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## Doctrinal Theology.

### SOTERIOLOGY.

#### BAPTISM.

Ritual applications of water to purify persons and things were common among the Jews, and these purifications were called *baptisms*, βαπτισμοί, in the idiom employed in the New Testament. The epistle to the Hebrews refers to these *various baptisms*, διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς,<sup>1)</sup> and St. Mark speaks of the Pharisees and their habit of *baptizing themselves*<sup>2)</sup> before eating, and of their *baptisms of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables*.<sup>3)</sup> Of such applications of water the Mosaic law said: *This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon*

1) Hebr. 9, 10.

2) εὐν μὴ βαπτίσωνται.

3) βαπτισμοῦς ποτηρίων καὶ ξεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων καὶ κλινῶν.

## Practical Theology.

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### CONFIRMATION.

Confirmation, as practiced in the Lutheran church, is of fourfold significance.

In the first place, it is a public proof and testimony of the accomplishment of the duty enjoined upon the church in the charge of the Master, *Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*<sup>1)</sup> That the catechumens, who were, in their early infancy, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, have now also been taught to observe all things, whatsoever the Lord has commanded his disciples, is in Confirmation, especially by the public examination connected therewith, exhibited to the eyes and ears of the congregation. This public examination should, therefore, be considered an essential part of this institution, even when, for sufficient reason, it is transferred to a previous Sunday, and where the time and circumstances will permit, it is preferable to let the examination precede the rest of the ceremony in the same service. For the same reason it is more appropriate to examine the catechumens on all the chief parts of the catechism, though in a more summary way, than to select some particular part for more detailed examination.

Confirmation is, secondly, a solemn reassertion, on the part of the catechumens, of the covenant once established between them and God in holy Baptism, a covenant in which they severally renounced the devil, and all his works, and all his pomp, and entered into a most intimate relation to God by faith in Christ Jesus. Hence the renewal of the renunciation embodied in the form of Baptism, and the repe-

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1) Matt. 28, 18 f.

tition of the Creed from the lips of the catechumens, in the rite of Confirmation. This is not a repetition of the sacrament of Baptism, or of a part thereof, but an assertion of firm and faithful adherence to the baptismal covenant which, on God's part, remains firm forever. That this renunciation and profession of faith is spoken in concert by the catechumens, and in the presence of the Christian congregation, is also highly appropriate. For by baptism they also entered into most intimate union with each other and with the whole Christian church, the communion of saints, and this, too, is reasserted by the young Christians as, in their confirmation, they again renounce the devil and his works and pomp, the world and all its sinful ways, and declare their allegiance to the God of their salvation as living members of the body of which Christ is the head over all.

A third significance of Confirmation is that of a public exhibition of the fitness of the catechumens to be admitted to the second sacrament of the Christian church, the Lord's supper. This sacrament, too, was not primarily committed to the ministry, but to the church, and it is a duty incumbent on the Christian congregation to guard against the admission of unfit communicants to its altar. The public examination should, for this reason, be so conducted, that these children of the first communion may exhibit to the congregation their ability to examine themselves and their knowledge of the nature and use and benefit of the Lord's supper, and profess their faith in Christ the Redeemer, who, by his obedience unto death, has obtained for them the remission of all their sins.

Finally, Confirmation is also a public and solemn avowal of adherence to the true, orthodox visible church, the church of the pure doctrine and unadulterated sacraments. Adherence to this church is, in fact, the duty of every Christian. Christ never intended that there should be another church than that which teaches observance of ALL the things whatsoever he has commanded his followers, who, continu-

ing in his word, are his disciples indeed.<sup>1)</sup> Besides, to partake of the Lord's supper is itself an act of confession, an avowal of unity in the faith once committed to the saints, and it is proper that those who seek admittance to the altar of the orthodox church should exhibit and avow their adherence to its doctrine in general and its doctrine of the Lord's supper especially. Hence the catechumens should be led in the public examination to express themselves on the chief distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran church and their rejection of the opposing doctrines. And hence the propriety of their declaration, in the Confirmation vow, of their willingness to be and remain members of the Evangelical Lutheran church all the days of their lives, and the acknowledgment of their membership by the pastor in the name of the congregation. The presentation of a new hymnbook by parents or sponsors, and of a testimonial of confirmation by the pastor, to the catechumens, is, in this light, a most appropriate custom.

This fourfold significance of Confirmation may be pointed out in the address to the catechumens and the congregation at the hand of such texts as these:—

Ps. 73, 23 f. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

Ps. 73, 28. *It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.*

Ps. 86, 11 f. *Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name for evermore.*

Is. 41, 9 f. *Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee;*

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1) Matt. 28, 18 f. John 8, 31.

yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Is. 54, 10. *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*

Jer. 9, 23 f. *Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*

Matt. 28, 19 f. *Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

John 6, 66—69. *From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

John 8, 31 f. *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

John 10, 27 f. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

John 17, 1—3. *Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh,<sup>1)</sup> that he should give eternal life to as*

1) Cf. Matt. 28, 18.

*many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

John 17, 6—8. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them thy words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

John 17, 10 f. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

John 17, 14—17. *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Rom. 8, 14—17. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

1 Cor. 5, 17 f. *Therefore if any man be in Christ,<sup>1)</sup> he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God,*

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1) Cf. Gal. 3, 27.

*who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

Gal. 3, 26—29. *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Col. 2, 6—8. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

1 John 2, 27 f. *The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

Hebr. 10, 23—25. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*

A. G.

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