

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

Second Article: Baptism considered in its Administration.

9. Two things relate to the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism: the subject to be baptised, and the manner in which the baptism must be conferred on him.

10. (1) Subject.—The subject of baptism is the adult or the child. The adult must bring with him certain dispositions, namely, the desire to receive baptism; faith, accompanied by proper instruction; repentance of his actual sins; and the resolution to lead a Christian life.

The child brings no obstacle to baptism, and on account of the necessity of this Sacrament the divine mercy dispenses him from any positive disposition of which he is incapable.

This necessity is so absolute, that children dying without baptism, though innocent of all actual sin, are excluded for ever from heaven, on account of the original stain which they bear upon their souls. Therefore our Lord has permitted them to be baptised as soon as they are born, and has given the utmost facility to the administration of so indispensable a Sacrament.

11. (2) Administration.—The administration of baptism may be either simple or solemn. The former takes place in cases of necessity; the latter in ordinary cases. In case of necessity any person may baptise. It suffices for him to have the intention of giving the baptism according to the rite of the Church; to take natural water and pour it on the head or forehead of the child, whilst he pronounces the words, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

In ordinary cases baptism must be administered solemnly—that is, by a priest in the church, with baptismal water, and with all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church.

12. The ceremonies observed in baptising are many and beautiful. Some precede, some accompany, and others follow the baptismal ablution. The chief of them are as follows:

(1) Preliminary Ceremonies.—In the first place, the catechumen is stopped at the church-door, to signify that baptism is to open it for his admission. A saint's name is given to him, because he is about to be inscribed in the number of the saints and children of God. The priest breathes in his face, to signify that he will be purified from the unclean spirit by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, who comes to breathe a new life into him. He is signed with the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast, in order that, being made a Christian, he may carry the sign of his crucified Master with love and courage. Blessed salt is put into his mouth—the symbol of incorruptibility and wisdom—to teach him that he must preserve himself from the corruption of sin, and live according to the wisdom and faith of Jesus Christ. His ears and nostrils are touched with spittle, to point out to him that he must henceforward listen to the voice of God, and love the good odor of Christian piety.

(2) Accompanying ceremonies. Having been admitted into the church and reached the font or place where he is to be baptised, the catechumen renounces Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps, and gives himself over to Jesus Christ, by asking for baptism. He renounces Satan, namely, the service of the prince of darkness; all his works, namely, sin; and all his pomps, namely, the vanities of the world and the occasions of sin. These are the promises or vows of baptism. In baptism there is a kind of contract entered into between God and man. God grants to man all the advantages of His adopted children; and man, on his side, engages to live as a true Christian, according to the precepts of faith and the example of Jesus Christ. The godfathers and godmothers contract these engagements on behalf of the infants for whom they stand sponsors, they being unable to do it for themselves. And the sponsors thereby become guarantees for the promises of their godchildren, and are bound afterwards to watch over their Christian education.

The catechumen then makes his profession of faith by reciting the *Credo*. He is anointed with holy oil on the breast and shoulders (this oil is called the oil of catechumens), that he may be strong and valiant in the service of Christ, and lovingly bear the sweet yoke of his divine Master.

Next comes the sacramental ablution, which is given by pouring the blessed water over the head of the child in the form of a cross three separate times, to signify the death of our Lord and His resurrection on the third day.

(3) Ceremonies which follow the ablution.—Again the person baptised is anointed; but this time it is with chrism on the top of his head, which signifies that he has become a Christian—that is, the anointed of the Lord—and that he has received the invisible unction of the Holy Spirit, by which he is made partaker in the royal Priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is then clothed with a white garment, the symbol of baptismal innocence, which he is to preserve unstained till death, then to present it to Jesus Christ, as he has received it in baptism. A lighted taper is put in his hand, to teach him that he must not only preserve faith, hope, and charity in his heart, but that he must moreover openly profess these virtues, and practise them by his works. Finally, the priest dismisses him with these words, "N... go in peace; and the Lord be with you."

“Dies Irae”

NOTED FRENCH WRITER TOUCHED.

In a recent number of a literary review a celebrated French writer thus gives expression to his feelings on hearing the solemn strains of the "Dies Irae" sung in one of the cathedrals of Paris:

"Suddenly the 'Dies Irae' has burst forth on the air thick with incense, and those stanzas, composed in some unshaded garden by a gentle disciple of St. Francis, have rolled over our heads like threats mingled with hopes. I do not know if you have thus been touched even to tears, as I have been by that poetry bearing the impress of the austere love which overflowed from the soul of the first Franciscans. But I can tell you that I have never heard the thirteenth strophe without feeling myself shaken by a religious tremor. That strophe says:

Thou the sinful woman savest;
Thou the dying thief forgavest;
And to me a hope vouchsafest.

"The singer who launches forth these Latin words in the vessel of the church is here in the voice of the entire assembly. At present, those pure, great, exalted persons must inwardly repeat:

Thou the sinful woman savest;
Thou the dying thief forgavest;
And to me a hope vouchsafest.

"That is what the Church desires, the Church which has condemned theft and made marriage into a Sacrament. It humiliates, in its wisdom, the virtues of those happy people who are called the just, and it reminds the best among them that, far from being able to erect themselves into judges, they ought themselves to crave for pardon. This Christian morality seems to me infinitely sweet and infinitely wise. It will never completely prevail against the violences of the spirit and the pride of the flesh; but it will sometimes spread its divine peace over our tired hearts, and it will teach us to pardon, with all other offences, the treasons committed against us by those whom we have loved too well."

Indian Mission Stamp Society

To Stamp Collectors.—Write to-day for our approval sheets of Indian and Foreign Stamps; Lowest Prices. New Zealand Agent: Bert Gallien, N.E. Valley, Dunedin.

To Stamp Collectors.—I have received a large assortment of Indian, Indian States, Service & Foreign stamps from Father Westropp. These are all on approved sheet sets, and in packets, which I will send out on approval anywhere. All proceeds are sent to the Mission. A fine chance to get good stamps at a low price.

Kindly continue to send me all the cancelled stamps you can. All stamps are of great use to the Missions.

Your parcels will be acknowledged in due course in these columns.

New Zealand agent: BERT GALLIEN,
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