

## **Introduction to the Orations on the Holy Lights and on Holy Baptism.**

The Oration on the Holy Lights was preached on the Festival of the Epiphany 381, and was followed the next day by that on Baptism. In the Eastern Church this Festival is regarded as more particularly the commemoration of our Lord's Baptism, and is accordingly one of the great days for the solemn ministration of the Sacrament. It is generally called Theophania, and the Gospel in the Liturgy is S. Matthew 3:13-17. The Sunday in the Octave is called \xexa xa (pekoe (After The Lights), pointing to a time when the Feast was known as the "Holy Lights," as seems to have been the case in S. Gregory's day. This name is derived from Baptism, which was often in ancient days called Illumination, in reference to which name (derived from the spiritual grace of the Sacrament) lighted torches or candles were carried by the neophytes. It would appear that the solemnities of the Festival lasted two days, of which the second was devoted to the solemn conferring of the Sacrament. Accordingly we find two Orations belonging to the Festival. In the first, delivered on the Day itself he dwells more especially on the Feast and the Mystery of our Lord's Baptism therein commemorated; and proceeds to speak of the different kinds of Baptism, of which he enumerates Five, —

1. The figurative Baptism of Israel by Moses in the cloud and in the Sea.
2. The preparatory Baptism of repentance ministered by S. John the Baptist.
3. The spiritual Baptism of water and the Holy Ghost given us by our Lord.
4. The glorious Baptism of Martyrdom.
5. The painful Baptism of Penance.

In speaking of this last he takes occasion to refute the extreme rigorism of the followers of Novatus, who denied absolution to certain classes of sins committed after Baptism. In the second Oration, delivered next day, he dwells on the Sacrament of Baptism and its spiritual effects; and takes occasion to reprove the then still prevalent practice of deferring Baptism till the near approach of death. He likewise dwells on the truth that the validity and spiritual effect of the Sacrament is wholly independent of the rank or worthiness of the Priest who may minister it; and he concludes with a sketch of the obligations which its reception involves, with a very valuable exposition of the Creed, and of the Ceremonies which accompanied the administration of the Sacrament.

### **Oration on the Holy Lights**

I. Again My Jesus, and again a mystery; not deceitful nor disorderly, nor belonging to Greek error or drunkenness (for so I call their solemnities, and so I think will every

man of sound sense); but a mystery lofty and divine, and allied to the Glory above. For the Holy Day of the Lights, to which we have come, and which we are celebrating today, has for its origin the Baptism of my Christ, the True Light That lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and effecteth my purification, and assists that light which we received from the beginning from Him from above, but which we darkened and confused by sin.

II. Therefore listen to the Voice of God, which sounds so exceeding clearly to me, who am both disciple and master of these mysteries, as would to God it may sound to you ; I Am TheLightOfThe World. Therefore approach ye to Him and be enlightened, and let not your faces be ashamed, being signed with the true Light. It is a season of new birth, let us be born again. It is a time of reformation, let us receive again the first Adam. Let us not remain what we are, but let us become whatwe once were. The Light Shineth In Darkness, in this life and in the flesh, and is chased by the darkness, but is not overtaken by it: — I mean the adverse power leaping up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam, but encountering God and being defeated; — in order that we, putting away the darkness, may draw near to the Light, and may then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light. See the grace of this Day; see the power of this mystery. Are you not lifted up from the earth? Are you not clearly placed on high, being exalted by our voice and meditation? and you will be placed much higher when the Word shall have prospered the course of my words.

III. Is there any such among the shadowy purifications of the Law, aiding as it did with temporary sprinklings, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean; or do the gentiles celebrate any such thing in their mysteries, every ceremony and mystery of which to me is nonsense, and a dark invention of demons, and a figment of an unhappy mind, aided by time, and hidden by fable? For what they worship as true, they veil as mythical. But if these things are true, they ought not to be called myths, but to be proved not to be shameful; and if they are false, they ought not to be objects of wonder; nor ought people so inconsiderately to hold the most contrary opinions about the same thing, as if they were playing in the market-place with boys or really ill-disposed men, not engaged in discussion with men of sense, and worshippers of the Word, though despisers of this artificial plausibility.

IV. We are not concerned in these mysteries with birth of Zeus and thefts of the Cretan Tyrant (though the Greeks may be displeased at such a title for him), nor with the name of Curetes, and the armed dances, which were to hide the wailings of a weeping God, that he might escape from his father's hate. For indeed it would be a strange thing that he who was swallowed as a stone should be made to weep as a child. Nor are we concerned with Phrygian mutilations and flutes and Corybantes, and all the ravings of men concerning Rhea, consecrating people to the mother of the gods, and being initiated into such ceremonies as befit the mother of such gods as these. Nor have we any carrying away of the Maiden, nor wandering of Demeter, nor her intimacy with Celei and Triptolemi and Dragons; nor her doings and sufferings...

for I am ashamed to bring into daylight that ceremony of the night, and to make a sacred mystery of obscenity. Eleusis knows these things, and so do those who are eyewitnesses of what is there guarded by silence, and well worthy of it. Nor is our commemoration one of Dionysus, and the thigh that travailed with an incomplete birth, as before a head had travailed with another; nor of the hermaphrodite God, nor a chorus of the drunken and enervated host; nor of the folly of the Thebans which honors him; nor the thunderbolt of Semele which they adore. Nor is it the harlot mysteries of Aphrodite, who, as they themselves admit, was basely born and basely honored; nor have we here Phalli and Ithyphalli, shameful both in form and action; nor Taurian massacres of strangers; nor blood of Laconian youths shed upon the altars, as they scourged themselves with the whips; and in this case alone use their courage badly, who honor a goddess, and her a virgin. For these same people both honor effeminacy, and worship boldness.

V. And where will you place the butchery of Pelops, which feasted hungry gods, that bitter and inhuman hospitality? Where the horrible and dark specters of Hecate, and the underground puerilities and sorceries of Trophonius, or the babblings of the Dodonaean Oak, or the trickeries of the Delphian tripod, or the prophetic draught of Castalia, which could prophesy anything, except their own being brought to silence? Nor is it the sacrificial art of Magi, and their entrail forebodings, nor the Chaldaean astronomy and horoscopes, comparing our lives with the movements of the heavenly bodies, which cannot know even what they are themselves, or shall be. Nor are these Thracian orgies, from which the word Worship (GpnaKeioc) is said to be derived; nor rites and mysteries of Orpheus, whom the Greeks admired so much for his wisdom that they devised for him a lyre which draws all things by its music. Nor the tortures of Mithras which it is just that those who can endure to be initiated into such things should suffer; nor the manglings of Osiris, another calamity honored by the Egyptians; nor the ill-fortunes of Isis and the goats more venerable than the Mendesians, and the stall of Apis, the calf that luxuriated in the folly of the Memphites, nor all those honors with which they outrage the Nile, while themselves proclaiming it in song to be the Giver of fruits and corn, and the measurer of happiness by its cubits.

VI. I pass over the honors they pay to reptiles, and their worship of vile things, each of which has its peculiar cultus and festival, and all share in a common devilishness; so that, if they were absolutely bound to be ungodly, and to fall away from honoring God, and to be led astray to idols and works of art and things made with hands, men of sense could not imprecate anything worse upon themselves than that they might worship just such things, and honor them in just such a way; that, as Paul says, they might receive in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet, in the very objects of their worship; not so much honoring them as suffering dishonor by them; abominable because of their error, and yet more abominable from the vileness of the objects of their adoration and worship; so that they should be even more

without understanding than the objects of their worship; being as excessively foolish as the latter are vile.

VII. Well, let these things be the amusement of the children of the Greeks and of the demons to whom their folly is due, who turn aside the honor of God to themselves, and divide men in various ways in pursuit of shameful thoughts and fancies, ever since they drove us away from the Tree of Life, by means of the Tree of Knowledge unseasonably and improperly imparted to us, and then assailed us as now weaker than before; carrying clean away the mind, which is the ruling power in us, and opening a door to the passions. For, being of a nature envious and man-hating, or rather having become so by their own wickedness, they could neither endure that we who were below should attain to that which is above, having themselves fallen from above upon the earth; nor that such a change in their glory and their first natures should have taken place. This is the meaning of their persecution of the creature. For this God's Image was outraged; and as we did not like to keep the Commandments, we were given over to the independence of our error. And as we erred we were disgraced by the objects of our worship. For there was not only this calamity, that we who were made for good works to the glory and praise of our Maker, and to imitate God as far as might be, were turned into a den of all sorts of passions, which cruelly devour and consume the inner man; but there was this further evil, that man actually made gods the advocates of his passions, so that sin might be reckoned not only irresponsible, but even divine, taking refuge in the objects of his worship as his apology.

VIII. But since to us grace has been given to flee from superstitious error and to be joined to the truth and to serve the living and true God, and to rise above creation, passing by all that is subject to time and to first motion; let us look at and reason upon God and things divine in a manner corresponding to this Grace given us. But let us begin our discussion of them from the most fitting point. And the most fitting is, as Solomon laid down for us; us; The beginning of wisdom, he says, is to get wisdom. And what this is he tells us; the beginning of wisdom is fear. For we must not begin with contemplation and leave off with fear (for an unbridled contemplation would perhaps push us over a precipice), but we must be grounded and purified and so to say made light by fear, and thus be raised to the height. For where fear is there is keeping of commandments; and where there is keeping of commandments there is purifying of the flesh, that cloud which covers the soul and suffers it not to see the Divine Ray. And where there is purifying there is Illumination; and Illumination is the satisfying of desire to those who long for the greatest things, or the Greatest Thing, or That Which surpasses all greatness.

IX. Wherefore we must purify ourselves first, and then approach this converse with the Pure; unless we would have the same experience as Israel, who could not endure the glory of the face of Moses, and therefore asked for a veil; or else would feel and say with Manoah "We are undone O wife, we have seen God," although it was God

only in his fancy; or like Peter would send Jesus out of the boat, as being ourselves unworthy of such a visit; and when I say Peter, I am speaking of the man who walked upon the waves; or like Paul would be stricken in eyes, as he was before he was cleansed from the guilt of his persecution, when he conversed with Him Whom he was persecuting — or rather with a short flash of That great Light; or like the Centurion would seek for healing, but would not, through a praiseworthy fear, receive the Healer into his house. Let each one of us also speak so, as long as he is still uncleansed, and is a Centurion still, commanding many in wickedness, and serving in the army of Caesar, the World-ruler of those who are being dragged down; "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." But when he shall have looked upon Jesus, though he be little of stature like Zaccheus of old, and climb up on the top of the sycamore tree by mortifying his members which are upon the earth, and having risen above the body of humiliation, then he shall receive the Word, and it shall be said to him, This day is salvation come to this house. Then let him lay hold on the salvation, and bring forth fruit more perfectly, scattering and pouring forth rightly that which as a publican he wrongly gathered.

X. For the same Word is on the one hand terrible through its nature to those who are unworthy, and on the other through its loving kindness can be received by those who are thus prepared, who have driven out the unclean and worldly spirit from their souls, and have swept and adorned their own souls by self-examination, and have not left them idle or without employment, so as again to be occupied with greater armament by the seven spirits of wickedness... the same number as are reckoned of virtue (for that which is hardest to fight against calls for the sternest efforts)... but besides fleeing from evil, practice virtue, making Christ entirely, or at any rate to the greatest extent possible, to dwell within them, so that the power of evil cannot meet with any empty place to fill it again with himself, and make the last state of that man worse than the first, by the greater energy of his assault, and the greater strength and impregnability of the fortress. But when, having guarded our soul with every care, and having appointed goings up in our heart, and broken up our fallow ground, and sown unto righteousness, as David and Solomon and Jeremiah bid us, let us enlighten ourselves with the light of knowledge, and then let us speak of the Wisdom of God that hath been hid in a mystery, and enlighten others. Meanwhile let us purify ourselves, and receive the elementary initiation of the Word, that we may do ourselves the utmost good, making ourselves godlike, and receiving the Word at His coming; and not only so, but holding Him fast and shewing Him to others.

XI. And now, having purified the theater by what has been said, let us discourse a little about the Festival, and join in celebrating this Feast with festal and pious souls. And, since the chief point of the Festival is the remembrance of God, let us call God to mind. For I think that the sound of those who keep Festival There, where is the dwelling of all the Blissful, is nothing else than this, the hymns and praises of God, sung by all who are counted worthy of that City. Let none be astonished if what I have to say contains some things that I have said before; for not only will I utter the same

words, but I shall speak of the same subjects, trembling both in tongue and mind and thought when I speak of God for you too, that you may share this laudable and blessed feeling. And when I speak of God you must be illumined at once by one flash of light and by three. Three in Individualities or Hypostases, if any prefer so to call them, or persons, for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning; but One in respect of the Substance — that is, the Godhead. For they are divided without division, if I may so say; and they are united in division. For the Godhead is one in three, and the three are one, in whom the Godhead is, or to speak more accurately, Who are the Godhead. Excesses and defects we will omit, neither making the Unity a confusion, nor the division a separation. We would keep equally far from the confusion of Sabellius and from the division of Arius, which are evils diametrically opposed, yet equal in their wickedness. For what need is there heretically to fuse God together, or to cut Him up into inequality?

XII. For to us there is but One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and One Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things; and One Holy Ghost, in Whom are all things; yet these words, of, by, in, whom, do not denote a difference of nature (for if this were the case, the three prepositions, or the order of the three names would never be altered), but they characterize the personalities of a nature which is one and unconfused. And this is proved by the fact that They are again collected into one, if you will read — not carelessly — this other passage of the same Apostle, "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever, Amen." The Father is Father, and is Unoriginate, for He is of no one; the Son is Son, and is not unoriginate, for He is of the Father. But if you take the word Origin in a temporal sense, He too is Unoriginate, for He is the Maker of Time, and is not subject to Time. The Holy Ghost is truly Spirit, coming forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of the Son, for it is not by Generation but by Procession (since I must coin a word for the sake of clearness); for neither did the Father cease to be Unbegotten because of His begetting something, nor the Son to be begotten because He is of the Unbegotten (how could that be?), nor is the Spirit changed into Father or Son because He proceeds, or because He is God — though the ungodly do not believe it. For Personality is unchangeable; else how could Personality remain, if it were changeable, and could be removed from one to another? But they who make "Unbegotten" and "Begotten" natures of equivocal gods would perhaps make Adam and Seth differ in nature, since the former was not born of flesh (for he was created), but the latter was born of Adam and Eve. There is then One God in Three, and These Three are One, as we have said.

XIII. Since then these things are so, or rather since This is so; and His Adoration ought not to be rendered only by Beings above, but there ought to be also worshippers on earth, that all things may be filled with the glory of God (forasmuch as they are filled with God Himself); therefore man was created and honored with the hand and Image of God. But to despise man, when by the envy of the Devil and the bitter taste of sin he was pitifully severed from God his Maker — this was not in the

Nature of God. What then was done, and what is the great Mystery that concerns us? An innovation is made upon nature, and God is made Man. "He that rideth upon the Heaven of Heavens in the East" of His own glory and Majesty, is glorified in the West of our meanness and lowliness. And the Son of God deigns to become and to be called Son of Man; not changing what He was (for It is unchangeable); but assuming what He was not (for He is full of love to man), that the Incomprehensible might be comprehended, conversing with us through the mediation of the Flesh as through a veil; since it was not possible for that nature which is subject to birth and decay to endure His unveiled Godhead. Therefore the Unmingled is mingled; and not only is God mingled with birth and Spirit with flesh, and the Eternal with time, and the Uncircumscribed with measure; but also Generation with Virginity, and dishonor with Him who is higher than all honor; He who is impassible with Suffering, and the Immortal with the corruptible. For since that Deceiver thought that he was unconquerable in his malice, after he had cheated us with the hope of becoming gods, he was himself cheated by God's assumption of our nature; so that in attacking Adam as he thought, he should really meet with God, and thus the new Adam should save the old, and the condemnation of the flesh should be abolished, death being slain by flesh.

XIV. At His birth we duly kept Festival, both I, the leader of the Feast, and you, and all that is in the world and above the world. With the Star we ran, and with the Magi we worshipped, and with the Shepherds we were illuminated, and with the Angels we glorified Him, and with Simeon we took Him up in our arms, and with Anna the aged and chaste we made our responsive confession. And thanks be to Him who came to His own in the guise of a stranger, because He glorified the stranger. Now, we come to another action of Christ, and another mystery. I cannot restrain my pleasure; I am rapt into God. Almost like John I proclaim good tidings; for though I be not a Forerunner, yet am I from the desert. Christ is illumined, let us shine forth with Him. Christ is baptized, let us descend with Him that we may also ascend with Him. Jesus is baptized; but we must attentively consider not only this but also some other points. Who is He, and by whom is He baptized, and at what time? He is the All-pure; and He is baptized by John; and the time is the beginning of His miracles. What are we to learn and to be taught by this? To purify ourselves first; to be lowly minded; and to preach only in maturity both of spiritual and bodily stature. The first has a word especially for those who rush to Baptism off hand, and without due preparation, or providing for the stability of the Baptismal Grace by the disposition of their minds to good. For since Grace contains remission of the past (for it is a grace), it is on that account more worthy of reverence, that we return not to the same vomit again. The second speaks to those who rebel against the Stewards of this Mystery, if they are their superiors in rank. The third is for those who are confident in their youth, and think that any time is the right one to teach or to preside. Jesus is purified, and dost thou despise purification?... and by John, and dost thou rise up against thy herald?... and at thirty years of age, and dost thou before thy beard has grown presume to teach the aged, or believe that thou teachest them, though thou be not reverend on account

of thine age, or even perhaps for thy character? But here it may be said, Daniel, and this or that other, were judges in their youth, and examples are on your tongues; for every wrongdoer is prepared to defend himself. But I reply that that which is rare is not the law of the Church. For one swallow does not make a summer, nor one line a geometrician, nor one voyage a sailor.

XV. But John baptizes, Jesus comes to Him... perhaps to sanctify the Baptist himself, but certainly to bury the whole of the old Adam in the water; and before this and for the sake of this, to sanctify Jordan; for as He is Spirit and Flesh, so He consecrates us by Spirit and water. John will not receive Him; Jesus contends. "I have need to be baptized of Thee" says the Voice to the Word, the Friend to the Bridegroom; he that is above all among them that are born of women, to Him Who is the Firstborn of every creature; he that leaped in the womb, to Him Who was adored in the womb; he who was and is to be the Forerunner to Him Who was and is to be manifested. "I have need to be baptized of Thee;" add to this "and for Thee;" for he knew that he would be baptized by Martyrdom, or, like Peter, that he would be cleansed not only as to his feet. "And comest Thou to me?" This also was prophetic; for he knew that after Herod would come the madness of Pilate, and so that when he had gone before Christ would follow him. But what saith Jesus? "Suffer it to be so now," for this is the time of His Incarnation; for He knew that yet a little while and He should baptize the Baptist. And what is the "Fan?" The Purification. And what is the "Fire?" The consuming of the chaff, and the heat of the Spirit. And what the "Axe?" The excision of the soul which is incurable even after the dung. And what the Sword? The cutting of the Word, which separates the worse from the better, and makes a division between the faithful and the unbeliever; and stirs up the son and the daughter and the bride against the father and the mother and the mother in law, the young and fresh against the old and shadowy. And what is the Latchet of the shoe, which thou John who baptizest Jesus mayest not loose? thou who art of the desert, and hast no food, the new Elias, the more than Prophet, inasmuch as thou sawest Him of Whom thou didst prophesy, thou Mediator of the Old and New Testaments. What is this? Perhaps the Message of the Advent, and the Incarnation, of which not the least point may be loosed, I say not by those who are yet carnal and babes in Christ, but not even by those who are like John in spirit.

XVI. But further — Jesus goeth up out of the water... for with Himself He carries up the world... and sees the heaven opened which Adam had shut against himself and all his posterity, as the gates of Paradise by the flaming sword. And the Spirit bears witness to His Godhead, for he descends upon One that is like Him, as does the Voice from Heaven (for He to Whom the witness is borne came from thence), and like a Dove, for He honors the Body (for this also was God, through its union with God) by being seen in a bodily form; and moreover, the Dove has from distant ages been wont to proclaim the end of the Deluge. But if you are to judge of Godhead by bulk and weight, and the Spirit seems to you a small thing because He came in the form of a Dove, O man of contemptible littleness of thought concerning the greatest of things,

you must also to be consistent despise the Kingdom of Heaven, because it is compared to a grain of mustard seed; and you must exalt the adversary above the Majesty of Jesus, because he is called a great Mountain, and Leviathan and King of that which lives in the water, whereas Christ is called the Lamb, and the Pearl, and the Drop and similar names.

XVII. Now, since our Festival is of Baptism, and we must endure a little hardness with Him Who for our sake took form, and was baptized, and was crucified; let us speak about the different kinds of Baptism, that we may come out thence purified. Moses baptized but it was in water, and before that in the cloud and in the sea. This was typical as Paul saith; the Sea of the water, and the Cloud of the Spirit; the Manna, of the Bread of Life; the Drink, of the Divine Drink. John also baptized; but this was not like the baptism of the Jews, for it was not only in water, but also "unto repentance." Still it was not wholly spiritual, for he does not add "And in the Spirit." Jesus also baptized, but in the Spirit. This is the perfect Baptism. And how is He not God, if I may digress a little, by whom you too are made God? I know also a Fourth Baptism — that by Martyrdom and blood, which also Christ himself underwent: — and this one is far more august than all the others, inasmuch as it cannot be defiled by after-stains. Yes, and I know of a Fifth also, which is that of tears, and is much more laborious, received by him who washes his bed every night and his couch with tears; whose bruises stink through his wickedness; and who goeth mourning and of a sad countenance; who imitates the repentance of Manasseh and the humiliation of the Ninerites upon which God had mercy; who utters the words of the Publican in the Temple, and is justified rather than the stiff-necked Pharisee; who like the Canaanite woman bends down and asks for mercy and crumbs, the food of a dog that is very hungry.

XVIII. I, however, for I confess myself to be a man, — that is to say, an animal shifty and of a changeable nature, — both eagerly receive this Baptism, and worship Him Who has given it me, and impart it to others; and by shewing mercy make provision for mercy. For I know that I too am compassed with infirmity, and that with what measure I mete it shall be measured to me again. But what sayest thou, O new Pharisee pure in title but not in intention, who dischargest upon us the sentiments of Novatus, though thou sharest the same infirmities? Wilt thou not give any place to weeping? Wilt thou shed no tear? Mayest thou not meet with a Judge like thyself? Art thou not ashamed by the mercy of Jesus, Who took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses; Who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; Who will have mercy rather than sacrifice; who forgiveth sins till seventy times seven. How blessed would your exaltation be if it really were purity, not pride, making laws above the reach of men, and destroying improvement by despair. For both are alike evil, indulgence not regulated by prudence, and condemnation that will never forgive; the one because it relaxes all reins, the other because it strangles by its severity. Shew me your purity, and I will approve your boldness. But as it is, I fear that being full of sores you will render them incurable. Will you not admit even David's repentance, to

whom his penitence preserved even the gift of prophecy? nor the great Peter himself, who fell into human weakness at the Passion of our Savior? Yet Jesus received him, and by the threefold question and confession healed the threefold denial. Or will you even refuse to admit that he was made perfect by blood (for your folly goes even as far as that)? Or the transgressor at Corinth? But Paul confirmed love towards him when he saw his amendment, and gives the reason, "that such an one be not swallowed up by overmuch sorrow," being overwhelmed by the excess of the punishment. And will you refuse to grant liberty of marriage to young widows on account of the liability of their age to fall? Paul ventured to do so; but of course you can teach him; for you have been caught up to the Fourth heaven, and to another Paradise, and have heard words more unspeakable, and comprehend a larger circle in your Gospel.

XIX. But these sins were not after Baptism, you will say. Where is your proof? Either prove it — or refrain from condemning; and if there be any doubt, let charity prevail. But Novatus, you say, would not receive those who lapsed in the persecution. What do you mean by this? If they were unrepentant he was right; I too would refuse to receive those who either would not stoop at all or not sufficiently, and who would refuse to make their amendment counterbalance their sin; and when I do receive them, I will assign them their proper place; but if he refused those who wore themselves away with weeping, I will not imitate him. And why should Novatus' s want of charity be a rule for me? He never punished covetousness, which is a second idolatry; but he condemned fornication as though he himself were not flesh and body. What say you? Are we convincing you by these words? Come and stand here on our side, that is, on the side of humanity. Let us magnify the Lord together. Let none of you, even though he has much confidence in himself, dare to say, Touch me not for I am pure, and who is so pure as I? Give us too a share in your brightness. But perhaps we are not convincing you? Then we will weep for you. Let these men then if they will, follow our way, which is Christ's way; but if they will not, let them go their own. Perhaps in it they will be baptized with Fire, in that last Baptism which is more painful and longer, which devours wood like grass, and consumes the stubble of every evil.

XX But let us venerate today the Baptism of Christ; and let us keep the feast well, not in pampering the belly, but rejoicing in spirit And how shall we luxuriate? "Wash you, make you clean" If ye be scarlet with sin and less bloody, be made white as snow; if ye be red, and men bathed in blood, yet be ye brought to the whiteness of wool Anyhow be purified, and you shall be clean (for God rejoices in nothing so much as in the amendment and salvation of man, on whose behalf is every discourse and every Sacrament), that you may be like lights in the world, a quickening force to all other men; that you may stand as perfect lights beside That great Light, and may learn the mystery of the illumination of Heaven, enlightened by the Trinity more purely and clearly, of Which even now you are receiving in a measure the One Ray from the One Godhead in Christ Jesus our Lord; to Whom be the glory and the might for ever and ever Amen.