

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. IV.

OCTOBER 1900.

No. 4.

Doctrinal Theology.

SOTERIOLOGY.

DEFINITION.

Soteriology is the doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the application and appropriation of the merits of Christ to the individual sinner, whereby the sinner is led to the actual possession and enjoyment of the blessings which Christ has actually procured for all mankind. Christ is *σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου*, the *Savior of the world*.¹⁾ *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*.²⁾ Christ is the *propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*.³⁾ The Mediator between God and man reconciled the world with God not partially or potentially, but wholly and actually. *By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*.⁴⁾ When he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the work of redemption had been fully performed; *he had by himself purged our sins*.⁵⁾

Yet, among those whom the Lord has bought, there are those who *bring upon themselves swift destruction*.⁶⁾ *Though God HATH reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*,⁷⁾ and *we WERE reconciled to God by the death of his Son*,⁸⁾

1) John 4, 42. 1 John 4, 14.

3) 1 John 2, 2.

4) Hebr. 10, 14.

2) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

5) Hebr. 1, 3.

6) 2 Pet. 2, 1.

7) 1 Cor. 5, 18.

8) Rom. 5, 10.

yet we are exhorted, *BE YE reconciled to God.*¹⁾ And this exhortation does not detract from or ignore the merit of the Redeemer of the world, but comes to us by the *ambassadors for Christ*, who *pray us in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*²⁾ It is the will of God and of Christ the Redeemer that the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the objective reconciliation wrought by him, should be given to and received by each and every individual sinner as a subjective blessing, to have and to hold and to enjoy in actual possession. An amnesty to rebellious subjects is valid as an act of the government; but it does not work absolutely; those to whom it is extended must comply with its terms, lay down their arms, and accept the benefits of peace. An inheritance is good in the heir according to the terms of the testament. But the heir may waive his claims or refuse to accept his share according to the testator's will, and his inheritance will not be forced upon him. Salvation, which Christ has provided for all men, comes to us as *the gift of God,*³⁾ and *of his fulness have all we RECEIVED, and grace for grace.*⁴⁾ Having *received* such gift of God, *we HAVE redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.*⁵⁾ Our inheritance is not only reserved in heaven for us,⁶⁾ but we have also *obtained* our inheritance, *ἐκληρώθημεν,*⁷⁾ and enjoy its first-fruits, *the earnest of our inheritance.*⁸⁾ On the other hand, though the great supper was made for many and all things are now ready, there are those who shall not taste of the supper to which they too were earnestly bidden.⁹⁾

SALVATION THE WORK OF GOD.

The kingdom of God, however, is not a feast at which people are expected to help themselves. The salvation of sinners is not partly divine and partly human, divine in the

1) 2 Cor. 5, 20.

2) Ibid.

3) Eph. 2, 8. Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 7.

4) John 1, 16.

5) Eph. 1, 7.

6) 1 Pet. 1, 4.

7) Eph. 1, 11.

8) Eph. 1, 14.

9) Luke 14, 16—24.

redemption of the world, human in the appropriation of the benefits of such redemption. Our redemption is the work of God; so is our salvation in all its parts. *θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον, it is the gift of God.*¹⁾ *θεοῦ* is here in emphasis. That we are saved is *not of ourselves*,²⁾ but of *God*, and of *God* in such a way that it all comes from him, as a gift from the giver. And our acceptance, too, is not of our own doing. We are not only offered salvation by grace, but by grace we are *saved*. *Χάριτι ἕστε σῶσασμένοι.*³⁾ The perfect tense signifies the completion of the act, the attainment of the result, the act having superinduced a state. That we are actually in a state of salvation is not in any sense or part of ourselves, but wholly of God, and not as a reward, but by *grace* and as a *gift*. Before Thomas believed in a risen Lord, he, because of his refusal to believe,⁴⁾ to accept of the grace and peace which for him too Christ had truly procured, was void of that peace and the blessings therewith connected. But when he too rejoiced in his Savior and said, "My Lord and my God,"⁵⁾ it was not by his own power and self-determination; for *no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*⁶⁾ Salvation is not a conditional blessing offered under a condition to be fulfilled by the sinner who is to be saved, but a free blessing bestowed by God upon the sinner in a certain order. When *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*, it was with the plan and intention that *WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life.*⁷⁾ God would save no man but for Christ's sake, and he would save no man for Christ's sake but by faith in Christ. And this saving faith is a work of God in us.⁸⁾ Christ himself is *the author and finisher of our faith*,⁹⁾ the faith of all those *who by him do believe in God.*¹⁰⁾ Faith is, properly speaking, not a condition of our salvation, but part and parcel of the order and process of a sinner's salvation, which is *in solidum* the work of God.

1) Eph. 2, 8.

2) Ibid.

3) Eph. 2, 5. 8.

4) John 20, 25.

5) John 20, 28.

6) 1 Cor. 12, 3.

7) John 3, 16.

8) John 6, 29.

9) Hebr. 12, 2.

10) 1 Pet. 1, 21.

PROMPTING CAUSE OF SALVATION.

Thus also the prompting cause of the sinner's salvation is not in man but in God. It is the goodness of God in its various aspects, love, benevolence, grace and mercy. *God, who is rich in MERCY, for his great LOVE wherewith he LOVED US, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ—by GRACE, ye are saved—and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*¹⁾ While man was dead in sins, unable to do or offer anything which God might have beheld with pleasure, but made a record of sin and death only, the riches of divine mercy, his great love, his grace, abounded toward us and saved us. God's mercy, by which he has compassion with the afflicted and bestows his blessings upon the miserable;²⁾ his love, according to which he longs for and delights in union and communion with the objects of his holy desire;³⁾ his benevolence, according to which he is desirous of blessing the objects of his love;⁴⁾ his grace, according to which he offers and confers his blessings regardless of the merits or demerits of the objects of his benevolence⁵⁾—his goodness prompts God to bestow upon and apply to the individual sinner the benefits of Christ's redemption, as the same goodness, his love, benevolence, grace and mercy, prompted him to send the Redeemer and caused the Savior to work our redemption.⁶⁾ *God has saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.*⁷⁾ The motive was not in us; it was his *ἰδία πρόθεσις καὶ χάρις*, according to which our salvation was planned and carried into

1) Eph. 2, 4—6.

2) James 5, 11. Luke 1, 54. Is. 49, 13. Ezek. 16, 6.

3) Jer. 31, 3. Deut. 33, 3. Is. 43, 1. Jer. 31, 20. Hos. 2, 19. 20.

4) Tit. 3, 4—7. Ps. 37, 4. 1 John 4, 9.

5) Ps. 103, 10. Rom. 3, 23. 24; 4, 5; 11, 6. Eph. 2, 8. 9.

6) John 3, 16. 1 John 4, 9. 10. 2 Cor. 8, 9.

7) 2 Tim. 1, 9.

effect. This grace and mercy and love, this goodness of God, is one divine attribute, the love wherewith God loved the world,¹⁾ the grace which prompted our Lord Jesus Christ, though being rich, to become poor for our sakes,²⁾ the benevolence of him *who will have all men saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,*³⁾ the mercy which cries out, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.*⁴⁾ The divine goodness of which Paul says, *By the grace of God I am what I am,*⁵⁾ is not a particular grace directed to some and denied to others, but the universal grace announced and held forth in the word of reconciliation, *which was preached to every creature which is under heaven,*⁶⁾ which is *the gospel of the grace of God,*⁷⁾ the *word of his grace, which is able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among them which are sanctified.*⁸⁾ This grace, then, is as broad as the reconciliation whereby the world was reconciled to God, the grace of him who says, *Come unto me, ALL YE that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*⁹⁾

MEANS OF SALVATION.

The means by which the benefits of Christ are offered and appropriated to the sinner, and by which not only the capability of accepting what is thus offered, but also such acceptance itself is wrought in him, are the means of grace, the written and spoken word of the Gospel and the holy sacraments. The saving grace of God does not operate by immediate action, by direct impact upon the human heart and mind. We know of not a single instance of spiritual quickening by an immediate act of divine power and without the intervention or employment of the means ordained for the accomplishment of such work of divine grace. Even the extraordinary conversion of Saul of Tarsus was

1) John 3, 16.

4) Ezek. 18, 32.

7) Acts 20, 24.

2) 2 Cor. 8, 9.

5) 1 Cor. 15, 10.

8) Acts 20, 32.

3) 1 Tim. 2, 4.

6) Col. 1, 23.

9) Matt. 11, 28.

not brought about without spoken words directing themselves to the senses and through the senses to the mind of the *subjectum convertendum*.¹⁾ Salvation is wrought by the *Gospel of Christ*, which is the *power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*.²⁾ The Christians of Galatia had received the Spirit by the *hearing of faith*.³⁾ To Abraham the inheritance was *given by promise*,⁴⁾ which was the Gospel to the fathers before the coming of the promised Savior. When the preaching of Christ crucified and risen from the dead went to the hearts of Abraham's children at Jerusalem, and they asked, *What shall we do?* Peter said unto them, *Repent and BE BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God SHALL CALL*.⁵⁾ We are not, for ourselves or others, to rely on or expect immediate enlightenment, or the inner growth of spiritual life, without the use of the outward means of grace, the word and the sacraments. *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not HEARD?*⁶⁾ *For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*.⁷⁾ In his sacerdotal prayer the Savior intercedes not only for his apostles, but for all those who, to the end of time, would *believe on him through their word*.⁸⁾

It is not only a first impulse toward faith and spiritual life and salvation, which is ascribed to the word of the Gospel, but faith and salvation itself. The words of St. Peter were described to Cornelius as *words whereby thou and all thy house shall BE SAVED*.⁹⁾ The Gospel is not only a doctrine concerning salvation whereby the sinner may learn how to be saved, but the *POWER of God unto salvation*,¹⁰⁾

1) Acts 9, 4 ff.; 22, 7—16.

2) Rom. 1, 16.

3) Gal. 3, 2.

4) Gal. 3, 18.

5) Acts 2, 37—39.

6) Rom. 10, 14.

7) Rom. 10, 17.

8) John 17, 20.

9) Acts 11, 14.

10) Rom. 1, 16.

whereby God works salvation itself. St. James says, *Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to SAVE your souls.*¹⁾ In the Scriptures we have not only wisdom unto the knowledge of God and spiritual things, but *eternal life;*²⁾ they are able to make wise unto SALVATION.³⁾ And as the written word, so likewise the spoken word is the means whereby sinners are saved. *It pleased God by foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*⁴⁾

Not only the beginning, but also the continuation of the work of our salvation, to its perfection in all its parts, is performed by the means of divine grace. St. Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth, *ἡγγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις,*⁵⁾ *I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.*⁶⁾ Not *ἐσώθητε*, or *ἐστὲ σωσόμενοι*, but *σώζεσθε*, says the apostle here, *ye are being saved*, the work of salvation being still in progress, being carried on *διὰ*, by means of, the Gospel which Paul preached and in which his hearers stood, keeping in memory what had been preached to them. The Scriptures are profitable not only for a beginning in the rudiments of Christianity, but *that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*⁷⁾ In the Scriptures we have not only the beginning of spiritual life, but *eternal life.*⁸⁾ What more do we want? That is the summary of the benefit of Christ, *whom we preach*, says the apostle, *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*⁹⁾

In like manner, salvation is ascribed to baptism, when St. Peter expressly says that *baptism doth also now save us.*¹⁰⁾ This is again by the application of the benefits of Christ. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put*

1) James 1, 21.

4) 1 Cor. 1, 21.

7) 2 Tim. 3, 17.

10) 1 Pet. 3, 21.

2) John 5, 39.

5) 1 Cor. 1, 2.

8) John 5, 39.

3) 2 Tim. 3, 15.

6) 1 Cor. 15, 1 f.

9) Col. 1, 28.

on Christ,¹⁾ who is the Lord our Righteousness. As *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,*²⁾ so and by virtue of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and by the application of this purifying flood, we are *sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word,*³⁾ being *baptized for the remission of sins,*⁴⁾ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.⁵⁾

Thus, then, the whole work of our salvation is, from beginning to end, achieved by the means of grace. *By his own will begat he us with the word of truth.*⁶⁾ We are *born again by the word of God,*⁷⁾ *begotten through the gospel.*⁸⁾ We enter into the kingdom of God, *born of water and of the Spirit.*⁹⁾ Then, *as newborn babes we are to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.*¹⁰⁾ As Christ is made unto us sanctification,¹¹⁾ the Savior prays that such benefit be applied to us, when he says, *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is the truth.*¹²⁾ Christ is eternal life;¹³⁾ and his words are *the words of eternal life.*¹⁴⁾ By baptism we become partakers of the death of Christ and of his resurrection and are *alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,*¹⁵⁾ since, *having been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ.*¹⁶⁾ Thus is our salvation the work of God accomplished by the means of grace.

All this will further appear as we proceed to consider the nature and efficacy of the word of the Gospel and the sacraments.

1) Gal. 3, 27.

3) Eph. 5, 26.

5) Eph. 1, 7.

7) 1 Pet. 1, 23.

9) John 3, 5.

11) 1 Cor. 1, 30.

13) 1 John 5, 20. Cf. John 11, 25; 14, 6.

14) John 6, 68.

16) Gal. 3, 27.

2) 1 John 1, 7.

4) Acts 2, 38.

6) James 1, 18.

8) 1 Cor. 4, 15.

10) 1 Pet. 2, 2.

12) John 17, 17.

15) Rom. 6, 3—11.

THE GOSPEL.**THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL.**

The Gospel in the strict sense of the term is the divine doctrine by which God announces to all mankind his grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, earnestly offers to all that hear it forgiveness of sins and the righteousness which Christ has earned by his obedience unto death, and by the power inherent in such means of grace efficaciously operates in their hearts toward the acceptance of his gracious gifts, and toward growth and perseverance in faith and in holiness of life, and accomplishes such effects wherever they are not frustrated by man's obstinate resistance.

In a wider sense, the term Gospel signifies "the entire doctrine of Christ our Lord, which he inculcated in his ministry on earth, and commanded to be inculcated in the New Testament."¹⁾ In this sense, the Gospel comprises the announcement of all the will and counsel of God to fallen mankind redeemed by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Christ and the apostles exhibited, expounded and inculcated the law, the manifestation of the holy will of God, the rule of life for all men, the norm by which all human acts, even every thought and affection and imagination and desire of man's heart, shall be judged.²⁾ Christ's sermon on the mount is an exposition of the law. St. Paul inculcates and applies the law in all its awful severity. When Christ preaches and expounds the law, his doctrine is strictly and essentially law. The Golden Rule,³⁾ though coming from the mouth of Christ, is not a word of life, whereby we may be saved, but a letter that killeth, and the sinner whose religion is that of the Golden Rule and who would work out his salvation by obedience to that rule is under the

1) Form. Conc. M. p. 633. Cf. Mark 1, 1; 16, 15. Luke 24, 46 f. Acts 20, 21.

2) Matt. 5—7; 19, 4—9; 23, 1—36. Luke 6, 27—46. Rom. 1 18 ff.; 2, 1 ff.; 13, 1—10. 1 Cor. 5, 1 ff.; 6, 1 ff.; 7, 1 ff. al.

3) Matt. 7, 12.

curse and will be as surely damned as any thief or murderer who dies in his sin. But when the whole doctrine of Christ and the apostles is called *εὐαγγέλιον*, a *parte potiore fit denominatio*. Though the Law is law, also from the lips of Jesus, and not Gospel in the proper sense, the Law is subservient to the Gospel, being preached to a sinful and redeemed world, not that the world should live by the law or the works of the law, but as *the letter that killeth*,¹⁾ its purpose being that *all the world may become guilty before God*;²⁾ *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*.³⁾ But *God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved*.⁴⁾ Speaking of his mission, also in his prophetic office, Christ says, *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world*.⁵⁾ And his charge to his apostles and his church to the end of time is, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the GOSPEL to every creature*.⁶⁾ The doctrine by which there is *knowledge of sin* is to be the handmaid of that doctrine by which God would *give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins*.⁷⁾ The purpose of Paul's apostleship was *to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed*.⁸⁾ But this obedience is not primarily obedience to the law, but obedience to the Gospel,⁹⁾ *ὄπακοή πίστεως*.¹⁰⁾ And as of the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, so of all the Scriptures, the Gospel strictly so called is the *pars potior*, inasmuch as all the Scriptures testify of Christ.¹¹⁾ In view and by virtue of this part of their contents the Scriptures are *able to make us wise unto salvation*,¹²⁾ and *we have in them*, not death, as by the letter that killeth, but *eternal life*.¹³⁾

1) 2 Cor. 3, 6. 7.

2) Rom. 3, 19.

3) Rom. 3, 20.

4) John 3, 17.

5) John 12, 47.

6) Mark 16, 15.

7) Luke 1, 77.

8) Rom. 15, 18.

9) Rom. 10, 16. 2 Thess. 1, 8.

10) Rom. 1, 5. Cf. Acts 6, 7. Rom. 16, 26.

11) John 5, 39. Acts 10, 43. Luke 24, 27.

12) 2 Tim. 3, 15.

13) John 5, 39; 20, 31.

The GOSPEL, then, in the proper sense of the term, is a divine doctrine. This *genus* it has in common with the law, which is also an authoritative manifestation of the will of God, published and promulgated *for our learning*.¹⁾ *Through thy precepts I get UNDERSTANDING*, says the psalmist,²⁾ and *by the law is the KNOWLEDGE of sin*.³⁾ *All scripture, the law and the Gospel, is profitable for doctrine*.⁴⁾ But while the doctrine of the law was inscribed in the heart of primeval man, and the Gentiles *shew the work of the law written in their hearts*,⁵⁾ the doctrine of the Gospel *is not after man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*.⁶⁾ The *πρωτευαγγέλιον* concerning the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent⁷⁾ was a word of divine revelation to fallen man in Paradise. Of this doctrine St. Paul says, *How by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*.⁸⁾ This is the doctrine concerning the things *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*,⁹⁾ of which the apostle says, *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . . that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*.¹⁰⁾ And while the natural man may, in a measure, receive and comprehend the doctrine of the law, the doctrine of the gospel, even where it is preached and expounded, is beyond the grasp of natural man. Though unenlightened human reason may obtain a historical knowledge of the contents of the Gospel, the man who is spiritually dead has no true notions of spiritual things. He may speak of them in correct terms, the terms of scripture or their equivalents; but he will speak of them as a

1) Rom. 15, 4.

2) Ps. 119, 104.

3) Rom. 3, 20.

4) 2 Tim. 3, 16.

5) Gen. 1, 27. 31; 3, 10 f. — Rom. 2, 14 f.

6) Gal. 1, 11 f.

7) Gen. 3, 15.

8) Eph. 3, 3 f.

9) 1 Cor. 2, 9.

10) 1 Cor. 2, 10—13.

blind man speaks of colors. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.*¹⁾ Thus the Gospel is *the wisdom of God in a mystery,*²⁾ a *hidden wisdom.*³⁾ When St. Paul preached, he made known the mystery of the Gospel.⁴⁾ To know the import of the Gospel is to *know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.*⁵⁾ And as Christ is the great central subject of the Scriptures, the Gospel is *the mystery of Christ.*⁶⁾ This *mystery of God,*⁷⁾ the *mystery of his will,*⁸⁾ was made known to the prophets and apostles *by revelation,*⁹⁾ and is made known to those who read or hear their doctrine.¹⁰⁾ The knowledge thus imparted is *knowledge of salvation*, and this knowledge is a *gift* conferred by the preaching of this doctrine.¹¹⁾ By the gift of such knowledge, God *gives unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.*¹²⁾ This work of bestowing upon the hearers of the word the blessings of Christ's redemption is most intimately knit together with the sacerdotal work of Christ. In his sacerdotal prayer, the Savior says: *I have GIVEN unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have RECEIVED them, and have KNOWN SURELY that I came out from thee.*¹³⁾ And *this IS LIFE ETERNAL, that they might KNOW thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*¹⁴⁾

The Gospel, being doctrine, whereby the Holy Ghost would impart knowledge,¹⁵⁾ addresses itself to the human understanding.¹⁶⁾ It is *εὐ-αγγέλιον*, *good tidings*, a message,

1) 1 Cor. 2, 14.

2) 1 Cor. 2, 7.

3) Ibid.

4) γνωρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Eph. 6, 19.

5) Luke 8, 10.

6) Eph. 3, 4.

7) Rev. 10, 7.

8) Eph. 1, 9.

9) Eph. 3, 3. Cf. 1 Pet. 1, 10—12. Eph. 1, 9. Col. 1, 26. Gal. 1, 11. 12.

10) Eph. 3, 4. Rom. 15, 4. 2 Tim. 3, 15. Luke 24, 25—27.

11) Luke 1, 77: *To give knowledge of salvation unto his people.*

12) 2 Pet. 1, 3.

13) John 17, 8.

14) John 17, 3.

15) 1 Cor. 2, 12. 13. Luke 1, 77.

16) Eph. 3, 3. 4. Acts 8, 30.

whereby God announces the mystery of his will, that the mind of man may know what was in the mind of God concerning man's salvation.¹⁾ The Gospel is not an abracadabra, a mystic formula of unintelligible sounds or characters. It is not an incantation or an amulet working by magic. It is a manifestation of mind, the divine mind, to mind, the human mind, in words intended to convey a meaning which constitutes the *ratio formalis* of the words. But while the Law, too, is a manifestation of divine intelligence and will, an announcement of what was in the mind of God concerning the righteousness demanded of man and the judgment whereby the sinner should die, the Gospel is the announcement of what was in the mind of God concerning a righteousness to be procured for man and the judgment whereby the sinner should live.²⁾ While the preaching of the Law is *the ministration of condemnation*,³⁾ the preaching of the Gospel is *the ministration of righteousness*.⁴⁾ While the cardinal doctrine of the Law to fallen man is, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*,⁵⁾ and *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*,⁶⁾ the cardinal doctrine of the Gospel is, *The just shall live by faith*,⁷⁾ *being justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.⁸⁾

The Gospel, like the Law, is *divine doctrine*. It is *not after man*, but *by the revelation of Jesus Christ*.⁹⁾ It is *the word of the Lord*.¹⁰⁾ What it teaches are *the things and the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*.¹¹⁾ It is, therefore, authoritative. It is the doctrine of him who KNOWS *the things of God*,¹²⁾ *the mind of the Lord*,¹³⁾ it is the doctrine

1) 1 Cor. 2, 7—16.

2) Rom. 3, 21 f.

3) ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως. 2 Cor. 3, 9.

4) ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης. Ibid.

5) Rom. 3, 23.

6) Ezek. 18, 20. Cf. Rom. 6, 23.

7) Rom. 1, 17. Gal. 3, 11. Hebr. 2, 4.

8) Rom. 3, 24.

9) Gal. 1, 11. 12.

10) 1 Pet. 1, 25. 1 Thess. 1, 8.

11) 1 Cor. 2, 10. 12 f.

12) 1 Cor. 2, 11.

13) 1 Cor. 2, 16.

of the *Spirit of TRUTH*.¹⁾ It admits of no manner of doubt. It is not capable of correction, not even by the hand of God. It was the same in Eden²⁾ that it was in Abraham's days³⁾ and when preached by Christ and his apostles.⁴⁾ It is the same to-day and will be the same to the end of time.⁵⁾ From the beginning it was and for all times it shall be the Gospel of man's salvation,⁶⁾ the doctrine of the only true religion by which man is re-united with God, *the word of reconciliation*.⁷⁾ No amount of progress in the "education of the human race" will ever render this doctrine obsolete; it cannot be superseded by another; and though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, *let him be accursed!*⁸⁾

EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL.

The Gospel, being doctrine, true doctrine, promulgated in words of human speech, carries with it the power inherent in human speech and the logical exhibition of historical or theoretical truth. The doctrines of the Gospel are, furthermore, authoritative statements of divine thought, manifestations of divine intelligence. They are at the same time utterances of the divine will. In both these aspects the Gospel is *the power of God unto salvation*.⁹⁾

A Governor's pardon is the announcement of an act of executive clemency. As a document it is or embodies a statement of fact. By reading the document, the reader is led to understand that what he reads is not an officer's commission, or a veto to a bill, but a letter of pardon. The document, however, conveys more than this information. It is the utterance of the Governor's will that the sentence shall not be executed upon the culprit. As such it confers that whereof it speaks, the remission of a fine, a dismissal

1) John 16, 13. Tit. 1, 2. 3. Eph. 1, 13.

2) Gen. 3, 15.

3) Rom. 4, 3.

4) Luke 24, 25—27.

5) Matt. 24, 35.

6) Eph. 1, 13.

7) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

8) Gal. 1, 8 f.

9) *δύναμις θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν*, Rom. 1, 16.

from imprisonment; it will throw the prison gates ajar; it will stay the executioner's hand even on the platform of the gallows. It gives freedom to the prisoner; it gives to the sentenced malefactor the life forfeited by his crime and pronounced so by the sentence of the court. The Gospel is a divine letter of pardon to the sinner condemned according to law. It says to the sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven unto thee." It says to him who has merited death, "Thou shalt not die." Thus it confers freedom and life upon him who has forfeited both.

A human testator's last will and testament is a written document containing statements relative to the testator's property and his heirs and legatees. But it is at the same time a conveyance of such property to such heirs and legatees, and, if properly executed and approved in probate makes the title to the legacies good in the legatees.¹⁾ The Gospel is God's own will and testament, whereby God gives and bequeaths to his children the inheritance intended for them.²⁾ This is the *vis collativa* of the Gospel. The Gospel is the ὄργανον δοτικόν, the filled hand which God extends to man, so that, *receiving*³⁾ the word of the Gospel, we *receive of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace.*⁴⁾ When the Jews to whom the word of God was spoken put from them the Gospel of Christ, they judged themselves unworthy, not only of the word, but of what such word of the Gospel contained, offered and conferred, *everlasting life.*⁵⁾ Those in whom the *testimony of Christ is confirmed* are sure to *come behind in no gift,*⁶⁾ *being in every thing enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge.*⁷⁾ Thus by the *hearing of faith* the believers in Galatia had *received the Spirit,*⁸⁾ *which is the earnest of our inheritance.*⁹⁾

1) Gal. 3, 15. Hebr. 9, 16 f.

2) Gal. 3, 14—18. Hebr. 9, 15—17. Rom. 8, 17. Gal. 4, 7. Acts 26, 18.

3) 1 Thess. 2, 13.

4) John 1, 16.

5) Acts 13, 46.

6) 1 Cor. 1, 6 f.

7) 1 Cor. 1, 5.

8) Gal. 3, 2.

9) Eph. 1, 14.

But an inheritance may be rejected. The acceptance of a pardon may be refused. Thus *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.*¹⁾ The acceptance of the benefits of Christ earnestly offered in the Gospel is not in the power of man, but is brought about by the power of God exerted through the Gospel. The Gospel comes *not in word only, but also in power.*²⁾ It is itself *the power of God unto salvation.*³⁾ For it *pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*⁴⁾ St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved.*⁵⁾ *δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε.* The preposition *διὰ* points out the *means*, that which enters between the cause and the effect, *through* which the cause acts and produces the effect. And the effect wrought through the Gospel is *τὸ σώζεσθαι*, the salvation of those to whom the Gospel is declared. Of Peter, who preached to Cornelius and his household the *peace by Jesus Christ, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,*⁶⁾ it was said: *He shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*⁷⁾ The benefit of Christ's redemption, the sinner's salvation, is offered by the Gospel, the *ὄργανον δοτικόν*, and received and accepted by faith, the *ὄργανον ληπτικόν*, the receiving hand; and that acceptance, faith, is wrought in the sinner by the word of the Gospel. The preachers of the Gospel are sent to Jews and Gentiles *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may RECEIVE forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified BY FAITH that is in Christ.*⁸⁾ He, the High Priest, who sent his apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world, prayed for those who should *believe on him through their*

1) 1 Cor. 2, 14.

4) 1 Cor. 1, 21.

7) Acts 11, 14.

2) 1 Thess. 1, 5.

5) 1 Cor. 15, 1. 2.

8) Acts 26, 18.

3) Rom. 1, 16.

6) Acts 10, 36. 43.

word, τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν.¹⁾ The bestowal of faith is regeneration, the quickening into spiritual life. And this is, again, brought about by means of the Gospel. *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, says St. Paul.²⁾ And St. Peter: *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, διὰ λόγου θεοῦ.*³⁾ And St. James: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, λόγῳ ἀληθείας,*⁴⁾ where the instrumental dative again indicates the means whereby the effect is produced. This is the *vis effectiva seu operativa* of the Gospel, which is κατὰ ῥητόν ascribed to the word of God preached by the apostles, when St. Paul says: *When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*⁵⁾ In the original, λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, the relative pronoun, ὃς, might appear to refer to θεοῦ as its antecedent, which would make *God* the subject of ἐνεργεῖται. But the constant *usus loquendi* of ἐνεργεῖται, the medial form, renders this connection impossible. For in all the texts in which the medial form, ἐνεργεῖσθαι, occurs,⁶⁾ it stands for impersonal energy, while, to express personal action, the active form, ἐνεργεῖν, is constantly employed.⁷⁾ That which is here said to exert energy is ὁ λόγος, *the word* preached by St. Paul and other apostles, the Gospel of Christ, which operates in those who believe, bringing forth faith, the acceptance of the benefits of Christ's redemption. Not only a disposition to believe, an inclination toward faith, but faith itself, the act and state of believing, is brought about by the means of grace. And not only that, but also the continua-

1) John 17, 20.

2) 1 Cor. 4, 15.

3) 1 Pet. 1, 23.

4) James 1, 18.

5) 1 Thess. 2, 13.

6) Rom. 7, 5. Col. 1, 29. 2 Thess. 2, 7. 2 Cor. 1, 6; 4, 12. Gal. 5, 6. Eph. 3, 20. James 5, 16.

7) Matt. 14, 2. Mark 6, 14. 1 Cor. 12, 6. 11. Gal. 2, 8; 3, 5. Eph. 1, 11. 20; 2, 2. Phil. 2, 13.

tion in that state, and the spiritual growth of the believer, is caused by the same means. St. John writes: *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, YE ALSO SHALL CONTINUE in the Son and in the Father.*¹⁾ And St. Peter: *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may GROW THEREBY: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*²⁾ What the apostles have seen and heard, the Word of life, they again and again declare to their spiritual children, to perpetuate their fellowship with them and with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ;³⁾ and, says St. John, *these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.*⁴⁾ St. Paul, serving God in the Gospel of his Son,⁵⁾ writes to the Christians at Rome: *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.*⁶⁾ And for this purpose, he is ready to preach the Gospel to those who are at Rome also.⁷⁾ For, he continues, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.*⁸⁾

So, then, even as the almighty *fiat* of the Creator spoken in the beginning was by its divine power, as by immediate action, productive of multitudes of created things, and still by mediate action through intermediate causes preserves and perpetuates physical life in the vegetable and animal world and the human race,⁹⁾ thus, also, we are, by the power of God, quickened into spiritual life, *that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures,*¹⁰⁾ and by the same *power of God we are kept through faith unto salvation.*¹¹⁾ But there is this difference between the exertion of divine

1) 1 John 2, 24.

2) 1 Pet. 2, 2 f.

3) 1 John 1, 1—3.

4) 1 John 1, 4.

5) Rom. 1, 9.

6) Rom. 1, 11.

7) Rom. 1, 15.

8) Rom. 1, 16 f.

9) Hebr. 1, 3. Acts 17, 25 f.

10) James 1, 18.

11) 1 Pet. 1, 5.

power by immediate and by mediate action. When in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, heaven and earth were called into being by immediate action; and when God said, *Let there be light, there was light.*¹⁾ In all the six days' work of creation the power of God was active without let or hindrance by any opposing power. It is not thus with the mediate acts of God. God said to the first parents of our race, *Be fruitful and multiply;*²⁾ and by the creative power of that blessing, he even now *giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*³⁾ It is with full truth that we say, *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*⁴⁾ But in the propagation of human beings in the course of nature the power of the Almighty works through intermediate agencies, fathers and mothers and their generative organs. And here the creative power of God can be, and often is, hindered and its object frustrated by the power of created beings, as by preventives to conception, or by the destruction of embryonic life in the mother's womb. Thus also, the mighty power of God exerted mediately through the means of grace may be and often is resisted and its object frustrated by the will of man. There is but one Gospel of Christ, which is the same Gospel everywhere. Paul nicely distinguishes between *ἕτερον* and *ἄλλο εὐαγγέλιον.*⁵⁾ The latter, another, second Gospel, he denies; the former, a different Gospel, which *eo ipso* is not Gospel, he condemns, and though it be preached by an angel from heaven.⁶⁾ The one same Gospel is to be preached in *all the world,*⁷⁾ is in all lands and at all times *the power of God unto salvation.* It is not only powerful, endowed with power, but is itself *δύναμις θεοῦ.* It can, therefore, never be powerless, and is at all times the power of God. Its end and aim, also, is always

1) Gen. 1, 1. 3.

2) Gen. 1, 28.

3) Acts 17, 25 f.

4) Job 33, 4.

5) Gal. 1, 6 f.

6) Gal. 1, 8 f.

7) Mark 16, 15.

and everywhere the same; it is the power of God *εις σωτηριαν*, unto *salvation*, the achievement, not of a part only, but of all that is required for the application and appropriation of Christ's work and its benefit to the individual sinner. The Gospel call is earnest everywhere. Even to the wayward children of the house of Israel, of whom the prophet complains, *Who hath believed our report?*¹⁾ the Lord says: *All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*²⁾ And the prophet's complaint is quoted by the apostle in proof of his statement that *they have not ALL obeyed the GOSPEL.*³⁾ It was the will of God that *all*, ALL should yield to the Gospel. Or how could Isaiah have complained of their failure or refusal to believe, if God had not intended that they should believe? To the Jews of a later day, to whom the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen from the dead had been preached, Stephen says: *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.*⁴⁾ Resistance is impossible where no power is exerted, and resistance to the Holy Ghost can only be where the power exerted is that of the Holy Ghost. Thus it appears that when the Gospel was preached to the obstinate Jews, who resisted its influence, the power of God was brought to bear on their hearts, that they might believe and be saved.⁵⁾ Yet, though the Gospel is in all cases efficacious, the saving grace and power of God earnestly exerted through the means of grace may be, and often actually is, frustrated by man's obstinate and continued resistance. Though by the Gospel God *commandeth all men everywhere to repent,*⁶⁾ and though publicans and harlots believe him, there are those who repent not, that

1) Is. 53, 1. Rom. 10, 16.

2) Rom. 10, 21. Cf. Is. 65, 2.

3) Rom. 10, 16.

4) Acts 7, 51.

5) Cf. Matt. 23, 37: . . . *how often would I . . . and ye would not.* Luke 19, 41 f.

6) Acts 17, 30. Cf. Mark 1, 14. 15. Luke 24, 47. Acts 2, 38; 3, 19; 20, 21. 2 Pet. 3, 9. Matt. 9, 13. Mark 2, 17. Luke 5, 32.

they might believe him.¹⁾ Though the messengers of Christ *preach, warning EVERY MAN, and teaching EVERY MAN in ALL wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*, there are those who *speak against these things which are spoken to them, contradicting and blaspheming.*²⁾ Though life and salvation is truly and earnestly offered to all who hear the Gospel, the saving, powerful word of God spoken to them, there are those who *put it from them and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.*³⁾ As of old, so now, *the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*⁴⁾ Why? Not because the light is not light, but because *men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.*⁵⁾ By the Gospel, God leads sinners to repentance. But in spite of all the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, the gainsaying sinner who offers resistance to the saving grace of God, *after his hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath.*⁶⁾ And how is it that the Gospel brings about its wonderful effects in those who are saved? It is because it is the power of God unto salvation, a spiritual *Ephphatha* and *Talitha cumi* from out of the mouth of God, *which shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it.*⁷⁾

But whence the difference? The same Gospel, being the means of the same grace and power of God, directed according to the same good and gracious will of God to men who are by nature in the same state of spiritual death, achieving its intended effect in some and failing of its intended effect in others—whence this difference? There are two answers to this presumptuous question; and both are wrong. Calvinism answers by a denial of the univer-

1) Matt. 21, 32.

2) Acts 13, 45.

3) Acts 13, 46.

4) John 1, 5.

5) John 3, 19 f.

6) Rom. 2, 4 f.

7) Is. 55, 11.

sality of saving grace, the universal redemption of the world and the efficacy of the means of grace. Synergism answers the same question by a denial of the total inability of fallen man to concur in his own salvation. Both assert a rationalistic *necesse est*, the former placing the cause of the difference in God, the latter, in man. Calvinism makes God the author of man's salvation and of man's eternal perdition. Synergism makes man and his conduct toward the means of grace the determining factor both of his salvation and of his perdition. Lutheran theology leaves the chasm unfathomed and unbridged, knowing of but one *necesse est* in theology, to abide by the Scriptures, which say, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.*¹⁾

THE SACRAMENTS.

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

The Sacraments are sacred acts of divine institution, by which, wherever they are properly performed by the prescribed use of the prescribed external elements in conjunction with the divine words of institution God, being, in a manner peculiar to each sacrament, present with the word and elements, earnestly offers to all who partake of such sacraments forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, and operates toward the acceptance of such blessings, or toward greater assurance of their possession. This definition, though not found in Scripture in the same terms, is scriptural inasmuch as it states the *notae* common to two peculiar institutions described in holy writ which, in the Christian church are designated as sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. As these institutions are not termed sacraments in holy Scripture, there is no cogent necessity of restricting the term to these institutions. Any sacred rite or performance or institution, as, f. ex., the act of absolution, the administration of an oath, the rite of confirmation

1) Hos. 13, 9.

or ordination, might be called a sacrament. But when we maintain that there are but two sacraments and shape our definition as we do, we mean that the Scriptures know of but these two institutions admitting of this definition taken from Baptism and the Lord's Supper as institutions intended for the church of the New Testament, and that whatever else may be called a sacrament is not of the same nature as these institutions to which we apply and restrict this term in theology.

According to this definition, then, sacraments are *acts*. Matrimony, though also a divine institution, is not an act, but a status, and hence, differing in the *genus proximum* from Baptism and the Lord's Supper, cannot be in the same sense a sacrament. That both our sacraments are *acts* appears from their institution. *Teach all nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,*¹⁾ is Christ's charge to his church whereby he instituted Baptism. That which is here ordained is described by an active verb designating an act to be performed. Thus also the administration of this sacrament is described by the same verb descriptive of an act; as when we read of Philip and the eunuch: *He baptized him,*²⁾ or when Paul says: *I baptized also the household of Stephanas.*³⁾ Again, instituting the Eucharist, Christ says, *This DO in remembrance of me. . . . This DO ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me,*⁴⁾ and what he thus commands them to *do* is in the narrative of the institution of the sacrament described as the continuous act of consecrating, giving, eating and drinking, the sacred elements.⁵⁾

The sacraments are, furthermore, defined as being sacred acts *of divine institution*. The narratives in the sacred records already referred to and to be reviewed at

1) Matt. 28, 19.

2) Acts 8, 38.

3) 1 Cor. 1, 16.

4) 1 Cor. 11, 24 f.

5) Matt. 26, 26—28. Mark 14, 22—24. Luke 22, 19. 20. 1 Cor. 11, 23—25.

greater length when we shall treat of each sacrament in particular, show these sacred acts to be instituted by Christ himself while in visible conversation with his disciples on earth, charging them to perform these sacred acts also after his departure, even to the end of time. This cannot be said of such sacred acts as ordination and confirmation, which are nowhere by divine injunction prescribed to the church of all times or of any time, and cannot, therefore, be classed with the sacraments as of the same nature with Baptism and the Eucharist.

The proper performance of these sacred acts, in order that they may be sacramental acts, requires the prescribed use of prescribed external elements in conjunction with the words of institution. These elements, water in Baptism,¹⁾ bread and wine in the Eucharist,²⁾ are essential to the respective sacrament, and so is their prescribed use. The baptismal water must not be drunk, but applied externally, in the manner described as βαπτίζεω³⁾ and familiar to the Jews from their ritual baptisms.⁴⁾ The eucharistic bread and wine must not be borne about in procession or adored on the altar, but given and eaten and drunk as prescribed in the institution of the sacrament.⁵⁾ And the elements must be so used in conjunction with the words of institution. Baptism is *the washing of water by the word*, τὸ λουτρὸν ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,⁶⁾ a washing in which water and word are together. What word? Simply that word which Christ spoke when he charged his church to *baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*⁷⁾ In the institution of the Eucharist Christ did not silently dispense meat and drink, but gave the bread saying, *Take, eat, this is my body*, etc., and the continuous act of which he says, *This do* comprises the speaking of those words as well as

1) Matt. 28, 19. Cf. John 3, 5. Acts 10, 47. Eph. 5, 26.

2) Matt. 26, 26—29. 1 Cor. 11, 21. 24 f.

3) Matt. 28, 19.

4) Numb. 8, 7; 19, 18. 19. Hebr. 9, 10.

5) Matt. 26, 26—29. cet.

6) Eph. 5, 26.

7) Matt. 28, 19.

the giving and taking of the elements. Thus it is that *as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do show the Lord's death*¹⁾ in and by the very act of celebrating the sacrament. This prescribed use of prescribed elements in conjunction with certain words marks a specific difference between the sacraments and other sacred acts, as absolution or confirmation, which have no prescribed visible elements to be used in conjunction with certain words.

In Baptism and in the Lord's supper, when the sacraments are administered, the divine Author of these institutions is, in a peculiar way, present in and with the word and elements in their sacramental use. A peculiar presence of the Holy Spirit was revealed in the baptism of Christ.²⁾ But also of those who enter into the kingdom of God by Baptism, Christ says that they are *born of water and of the Spirit*.³⁾ Again, *Christ* is said to *cleanse the church with the washing of water by the word*.⁴⁾ Here not only the word, but the *λουτρὸν τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι*, is named as the means whereby Christ sanctifies his bride, Christ in active presence with the entire sacrament. In the Lord's supper, it is the Lord who presides at his table and himself gives to his guests his own body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. Not a human priest, but Christ is the host at his supper, being present in a peculiar way, blessing and giving all that is there dispensed in and by this peculiar means of grace.⁵⁾

The spiritual blessing dispensed in the sacraments is the benefit of Christ's redemption, forgiveness of sins, the salvation which Christ the Mediator has merited for all mankind. The whole counsel of God, all that he has prepared for man's salvation, is offered by Baptism and rejected by those who refuse to be baptized.⁶⁾ *Be baptized*, says St. Peter, *every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ*

1) 1 Cor. 11, 26.

2) Matt. 3, 16.

3) John 3, 5.

4) Eph. 5, 26.

5) 1 Cor. 10, 16; 11, 29.

6) Luke 7, 30.

*for the remission of sins.*¹⁾ Baptism is expressly said to *save us,*²⁾ not as a first cause, which is God, our Savior; not as the prompting cause, which is the grace of God; not *ex opere operato*, as by a meritorious work; for the *causa meritoria* of our salvation is Christ and his sacrifice; but as a means whereby we are made partakers of Christ and his righteousness and salvation.³⁾ In the Eucharist, likewise, Christ assures us of the forgiveness of sins, giving us the selfsame body which was sacrificed for us and the selfsame blood which was paid as a ransom for us, *for the remission of sins.*⁴⁾ And this appropriation of such benefits to the individual sinner is all the more apparent as, in the sacraments, God takes each candidate for baptism and each communicant separately and individually assuring him, to whose body the sacramental water is applied, or him who eats and drinks his Savior's body and blood, that his sins are forgiven unto *him*.

And here, again, the full pardon thus freely and unconditionally offered and extended to the sinner can be and often is rejected, its acceptance refused. The sacrament is not a charm, a magic lotion or potion, but a means of grace. Being but another form of the Gospel, it, too, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. But by the sacrament, too, the power of God operates by mediate action. *As many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*⁵⁾ But in this, also, we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Faith is the receiving hand, ὄργανον ληπτικόν, by which we receive and accept what by the giving hand of God, ὄργανον δοτικόν, is offered in the sacrament. The giving hand is God's, the sacrament being God's own means of saving grace. What that hand contains and offers is also God's gift, a good and perfect gift, which cannot be augmented or diminished by

1) Acts 2, 38.

4) Matt. 26, 28.

2) 1 Pet. 3, 21.

5) Gal. 3, 27.

3) Gal. 3, 27.

the will and power of man, neither of the officiating minister nor of the recipient. Faith, likewise, is the gift of God engendered by the power of God through the means of grace. But unbelief is in the power of man, who can by persistent unbelief reject the precious gift of God and refuse to accept what is truly and earnestly offered in the sacraments to all to whom they are administered. And thus it is that the unbeliever *eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*¹⁾ For this reason, lest he become guilty of receiving the grace of God in vain,²⁾ the eunuch, upon his enquiry, *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* is told, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*³⁾

Having thus considered the sacraments in general, their nature and use, we next proceed to enter upon the two sacraments of the New Testament in particular, Baptism and the Lord's supper.

A. G.

1) 1 Cor. 11, 29.

2) 2 Cor. 6, 1.

3) Acts 8, 36. 37; cf. v. 12.