if at the dawn of life's morning my accents are those of gladness rather than of gloom, how is this to be explained? Can it be otherwise accounted for than as the testimony of heredity to the balance of joy over grief! If you once concede the position that the age of youth is habitually the age of hope, you are driven into the other position that throughout the past ages hope has prevailed. Before you sneer at the Optimism of youth I would have you remember that the Optimism of manhood rests on no such solid basis. The songs of manhood are the result of its personal successes —of the sunshine I have individually experienced, of the triumphs I have individually won. But the songs of youth have no such origin; they are antecedent to personal fortune. And for that very reason they mean more, their testimony is more worth having. Theirs is the testimony of the past. They express the sum of common experience. If I am born with an instinct rather of joy than of grief I bring to the world a message from its yesterday; I prove that for one circle at least the gold dominates over the grey. If the inventory of present life should lead to the conclusion that the majority of the human race have shared in this experience—in other words, if the Optimism of youth be not only a phrase but a fact, we shall receive from the voice of a transmitted instinct the surest possible evidence for the predominance of happiness on the earth.

G. MATHESON.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

(1 CORINTHIANS XV. 19.)

THE object of this note is to point out that "baptism for the dead" in a literal sense is not in itself an improbable custom nor even in the circumstances of those days wholly unjustifiable; that St. Paul's words are best explained by the existence of such a custom; and that a right apprehen-

sion of the custom in question will account for its entire disappearance from the Church and even from the memory of succeeding generations, and consequently for the difficulty of interpretation which ensued.

Without reviewing at length the various explanations of the passage we venture to affirm generally that none of those interpretations which reject the literal meaning of "baptizing for the dead" would have been given unless the existence of such a custom had been deemed inconceivable, or at least open to very grave objection. Canon T. Evans, for instance, who in a very able note argues against the more obvious interpretation of the words, alludes to the custom as "a monstrous superstition," and Prof. Milligan speaks of it as "grotesque, superstitious and absurd" (*The Resurrection of the Dead*, p. 88).

The explanations based on such preconceived opinions are often forced and alien to the directness and simplicity of the language in which St. Paul expresses his arguments in the rest of the chapter. One interpretation indeed reached by a change in punctuation possesses some plausibility. By placing a note of interrogation after "baptized" as well as after "dead" it is possible to render the words "What shall they do which are baptized? Is it for their dead (bodies) that they are baptized? If the dead are not raised at all why then are they baptized for them?"

Canon T. Evans however (*Speaker's Commentary*, ad. loc. and in an additional note) accepts the rendering "for the dead" (A.V. and R.V.) as one which, "rightly understood is good and may well be retained." But he proceeds to give an interpretation to the preposition "for" (ὑπέρ) and to "the dead" (τῶν νεκρῶν), which is certainly not obvious and on the surface. We need hardly say that an accomplished scholar like Canon Evans is right in affirming that the preposition ὑπέρ signifies not only "in behalf of," but also "on account of, with an interest in, concerning,

with a view to," etc. Compare among other instances cited by Blass (*Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 135, Eng. Trans.) 2 Corinthians viii. 25, *εἴτε ὑπὲρ Τίτου* ("as concerning"): xii. 8, *ὑπὲρ τούτου παρεκάλεσα*: 2 Corinthians i. 6, *ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως*, "to," "with a view to." What we have to say is that any of these renderings might be accepted in this passage, and that no one of them is incompatible with a very literal interpretation of it.

But where we venture to differ from Canon Evans is not in the extended use of the preposition but in the extension of meaning which he gives to the words "the dead" (*τῶν νεκρῶν*). "Both context and circumstance," he says, "together proclaim that the ulterior view of a neophyte's mind bending over the long roll or class of the dead is their *resurrection*." So that with Theophylact and other Greek Fathers he expounds the phrase "for the dead" as "with an interest in the resurrection of the dead," or even "in expectation of the resurrection." Theophylact indeed paraphrases the words thus: *τί δὲ ὅλως καὶ βαπτίζονται ἄνθρωποι ὑπὲρ ἀναστάσεως, τουτέστιν ἐπὶ προσδοκίᾳ ἀναστάσεως εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται*. In view of such a paraphrase we are tempted to ask—If this was indeed the meaning of the Apostle why did he not use those words or words as clear and unambiguous? If the reading in the text had been "with a view to the resurrection" (*ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀναστάσεως*) there would have been no difficulty or controversy in relation to this much disputed phrase. But what we doubt is that Theophylact's paraphrase is a true representation of St. Paul's words.

Indeed if St. Paul's argument at this point were drawn from Christian baptism only the words "for the dead" or even "for the resurrection" would have been superfluous to sustain it. "Why then are men baptized if the dead rise not?" would be a sufficient argument as it stands, for of course baptism has a relation to a future life and

implies a resurrection. But St. Paul had a purpose in adding "for the dead." And the natural inference is that there is an allusion to a special usage in baptism.

What that usage was may be conjectured from the circumstances of the Corinthian Church at the time. It was of course an infant Church consisting entirely of recent converts from Judaism and the various pagan cults. As yet there was no such thing as hereditary Christianity. To become a Christian was to break from the traditions of family and race. And to accept Christian privileges, union with Christ, a partaking of the Divine nature and a certain hope of an immortal life was to accept privileges from which many of those who were nearest and dearest to them had been debarred by death. But the new converts had been taught that Christ had died for all men. He had died for the dead and the living alike, for parents or brethren or friends whom they had lost, Jew or pagan though they were.

And as the Christian converts knew that only through union with Christ could their dead who were living enter upon the full enjoyment of immortal life a passionate desire would arise that all who with them had "waited for the consolation of Israel" or who in paganism had been "seekers after God" should be brought into that union and share with them the joy of the resurrection in Christ. They had been led to believe that the Lord would come "quickly"—the moment of the *parousia* was close at hand, there seemed therefore to be an immediate prospect of rejoining the friends whom they had recently lost. And it was an agonizing thought that anything should separate them from the loved companionship. How then, the new converts might reason, could their departed friends so like-minded with themselves, so prepared to receive Christ if that had been possible, how could they be brought into covenant with Him? Only by baptism as far as they knew.

Could they not then be sponsors for these dead friends living, as they knew they were, by the power of the resurrection? Could they not answer for their faith as they answered for their unconscious babes in baptism? It was only one step further to ask—could they not be baptized for them? Such we may imagine to ourselves was the train of thought which led on to "baptism for the dead." We must remember that the revelation of immortality or incorruptibility (*ἀφθαρσία*) through the gospel, the certainty that departed friends were living, must have had an overwhelming effect on the first converts which it is difficult for us fully to realize. In the light of that revealed and certified truth all kinds of possibilities would present themselves. No limits could be set to the far-reaching power of this resurrection. And if the means of realizing ardent hopes was erroneous, it was at least human and pathetic; and however questionable in itself the usage implied belief in the future life, in the resurrection of the dead, in the efficacy of the resurrection of Christ and in the value of baptism.

Nor must it be forgotten that the thought of substitution lies at the root of Christian doctrine, and that therefore there would be no objection *in limine* for a Christian believer to the teaching that a vicarious act of love and piety might benefit those on whose behalf it was wrought.

It is natural to suppose that thoughts and uses would spring into existence under the first impulse of the proved fact of the resurrection which could not be permanently sanctioned by the Church and would pass with a changed condition of things and in the face of a more settled doctrine. Among these besides "baptism for the dead" may be reckoned "speaking with tongues" and exorcism, and that ceremonial unction by presbyters described in St. James v. 14.

When we come to consider St. Paul's relation to this

usage, supposing it to exist, it may be observed that the change from the third person in *v.* 29 to the first person in *v.* 30 implies that the Apostle does not associate himself with the belief which was possibly local and confined to a small group of Christians in Corinth. The form of the expression *οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν* appears to indicate a party distinguished from the general body of the Church. It is true that St. Paul bases one part of his argument on the usage. The very intensity of belief in the resurrection which the custom implied would make an appeal to it more telling. The belief itself was vital though the custom which grew out of it may have been inexpedient or even indefensible. But may not this have been a case where, if excision was needed, it was expedient to carry it out tenderly and without precipitation? May it not have been a point on which the Apostle hesitated to speak authoritatively at once?

Here indeed it may be noted that even at this day there is far from being agreement in Christendom as to the relations between the living and the departed who are in Paradise.

In any case the custom, limited as we conceive it to be, would vanish with the condition of things which made it possible. It would have no place in the generation which followed. In the second century indeed we have traces of vicarious baptism practised by certain heretical sects, a custom possibly founded on these words of St. Paul, but one which is according to our theory to be entirely dissociated from the primitive usage, the existence of which we infer from this passage.

We may add that it was in all probability the use of vicarious baptism by the Marcionites that induced the Greek Fathers to give an interpretation to this celebrated passage which would lend no support to a custom entirely discredited by the Church.

But a further objection has been made. It has been said—How could an argument founded on "baptism for the dead" be efficacious as against persons who denied the resurrection? To this it may be answered that with absolute unbelievers no argument derived from baptism would have weight; but the whole of the Apostle's reasoning in this chapter is directed rather to confirm and warn the wavering than to refute the unbelieving.

We ought not perhaps to conclude this paper without referring to Prof. Milligan's interpretation of the passage. According to this scholar "the dead" are the Christian dead who are at rest but still awaiting the completed victory of Christ. Every one therefore who is baptized and suffers for Christ, helping as he does to fill up the number of the elect, hastens the coming of Christ and the consummation of the bliss of His saints, and in this sense is baptized for the benefit or advantage of the dead in Christ. St. Paul's thought here is, he says, substantially the same as that which he expresses when writing to the Colossians—"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake which is the Christ" (Col. i. 24).

Expressed very briefly our objections to this exposition are—(1) that Prof. Milligan imposes on *βαπτιζόμενοι* a wider meaning than it can bear in this passage when he includes in it the thought of the trials and sufferings then inseparable from the Christian profession. (2) Although no doubt each Christian baptism does or may contribute to the completion of the number of the elect, still it cannot be regarded as a prominent thought or one usually present to the minds of the candidates for baptism as a motive. (3) The thought does not add to the force of St. Paul's argument, which would have been equally strong without the addition of "for the dead." (4) If the thought of suffering

be brought into this clause the argument is substantially identical with that which follows.

In conclusion we do not find any of the interpretations offered for the solution of this passage entirely convincing or satisfactory. There are none which do not more or less convey the impression of "explaining away." And on the other hand the existence of a practice to which the most literal and obvious interpretation points is neither so improbable or so indefensible as most commentators have supposed. At any rate the words stand written without any question of authenticity, demanding a solution: *si quid novisti rectius | istis candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.*

ARTHUR CARR.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

V.

IMMORTALITY IN MODERN THEOLOGY (*continued*).

IN my last paper I quoted and discussed writers who either maintained with more or less confidence, or did not explicitly and conspicuously protest against, the traditional doctrine of the endless permanence of all human souls. I shall now refer to two other recent writers who, while differing greatly from those quoted above, yet maintain the same traditional doctrine; and shall then quote some other writers who protest strongly against it.

Dr. Welldon, bishop of Calcutta, in his interesting volume on *The Hope of Immortality*, endeavours to say something for the immortality of the soul without appealing to the Bible. But he is not very sure of his ground. For, on p. 3, he writes: "I do not aspire to prove Immortality but to make it probable." His doubt is far-reaching. For, on p. 5, he says: "No historical fact is certain."