

⁶⁸See: J. Danielou, "Le Symbolisme des rites baptismaux," in *Dieu Vivant*, I (1945), p. 36; L.B., pp. 85-8 (on sacramental baptism and baptism of blood in Nicholas Cabasilas); and Hamman, *Le baptême d'après les Pères de l'Église* (Paris: 1962), pp. 19-21.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷⁰V.C. 565 B.

⁷¹V.C. 564 B.

⁷²V.C. 564 C.D.

⁷³V.C. 564 D-565 A. Br. 82-3, and St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 7 in 2

Cor. P.G. 61, 448.

⁷⁴V.C. 565 A.

⁷⁵St. Cyril compares the sacred flesh of Christ to "the fire which penetrates cold matter and makes it burn," and to "the spark which falls into the straw and burns it up" (quoted in L.B., p. 104).

⁷⁶The Eucharistic prayers of St. Symeon contained in manuals of Orthodox prayers speak the same overwhelming language. Cf. O. Clement, *L'essor du christianisme oriental* (Paris: 1964), pp. 33-4.

⁷⁷V.C. 584 D. Br. 100.

⁷⁸*Commentary*, Chap. 1. P.G. 150, 373 D. H.M., p. 29.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 376 B. H.M., p. 30.

⁸⁰*Triades*, 11, 33, 66. See other texts of Palamas in *A Study*, p. 174; and the works of V. Lossky, "La théologie de la lumière chez S. Grégoire Palamas," in *Dieu Vivant*, I (1945), pp. 107-10, and *The Vision of God* (London: 1965), pp. 124-37.

⁸¹V.C. 624 A.B.

⁸²V.C. 624 B.; cf. *Commentary*, cp. 43. P.G. 150, 461-4. H.M., pp. 98-100.

⁸³V.C. 649 B.D.

⁸⁴Quoted in L.B., p. 182.

⁸⁵L.B., pp. 183-4.

⁸⁶*Commentary*, cp. 36 and 38. P.G. 150, 449 C and 453 A. H.M., pp. 88-92.

⁸⁷V.C. 684 C.

THE FIRST BOOK

How the life in Christ is constituted by means of the divine Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Communion

[§ 1. How the life in Christ begins in this life]

The life in Christ originates in this life and arises from it. It is perfected, however, in the life to come, when we shall have reached that last day. It cannot attain perfection in men's souls in this life, nor even in that which is to come without already having begun here. Since that which is carnal, the mist and corruption which derive from the flesh, cannot inherit incorruption (1 Cor. 15:50), it casts a shadow over that life in this present time. Therefore Paul thought it to be a great advantage to depart in order to be with Christ, for he says, "to depart and to be with Christ is far better" (Phil. 1:23). But if the life to come were to admit those who lack the faculties and senses necessary for it, it would avail nothing for their happiness, but they would be dead and miserable living in that blessed and immortal world. The reason is, that the light would appear and the sun shine with its pure rays with no eye having been formed to see it. The Spirit's fragrance would be abundantly diffused and pervading all, but one would not know it without already having the sense of smell.

Now it is possible for the Son of God to make His friends to share in His Mysteries* in preparation for that day, and for them to learn from Him what He has heard from the Father (Jn. 15:15). But they must come as His friends who "have ears to hear" (Mt. 11:15). Then it is impossible to begin the friendship and to open the ear, to prepare the wedding garment and to make ready the other requisites for that bridechamber; it is this life which is the workshop for all these things. Those, then, who have not acquired these things before they departed have nothing in common with that life. To this the five foolish virgins and the man invited to the wedding feast are witnesses, since they came without either the oil or the wedding garment and were not able to buy them then.

[§ 2. The life in Christ consists of union with Him]

In short, it is this world which is in travail with that new inner man which is "created after the likeness of God" (Eph. 4:24). When he has been shaped and formed here he is thus born perfect into that perfect world which grows not old. As nature prepares the foetus, while it is in its dark and fluid life, for that life which is in the light, and shapes it, as though according to a model, for the life which it is about to receive, so likewise it happens to the saints. This is what the apostle Paul said when he wrote to the Galatians, "my little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

However, while the unborn have no perception whatever of this life, the blessed ones have many hints in this present life of things to come. This is the reason. The unborn do not yet possess this life, but it is wholly in the future. In that condition there is no ray of light nor anything else which sustains this life. In our case this is not so, but that future life is, as it were, infused into this present life and

*I.e., Sacraments.

mingled with it. For us too that Sun has graciously risen, the heavenly fragrance has been poured forth into the malodorous places, and the Bread of angels has been given even to men.

In this present world, therefore, it is possible for the saints not only to be disposed and prepared for that life, but also even now to live and act in accordance with it. Paul writes, "lay hold on eternal life" (Tim. 6:12), and "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The divine Ignatius says, "there is water living and speaking in me" (To the Romans, 7:2). Scripture is full of such passages! Beside all these, when He who is the Life promises the saints to be with them for ever, and says, "behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20), what else should one think? When He had sown the seed of life on the earth (Lk. 8:5) and cast on it the fire (Lk. 12:49) and the sword (Mt. 10:34), He did not forthwith depart and leave it to men to plant and nourish the seed and to kindle the fire and use the sword. He Himself is truly with us and "works in us to will and to do, as the blessed Paul said (Phil. 2:12). It is He Himself, who kindles and applies the fire, He Himself holds the sword. In short, "neither does the axe boast without him who lifts it" (Is. 10:15). Those from whom the Good One is absent will attain to no good.

Yet the Lord did not promise merely to be present with the saints, but to abide with them—nay more than this, to make His abode in them (Jn. 14:23). What then shall I say? Where it is said that He is united with them, it is with such love that He becomes one spirit with them. As Paul says, "he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him" (I Cor. 6:17), and "that you may be one body and one spirit, just as you were called" (Eph. 4:4).

[§ 3. The intimacy of our union with Christ]

As God's loving-kindness is ineffable and His love for our race surpasses human speech and reason, so too it

belongs to the divine goodness alone, for this is "the peace of God which passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). Likewise it follows that His union with those whom He loves surpasses every union of which one might conceive, and cannot be compared with any model.

Therefore even Scripture needed many illustrations to be able to express that connection, since one would not suffice. In one place it employs the figures of an inhabitant and a dwelling, in another those of a vine and a branch, here that of a marriage, there that of members and a head. None of those figures is adequate for that union, for it is impossible from these to attain to the exact truth. Above all it is necessary that the union should conform to friendship—yet what could be adequate for divine love?

It would appear that marriage and the concord between head and members especially indicate connection and unity, yet they fall far short of it and are far from manifesting the reality. Marriage does not so join together that those who are united exist and live in each other, as is the case with Christ and the Church. So the divine apostle, speaking of marriage, says, "this is a great mystery," and adds, "I speak of Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32), showing that it is not marriage, but union with Christ which he sets up for admiration. The members are joined and die if they are alive because they are joined and die if they are separated. But it appears that the members of Christ are more closely joined to Him than to their own head, and that it is even more by Him than that they live than by their concord with it. This is plain from the blessed martyrs, who gladly suffered the one (i.e., dismemberment of their bodies) but would not even hear of the other, for they gave up their heads and limbs with pleasure, but could not even by word revolt from Christ.

So I come to that which is strangest. To whom else could one be more closely united than to oneself? Yet this very unity is inferior to that union. For each of the spirits of the blessed ones is identical with himself, yet it is united to the Saviour more than to him. It loves the Saviour more than itself, and of this Paul will bear witness by the saying

in which he wishes that he were "anathema from Christ for the sake of the salvation of the Jews" (Rom. 9:13) so that it might redound to His greater glory. But if human love is so great, the divine love is inconceivable. If the wicked can show so great gratitude, what ought to be said of God's goodness? Since the love is so immense, the union in which it has joined those who love must needs so surpass man's understanding that it cannot be likened to any similitude whatever.

[§ 4. In this union Christ is all-sufficient]

Let us then examine it in this way. There are many things of which we stand in need throughout life—such as air, light, food, clothing, our natural faculties and members; yet it so happens that we do not use any of them constantly for all purposes. We use one of them at one time, another at another time, each in turn helping us to meet the need which is at hand. When we put on clothing it cannot feed us, those who need nourishment must seek something else. The light does not enable us to breathe; the air cannot take the place of a ray of light. We do not constantly employ all the functions of our senses and members, but from time to time the eye and the hand are idle, as when we have to listen. The hand will suffice for those who wish to touch, but not for smelling or hearing or seeing; for those purposes we ignore it and look to some other faculty. But in such a way the Saviour is ever present in every fashion with those who dwell in Him, that He supplies their every need and is all things to them, nor does He suffer them to look to anything else whatever nor seek anything from elsewhere. There is nothing of which the saints are in need which He is not Himself. He gives them birth, growth, and nourishment; He is life and breath. By means of Himself He forms an eye for them and, in addition, gives them light and enables them to see Himself. He is the one who feeds and is Himself the Food; it is He who provides the Bread of life and who is Himself what He provides. He is life

for those who live, the sweet odour to those who breathe, the garment for those who would be clothed. Indeed, He is the One who enables us to walk; He Himself is the way (Jn. 14:6), and in addition He is the lodging on the way and its destination. We are members, He is the head. When we must struggle He struggles on our side. For those who are champions in the contest He is the awarder of the prizes; when we are the victors He is the crown of victory.

Thus He turns our mind to Himself from every side and does not permit it to occupy itself with anything else nor to be seized by love of anything else. Even though we move our desire in another direction, He checks it and quiets it. He blocks that way and takes in hand those who go astray. "If I go up into heaven, thou art there," it says, "if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take up my wings in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:8-10). By a wondrous compulsion and gracious governance He draws us to Himself alone and unites us to Himself only. This, I think, is the same compulsion by which He gathered those whom He invited to the house and the banquet when He said to the servant, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled (Lk. 14:23).

[§ 5. We attain to this union by newness of life]

So then, from what has been said it is clear that the life in Christ is present to the saints, those who live and work in accordance with it, not only in the world to come but also in that which is here and now. But how it is possible to live in this way and, as Paul says, "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), and further, what it is that they do with whom Christ is thus united and grown together—and I know not how else to describe it—must be discussed in that which follows.

There is an element which derives from God, and another which derives from our own zeal. The one is entirely His work, the other involves striving on our part.

However, the latter is our contribution only to the extent that we submit to His grace and do not surrender the treasure nor extinguish the torch when it has been lighted. By this I mean that we contribute nothing which is either hostile to the life or produces death. It is to this that all human good and every virtue leads, that no one should draw the sword against himself, nor flee from happiness, nor toss the crowns of victory from off his head. When Christ Himself is present He implants the very essence of life into our souls in an ineffable manner, for He is truly present and as He by His coming has supplied the first principles of life, so He assists their growth. He is present, however, not as when He first came to share our conditions of life, our company, and our pursuits, but in a different and more perfect way, in that we are joined to Him in the same body and share His life and are His members.

So, just as it is a wondrous loving-kindness which impelled Him so to love those who were the basest and to count them worthy of the greatest favours, so the union by which He is present with the objects of His love surpasses every image and every name. Thus too the manner in which He is present and bestows His benefits is a marvellous one, worthy of Him alone who does wondrous things. Those who imitate, as it were by a picture, by means of certain signs and symbols, the death which He truly died for the sake of our life, He renews and recreates by these very acts and makes them partakers of His own life.

[§ 6. Christ bestows this new life through His Mysteries]

In the sacred Mysteries, then, we depict His burial and proclaim His death. By them we are begotten and formed and wondrously united to the Saviour, for they are the means by which, as Paul says, "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Baptism confers being and in short, existence according to Christ. It receives us when we are dead and corrupted

and first leads us into life. The anointing with chrism perfects him who has received [new] birth by infusing into him the energy that befits such a life. The Holy Eucharist preserves and continues this life and health, since the Bread of life enables us to preserve that which has been acquired and to continue in life. It is therefore by this Bread that we live and by the chrism that we are moved, once we have received being from the baptismal washing.

In this way we live in God. We remove our life from this visible world to that world which is not seen by exchanging, not the place, but the very life itself and its mode. It was not we ourselves who were moved towards God, nor did we ascend to Him; but it was He who came and descended to us. It was not we who sought, but we were the object of His seeking. The sheep did not seek for the shepherd, nor did the lost coin search for the master of the house; He it was who came to the earth and retrieved His own image, and He came to the place where the sheep was straying and lifted it up and stopped it from straying. He did not remove us from here, but He made us heavenly while yet remaining on earth and imparted to us the heavenly life without leading us up to heaven, but by bending heaven to us and bringing it down. As the prophet says, "He bowed the heavens also, and came down" (Ps. 18:10).

Accordingly, through these sacred Mysteries as through windows the Sun of Righteousness enters this dark world. He puts to death the life which accords with this world, but raises up that which is above the world. The Light of the world overcomes this world, which He affirms when He says, "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), and introduces the abiding and immortal life into a mortal body which is subject to change.

When the sunlight enters a house the lamp no longer attracts the sight of the onlookers, but the brightness of the sunlight overcomes it and dims it. Similarly, when in this life the brightness of the life to come enters through the Mysteries and dwells in our souls it overcomes the life which is in the flesh and the beauty of this world and

conceals their brightness. This is the life which is in the Spirit, which overcomes every desire of the flesh in accordance with Paul's word, "walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). This way the Lord traced by coming to us, this gate He opened by entering into the world. When He returned to the Father He suffered it not to be closed, but from Him He comes through it to sojourn among men, or rather, He is constantly present with us and, in fulfilment of those promises, is with us for ever. Therefore, as the patriarch said, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). By it not only the angels descend to the earth, for they are present with each one who is being initiated, but even the very Lord of the angels Himself.

Accordingly, when He prefigured, as by a picture, our own Baptism, the Saviour Himself as He suffered Himself to undergo the baptism of John opened up heaven and showed that this is the means by which we shall see the heavenly place. Indeed, the words in which He declared that he who has not been baptized will not be able to enter into life (Jn. 3:5) hint that this washing is some kind of entrance and gate. "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (Ps. 118:19), says David, moved by desire that these gates should be opened. That which many prophets and kings desired to see (Lk. 10:24) is this, that the Artificer of those doors should come to the earth. Therefore David states that were he to attain to this entrance and go through these gates he would render thanks to God who has breached the wall, for he says, "I will go into them and give thanks unto the Lord" (Ps. 118:19), since it is from these gates that he would be able to attain to the most perfect knowledge of the goodness and loving-kindness of God towards our race.

What then could be a greater proof of kindness and benevolence than that He who washes with water should set the soul free from uncleanness? Or that He by anointing it with chrism should grant it to reign in the heavenly kingdom? Or that He as the Host of the banquet should provide His own Body and Blood? And moreover, that men

should become gods (cf. Jn. 10:35) and sons of God (cf. Rom. 8:14). And that our nature should be honoured with God's honour, and that dust should be raised to such a height of glory as to become equal in honour and dignity to the divine nature?

This, then, is the excellence of God's work which has beclouded the very heavens. It has surpassed, I think, every creature and concealed every other work of God by excelling it in greatness and beauty. All of God's works, be they ever so many, so beautiful, and so great, are less than the Creator's wisdom and skill so that He could well have brought forward things yet more beautiful and yet greater than those which already exist, such as we should not be able to express. But were it possible for a work of God to take place, so beautiful, so great that it would vie with that wisdom and power, and almost match His infinity and, like a footprint, indicate the whole greatness of His divine goodness, I should regard this to be superior to the others. If, then, God's work always consists in imparting goodness, it is for this end that He does all things. This is the goal both of past events and of things which may happen in time to come, since "the good has been poured forth and spreads abroad" (Dionysius, *Of the Divine Names*, c. 4). By doing this God would impart the greatest good of all. Greater than this He could not give, and this would be the greatest and fairest work of His goodness and the utmost limit of His kindness.

Such, then, is the work of that dispensation which was wrought for mankind. In this case God did not merely impart whatever was good for human nature and keep most for Himself, but He bestowed all the "fulness of His Godhead" (Col. 2:9), all the riches of His very nature. It was for this reason that Paul said that in the Gospel the righteousness of God is eminently revealed (Rom. 1:17). For if there is any virtue and righteousness of God it would consist in bountifully imparting to all His own excellence and in sharing His blessedness.

For this reason the most sacred Mysteries may fittingly be called "gates of righteousness," for it is God's supreme

loving-kindness and goodness towards mankind, which is the divine virtue and righteousness, which has provided us with these entrances into heaven.

[§ 7. Christ's saving work as the foundation of the new life]

In yet another way, by an act of judgment and righteousness, the Lord has set up this sign of triumph and has given us this gate and this way. He did not steal away the captives, but gave a ransom for them. He bound "the strong man" (Mk. 3:27), not by virtue of greater power, but by condemning him with a just sentence. He became king over the house of Jacob by destroying the tyrant's dominion in men's souls, not merely because He was able to destroy it, but because it deserved to be destroyed. This he pointed out by the saying, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne" (Ps. 89:14).

It was not merely that righteousness opened those gates, but that through them righteousness reached our race. In times past, before God had sojourned among men, it was impossible to find righteousness upon the earth. God, from whom nothing is hid, Himself stooped down from heaven and sought it, to see whether it existed at all; yet He did not find it, for He says, "they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:4, LXX).

But when the truth rose, like the sun, from the earth for those who sat in the darkness and shadow of falsehood, then righteousness stooped down from heaven and, for the first time, appeared to men in its reality and perfection. We were justified, first by being set free from bonds and condemnation, in that He who had done no evil pleaded for us by dying on the cross. By this He paid the penalty for the sins which we had audaciously committed; then, because of that death, we were made friends of God and righteous. By His death the Saviour not only released us and reconciled us to the Father, but also "gave us power to

healing and gladly see the physician are in a better and more tolerable case than those who do not even know that they are sick and who shrink from medicines. The physician who knows that his art is equal to the disease will, I think, address them as though they have already recovered, even though he has not yet cured them. It was in this sense that God called men both righteous and friends in those times, for they made every effort in their power and displayed such righteousness as was possible.

This made them worthy of being released when He should appear who had the power to release them, yet He by no means released them beforehand. Had this been true righteousness then they, as Solomon says, should have been "in peace" and "in the hand of God" (Wis. 3:1, 3) when they had laid aside this body, but it was Hades that received them when they had departed hence. When our Master brought in true righteousness and fellowship with God it was not as though He brought them back from abroad; He brought them into the world for the first time. He did not discover an already existing road leading to heaven, He Himself was its builder. Had it already existed, someone else would have built it, but now "no one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man" (Jn. 3:13).

Since, then, it was impossible to find forgiveness of sins and remission of punishment before the cross, what must we think of righteousness? It would not have been consistent, I think, for the just to be placed with the choir of God's friends before being reconciled to Him, or to be proclaimed as receiving the crowns of victory while they were still bound in chains. In short, had the passover lamb of the Old Covenant accomplished all things, what need would there have been for the second paschal Victim? Had the types and the images brought about the felicity which was being sought after, the truth and realities would have been in vain. Since the enmity was destroyed through Christ's death and the dividing wall removed (Eph. 2:14, 16), and since peace and righteousness rose as the sun in the days of the Saviour, would there have been any place

become children of God" (Jn. 1:12), in that He both united our nature to Himself through the flesh which He assumed, and also united each one of us to His own flesh by the power of the Mysteries.

In this way, then, He makes His own righteousness and life to rise, like the sun, in our souls. Thus it became possible for men, by means of the sacred Mysteries, both to know true righteousness and themselves to practice it.

[§ 8. How the righteous under the Old Covenant looked forward to their deliverance by Christ]

Even though in Scripture there were many righteous men and friends of God before the coming of the Justifier and Reconciler, we ought to consider this both in the particular context of their own generation and also with reference to that which was to come. It was for this that they were enabled and prepared, that when righteousness should appear they would run towards it, and that when the ransom would be paid they would be released; that when the light would shine they would see it, and when the reality had been disclosed they would rise above the types and shadows.

While the righteous and the wicked were held by almost the same bonds and endured the same tyranny, yet they differed in this respect, that the righteous hated that captivity and slavery. They prayed that their prison might be destroyed and those bonds broken, they wished to see the tyrant's head trampled under foot by those who had been his captives. The wicked, on the other hand, by no means regarded their present plight as a calamity and were happy to be slaves. Such were they also who, at that blessed time when the Sun had risen upon them, did not accept it, but sought by every means to extinguish it and did all they could to cause the sunlight to vanish. When, therefore, the King appeared, the former were set free from the tyranny of hell, while the latter remained in their bonds.

In the case of the sick, those who in every way seek for

for all these things if there had been friends of God and righteous men before that sacrifice?

Here is a further proof. Formerly it was the law which united us to God, but now it is faith and grace and all that depends on them. It is thus clear that at that time the fellowship of men with God was a condition of servitude, but that it is now one of sonship and friendship, for the law pertains to slaves, but grace, confidence, and faith belong to friends and sons. From all these things it is obvious that since the Saviour is "the first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18) so it was not possible for anyone of the dead to revive to immortal life before He had risen. In the same way too He alone led the way to holiness and righteousness for mankind. This Paul showed when he wrote that Christ "has gone as a forerunner for us" into the Holy Place (Heb. 6:20). He entered into the Holy Place when He had offered Himself to the Father, and He leads in those who are willing, as they share in His burial. This, however, does not consist in dying as He died, but in showing forth that death in the baptismal washing and proclaiming it upon the sacred table, when they, after being anointed, in an ineffable manner feast upon Him who was done to death and rose again. Thus, when He has led them through the gates, He brings them to the kingdom and the crowns.

[§ 9. How Christ opens to us the gates of life]

The gates of the Mysteries are far more august and beneficial than the gates of Paradise. The latter will not be opened to anyone who has not first entered through the gates of the Mysteries, but these were opened when the gates of Paradise had been closed. The latter were able to let out those who were within, while the former only lead inside and let no one out. It was possible to shut the gates of Paradise and so they were shut; in the case of the Mysteries the curtain and the dividing wall were entirely destroyed and taken away. It is impossible to raise a barrier

anew and for the gates to be closed again and these worlds to be divided from each other by a wall. For "the heavens were" not merely opened, but "parted asunder," as says the admirable Mark (1:10), showing that a door and entrance way and curtain no longer existed. He who has reconciled and united the world which is above with that which is below, and has made peace between them and destroyed the dividing wall (Eph. 2:14, 15), "cannot deny Himself," as blessed Paul says (2 Tim. 2:13).

The gates of Paradise were opened for Adam, but it was fitting that they be closed when he fell from the state in which he ought to have remained. These gates Christ Himself opened, "who committed no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22) and cannot sin, for as it says, "His righteousness remaineth for ever" (Ps. 111:3). Wherefore they must of necessity remain open and lead to life, but without providing a way out of life, for "I came," says the Saviour, "that they might have life" (Jn. 10:10). This is the life which the Lord came to bring, that those who come through these Mysteries should be partakers of His death and share in His passion. Apart from this it is impossible to escape death. It is not possible for him who has not been "baptized in water and the Spirit" (Jn. 3:5) to enter into life, nor can those who have not eaten the Flesh of the Son of man and drunk His Blood have life in themselves (Jn. 6:24).

[§ 10. The Ransom which Christ has paid for us]

Let us examine this further. It is not possible for those who have not died to sin to live for God. So it is of God alone to be able to slay sin. For men it was necessary, for had we been defeated against our will we should have been worthy of retrieving our defeat; but for those who had become slaves of sin it was in no way possible. How should we have been able to prevail over that to which we had become slaves? Even had we been more powerful, yet "the slave is not greater than the master" (Mt. 10:24).

It was man, then, who by rights should have attained

this end and for whom it was fit to win the victory; but he had become enslaved by those whom he should have conquered in battle. God, however, who was indebted to no one, had the power to do these things. Therefore, as long as neither God nor man undertook the battle, sin lived on. It was impossible for the sun of the true life to rise on us, since it was man who should wrest the victory for himself but only God who was able to do so. It was necessary, therefore, for manhood to be joined to Deity, and for one and the same to possess the nature both of him to whom the warfare pertained and of Him who was able to prevail in it.

It is this, then, that comes about. God makes His own the struggle on behalf of the human race, for He becomes man. Man, being pure from all sin, overcomes sin, for He is God. In this way human nature is cleared of disgrace and, now that sin has fallen, puts on the crown of victory.

Even though it has not yet happened that each member of the human race has been victorious because of this, or has even entered into the struggle, yet he has been released from these bonds. This the Saviour Himself accomplished by means of the nature which He assumed. Thereby He gave to each member of humanity the power to slay sin and to share with Him in the hero's prize. Since after that victory He had to receive His crown and celebrate His triumph, He underwent wounds, the cross, and death, and as Paul says, "for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). What does this mean? He had done no wrong for which He might pay the penalty, nor had He committed sin, nor had He done anything of which the most shameless informer might accuse Him. Yet wounds, pain, and death were from the beginning devised against sin! Why then did the Lord permit it, since He loves man? It is not reasonable for goodness to take pleasure in an atrocity and in death. This is the reason that God permitted death and pain as soon as sin had entered in, not so much to inflict a penalty on the guilty but rather to supply a remedy for him who had fallen into sickness. Since, therefore, it was impossible to apply this penalty to

the things which Christ had done, and since the Saviour had no trace of any disease for which He needed a remedy to heal Him, the power of His cup is applied to us and slays the sin that is in us. The wounding of Him who is under no censure becomes the penalty of those who are guilty of many things.

Since it was a great and wondrous penalty which more than outweighed the evils committed by men, it not only cancelled the indictment but added so great an abundance of benefits that He ascended into heaven in order to make those who were of the earth, the most hateful captives, enslaved and dishonoured, to become partakers with God of the heavenly kingdom. That death was precious beyond the power of human thought, and yet the Saviour yielded Himself to be sold to His murderers for a trifling sum, so that even this should be full of poverty and dishonour for Him! By being bought He willed to share the lot of a slave and be subject to outrageous treatment. He considered it gain to be dishonoured for our sake; by being sold for a trifling sum He would hint that He came freely, as a Gift, to suffer death for the world. Willingly He died, having wronged no one either for the sake of His own life or for the common good, supplying graces to His murderers far greater than they could wish or hope for.

But why do I mention these things? It is God who died; it was God's blood which was shed upon the cross.* What could be more precious than this death, what more awesome? How great a sin had human nature committed that needed so great a penalty to expiate it! How great was the wound that required the power of this remedy!

It was necessary that sin should be abolished by some penalty, and that we, by paying a just penalty, should be cleared of the indictment of the sins which we have committed against God. He who has been punished for the things which he has committed will not be called to account for them

*That is, the humanity which underwent death belonged to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Cabasilas would hardly have subscribed to the heresy of Patripassianism, i.e., that the divine nature as such underwent either suffering or death!

again. But among men there was no one who, himself being guiltless, might have suffered for the others. Since no one could have sufficed for himself, even the whole race, could it have died ten thousand times, was unable to pay the penalty it deserved. What fitting penalty could that most wretched slave undergo, who had utterly destroyed the image of the king and acted contemptuously towards so great a dignity?

It is for this reason that the Master who is without sin suffers many terrible things and dies and endures the blow. As man He undertakes the cause of mankind. He releases our race from the indictment and gives freedom to the prisoners, since He Himself, being God and Master, stood in no need thereof.

[§ 11. The Mysteries as the means by which we appropriate Christ's saving work]

These, then, are the reasons why the true life passes to us through the Saviour's death. This is the way in which we draw this life into our souls—by being initiated into the Mysteries, being washed and anointed and partaking of the holy table. When we do these things, Christ comes to us and dwells in us, He is united to us and grows into one with us. He stifles sin in us and infuses into us His own life and merit and makes us to share in His victory. O how great is His goodness! He crowns those who have been washed, and those who partake of His banquet He proclaims victors.

How shall we explain that victory and its crown, the fruit of toil and sweat, which come from the baptismal washing, the chrismation, and the banquet? For though we neither struggle nor suffer when we celebrate these rites, we yet sing the praise of that struggle and celebrate that victory and venerate the trophy and display fervent and unutterable love for that Champion. As for those wounds and bruises and that death, we make them our own and apply them to ourselves by whatever means we may, and

become one flesh with Him—with Him who was put to death and rose again. Wherefore we fittingly enjoy the benefits which come from that death and those struggles.

Suppose some one passing by should try to rescue a captured tyrant awaiting his punishment, in order to crown him and honour his tyranny. At his fall would he not consider himself to die and cry out against the laws and protest against justice, all this without shame or hiding his wickedness, but boldly and brazenly testifying and making a display? What verdict would we think fit for him? Would we not punish him like the tyrant? Obviously, in every way!

On the other hand, let us suppose the completely opposite case—one who admires the victor and rejoices when he has won and weaves for him the victor's crowns, rouses applause in the crowd and moves the audience, with pleasure pays him homage to his triumph, kisses his face, grasps his right hand, and is thus utterly beside himself over the hero and the victory which he has won, as though it were he whose head was to be crowned. In the eyes of favourable judges this man would have some share in the victor's prizes, just as the other would share in the tyrant's punishment. If in the case of the wicked the just penalty must be exacted and their purpose and intent must be taken into account, it would hardly be right that the good should be deprived of their deserts. In addition, were the victor himself to stand in no need of the prizes of his victory but prefer above all to see his admirer to enjoy the honour of the audience and regard the crowning of his friend as his own prize in the contest—would it not be most fitting, most appropriate, that the latter should carry off the crown, even though without the sweat and peril of the conflict?

These things, then, this baptismal washing and the banquet and the sober enjoyment of the chrism achieve. For when we are initiated we despise the tyrant, we spit at him and we shun him; as for our Champion we praise Him, we admire Him, we worship Him and love Him with all our soul, so that we by overflowing love feed on Him as on bread, we are anointed with Him as by chrism, we are clothed with Him as by water. It is evident that He

undertook the warfare on our behalf and that for the sake of our victory He endured death. Thus there is nothing unfitting or incongruous that we should attain to the crowns of victory through these Mysteries. On our part we display such eagerness as we are able, when we hear that this water has the power of Christ's death and tomb; we believe it most firmly and gladly draw near and go down into the water.

They are no trifling gifts that He bestows, nor are they trifling benefits of which He counts us worthy! Those who come over to Him He welcomes with the gifts which follow from His death and burial. He does not merely bestow a crown or give them some share in His glory, He gives them Himself, the Victor who is crowned with glory. When we come up from the water we bear the Saviour upon our souls, on our heads, on our eyes, in our very inward parts, on all our members—Him who is pure from sin, free from all corruption, just as He was when He rose again and appeared to His disciples, as He was taken up, as He will come again to demand the return of His treasure.

Thus we have been born; we have been stamped with Christ as though with some figure and shape. To prevent us from introducing any alien figure He Himself occupies the entrances of life. He appropriates the organs by which we introduce air and food to aid the life of the body, and through them He enters our souls; through the former He comes as chrism and a sweet odour, through the latter as food. We breathe Him, He becomes food for us. Thus, as He blends and mingles Himself with us throughout, He makes us His own body and He becomes for us what a head is for the members of a body. Since, then, He is the Head, we share all good things with Him, for that which belongs to the head must needs pass into the body.

For this reason one might well marvel that we do not share in His stripes and death also, but that, while He alone underwent that struggle, yet when He was to be crowned He then made us partakers of Himself. This too belongs to His ineffable loving-kindness. Yet it is not without reason or contrary to it. It was after the cross that

we were united to Christ; before He had died we had nothing in common with Him. He was the Son and the beloved One, but we were unclean, slaves, of a hostile mind. It was when He had died and the ransom had been paid and the devil's prison had been destroyed that we obtained freedom and adoption of sons and became members of that blessed Head. From Him, therefore, that which belongs to the Head becomes ours as well.

Now, then, we depart from this water without sin. Because of the chrism we partake of His graces, and because of the banquet we live with the same life He does. In the world to come we shall be gods with God,* fellow-heirs with Him of the same riches, reigning with Him in the same kingdom—that is, unless we of our own free will blind ourselves in this life and rend asunder the royal garment. This alone we contribute to this life—that we submit to His gifts, retain His graces, and do not reject the crown which God by many toils and labours has prepared for us.

This is the life in Christ which the Mysteries confer, but to which, apparently, human effort also has a contribution to make. He, then, who would speak thereof must first deal with each of the Mysteries. After that it is fitting to consider the activity which is in accordance with virtue.

*"He was made man that we might be made God"—St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 54. The Orthodox Church lays great stress on the Christian life as deification, or divinization—not, indeed, that we might be absorbed into the divine essence, but be penetrated by the divine "energies." See further: V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Chapter 5.