

The Third Sunday after Trinity

THE LORD'S PRAYER – FIFTH PETITION

It is, therefore, the intent of this petition that God would not regard our sins and hold up to us what we daily deserve. But we pray that He would deal graciously with us and forgive, as He has promised, and so grant us a joyful and confident conscience to stand before Him in prayer [Hebrews 10:22]. For where the heart is not in a right relationship with God, or cannot take such confidence, it will not dare to pray anymore. Such a confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the certain knowledge of the forgiveness of sin [Psalm 32:1–2; Romans 4:7–8].

HOLY BAPTISM – INFANT BAPTISM

They are arrogant, clumsy minds that draw together such ideas and conclusions as these, “Where there is not the true faith, there also cannot be true Baptism.” That’s as if I would conclude, “If I do not believe, then Christ is nothing.” Or “If I am not obedient, then father, mother, and government are nothing.” Is that a correct conclusion, that whenever anyone does not do what he ought, the work that he ought to do shall become nothing and of no value? My dear, just invert the argument and rather draw this conclusion: For this very reason Baptism is something and is right, because it has been wrongly received. For if Baptism was not right and true in itself, it could not be misused or sinned against. The saying is, “Abuse does not destroy the essence, but confirms it.” For gold is not the less gold even though a harlot wears it in sin and shame....

I say this lest we fall into the opinion in which we were stuck for a long time. We were imagining that our Baptism is something past, which we can no longer use after we have fallen again into sin. The reason for this is that Baptism is regarded as only based on the outward act once performed (and completed). This arose from the fact that St. Jerome wrote that “repentance is the second plank by which we must swim forth and cross over the water after the ship is broken, on which we step and are carried across when we come into the Christian Church.” By this teaching Baptism’s use has been abolished so that it can no longer profit us. Therefore, Jerome’s statement is not

correct, or at any rate is not rightly understood. For the ship of Baptism never breaks, because (as we have said) it is God’s ordinance and not our work [1 Peter 3:20–22]. But it does happen, indeed, that we slip and fall out of the ship. Yet if anyone falls out, let him see to it that he swims up and clings to the ship until he comes into it again and lives in it, as he had done before.

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