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*THE MYSTERIES OF BAPTISM BY MOSES BAR
KEPHA COMPARED WITH THE ODES
OF SOLOMON*

THE reason for the publication of the following tract is as follows: the question of the antiquity of the Baptismal Services of the Christian Church and of the meaning of the symbolic acts that are involved in the same have been brought into renewed prominence by a recent discovery in the Early Christian literature, in which it has been thought by several critics, working in independence of one another, that traces of the Baptismal rituals of the earliest centuries could be detected. The work to which I refer is the *Odes of Solomon* recently discovered by Dr. Rendel Harris. And it was a suggestion of the discoverer that I should examine in the light of recent investigations the very interesting *Exposition of Baptism* made by a celebrated Syrian Father, Moses bar Kepha.¹

Since the discovery of the *Odes* there has been widespread interest in their interpretation. At present opinion seems to be moving away from Harnack's hypothesis that the *Odes* are Jewish with Christian interpolations and to be inclining towards belief in a Christian origin for them.

¹ Moses bar Kepha lived from about 813 A.D.-903 A.D. He was born and brought up at Balad in Mesopotamia and was educated under Rabban Cyriacus, the abbot of the Convent of Max Sergius, which was situated near Balad.

He was himself bishop of Mosul, Beth Ramman and Koniye for the last forty years of his life.

He was a voluminous author, and is said to have written commentaries on most of the books of the Bible. Of these the Commentaries on Genesis, the Gospels and Pauline Epistles are still in part extant. An ecclesiastical history is also attributed to him, but of this no trace remains.

Besides these he wrote a number of homilies and treatises, some of them of considerable length, dealing for the most part with ecclesiastical matters, such as ordination, chrism, tonsure of monks. Amongst these are three dealing with Baptism, one of which being the treatise here translated.

Dr. Bernard's theory¹ in particular—that they are “a collection of hymns packed with allusions to Baptism”—demands attention. For if it could be established, while it would lower the date of the *Odes* and of the *Pistis Sophia* it would carry our knowledge of Baptismal Ritual to very early times. It is important therefore that this hypothesis be carefully tested. Its chief confirmation comes from the old Syrian rituals.

The treatise of Moses bar Kepha is based on these. In it he sets forth the various customs and rites connected with baptism and explains the significance attached to all the details of the ceremony and gives the reasons for them. In particular he discusses the symbolic imagery of the baptismal element and of the central act itself.

As will be shown, Dr. Bernard's theory receives ample support and illustration from the work of bar Kepha. A collection of parallels are found in it to nearly all the passages which Dr. Bernard has adduced from various sources to illustrate his contention as to the numerous allusions in the *Odes* to the fruitful symbolism of the baptismal ceremonies.

This may be seen by the following comparisons between passages from the *Odes* and our Treatise respectively.

(a) *Ode* 36. 3.

“The Spirit brought me forth before the face of the Lord: and although a son of man I was named the Illuminate, the Son of God.”

Moses bar Kepha, section 2.

“Baptism is named Illumination for two reasons, (1) Because from him who is baptized there is expelled the darkness of the ignorance of God and the darkness of sin, and he is illumined by the three lights which are the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (2) Because he is counted worthy of the light of the Kingdom of Heaven, etc. It is designated Regeneration, being likened to

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1910.

the first birth from a woman.
The first birth is from a woman,
but this is of the Holy Spirit."

In both these passages we have the idea of Illumination linked with that of Spiritual Birth.

(b) *Ode* 21. 2.

"I put off darkness and clothed myself with light."

M.b.K., section 19.¹

"The white robes with which they clothe him are to show that he has been in the darkness of ignorance and has become white and shining in the knowledge of God and in the light which he has received from baptism."

(c) *Ode* 25. 8.

"In me there shall be nothing that is not light: and I was clothed with the covering of Thy Spirit, and Thou didst remove from me my garment of skin."

M.b.K., section 19.

"The white robes show that the baptized . . . will put on the glory which Adam wore before he transgressed the commandment."

"The glory which Adam wore" is undoubtedly the "coat of light" which was lost when the "coat of skin" was acquired."¹

(d) *Ode* 15. 7, 8, 9.

"According to His bounty He hath given to me, and according to His excellent beauty He hath made me. I have put on incorruption through His name: and have put off corruption by His grace. Death has been destroyed before my face."

M.b.K., section 19.

"The white robes are . . . because beforetime he (the baptized) was without form or beauty, and it is come to pass that he has acquired both form and adornment, and because after the resurrection he will receive a robe of immortality and incorruption."

Here we may notice that not only do we have in both these passages the conception of the putting on of a garment of *incorruption* and of the acquiring of immortality, but also in both is the accompanying thought of the acquirement of new beauty.

¹ Compare J. R. Harris' *Introduction to Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, pp. 66-69.

(e) *Ode 39. 8, 10.*

"The Lord has bridged them by His word . . . And the waves were lifted up on this side and on that."

Ode 6. 7f.

There went forth a stream and became a river great and broad; for it flooded and broke up everything and none could restrain it—for it spread over the face of the whole earth and filled everything, etc."

That *Ode 6. 7* refers in the first instance to the river described in *Ezekiel xlvi. 12* is generally recognised.

(f) *Ode 11. 14f.*

"He carried me into His Paradise: where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord: and I worshipped the Lord on account of His glory: and I said, Blessed, O Lord, are . . . those who have a place in Thy Paradise."

(g) *Ode 8. 16, 17.*

"For I know them, and before they came into being I took knowledge of them, and on their faces I set my seal; I fashioned their members."

(h) *Ode 21. 1.*

"He had cast off my bonds . . . I put off darkness and clothed myself with light."

Ode 10. 3.

"He has given me . . . to

M.b.K., section 16.

"These very waters have foreshadowed baptism from the beginning, the sea that was divided, the Jordan which purified Naaman, the torrent which *Ezekiel* saw."

M.b.K., section 24.

"The entrance to the Holy of Holies (after Baptism) signifies the entering into the tree of life from which Adam was prohibited."

M.b.K., section 18.

"He is sealed with 'myron' . . . upon the organs of sense that they may not be the entrances of sin. Again on the forehead that he may be terrifying to demons . . . Again on the joints (members) that they may be the instruments of righteousness."

M.b.K., section 5.

"The divestiture of the baptized . . . shows that he is delivered from the captivity from the Adversary like those who escape from captivity naked."

M.b.K., section 20.

"The 'orarium' which is upon

lead captivity a good captive for freedom."

Cf. also Ode 22., 25. 1, 17. 3, 11.

(i) Ode 24. 1.

"The dove fluttered (*lit.* brooded) over the Messiah."

(j) Ode 21. 1.

"My arms I lifted up to the Most High, even to the grace of the Lord : because He had cast off my bonds from me."

Cf. also Ode 27. 1, 42. 1, 35. 8, 37. 1.

(k) Ode 15. 1.

"As the Sun is the joy to them that seek for its day-break, so is my joy the Lord, because He is my Sun and His rays have lifted me up and His light hath dispelled all darkness from my face."

Cf. also Ode 18. 6.

(l) Ode 25. 7.

"Thou didst set me a lamp at my right hand and at my left, and in me there shall be nothing that is not light."

his head is a symbol of the freedom which he has received from Christ in baptism, who has freed him from Satan, ignorance and death."

M.b.K., section 13.

"The priest pours 'myron' upon the holy waters of baptism. The 'myron' . . . here typifies the Holy Spirit. For as the Spirit of God brooded upon the waters in the beginning of creation that it might impart to them generative and creative power, so here also the Holy Spirit broods upon the waters of baptism through the pouring out of the 'myron' upon them that it may impart to them power to bring forth spiritual sons of a heavenly Father."

M.b.K., section 9.

"By spreading out his hands he declares that right willingly he confesses what he confesses and promises to do what he promises."

M.b.K., section 9.

"By turning to the East and confessing Christ he signifies that he is confessing that Christ is the Light . . . and that He is the 'Sun of Righteousness.'"

M.b.K., section 21.

"The lights which precede him who is baptized . . . signify (1) that he has removed from the darkness of ignorance and sin to the knowledge of God. . . . (2) that he is prepared for the heavenly light."

(m) Ode 18. 2, 3.

“My members were strengthened that they might not fall from his strength, Sicknesses removed from my body, and it stood to the Lord by His will.”

Cf. also Ode 6. 15, 21. 5, 25. 9.

M.b.K., section 16.

“Water strengthens the weak. Just as iron is softened and liquefied by fire, but when it is dipped in water it is made hard and strong: so also those who are weak and languid by the practice of error and wickedness are baptized, and the waters of baptism make them strong in the practice of virtues.”

All these parallels illustrate and confirm Dr. Bernard's position. One point, however, on which he has laid much stress—the crowning of the baptized—is not borne out by Moses bar Kepha, who mentions no crown nor garland, but only an orarium, a kind of kerchief which was tied about the head to symbolize freedom.

Two or three further probable allusions to baptism in the Odes which have not been pointed out by Dr. Bernard are suggested by our Treatise.

In Ode 11, in which Dr. Bernard saw so many references to baptism, are also found these words, “And my nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord” (Ode 11. 13). Moses bar Kepha mentions that incense is burned before the baptized, and explains it thus, “The incense that is burned before him shows this—the sweetness of the fragrance of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost which he has received from Baptism” (sec. 22).

It may be significant that according to the Treatise the burning of incense immediately preceded the entrance of the baptized to the “Holy of Holies,” which is likened to Paradise; while in the Ode the same connexion of thought is apparent, “My nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord; and He carried me to Paradise.”

The next passage is the short 13th Ode, which runs as follows;

“Behold the Lord is our mirror : open the eyes and see them in Him ; and learn the manner of your face : and tell forth praises to His Spirit : and wipe the filth from your face and love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith, and be without stain at all times before Him.”

Now Moses bar Kepha, in discussing the waters of Baptism, likens them to a mirror. He says, “When thou lookest on water thou seest in it another in thine own likeness—like thee. Here thou wilt perceive thou goest down to baptism one person and comest up another instead, the new instead of the old” (sec. 16). The rest of the Ode seems to fit in with this. Obviously, “Wipe the filth from your face” might refer to the cleansing function of Baptism, and “Clothe yourself with holiness” to the symbolism of the subsequent putting on of the white robes. The reference would be beyond doubt if the following rendering of the first verse based on suggested emendations were correct. “The water is our mirror : open the eyes and see yourselves in it.”¹

One further possible baptismal allusion in the Odes indicated by our Treatise may be added to Dr. Bernard’s suggestions.

Moses bar Kepha says, “The betrothals of Rebecca, Rachel and Zipporah were beside water.² So also are the betrothals of the Holy Church beside the waters of baptism.” (sec. 16). The 3rd Ode is a hymn eminently suitable for such a conception, mystical union and spiritual love being its

¹ The emendation is supported by the language of Ephrem. *Hymn. in Epiph.* ix. 7, “*Aquae natura sua veluti speculum sunt illi qui in eis respicit.*” He is speaking of baptism, and follows the argument of the 13th Ode so closely as to suggest actual acquaintance with it.”

² The illustration is borrowed from Ephrem, *Comm. in Diat.* p. 40, and is reproduced in the Commentary of Isho’dad (see Harris, *Ephrem on the Gospel*, p. 44). It is also a commonplace in the Syrian service-books : compare Maclean, *East Syrian Rite of the Epiphany*, pp. 318, 352, apparently in each case quoting from Ephrem.

We may also compare Ephrem : *Hymni in Epiph.* vii. 4. “*Ad puteum occurrit Rebecca, in aures gestat et armillas. Sponsa Christi rebus pretiosis vestivit se in aquis.*”

keynotes. "I love the Beloved, and my soul loves Him. . . I have been united to Him, because the Lover has found the Beloved . . . he that is joined to Him that is immortal will also himself become immortal."

Apart from its bearing on the Odes, the Treatise has a value of its own as a clear and simple statement of the thoughts which gathered about Baptism and its attendant ceremonies in the earlier centuries of the Eastern Church, some of which are suggestive even for to-day, and few without some beauty or interest.

MOSES BAR KEPHA'S EXPLANATION OF THE MYSTERIES OF BAPTISM.¹

1. *Firstly the preparation.*

True faith is the beginning of all the Christian mysteries, and therefore the canons of the holy and inspired Fathers command that whoso wishes to become a Christian shall first learn the true faith of the Christians and shall thereupon become a hearer of the Holy Scripture for a definite period, and then shall be introduced to the Christian mysteries. And first it is fitting that he should know what the faith is. And we say that Dionysius the Areopagite said this:—"Faith is the way which leads to fundamental truth and holy and spiritual behaviour."

And holy Mar John of Constantinople has said that Faith is the way of acquiring immortal life.

And many things you will find in the Teachers which have the same meaning as what these holy Fathers said before-time, although they vary in phraseology.

2. *And next we must investigate and inquire by how many names this act is called, and what they are, and what the meaning of each one of them signifies.*

And we say that it is called by three names—baptism,² illumination, regeneration. And it is called baptism² for

¹ Translated from the Syriac.

² Lit. "bathing" or "immersion."

two reasons. Firstly, because it washes both bodilywise and spiritually; spiritually from sins and bodilywise from filth. And secondly, because he who is baptized is plunged in the water and is hidden. Again, it is named illumination for two reasons. Firstly, because from him who is baptized there is expelled the darkness of the ignorance of God and the darkness of sin, and he is illumined by the three lights which are the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the one true God. And, secondly, because he is counted worthy of the light of the Kingdom of Heaven, in which the righteous shine as the sun,¹ as the Lord has said, if indeed he also keep baptism by works of righteousness.

It is designated regeneration, being likened to the first birth from a woman. The first birth is from a woman, but this is of the Holy Spirit. And the former is by reason of sin, but this is for pardon and adoption.

3. *The "Sponsor," that is the near kinsman.*

The "sponsor" is called by the following titles: leader, near kinsman, surety and teacher.

(a) "Leader" because he leads and brings to the priests at whose hands the baptism is effected.

(b) And "Surety" because he stands surety on behalf of him who is baptized that he will fulfil all those things which he promises relating to baptism. Moreover, he pledges himself to him who is baptized that baptism confers on him forgiveness of sins, and that he will be a son of God the Father and a brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is heir to the Kingdom of Heaven if he keeps the baptism in holiness of life.

(c) "Near-kinsman" because he is neighbour and family friend of him who is being baptized, more so than other people.

(d) He is called "Teacher" because he has to teach him

¹ Matt. xiii. 43.

how to conduct himself in the Church precincts and in the pious practices of asceticism.¹

Now the Teachers have given injunctions that on account of the exigency of death, infants shall be baptized. And because an infant is not able to speak regarding baptism nor to make either renunciation or confession nor to promise to abide by his promise, the sponsor is asked to come and say all these things instead of him. And his spreading out both his hands and receiving it (i.e. the child) announces that he willingly pledges himself and receives on him those things in which he has pledged himself.

And again, after the manner of our Lord when He took up the children in His arms and said, "Whosoever receiveth one of these little ones who believes in me, receiveth me."² Therefore it is God whom he receives and for whom he stands surety.

4. *The enrolment of the baptized.*

The name of him who is baptized is written down for the following reasons. First, because as soon as he is enrolled he is numbered among those who are saved from the service of Satan and sin. Secondly, because he is enrolled among the sons of God by grace. Thirdly, because he is enrolled in the Church of the firstborn, who are written in heaven with the saints. Moreover, that the name of the surety is written down makes it known that he is the leader of the baptized, and not a misleader. It is not a case like that which is said, "Cursed be he who leads astray the blind by the way."

5. *The divestiture of the baptized and the removal of his ornaments and the putting off of his shoes.*

First and foremost it shows that he lays aside the "old man" and his former manner of life.

Second, that he is delivered from the captivity of the Adversary like those who escape from captivity naked.

¹ Lit. "peculiar excellence."

² Matt. ix. 37.

Third, the putting off of his shoes, which are lowest and least, shows that baptism purifies him from those lower and lesser things of his former manner of life.

6. *The Exorcism.*

The exorcism signifies two things. Firstly, his warfare with Satan; and secondly, the appeal to the Judge asking him to free him from the evil tyranny of the Evil One.

7. *The threefold sealing with the cross without the chrism.*

With the cross he seals him to show this—the cross typifies the death of the Lord, and he who is baptized is baptized into the death of Christ,¹ as the Apostle Paul says.

Again, he seals him with the cross, because the cross reveals and shows to us the Trinity. How? For by the hands of Him who was crucified we acquire knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

And again, he seals him with the cross, because all the mysteries of the Christians are summed up in the cross.

He seals him thrice for two reasons. In the first place to show that he is sealed in these three respects: in spirit, soul and body. In the next place, because he invokes the Trinity over him, saying, “In the name of the Father, Amen; and in the name of the Son, Amen; and in the name of the living and holy Spirit, Amen.”

And he seals him first of all without oil for this reason. It is as when a painter comes to an image which is already old and has the paint rubbed off. First he scours it and cleans it from the marks of its age, and after that he puts paint on it and adorns it. Because if he put paint on it before he had cleaned and scoured it, he would ruin the paints. Likewise, also, when the priest comes to the baptized, who is old and sullied with sin, he first seals him with the cross without oil, thus cleaning off his [marks of] age, and afterwards he seals him with oil, restoring him to his pristine beauty.

¹ Rom. vi. 3.

8. *The turning to the west, the repulsion with the hands, the blowing with the mouth, the renunciation of Satan and the execration¹ of him with the hands.*

The West is the dark region. That he turns to the west and renounces Satan shows that he renounces Satan who is darkness, also his dark and evil deeds. Then that he repels with his hands shows two things: first, that he curses Satan² and next that he drives away from him the evil deeds of Satan. Moreover, the hands show that it is the deeds. Furthermore, by blowing he drives away from him the evil thoughts of Satan. For sin is committed in two ways—in theory, I say, and in practice; and, therefore, with his hands he drives away the practice of sin and by his blowing the theory of it.

9. *On turning to the East and spreading out the hands and confessing Christ and accepting Him and His words.*

The East is the region of light. By turning to the East and confessing Christ he signifies that he is confessing that Christ is the light, as He said, "I am the light of the World";³ and that He is "the Sun of Righteousness,"⁴ as the prophet has said. And he acknowledges that He and His Father and the Holy Spirit are the one True and Light-giving God, and that he is accepting the true and light-giving teaching which was delivered by Him, and that he is promising to do the works of light and righteousness.

And by spreading out his hands he declares that right willingly he confesses what he confesses and promises to do what he promises.

10. *On being anointed with oil.*

He is anointed with oil for these reasons. Firstly, to show that he is entering on a contest and wrestling match with

¹ Lit. "giving him woe."

² Lit. "gives Satan woe."

³ John viii. 12.

⁴ Mal. iv. 2.

Satan. Because he who enters on a wrestling contest is anointed with oil, so that the hands of him with whom he is striving may slip from him. So too the baptized is anointed that he may not be held fast by the demons.¹

Secondly, by being anointed with olive oil he shows that he has been a wild olive and a stranger to God. And now he is anointed so that he may be grafted on the olive of faith in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in whom he is about to be baptized, and that he may become as one "planted by a stream of water,"² etc. And that he may say openly, "I am like a glorious olive in the house of God."³

It is just as when there is a tree which bears no fruit and the husbandman brings a piece of another tree which does bear fruit and makes an incision into the fruitless tree and thus engrafts the fruit-bearing branch. So too does the priest to him who is to be baptized. Because he has been a wild olive tree bearing none of the fruits of righteousness he anoints him with oil and thus engrafts on him the fire⁴ of the orthodox faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he will bear the fruits of righteousness, "some thirty, some sixty and some a hundred fold."⁵

11. *Again as to the priests saying "Sign the Messiah" on those who are being baptized.*

For the name of Messiah symbolizes the whole of the Trinity. And how so? It is the Father who anoints and the Son who is anointed, and it is the Holy Spirit which is the anointing. For in every anointed one there are three

¹ Cf. Dion. Areop. P.G. 3. 420. διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἐλαίου χρίσεως πρὸς ἀγῶνας ἀγεται ὁ τελούμενος.

² Ps. i. 3. ³ Ps. lii. 8 (Syriac Vers.).

⁴ MSS. "bnūrā," but perhaps read "nūrbā"—"and thus engrafts on him a twig of the orthodox faith."

⁵ Mark iv. 8.

⁶ "Sign the Messiah," etc. These words are part of a prayer which begins thus: "O Trinity, sign Thy Messiah on these who are about to be regenerated."

things concurring: the anointer, the anointed and the anointing. The anointer is the Father, the anointed is the Son and the anointing is the Holy Spirit.¹ And because the name of Messiah signifies the whole Trinity, the priest says "Sign the Messiah" on those who are being baptized.

12. *On the priest's breathing upon the water.*

The priest breathes upon the water for these reasons. Firstly, as God "breathed on Adam the breath of life" ² when He created him, and as baptism too is a fashioning anew, it is right that the priest should breathe on the water as if it were the first fashioning. And, secondly, the priest breathes on the water as in the passage our Lord breathed on His disciples and said "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." ³

13. *On the priests' pouring "myron" ⁴ upon the water of holy baptism.*

He pours the oil on it. Firstly, to show that it was for the sake of our regeneration by baptism that the Word of God came down and emptied Himself even unto the enduring of the cross and death. And secondly, the "myron" which is poured upon the water here typifies the Holy Spirit. For as the Spirit of God brooded upon the waters in the beginning of creation, that it might impart to them generative and fertilising power, so also here the Holy Spirit "broods" ⁵ upon the waters of baptism, through the pouring out of the "myron" upon them, that it may impart to them power to bring forth spiritual sons of a heavenly Father. For holy Mar Severus ⁶ says in one of his writings that "myron" typifies the Holy Spirit.

14. *The baptistery and the descent of the baptized and his threefold immersion.*

¹ Cf Basil P.G. 32. 116-117: ἡ γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσηγορία τοῦ παντός ἐστιν ὁμολογία. θελοῖ γὰρ τὸν τε χρίσαντα θεὸν καὶ τὸν χρισθέντα υἱὸν· καὶ τὸ χρίσμα τὸ πνεῦμα.

² Gen. ii. 7.

³ John. xx. 22.

⁴ Perfume, sweet oil.

⁵ Gen. i. 12.

⁶ Patriarch of Antioch 512-519 A.D.

The baptistery then takes the place of the grave of Christ, and therefore when the baptized goes down he goes down as if to the grave and his immersion in the water symbolises two things. First, his complete dying : and second, that when a man is buried he is altogether covered up and nothing of him is visible. So, too, the baptized when he plunges all of him into the water.

Then that he plunges three times, neither more nor less, shews that our Lord was in the grave three days.¹ And that the immersion in the water symbolises the death of Christ, and the font His burial, the Apostle Paul testifies, saying : “ Know ye not that those who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death ? ”² and “ For we are buried with him in baptism to death.”³ Also, this ought to be known, that formerly when believers were baptized when they were youths and men, the priests made them plunge in the water in the midst of the font three times, but nowadays because those who are baptized are infants and little children the priests do not plunge them into the midst of the water lest they should be choked, but instead of immersing them they perform upon them pourings, taking up the water partially and pouring it upon their heads thrice, instead of three immersions, making three sprinklings, doing it carefully so that the infants be not choked. We accept by faith that three sprinklings are like three immersions.

15. *The priest lays his hand on the head of him who is baptized and says, “ So and so is baptized in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” the face of the baptized looking eastward and the face of the priest looking westward opposite to him who is baptized.*

¹ Cf. Dion. Areop. *De Eccles. Hier.* [P.G. 3. 404 : τὸν οὖν ἱερῶς βαπτιζόμενον ἢ συμβολικῆ διδασκαλίᾳ μυσταγωγεί τοῖς ἐν τῇ ὕδατι τρισὶ καταδύσει τὸν θεαρχικὸν τῆς τριημερονύκτου ταφῆς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ ζωοδότου μιμεῖσθαι θάνατον.

² Rom. vi. 3.

³ Rom. vi. 4.

The priest sets his hand upon the head of him who is baptized for these reasons. Firstly, as God formed Adam with his hands in the first creation, so also does the priest in the second creation. Secondly, as John put his hand upon the head of the Son in baptism. And thirdly, the hand of the priest points out him who is being baptized as if by a finger—while the Father cries out, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”¹ And therefore he is able to say openly to the Father, “Our Father who art in heaven.”² Fourthly, the hand of the priest is a secret sign that he who is being baptized is born again. The priest says, “So and so be baptized,” and not “I baptize,” because the baptism is not his doing but God’s,³ and he has been chosen by grace to be minister to the mysteries of Baptism.

But the face of him who is baptized looks eastward because it is our first home from whence came out our father Adam, when he transgressed the commandment of the Lord.

16. Why did Christ constitute baptism from water and the Spirit and not from anything else? For it could have been from oil and the Spirit. For the priests and kings of the children of Israel were anointed with oil.

And we say that he constituted baptism from water, for these three reasons. Firstly, because the first creation of the first man was by means of water. “The Lord God created man from dust.”⁴ It is fitting that the second creation too should be by water. Secondly, that the element should be easily accessible in all places for rich and poor. “Behold, water; what is the hindrance that I be baptized?”⁵

¹ Matt. iii. 17. ² Matt. vi. 9.

³ Cf. Basil P.G. 32. 116–117: ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστὶν ἐκφώνως καὶ ἀλοθῆτως τὸ εἶδος ἐπέδρασαι ἄγον τὸ βαπτίζεται ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Cf. also [Chrysostom] P.G. 60. Col. 21: ἐν τῇ ἐκτέλει τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος ἡ Ἀνατολικὴ Ἐκκλησία προφέρει παθητικῶς τὸ “βαπτίζεται” ῥῆμα, καὶ οὐχὶ ἐνεργητικῶς . . . ἐπιφωνοῦμεν δὲ ἡμεῖς τὸ “βαπτίζεται” ταπεινοφρονεῖν ἐπὶ πάντα μεμαθηκότες· βαπτίζεται γὰρ φαμεν ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὃ συνυπακούεται ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ ἢ δι’ ἐμοῦ.

⁴ Gen. ii. 7.

⁵ Acts viii. 36.

If the element had not chanced to be easily obtainable, many would have been robbed of baptism, which is the salvation of souls. Thirdly, so that the filth of the soul might be cleansed by the mysteries. For just as water cleanses the filth of the body, so baptism cleanses the filth of the soul, i.e. sin. Fourthly, because it is of the nature of water to bring forth, which nature it received at the beginning; "Let the water swarm, etc."¹ Even so they produce a swarm of spiritual children. Fifthly; furthermore, when thou lookest on water, thou seest in it another in thine own likeness—like thee. Here thou wilt perceive, thou goest down to baptism one person and comest up another instead,² the new instead of the old. Sixthly, by means of water writings are blotted out, and—therefore by the waters of baptism the bill of our liabilities is wiped clean and the bond which Adam wrote by which we were made debtors both to sin and death. Seventhly, water strengthens the weak. Just as iron is softened and liquefied by fire, but when it is dipped in water it is made hard and strong. So, also, when those who are weak and languid by the practice of waywardness and wickedness, the waters of baptism make them strong in the practice of virtues. Eighthly, because in the beginning we were formed from earth and our dwelling place was commanded to be on the earth. We are now reformed by water that we may dwell at last above the firmament, which is drawn out and hammered out of water³—"Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water."⁴ Ninthly, because these very waters have foreshadowed baptism from the beginning: the sea that was divided;⁵ the Jordan which purified Naaman;⁶ the torrent which Ezekiel saw;⁷ the

¹ Gen. i. 20.

² Lit. "thou goest down to baptism and thou comest up one person instead of the other."

³ There is a play on the words here impossible to render in a translation. Raki'a = firmament; marak = drawn out; raki = hammered.

⁴ Gen. i. 6. ⁵ 1 Cor. x. 2. ⁶ 2 Kings v. 10-14. ⁷ Ezek. xlvii. 1-12.

pool¹ of Siloam.² Moreover, the betrothals of Rebecca³ Rachel⁴ and Zipporah⁵ were beside water. So also are the betrothals of the Holy Church beside the waters of baptism. Tenthly, St. Basil has said thus: "Because mortality and resurrection are appointed to us, therefore, through water and the Spirit baptism is consummated, the water symbolising mortality and the spirit renewing us in resurrection. "Thou sendest thy Spirit, and they are created."⁶

17. *The ascent from the baptistery and the sealing with "myron."*

The ascent from the baptistery shows three things. First, the ascent and resurrection of Jesus from the grave. Second, that there will be an ascent and resurrection from the grave on the last day. And, thirdly, that he will rise up above the heavens if he keep the baptism inviolate.

18. *He is sealed with "myron" for these reasons.*

Firstly, that he may acquire sweetness of savour, which is well-pleasing to God. For, according to the apostle, "we are a sweet savour in Christ."⁷

Second, because by it the baptized is perfected and receives the Holy Ghost.

Third, because it is a token of Christ, by which he who is baptized is separated from alien flocks.

Fourth, that he may be fearsome to the demons and not dependent on their help.

Fifth, he is sealed upon the organs of sense that they may not be the entrance of sin.

Sixth, again on the forehead that he may be terrifying to demons. Just as was the case in Egypt when the destroyer came not near to the home upon which was the token of the blood of the lamb.⁸

¹ Jno. ix. 7.

² Lit. baptistery.

³ Gen. xxiv.

⁴ Gen. xxix. 1-12.

⁵ Ex. ii. 15-22.

⁶ Ps. civ. 30.

⁷ 2 Cor. ii. 15.

⁸ Ex. xxii. 23.

Seventh, he is sealed upon the heart that it may be an abode not of evil thoughts but of good.

Eighth, upon the joints, so that they may be "instruments of righteousness," as Paul said.¹

19. *The white robes with which they clothe him.*

The white robes with which they clothe him are for these reasons.

First, to show that he has been in the darkness of ignorance and has become white and shining in the knowledge of God and in the light which he has received from baptism.²

Second, to show that he has put off the old man and put on the new.³

Third, that beforetime he was without form or beauty, and it is come to pass that he has acquired both form and adornment.

Fourth, that after the resurrection he will receive a robe of immortality and incorruption, and will put on the glory which Adam wore before he transgressed the commandment.⁴

Fifth, that after the resurrection he will dwell in heaven as a luminary.

Sixth, that he will shine in the Kingdom of Heaven as the Sun of Righteousness, with the righteous ones.⁵

20. *The "orarium" which they tie about his head.*

The "orarium" which is upon his head is a symbol of the freedom which he has received from Christ through baptism who has freed him from Satan, ignorance and sin.

21. *The lights which precede him who is baptized.*

The lights which are before him signify that he has removed from the darkness of ignorance and sin to the light of

¹ Rom. vi. 13.

² Dion. Areop. P.G. 3. 404: ἐξῆς δὲ φωτροειδεῖς ἐσθῆρας ἐπιβάλλουσι τῷ τελευμένῳ.

³ Col. iii. 10.

⁴ Gen. iii. 21. Cf. Introduction.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 43.

⁶ A "kerchief" or "napkin."

the knowledge of God and the works of righteousness.

Secondly, that he is prepared for the heavenly light.

22. *The incense which is burned before him.*

The incense, which is burned before him shows this : firstly, the sweetness of fragrance of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, which he has received from baptism.

Secondly, the sweet fragrance of the holy life which he is about to present to God, even as Noah presented a sacrifice to God.

23. *The service by which he comes to the sanctuary.*

The service by which he comes to the sanctuary shows firstly, the spiritual nuptials which have fallen to him ; secondly, it typifies the joy on his behalf with which the angels rejoice ; and, thirdly, it relates to the oneness of the holy angels ; fourthly, to his participation (?) in the Kingdom of Heaven.

24. *The entrance to the Holy of Holies.*

The entrance to the Holy of Holies signifies the entering in to the tree of life from which Adam was prohibited.

25. *The reception of the holy mysteries.*

The reception of these holy mysteries shows, first, that he is fully initiated and perfected in gifts ; second, that he has been united to the Word of God and has become a member of Him ; third, that the fatted calf has been slain for him because " he was dead and is alive, and was lost and is found,"² fourth, as bodily children come to bodily nourishment so also do spiritual children ; fifth, it shows the banquet which is prepared for the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven.

27. *Why those who are baptized do not wash their hands for seven days.*

And this signifies the not washing away of the secret

¹ Cf. Dion. Areop. ut sup., τὸ ἄκοσμον κοσμεῖται καὶ τὸ ἀνείδεον εἰδοποιεῖται τῇ φῶτι οἰδεῖ καθόλου ζωῆ, λαμπρυνόμενον.

² Luke xv. 23-24.

power, which they have received from holy and divine Baptism.

The end of the Exposition of the holy mysteries of Baptism.

R. A. AYTOUN.

PERSONALITY AND GRACE.

I. PERSONALITY AND SYSTEM.

UGHT not a study of the relation of personality and grace to begin with a systematic account of personality? We cannot say that such a beginning is not necessary. The subject is not so simple that it admits of no misunderstanding and though every one has direct knowledge of its nature, to be taught how to see is life's most difficult lesson, and there is nothing we see so partially as ourselves.

It is more important, however, to begin by realising that there is something in personality which eludes all systematic exposition, which is even inimical to all systematising. The personal element is precisely the variable, incalculable element in our experience, the thing not to be measured and tabulated and arranged. In every age it has been the despair of the systematiser, nor, in spite of some lip service, ever more than in our own.

By its disturbing effect upon his theory, the scientist is harassed into materialism. The idea that materialism is a positive conclusion regarding life is an illusion. When the materialist is not engaged in the task of securing peace for his scientific aims, he thinks about life like the rest of us mortals, which would be a thing impossible, if he had, as he avers, really caught the scene-shifter pulling the ropes. Exactly as we do, he reprobates and approves. Like Shylock, he has in addition to "hands, organs, dimensions," also