Charles.

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