



"FOR THE BAPTISM OF THOSE OF RIPER YEARS": THE "GRAVE PONT" OF LAMBETH PARISH CHURCH.

*A Memorial to the late ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, DR. BENSON.*

**The Gospel = =**  
**In Baptism.**



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## PREFACE.

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THE aim of this book is devotional not controversial. An endeavour has been made to deal with every New Testament reference to baptism as a Christian institution. It is hoped that these studies may assist candidates for baptism to realize the importance and beauty of the ordinance, and may exhibit, to those who have long ago been baptized the manifold truth associated with this act of confession. At the same time it is possible that it may call the attention of some brethren in the ministry to the value and variety of the topics which may be appropriately dwelt upon from the pulpit on occasions when baptism is administered.

While controversy has been avoided in these pages the views of baptism expressed are definite and rest upon exposition of the Scriptures quoted. This expository method is very earnestly commended for adoption by those who may differ from the views here set forth, so that appeal may be made always to the Word of God.

There is perhaps less difference of opinion on the underlying principle of baptism than might be imagined, and in answering the question, "Into what then were ye baptized" many differing greatly in practice give identical answers. Faith is usually associated with baptism. The English Church Catechism declares that of persons

to be baptized is required, "Repentance whereby they forsake sin, and faith whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in the Sacrament."

The recently issued Free Church Catechism agrees substantially, though less explicitly, with this when it declares that the inward benefits signified by baptism are "The washing away of sin and the new birth wrought by the Holy Spirit in all who repent and believe."

Pedobaptists generally either require faith on the part, of at least, one parent, who like the English Church sponsor is regarded as believing for the baptized; or else treat baptism merely as an act of dedication, providing an opportunity for public prayer on the babe's behalf.

The late Dr. Dale, it is true, described baptism as "a glorious gospel expressed in an ~~expressive~~ <sup>expressive</sup> rite" and defined this gospel as that "apart from its own choice the child belongs to Christ and that by the purpose and will of God the child is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. This position separating baptism entirely from the exercise of faith stands, however, altogether apart as much from all existing church standards as from the testimony of Holy Scripture.

There is a close connection between the meaning attached to baptism and the faith held in regard to the vital truths of the Gospel.

If baptism is a saving ordinance effecting regeneration, all the claims of priestism will easily follow and outward observance will soon take precedence of Christ. If faith by proxy is sufficient to qualify for baptism there is a great danger of its being held to qualify for salvation. If baptism is not an expression of faith at all but a witness to universal redemption, and the possibility of the salvation of all men then it is not only quite an unnecessary rite for converts, but surely undesirable; as

suggesting the unimportance of personal faith to secure the benefits of salvation through Christ.

Only an appeal to Scripture can determine these great points, and when they are clear, all the other questions as to subjects of baptism and mode of administration will readily solve themselves. At the same time adherence to the scriptural practice in baptism will be of immense value in safe guarding from error these vital truths concerning salvation by faith and in exhibiting them to men.

While one is sorrowfully compelled to recognize serious divergencies on this subject, both in principle and practice, there can surely be no doubt as to the desirability of earnest examination of all the Scriptures that set forth its meaning, and in doing so the writer desires most emphatically to share and to unite in the Apostolic blessing : " Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness."

CANONBURY,

*April, 1899.*

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## CHAPTER I.

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### THE ONE BAPTISM.

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Ephesians iv. 3-6.—Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

I. Cor. i. 13.—Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?

I. Cor. xii. 13.—For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.

THE unity of the Spirit maintains seven other unities in the blessed bond of peace. One body one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.

Perhaps there was never a time in the world's history since the flood, when the unity of the God and Father was more widely recognised. Within the bounds of the Christian Church one Lord Jesus Christ certainly reigns supreme as far as outward acknowledgment is concerned; but it is not so easy to find either the one faith or the one baptism. These three, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, which stand side by side in Scripture, have, however, an intimate connection. It will be freely

conceded that baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus is the only baptism allowable, and so far the unity is complete. It is also far more widely true than is recognised, that the theory of Christendom couples faith with baptism as an essential; still the unity of the faith is broken by a wide divergence in practice. Hence it has come about that the expression "one baptism" too often provokes a smile of incredulity, for if there is a point where contending factions have more bitterly fought than any other it is round the ordinance which nearly all Christian sects regard as the appointment of the one Lord and the affirmation either in person or by proxy of a saving faith in Him.

It may seem impossible, in presence of the contention both as to the subjects and mode of Christian baptism, to speak at all consistently of "one baptism," but the Apostle Paul justifies our doing so, notwithstanding divergence of opinion. Writing to the Corinthians, he says: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many and lords many; yet *to us* there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." In like manner, then, though we have sorrowfully to confess "howbeit in all men there is not that knowledge," many of us can say with emphasis, *to us* there is not only one Lord, but also one faith, and as emphatically also, only one baptism. For if there be a baptism so-called that is not to be found warranted by the sacred Scriptures, it is *to us* as surely "nothing in the world" as were the idols referred to by the Apostle Paul.

The discussion on this subject of late years has considerably changed. The inquiry whether New Testa-

ment baptism was always immersion and never administered to infants has been approached by learned men from the standpoint of ancient Church history, and, having done so, they have come to the same conclusion as the simple man who read only his New Testament, and they to-day declare with one voice that to the earliest Christian Church there was only one baptism and that was the immersion of believers.

To quote but one of these authorities, not the most recent by any means, but perhaps the most widely known, the late Dean Stanley, in an article on baptism in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, 1877, says :—

“ For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word ‘ baptize,’ that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water.

“ That practice is still, as we have seen, continued in the Eastern Churches. In the Western Church it still lingers amongst Roman Catholics in the solitary instance of the Cathedral of Milan, amongst Protestants in the austere sect of the Baptists. It lasted long into the Middle Ages. Even the Icelanders, who at first shrank from the water of their freezing lakes, were reconciled when they found that they could use the warm water of the geysers. And the cold climate of Russia has not been found an obstacle to its continuance throughout that vast Empire. Even in the Church of England it is still observed in theory, Elizabeth and Edward the Sixth were both immersed. The rubric in the ‘ Public Baptism for Infants ’ enjoins that unless for special cases they are to be dipped, not sprinkled. • But in practice it gave way since the beginning of the seventeenth century. . . . It had no doubt the sanction of the Apostles

and of their Master. It had the sanction of the venerable Churches of the early ages, and of the sacred countries of the East. Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient Church (except in the rare case of deathbeds or extreme necessity) as no baptism at all.

“ Another change is not so complete, but is, perhaps, more important. In the Apostolic age, and in the three centuries which followed, it is evident that, as a general rule, those who came to baptism came in full age, of their own deliberate choice. We find a few cases of the baptism of children; in the third century we find one case of the baptism of infants. Even amongst Christian households the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa, Augustine, Ambrose, are decisive proof that it was not only not obligatory, but not usual. They had Christian parents, and yet they were not baptised till they reached maturity.”

These words are quoted not as authority to settle the question, but as a witness to be valued. With such general testimony to primitive practice as we have, we are justified in interpreting baptism by these widely acknowledged facts without being accused of raising controversial issues. We are well content, however, to take our stand on the New Testament alone, quite certain that when the doctors have prosecuted their utmost inquiries they will come at last to the simple facts recorded in the good old book.

But thousands have accepted Dean Stanley's conclusions, and yet continue their very different practice. How do they justify the apparent inconsistency? Why cannot we now have the advantage of one baptism, expressing one truth, and bearing only the simple meaning of confession of faith? The answer given is as direct as

the testimony to immersion, and amounts to this, "Because the Church has modified the ordinance to meet the various changes which the circumstances of centuries have shown to be desirable." Here a great principle is at stake, namely, the right of the Church to modify, not to say to completely change, the ordinances of Christ. That is a point on which those who modify should be the first to speak for it is by no means surely to be assumed that the right exists; it needs first to be proved. Whenever any are ready for that discussion there are plenty prepared to take it up. There is less need for us to do so, seeing that we confessedly accept the vantage ground of the original practice. For suppose the right to modify the ordinances were proved, a further question would arise, namely, the desirability of the modification. Do we gain or lose by the process? And here at least is a field for enquiry which need not be a mere battlefield of differing opinions, but rightly treated should prove a study productive of spiritual blessing; for if leaving our old contentions for a little while, we can all unite in searching the Scriptures for the truths intended to be expressed in baptism, we may convert this topic which has for so long been the very symbol of contention into a means of grace and instruction.

It is not intended for a moment to suggest that there is no room for difference of opinion in dealing with the Scriptural statements about baptism, but only that it is extremely probable that if we approach the subject in the attitude of enquirers into the teaching of Scripture, we shall be more likely to discover and maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." than if we merely contend for our own peculiar practice.

The question of the mode of baptism will be best approached from the standpoint of the *meaning of the*

*ordinance* as expounded in the New Testament, while the purpose it is intended to serve will indicate the proper *subjects of baptism* better even than the example which may be adduced from antiquity.

If we could all agree as to the original practice, a great point would be gained in the spiritual unity of the one body ; but best of all it will be if we can learn more of what Scripture teaches, and what we are justified in understanding by this very important ordinance to which our Lord himself submitted, and which He has ordained to be observed as widely as His Gospel is preached.

It is proposed, therefore, to deal with the various aspects of the ordinance as set forth in the instances of its administration, and the exposition of its meaning in the New Testament.

A mighty mystery we set forth,  
A wondrous sign and seal ;  
Lord, give us hearts to know its worth,  
And all its truth to feel.

## CHAPTER II.

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### THE BAPTISM UNTO REPENTANCE.

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Mark i. 4.—John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Acts ii. 38.—Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

JOHN came baptizing in water. Whether or not a practice existed already, as some say, of proselytes to the Jewish faith baptizing themselves, the baptism of John was a distinct, and in many respects novel, institution. So inseparable was the act from the teaching of John that he himself was always known by the title of "the Baptist." After his death his followers are referred to as "those who were baptized of him," and long subsequently, in the Apostolic Age, far away in Ephesus "the baptism of John" was associated with the truths he taught. Those truths were temporary in their character. He was a forerunner only. He did but prepare the way for Jesus; and his baptism, as well as his teaching, was preparatory too. We have but a shadow of Christian baptism in the ordinance as John administered it, but still, just as the truth he uttered was fulfilled rather than destroyed by the coming of the

predicted one, so his baptism was enlarged rather than superseded by the subsequent institution. For Christian baptism, no less than his, is a baptism of repentance. Peter's message on the day of Pentecost was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and the Apostolic preaching, both to Jews and Greeks, was always "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," for it was part of the Divine commission to the Church that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." For this element of repentance, the principal element in John's baptism and none the less essential, though subordinate in Christian baptism, we may with advantage turn to the discourses of the forerunner.

It would be well if the outward administration of the rite were always accompanied by such faithful dealing as is conspicuous in the words of John. Nothing could be further from his desire than to sanction a mere outward conformity without that inward attitude of heart, of which the ordinance was meant to be the expression.

We almost tremble before the scathing denunciations of formality and hypocrisy and insincere profession which fall from his lips, and as we apply them to our own relation to the baptism of repentance instinctively cry, "Search me, O God, and try my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

John's baptism was confessedly only a sign. Almost contemptuously he describes it as "baptism in water," in contrast with that baptism in the Holy Ghost and in fire which Jesus was to administer, but he does not on that account allow any paltering with the solemnity. He will not suffer his baptism to be degraded to a



fashionable practice or entered upon thoughtlessly as a mere form. Repentance is demanded, the personal, thorough, sincere repentance of every one who comes to him. If they be notorious evil liver, however high they may stand in the social scale they are repelled with the burning words, "O generation of vipers who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" If their occupation and antecedents tempt them to rely on a virtue derived from parents rather than possessed by the heart, he scorns their holiness by proxy as he says, "Think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." We are told the people "came to him confessing their sins," not merely acknowledging that they were sinners, but making a clean breast of their particular wrong doings. Yet this was insufficient for this prophet of the burning tongue, for when the sense of guilt was inadequate, though he believed the heart sincere, he awakened the sleeping conscience by pointing out the evil least likely to be spontaneously acknowledged, and when the publicans who came to be baptized meekly inquired, "Master, what shall we do?" he promptly answered, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." Or to the soldiers in a like case, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely: and be content with your wages."

The solemn earnestness with which John guarded his baptism from degenerating into a mere form, thoughtlessly received and deprived of its essential meaning, is most strikingly illustrated in his reception of Christ. Here he hesitates to baptize, for the very opposite reason that prompted him to repulse the Pharisees and Sadducees. They had demanded baptism without any evidence of true repentance, and they were refused, for

we read later that "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him," but now there comes one to the baptism of repentance without confession of sin, for He has none to confess. The earnest spirit of John shrank from unreality in this direction as much as in the other, for he knew but little of the sinner's substitute, and therefore, we are told, "forbad him." It was put with wonderful grace and humility, "I have need to be baptized of Thee and comest Thou to me," but the objection was made and only yielded when the enlightening response was heard, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Strenuously as John insisted upon genuine abandonment of sin before reception of the rite which symbolized its remission, he was equally earnest in insisting on the fruits of repentance following its administration. Baptism with him was not an end, but a means to an end. While it served to unite those who submitted to it in the desire for pardon, it was equally a pledge that the after life should be moulded in accordance with God's will. He came to prepare the way for Christ, and the preparedness he desired was that of holiness of heart and life; for the Christ he proclaimed was one who would thoroughly purge His floor. Professedly good trees, he told his disciples, must bring forth good fruit or they would be hewn down and cast into the fire. The coming one would complete the work which he had begun, not by offering an atonement for sin only, nor effecting a deliverance from some adverse conditions, but by baptizing them with the Holy Ghost. All this belongs essentially to repentance which it was John's mission to emphasize.

Repentance is to leave the sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve by doing so no more.

It is only the preparation for Christ, but as such it is as necessary to-day as it was then. It may not always precede faith in the experience of the believer, but it always accompanies faith, though it may do so unconsciously. That soul has never learned to trust Christ that has not in doing so turned definitely away from sin and toward holiness. The expression of a belief in Him as Redeemer and Lord includes an abandonment of every evil way, as far as it may be known to the soul.

The manifestation of Jesus has required in Christian baptism a much stronger emphasis upon faith than John's baptism could possibly express, but it has not separated it from that acknowledgment of need and confession of guilt which gather round the act which sets forth repentance. For baptism is of special value in this direction. As the deliberate act of an intelligent and sincere soul it is valuable as an acknowledgment of personal unworthiness and the need of pardon. He who comes to baptism aright comes confessing his sin. The innocent have no need of cleansing—the unrepentant will have no desire for it. Baptism is commonly and not incorrectly associated with Christian profession, but it is not the profession of goodness so much as the confession of need.

The inhabitants of a conquered town were wont to make their submission with ropes about their necks in token that their lives were forfeited, and a similar acknowledgment is symbolized in the ordinance which sets forth burial with Christ. Here the old life is represented as being so utterly without merit that it is laid in the grave as a dead and useless thing, while it is at the same time so completely abandoned as a mode of life that it is to be regarded as "crucified with Christ." "So many of us as were baptized into Christ were

baptized into His death." . . . "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin." Surely this is repentance. It is more, thank God, it is also deliverance both from the power and guilt of sin, but it represents at the same time the attitude of the individual soul towards sin as a confessed but hated thing. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

The thought of baptism as cleansing is equally in harmony with the same view. When Ananias was sent to Saul of Tarsus he said, "Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." We do not imagine that water, as such, can take away guilt, but we believe that "He pardoneth and absolveth all such as truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel," and we can easily recognise that the acceptance of Christian baptism by this bold persecutor was the most emphatic outward sign of the inward and spiritual grace of repentance and faith by which is obtained from God the remission of sins.

The symbol of cleansing without felt and acknowledged guilt is incongruous. The innocent do not need to be forgiven. The sign of washing to those who intend to return to wallowing in the mire is altogether inappropriate and futile.

Let us then never forget this aspect of our baptism. We therein confessed ourselves to be lost and undone, needing the grace of Christ and the merit of His atonement. We disowned our past, expressing deep contrition for our sins and shortcomings, and our earnest resolve that by true repentance we would make room in our hearts for Him whose coming should strengthen us to

victory in the fight against evil. Resolutions, alas, are easily made and soon forgotten, but this holy resolve of our soul, come to with deliberation, with felt weakness, but at the same time with simple dependence upon His might, we sealed in public by that act of baptism which His wisdom has ordained as the believer's expression of His repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. May His all-sufficient grace enable us to fulfil the vow.

Lord may we feel as once we felt,  
When pained and grieved at heart,  
Thy kind, forgiving, melting look  
Relieved our keenest smart.

Let graces then in exercise,  
Be exercised again ;  
And nurtured by celestial power,  
In exercise remain.

## CHAPTER III.

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### BAPTISM AND FAITH.

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Mark xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Acts xviii. 8: "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."

THE stress laid upon faith in the Christian religion is unique and most emphatic. Pagan idolatry was content with religious observance: it laid no claim to the heart. Judaism as a system was based upon the command, "This do and thou shalt live." True, the fulfilling of the law is in love, and there can be no love without faith; so that all the spiritual men of the Old Testament wrought their righteousness by faith, like Abraham, the father of the faithful. Still, the preaching of the Old Testament lays scarcely any stress on faith compared with the supreme place it is made to occupy in the New Testament. Morality, as separate from religion, whether in Pagan or Christian times, has sneered at faith as a mere condescension to human weakness. Works and works alone are exalted as the title to a conscience void of offence.

"For creeds and forms let graceless bigôts fight.  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

We have already seen that Christian baptism recognizes repentance, and requires that repentance to be genuine, yet it does not wait for the realization of the new life to be attained, but points the repentant one immediately to the Redeemer as the object of his faith through whom alone either the realization of victory now or of eternal life hereafter can be obtained.

Faith is presented to the Philippian jailor, just aroused to a sense of guilt, as the way of life. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Faith is stated as the instrument of justification before God. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness." Faith is the condition of the highest privileges of the Christian teaching. "To as many as received Him to them gave He the power (right) to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on His name." Faith is the necessary qualification for accepted service. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." It is indeed the instrument by which holiness is attained, for "faith worketh by love," and "love is the fulfilling of the law"; we are "sanctified by faith," and exhorted to "take the shield of faith, by which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

That baptism then which is not a personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ on the part of the baptized can never stand in the relation to Christian doctrine which is occupied by baptism in the New Testament, for that is not baptism into a hope, nor into a creed, nor into a church, but baptism "into Christ," and the only way of being savingly "in Christ" is by faith. Hence the invariable order of the terms employed, "He that believeth and is baptized"; "Then they that

gladly received His word were baptized"; "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them"; "Hearing, they believed, and were baptized." Not baptism disposing to faith, but faith expressed by baptism.

For it is one of the distinctive qualities of a true faith in Christ that it needs *expression*. We can show no one our faith without our works. When, then, faith is demanded as the very condition of salvation it is appropriate that there shall be an outward and visible sign by which it is expressed. Consent is the essential element in the transfer of land by sale or purchase, but until that consent is expressed visibly in the signature and the seal to the document it is not deemed sufficient. The "I will" of the marriage ceremony is a necessity, for it gives voice to the inward resolve for union, but words do not abide, and it is felt desirable to add the ring as the witness to the vow. Many methods of expressing the great decision have been devised of late—the penitent form, the uplifted hand, the written pledge, the union with a society—all of which are for the purpose of declaring openly the unseen faith of the heart, but the only scriptural method of so doing is the ordinance we are considering, and it is the privilege, as well as the duty, of all who trust in the Lord for salvation to make known that trust in the way sanctioned by His example, ordered by His commission, and confirmed by His bestowal of the gift of the Spirit.

It is, too, a very simple *test* of the reality of faith, for if "faith without works is dead, being alone," surely a faith that at its very commencement shrinks from this expression in obedience cannot be said to exhibit much sign of vigorous life. The plant that having come forth from the seed does not shortly emerge from the soil into the light of day loses in vigour, if it is not in danger of



death. It is well, therefore, for the establishment of faith in the heart of the believer himself, that it be openly avowed ; that if he has entered upon this path of holiness and life he shall be duly committed to it, and by outward action as well as inward resolve, take his stand as one who accepts the way of faith as the designed plan of salvation.

It will serve as a *reminder*. Many a temptation to rely on deeds or experience instead of upon Christ is sure to assail the convert, but his baptism will be a witness, if rightly understood, that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Neither is the very act of baptism devoid of significance in this direction. Administered not by the believer himself but received at the hands of another, he has in it a *symbol* of that surrender of his own will and his own strength into the hands of his Saviour, which is involved in the simplest conception of the term trust.

Plunged into the watery grave with no hope of rising therefrom except as he may be raised by a strength not his own ; he may, if he will, see in this a representation of his dependence upon his divine and risen Lord. The commonest Hebrew word for trust, "*battach*," according to Gesenius, is allied to the Arabic root, meaning to throw one down on his back, so that in the manner in which immersion is frequently if not mostly administered there is a vivid illustration of absolute confidence. And, indeed, the usual Hebrew verb, "*rachats*," to wash, or (in *Hithpael*) bathe oneself, is rendered "to trust in."

Dan. iii. 28. For to trust in God is to bathe oneself in His love, and grace and power. So that to the Jews at least there was in the very term itself a striking connection between baptism and faith.

It is necessary here, however, again to insist that the relation set forth in baptism is a relation to Christ. He, and He only, is the object of the faith thus to be expressed. Baptism illustrates most graphically many Christian doctrines, as we shall have occasion to see, but primarily it is intended to express an avowed interest in Christ. The believer stands related to Him in His life, death, resurrection, the fulness of His power, and the certainty of His coming triumph. In unbelief he stood in the first Adam, a partaker of the griefs introduced by sin; by faith he takes his stand in the second Adam, becoming an inheritor of His redemption, His grace and His glory. A change so great effected by an instrumentality so simple and so hidden as that of belief of the heart, demands some outward expression, not only for the sake of the believer himself, but also for those who are expected henceforth to treat him as a brother in Christ, and the need is met in the Divine wisdom by the provision of an ordinance which is not primarily the seal to a vow of amended life, a promise that the face shall be henceforth turned towards God, but rather according to the original commission of the Divine Lord, expressing the new relationship to God which is established by faith, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is not baptism into belief in the doctrine of the Trinity merely, but something more glorious far, the symbolic expression of trust in a triune God. For he who comes to Christ by faith comes to Him as the Son of God, himself to be made in the highest sense possible to human nature, a

Son of the Divine Father, and to receive as a gift from the Father through the Son that indwelling Holy Spirit, who is the promised portion of all who truly believe.

The fulness of this truth, however, is scarcely to be apprehended at the time of baptism. The young believer is occupied with the elementary thought of sin pardoned—mercy shown—salvation wrought. As far as his apprehension goes he, like the first disciples after Pentecost, and also those at Ephesus, needs mainly to remember that he has believed, and is baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus,” that if he has the promise of being saved it is because he has a Saviour rather than because he has complied with the terms of salvation, and that that faith in Jesus he is expressing is not the momentary resolve of a past experience, but the living continuous confidence of one who, though at present perhaps trembling in his trust, hopes and expects by-and-bye to be able to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

We have thus seen baptism to be most intimately related to faith. Disregarding entirely the age and circumstances—the history, knowledge, or experience of the person baptized; dependent in no way whatever on the authority or character of the baptizer; its value turns on the faith which it is intended to express. And this being the case, it becomes a witness to the necessity of faith in order to salvation; in some degree even to the nature of faith as complete confidence, and by the words of institution themselves a setting forth of that glorious God into whose matchless grace and infinite fulness we only experimentally have access through the prescribed trust in the redeeming Son of His love.

As the believer looks back upon this confession made

at the outset of his Christian life, he is reminded that he received the Spirit "by the hearing of faith," and feels the force of the exhortation. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." His past experience is not left to be an indefinite one, but his baptism witnesses that he did then, at all events, assert his whole-hearted trust in the Christ of God. And on the other hand the fulness of the Godhead, in which his trembling feet then bathed themselves, lies still around him an ocean of infinite grace and mercy in which he may plunge in ever-growing confidence. The distinguishing mark of the Christian is well stated in I. John iv. 16 :—"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." And this statement is preceded by the words which our baptism on profession of faith certainly reminds us of, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God."

May our hearts be kept by our Divine Saviour in the simplicity of faith and led by Him into the love which passeth knowledge.

"My faith would lay her hand,  
On that dear head of Thine;  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.

"Believing we rejoice  
To see the curse removed;  
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,  
And sing His bleeding love."

## CHAPTER IV.

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### BAPTISM AND OBEDIENCE.

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Matt. xxviii. 19 : " Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Acts x. 48 : " And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

John xiv. 15 : " If ye love Me keep My commandments."

Luke vi. 46 : " Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

IT is a very striking fact that the Greek word *peitho* means both to believe and to obey. Nothing but the context can determine which is the more suitable rendering, and when either rendering is chosen it has the other clinging to it. These two are God joined, and man has no right to put them asunder.

The Epistle of James deals with those who forgot the "obedience," while they emphasised the "faith." "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" The Epistle to the Hebrews rebukes the omission of faith in similar terms, as when describing the principles of the Gospel of Christ it names "repentance from dead works and faith toward God." For as the

Apostle Paul shows us, in these twin virtues there is a divine order. If works come first, so that faith rests upon them, there is only "the righteousness of the law," "by which there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." When, however, "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," he does not "make void the law through faith," but rather "establishes the law," "for how shall we that (by faith) are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Such a man in that he (by faith) died, "he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth he liveth unto God." True faith in the Christ that died for sinners, therefore, will manifest itself in that obedience which the Apostle rejoiced to recognize in the Roman Christians when he said: "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." Faith cannot be separated from obedience, nor obedience from faith, for faith is obedience. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. Let us never imagine that we can please God by good living without faith in Christ, for He declared: "I am come in My Father's name. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who hath sent Him," and, consequently, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed."

This necessary relation between faith and works, each requiring the other to make it complete, is one which, though apparent enough when thought of, needs the illumination and emphasis of the Word of God. For men are strangely prone to be content on the one hand with dead works, like those who went about to establish their own righteousness, and on the other with a dead faith, like those who said, "Let us do evil that grace may abound." The wisdom of God has, therefore, pro-

vided us with abundant Scripture insisting upon both "the righteousness imputed to the believer" without works, "and the fact notwithstanding that 'he that doeth righteousness is righteous.'" It has also combined these truths in the ordinance appointed to stand at the beginning of the Christian life. We have already seen that baptism lays strong emphasis on faith, and we now observe that it, at the same time, gives a very simple, but instructive opportunity for obedience. Let it never be forgotten, however, that as an act of obedience it springs from faith, apart from which it always must be a mere dead work to be turned from as an empty form.

It is not, however, without value that in this expressive manner it is indicated that faith is insufficient if alone. It may be a trifling act to submit to God's will in this respect, but it is indicative of the attitude of the whole Christian life, and to any professing Christian who hesitates to obey in this respect, we may well say with the servants of Naaman: "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then when he saith to thee wash and be clean?" The rule of the Kingdom is, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." To fail in the first outward duty imposed upon the believer is to give poor promise of an obedient life. For the same reason it may prove a dangerous thing in proclaiming the Gospel to omit part of the precept. Paul did not do so at Philippi. Though it is only recorded that he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," he made haste to enforce the duty of being also baptized. The preaching of salvation by faith, ignoring altogether the ordinance for its expression, is liable to give an impression that obedience is of small consequence, and may with impunity be neglected.

On the other hand, it is of immense importance, if the vital relationship between faith and works is to be clearly presented, that baptism should never be separated from the confession of faith. To do so must tend inevitably to suggest that there is a virtue in the outward and visible sign apart from the inward invisible grace, to make it a saving ordinance instead of a record of salvation received.

There is no obedience at all in baptism except for believers, for certainly none but such are commanded to be baptised. Observed by others, then, it must ever be a vain show, unable to bring blessing or to show forth truth, and liable to deceive both the baptised and the spectators.

In harmony with this absolute necessity of faith for salvation, baptism seems to have been selected as the simplest act of obedience it is possible to imagine. Just as the blind man told to "go wash in the pool of Siloam" did not and could not reasonably suppose that he was indebted to his obedience for the sight received, but was compelled to attribute the praise to "the man who opened his eyes," so, unless some theory of imparted grace flowing through the water or through the baptiser be adopted, it is impossible for any thinking man to imagine that pardon, acceptance and salvation are obtained through washing in material water, or indeed in any other way than by the work and gift of Him on whom he has believed.

It has often been suggested that those who insist upon the baptism of believers are in danger of making too much of the ordinance, though one can hardly insist too much upon the obedience of faith. The danger of unduly exalting baptism and depriving it of simplicity lies rather in any attempt, however well meant, to separate it from



the faith which gives it both its full meaning and its virtue.

Regarded as obedience, it becomes to him who thus expresses his faith an act of devout gratitude and holy joy. The fresh young love that springs in the heart when Jesus is first discerned as Saviour yearns for expression. A thousand impossible forms of declaring devotion suggest themselves to the grateful heart, but the Lord Himself vouchsafes one very simple, within the reach of all, hallowed by His own example, expressive of union with Himself, designed to be an open, but not obtrusive, acknowledgment of His grace, and by appointing it, in effect says to the ardent spirit of the young believer: "You are eager to prove your love: this is the work not of a moment, but of a lifetime; yet, begin here: do this in remembrance of Me; confess Me before men; be baptized in My name."

How many have eagerly embraced the opportunity. With what gladness the disciples have followed their Lord. The Eunuch baptized by Philip went on his way rejoicing, and so have many millions since; for though baptism in itself is like circumcision in this, that *it is* "nothing, but the commandment of the Lord," the true disciple will always be able to say with his Master: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

"In keeping His commandments there is great reward." Not *for* keeping them only, though He will not forget the faithful in the time when He distributes the honours of His Kingdom. *In* keeping them. "If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine." This unquestionably has a wide application to all obedience, for that is the absolute condition of progress in the understanding of the truth, but it also applies to the simple obedience of baptism, for the teaching of the

New Testament respecting this ordinance is so varied, so clear, so important, that it becomes when rightly observed an open door to many important truths, a safeguard against many deadly errors, and a help to the realization of a personal interest in Christ. As the proof of this is the object we have taken in hand, it will be needless just here to do more than call attention to the illustration it affords generally of the supreme importance of doing the will of God even in the smallest particular.

The claim of the Church to modify the ordinances is a bold one, yet if those modifications are the suggestions of the Spirit of God working in His people they may be welcomed. In that case, however, may we not expect to find fuller instruction rather than a diminution of it; consistency with fundamental truth, if not a clearer expression of it? If this has been attained by the variations which, it is confessed, have been introduced into the practice of baptism, let them clearly be set forth, but if not, then the subject of this chapter only receives another illustration. Obedience is the only safe path for believers, either individually or collectively, and that is intimated and illustrated in the very ordinance appointed for the expression of faith.

“Hear the blest Redeemer call you,  
Listen to His gracious voice;  
Dread no ills that can befall you,  
While you make His ways your choice;  
Jesus says, “Let each believer  
Be baptized in My name”;  
He himself in Jordan’s river  
Was immersed beneath the stream.”

## CHAPTER V.

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### BAPTIZED INTO THE NAME.

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Matt. xxviii. 19: Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Luke iii. 21-22: "Now it came to pass when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.

II. Cor. 13-14: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

THE Revised Version substitutes the preposition "into" for the "in" of the Authorised in this passage, and the correction is universally accepted, for whatever discussions may arise as to the English rendering of the Greek *en*, it is not disputed that *eis* is correctly translated by "into." And between the "in" and the "into" of this passage it is possible to make a great difference.

When Peter said to the lame man at the beautiful gate, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk," he probably meant the same thing as when he said to Æneas, "Jesus Christ healeth thee, arise and make thy

bed," for undoubtedly he afterwards explained that it was "by *faith* in His name" the man was made strong, and certainly apart from any "power or godliness" in the Apostles. Still, without this explanation, it might have been thought that the Apostles had healed the man "in Christ's name!" that is, by some authority delegated to them by Christ Jesus. Such a meaning cannot possibly attach to "into" as employed in the baptismal formula, yet both it and the benediction have often been used in this sense by those who maintain the sacerdotal position as if they were authorized in the name of the Triune God to declare some spiritual result, or to confer some spiritual blessing. It is important, therefore, to adhere to the preposition "into" although it is a small word, because it excludes the assumption which would make baptism a regenerating ordinance.

On the other hand the meaning of being baptized *into* the Name is one full of instruction, shedding singular light upon some very profound truths.

To the people to whom was first committed the task of instructing all nations in this mystery, the meaning would be very plain. They had been trained in the great doctrine of the Unity of God. The foundation of their belief was expressed as it is to-day in the words of Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," or rendering the word Lord as they always did mentally, it would run, "Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah." For the great truth committed to them as a people, was, that in contradistinction to the plurality of gods among the heathen, there was only one true, self-existent Being to be known, worshipped and loved by them under the name He himself chose to reveal, "Jehovah." He who was, and is, and is to come. This name was referred to in their literature constantly as meaning God Himself,

Abraham called upon the name of the Lord; God Himself proclaimed His name in the revelation to Moses; the priests ministered in His name; the psalmist praised His name; the prophets rejoiced in His name; the wise man compared it to a strong tower; and the forerunner announced the Messiah as coming in the name of the Lord.

The announcement, then, that believers were to be baptized into the name indicated that they were henceforth to stand in a special relationship to Him whose name was pronounced over them. They were to be believers in Him—worshippers of Him, but pre-eminently to obtain the privileges and blessing of being in Him. Baptism could not secure this; they must first become disciples by faith, but, being disciples, baptism into the name would serve to indicate to whom they stood in the relation of disciples.

Dr. Morison says: "The baptism is into the name of the tri-personal God, because there is no other possible way by which finite minds can deal in consciousness, with God, than through His name."

Here, then, the disciple is, according to the command specially handed to us by Matthew, who always looks at Christ from the Jewish side, to be baptized into the name, not of Jehovah, with which all the disciples and their nation had long been familiar, but "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The triune nature of God is not a doctrine unknown to the Old Testament. It is easy to discern hints of it, more or less clear, and especially in the Psalmist and the Prophets. Still, there can be little doubt that the earlier dispensation was intended to lay special stress on the unity rather than on the triunity of God. No sooner, however, do we open the New Testa-

ment than we find by the operation of the Holy Ghost "a Son of the Most High God" is born on earth, Himself, "Immanuel—God with us." His ministry is opened with the same triune manifestation at baptism and closed with the promise to send the Comforter when He returns to His Father, while all who own Him Lord are to acknowledge Him by being baptized into the Triune name. So far from the doctrine being developed by the Church in later years, it stands at the very foundation of Christianity. It is inseparable from it. It would be quite possible to found a religion upon the life, teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth, denying His deity and maintaining the impossibility of a Triune God, but such a religion would not be in any sense Christianity. It might possess an exemplar, but not a redeemer, might direct the thought to holy things, but could not lift the soul out of a lost condition into new life and power. It might easily inspire admiration for the character of him whom it would call its founder, but could not lead to worship and devotion and expectation of his coming triumph.

But Jesus Christ founded His doctrine on a Triune God; so He clearly indicated when He prescribed baptism in the Triune name, and so the Apostles understood; as we see when Paul pronounced a blessing in similar terms.

We need not be surprised that such a mystery should be placed at the very threshold of Christianity, both in the world teaching and in the individual belief. It is not only desirable for a complete faith; but essential for a complete understanding of the faith. We are not to begin with the doctrine of the Trinity, but with Christ; yet the true faith in Him involves as a necessity a triunity in God. Had not God been triune in His

nature, the incarnation as we have it in Jesus would have been impossible, for only such a Being could stand to men in such different relationships as at one and the same time invisible and omnipotent, yet manifested, and condescending to show His own love by dying. Exalted to heaven as our Prince and Saviour, yet present in every assembly of His people, to guide and to bless. Able to forgive, to procure forgiveness, and to awaken the heart to a sense of forgiveness.

It may be urged that these, though to some extent necessities of human thought, are not necessities of the divine nature. Yet if this is the case it only leaves the mystery more profound and faith more difficult, whereas by the revelation of the Trinity God has graciously met us at the very point where we should be most likely to be brought to a standstill.

One thing is clear—if Scripture is to be our guide we are brought face to face with this doctrine at the very beginning. It is named at baptism as if it were the very essence of the truth to be received. Yet may we not be devoutly thankful that the expression is one that does not involve understanding. To be baptized into the triune Name may be to be plunged into a mystery in which reason must lose itself, but it is not to have to *comprehend* that mystery. It will ever be a fathomless sea to our understanding, but the essential point is, that we should dwell in God, not that we should be able to explain Him. So at our baptism this truth is set before us as the sphere in which our spiritual nature is henceforth to abide, not as the rigid definition of the theologian, to be accepted on pain of eternal death for rejection, but rather the revelation of an infinite grace abounding in multified manifestation; always infinite, and encompassing us on every hand with the love of God.

For if we do not understand the triunity of God as a benediction, we do not enter into the essence of the truth. Lacordaire well says, "Beauty is the result of order; wheresoever order ceases, beauty vanishes. But what is order if not the unity which shines in a multitude of beings, and which, notwithstanding their distinctions and their variety, brings them together again in the splendour of a single act?" The Divine Being contemplated solely in the splendour of an infinite isolation; alone, without the possibility of fellowship with an equal; loving, but never loved with a love at all to be compared with His own; such a being can never possess the same moral beauty to our thought as the God of the New Testament, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; exhibiting His grace in the gift of Himself, and creating, by the power of His indwelling Spirit, beings capable of knowing and adoring Him."

Holy men have ever found this doctrine make God more precious to them. Humbly and gratefully received as a revelation from heaven, it makes all truth glow with living beauty. The learned and pious Bengel, when dying, exclaimed, "I commit myself to my faithful Creator, my intimate Redeemer, my true and approved Comforter." He did so in view of entering upon the untrodden path of the unseen world; and our Master's command directs us to do so, too, when entering upon the new and unknown way of a Christian profession. May the infinite fulness of the triune God be our constant trust, and our lives be a living presentation of the Song of the Church: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen."



"Baptized into Thy name most Holy,  
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !  
I claim a place though weak and lowly,  
Among Thy seed, Thy chosen host ;  
Buried with Christ, and dead to sin,  
Thy Spirit now shall dwell within.

"My loving Father now doth take me  
To be henceforth His child and heir,  
My faithful Saviour now doth make me  
The fruit of all His sorrows share.  
My Comforter will comfort me,  
When darkest clouds around I see."

## CHAPTER VI.

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### BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM.

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xii. 50 : But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.

Rom. vi. 3 : Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ? We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

Col. ii. 12 : Having been buried with Him in baptism wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

THE Apostle Paul saw in baptism a *likeness* of Christ's death and resurrection, hence he says we were buried with Him through baptism into His death. It is very easy for us also to see a likeness when the ordinance is administered by immersion in water, the mode which, it is admitted, was the primitive one, and has never ceased to be employed in the centuries since, exclusively by the Greek Church, partially by the Roman and Anglican Churches, and increasingly, by choice, among the Free Protestant Churches of the world. Water naturally suggests cleansing, but immer-

sion suggests death and burial, so that Christian baptism, which, as far as the outward act is concerned, is immersion in water, naturally symbolizes the cleansing which results from participation in the death of Christ.

In this, coupling the thought of cleansing from sin with the only efficient cause of it, namely, the sacrificial death of the Divine Redeemer, baptism at once presents to the mind the fundamental truth of the Christian religion. "Christ died for our sins." "When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly." "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

The attempt is constantly being made to represent forgiveness as a natural right possessed by man without the need of Atonement. Stress is laid on the fact that we can readily obtain pardon, while the teaching that Christ procured it is ignored. The Scriptures, however, are emphatic as to the work of redemption, as well as to the fact of forgiveness.

John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins before Christ appeared, but he pointed to the efficient cause of his good tidings when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus Himself as the Son of Man, freely pronounced forgiveness for sins against God, but he also taught that "Verily the Son of Man came. . . . to give His life a ransom for many." The Apostles declared that forgiveness of sins was in the hands of the crucified, but now exalted Saviour. It is well, then, that the thought of purification, which undoubtedly belongs to baptism as a symbol, should be closely associated with the great truth of the death of Christ.

It is round the death of Christ, too, that all the holy influences upon the soul of man gather. Take away the

Cross of Jesus, and even His beautiful life would be powerless to regenerate society. His teaching, so pure and heavenly, needs the exemplification of His death to give it force. The Sermon on the Mount is mockery till realized not only in the sinlessness of His life, but in the self-sacrifice of His voluntary death. All the Evangelists unite with awe to set forth, in fullest detail, the story of the last few hours of His life. The Apostles need no other basis for their Gospel than the simple facts set forth so briefly by the Apostle Paul, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Baptism, by setting this forth in symbol, while the triune name of God is at the same time proclaimed, bring us into touch with the whole range of Christian truth at its most vital point. It will not suffer us to separate forgiveness from that atoning death, by the virtue of which it is available.

But it further illustrates the necessity for an individual, personal interest in the death of Christ, secured by a living faith, for it is only as we believe in Him that it can be said we are buried with Him in baptism. The symbol is there, but the reality can only be shared by faith. The watery sepulchre may set forth the death of Jesus by illustrating His burial, but it is only as the baptized enters into the teaching of the outward rite that it can truly be said that *he* is buried with Christ. As a believer, it is most appropriate and instructive that he should symbolically take his place with his Lord, and, being "planted in the likeness of His death," realize, not only that Jesus died, but that he, too, died in Christ. Completely severed from the power of the law, slain by it already in the person of his substitute, he is reminded,

most emphatically, that henceforth the law no more has dominion over him. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." And not only does he thus learn the necessity of realizing the personal interest in order to have the benefit of His atonement, but also has exhibited before him the completeness of the deliverance. His Lord "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and his sins are put away completely because he died in Christ. It is the first step in a glorious inheritance. To be identified with Jesus in His death is to share in all the grace and power of His glorious life. Happy the man who realizes the fulness of that expression, "in Christ." To such, the first two chapters of Ephesians will prove the title-deeds of a portion "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." All spiritual blessings in heavenly places are "in Christ." It may be a cross to take the place of the dead, and share the burial of Jesus; but it is the prelude to resurrection power, and the crown of a fuller, more glorious life. Only on the footing that "ye are dead," shall we be able to rise to the magnificent height of the next expression, "and your life is hid with Christ in God."

What a contrast there is here to the theories of reformation and improvement of the old nature! All mere development of the carnal man is arrested at the tomb of Christ. Tennyson described the "Vision of the Holy Grail" as seen only by the man who "lost himself to save himself." Others pursued with deeds of endurance and daring, and saw, or thought they saw, the vision, but only Galahad enjoyed the unveiled glory. Certainly, it is even so with the soul that would apprehend the wonders of redemption. His first act must be despairing of himself to take the place of death with Christ, and presently in the power of a new and risen life, heaven

will unfold in ever-increasing manifestations of grace.

We may truly value an ordinance which, witnessed by those who are strangers to this grace, so vividly and unmistakably sets forth the death of Christ as the ground of our hope and the necessity of being in Him by faith, accepting Him as our representative, in order to share in the benefits of His death. Of it may be said that which the Apostle declared concerning the bread and wine of the Supper:—"As often as ye do this . . . ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Baptism, however, sets this forth, not as in the Supper, as the constant sustenance and refreshment of the believer, but as the point at which he separates from the old life and enters upon the new relationship to God. This aspect of the truth does not need repetition. It comes appropriately as the expression of the new-born faith, once for all setting forth that the believer has taken his stand in Christ, and henceforth desires to "walk in Him."

But though baptism does not need repetition, it will well bear reflection. We cannot too constantly remember the ground of our hope, and an occasional glance at least at "the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged," will prove a blessing, especially when we bear in mind that on which the Apostle lays such great emphasis when he reminds us, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein." The waters of baptism telling us of our voluntary acceptance of the grace and salvation of God, should be a dividing line, over which the evil habits of the past life, should never be permitted to pass. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away, all things have become new." "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." We

do renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil in baptism, though no such word may be spoken by us, nor in our hearing, at its administration. The symbol involves the declaration, but the strength of the declaration is not in the vow, but in the Lord. It is by Him we are to be delivered from the practice of sin, as well as from its guilt, and only as we cling to Him as our Saviour shall we realize that risen life in which, by His grace, we are henceforth to walk. This will certainly follow if we are sincere, but there must be no paltering with evil. That grave in which we have been buried with Christ must be regarded as the grave of every sinful thought, and word, and way. We must "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Thus does baptism bring us, by one simple symbol, face to face, with the essence of the Gospel in the death of Christ, and at the same time, pictures to us our lost condition out of Christ, the necessity of our union with Him in His atoning work by faith, and the responsibilities of the position taken up by us when we make this profession of trust in His name.

May the Spirit of God apply all these truths to our hearts, and make the symbol a reality in our experience.

" Into thy death baptized  
O let us with Thee die,  
And clothe us with Thy risen life,  
And wholly sanctify ;  
So freed from the old nature,  
And ransomed by Thy blood,  
May we pass on to glory,  
Alive with Thee to God."

## CHAPTER VII.

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### BAPTISM AND THE RESURRECTION.

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Romans x. 9 : If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

I. Cor. xv. 14 : And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Col. ii. 12 : Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

Col. iii. 1 : If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

THE truth of Christianity stands or falls by the resurrection of our Lord. In the days of the Apostles, the witness to this fact was the one thing that made faith in a crucified Christ possible. It was the Divine testimony to Jew and Gentile alike, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." Apart from the resurrection the claims made by Jesus seemed mere blasphemous audacity, but "He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." Hence we are not surprised to find that the subject of the Apostles' preaching, both in



Jerusalem and Athens, and, indeed, wherever they went, among either Jews or Gentiles, was "Jesus and the Resurrection." We have no less need for prominence to be given to this truth to-day. Christianity is no mere philosophical system, neither is it only "an ethical movement." It faces the world as a supernatural revelation. It claims to bring the powers of the world to come to bear on this mundane sphere, and the sign by which its claim is supported is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

No higher witness to the supernatural could possibly be afforded. Death, except in Him, reigns supreme amongst the sons of men. The grave is the "bourne whence no traveller returns." Man has become master of many things, but death still baffles him. His boastful science stands helpless in the presence of this enemy. When resurrection is asserted, it is no question of superior knowledge, the discovery of some earthly secret, or the trick of an impostor. Earth's wisest are content to exclaim with the magicians of Egypt: "*This is the finger of God.*"

And the evidence for it is still as clear as on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. We are not permitted to see, as were the Apostles, but their testimony is before us, and cannot be refuted. Sceptics have tried to examine and disprove, and have been converted in the process, and become humble believers in the risen and exalted Saviour. For we not only have the witness of godly, sober-minded men, who were slow to accept the evidence even of their senses, but we have with us the living Church built upon this foundation truth, and exhibiting in its history and deeds the spiritual power which claims to come from the resurrection.

If there is a doctrine of Christian truth so essential as

this, we might well expect the rite by which profession of faith is made to have some very clear expression of it associated either by word or sign. And it is so. This truth, belief in which is coupled with salvation, is pre-eminently set forth in believers' baptism. Burial with Christ is only half the sign. Baptism is incomplete without the thought which henceforth prevails above the former, "Ye also are risen in Him."

It does not seem altogether impossible that this may be the meaning of that much-disputed passage in chapter xv. of the 1st Corinthians, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead? if the dead are not raised at all why then are they baptized for them?"

If the preposition *hyper* in this passage can rightly take the meaning of "in the place of," the argument would run like this: "Even among yourselves baptism is being continued, and the converts are thus symbolically taking the place of the dead with Christ, but what does such a symbol avail at all if there be no resurrection associated with it? Such a burial in baptism standing alone would be unmeaning and ineffectual, it could only signify death."

Whether this particular rendering is allowable or not, it is generally acknowledged that it illustrates the powerful witness to the resurrection which the ordinance of baptism conveys.

In descriptions of the baptism of our Lord, and also of the Ethiopian Eunuch, we have most distinctly the statement that they came up out of the water, while the clearest references to baptism in the Epistles are based upon this symbolic resurrection from a watery grave.

Resurrection is part of the Christian hope, as well as the Christian faith, and as such, too, it is well that it should have prominence. When Jesus finds us, He not only

takes away the fear of death by His forgiveness, but adds the assurance that He will raise us up at the last day. Christ has brought life and immortality to light. Before Him, Death is a gloomy tyrant, claiming all men as its victims ; behind Him, even death itself is transformed into an angel of light. The Song of Moses is, " We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled." - The song of Paul is set to very different music as he sings, " O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is well that our hope, as well as our faith, should have clear expression in the moment of our public dedication to our Lord's service.

This hope, however, is fuller than the eventual redemption of our body by the resurrection from the dead ; it includes the power of a risen life in this mortal body. If there is one thing that needs recognition at such a moment of outward profession it is this. To take the vow of renunciation of the world, flesh, and devil, if there be no inexhaustible grace on which to rely, is to commit ourselves to a resolution doomed to speedy disavowal in action.

How can we be dead to sin while sin is not dead to us? Temptation will come in the old and even in new ways, and every fresh path opens new opportunities for dishonouring our Lord. Our strength, too, is nothing ; we have just confessed it so, and openly taken the place of death, acknowledging with Paul that " in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." Alas for those who promise to amend without the knowledge of the risen life ! But he that has truly committed himself to Christ to save, not to pardon only, but to " deliver him

from all evil" may have the comforting assurance of the truth expressed to him in the very sign that seals his confession. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by His spirit that dwelleth in you." He does not say "shall quicken your dead body" but "your mortal body." To have the mortal body quickened by the Holy Ghost, this it is alone that can make possible a holy life, but this is abundantly sufficient to secure it. Powerless in ourselves we become mighty through the Spirit—mighty for victory and mighty for service. The mortal body remains, and continually reminds us of its mortality, but the life we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

A truth like this is always needed, but never more so than on entrance upon the avowal of Christian life. Just then there is a danger of self-reliance, which this will correct, and on the other hand, a danger of despair of attainment, which this will rebuke. The selection of a symbol, not of cleansing only, which may be partial and temporary, but of resurrection, which is thorough, sufficient, and introduces to a new world of spiritual experience, is surely a mark of the Divine wisdom to be attentively observed and richly appreciated.

Neither must we omit the new outlook for the soul which the resurrection makes prominent. The affections are to be set upon things above. We are risen with Christ already, and it is our privilege by faith to share His ascended life in some measure, for He hath "made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places." The believer is not only to turn his back toward sin, but it is his privilege also to keep his face toward heaven, compassed with its light and peace and joy. Even the trials and sorrows of life will be endurable "while we look not at

the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Too much emphasis can scarcely be laid on this aspect of the believer's life, for it is indeed a continual source of strength. Let the affections and desires continue to twine themselves around the pleasures and ambitions of earth, and the soul must inevitably become worldly and feeble ; but let him realize that in Christ he has come into the heavenly inheritance, and is "endued with grace in the Beloved," no longer of the earth, earthy but now a "fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God," and the things of time, will assume their true insignificance to him. Though in the world he will not be of it, and while using the opportunities, and fulfilling all the duties, of this mortal life he will have his eye on the well done of his Master for reward, rather than on any gratification to be found in these things themselves.

Are any disposed to say this is too high an ideal ? That it is only to be realized at the end of life, when the faculties begin to fail, and the gathering majority within the veil insensibly draws the thoughts heavenward. Or that it is the mark of that ripeness for glory, which is the precursor of dissolution. Not so. It is in baptism associated with the beginning of the spiritual life. The first open confession of faith in Jesus is made to take a form which expresses a present share in Christ's risen life, and though it is true that the experienced Christian will still yearn like Paul, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection," it is the privilege of every believer to remember that his treasure is in heaven, and that fulness of joy will be realized in the presence of his Lord. Well may the Apostle point the Roman and Colossian Christians back to their baptism as a strenuous call to cut entirely adrift from all which

might hinder their spiritual progress, and to remember that by the confession then made their life was "hid with Christ in God," and it was theirs henceforth to "walk in newness of life."

" With Christ we die that freed from sin,  
With Christ we may arise,  
New thoughts, new hopes, new lives to win,  
To fit us for the skies,  
Oh, Holy Ghost, to us be given !  
And all our converse here.  
Be waiting for the Lord from heaven  
Till Christ our life appear."

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### BAPTISM AND THE NEW BIRTH.

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John iii. 5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee : Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

I. John v. 6-8: This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. . . . For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three agree in one.

Titus iii. 5: According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing (laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

THE doctrine of baptismal regeneration is said to be of Pagan origin, coming down with many other gross perversions of truth from the old Babylonian cult. Noah, having lived in two worlds, it is said, was called the twice-born, and a ceremony of purification was adopted to represent deliverance from the power of evil by re-birth into a new world. This ceremony closely agrees with "christening," as practised by the Church of Rome. Certainly, there is no warrant in Scripture for

imagining any spiritual change to be effected by a merely carnal rite. As we have seen already, faith in a living Christ is the means of obtaining the new life, and baptism only the expression of the faith and seal of the blessing already received.

It is, doubtless, owing to the righteous horror of such a doctrine as that of baptismal regeneration that it has become common among Protestants to deny that there is any allusion to baptism in the expression "born of water," as recorded in John iii. The other explanations offered are, however, far from satisfactory. Some make water the type of the Spirit, in which case there are two expressions, with only one meaning, and the first so equivocal as to hinder rather than help the understanding. Others, again, make water to be a type of "the Word," quoting the passage respecting the Church in Ephesians v. 26: "That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing (laver) of water by the word." Alford on this passage says, "The word, preached and received, is the conditional element of purification, the real water of spiritual baptism, that wherein and whereby alone the efficacy of baptism is conveyed, that wherein and whereby we are regenerated." So that the two views are by no means incompatible. We are born again by receiving the word, and this is expressed in baptism "the laver of water"; for, according to the same authority, it would be incorrect to join "in the word," with "laver," or with "the water," such a connection involving a different Greek construction, but "in the word" refers back to "sanctify" and "purified."

Undoubtedly the objection has arisen from the fear that the form of the Saviour's utterance, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," involves the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation, if so be the



water mentioned is the water of baptism. If baptism had no reference to any spiritual fact in the experience of the baptized, which *is* essential, this might be so, but if, on the other hand, baptism in water is the appointed outward expression of that faith which is inseparable from a title to the adoption of sons, then surely it is appropriate that, side by side with the invisible and mysterious work of the Spirit should be placed that confession with the mouth which, according to Rom. x. 10, is as essential as belief with the heart. We must be careful not unduly to depreciate even the outward sign when it is of Divine appointment. And this passage in John is paralleled very closely by the instruction of the Saviour in Mark : "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and by the exhortation of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus : "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling upon His name. If it were not for the eagerness of some to avoid obedience to their Lord's will in this respect, we might have heard less of the impossibility of the reference to baptism in the expression "born of water."

In trying to derive spiritual instruction from this symbol, there are two directions in which our thoughts may profitably travel. First, as to the meaning usually associated with the term water ; and, secondly, with the connection between regeneration and the faith expressed in baptism. The references to water in the writings of the Apostle John are so numerous and varied as to be remarkable. The word itself is used by him forty-four times out of seventy-six times that it is found in the New Testament. Its use in the Gospel alone is such as to make a striking and interesting study. Before we come to this somewhat vague reference to it in this passage, we have had baptism in water already named

three times, while this very chapter tells us John baptized at Enon because there was much water there. Our Lord's first miracle was turning water into wine, a very suggestive thought when we observe how much of Gospel truth is illustrated in baptism. The woman by Samaria's well learns that there is another water that Christ can give, springing up unto everlasting life.

The fifth chapter tells of a man waiting a long time for the moving of the water, but healed at once by the word of the Saviour, which is more effectual than any healing stream, even though stirred by an angel. Then Jesus is seen walking upon the water as its Master and Lord. Presently He stands and cries on the great day of the feast, "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," by which, we are told, He alluded to the Spirit.

The blind man with his eyes anointed with clay is told to "go and wash in the pool of Siloam," which having done, "he came seeing"; faith and obedience being thus coupled. Then before the Passion there is recorded the touching incident of the washing of the disciples' feet, and finally this disciple bears his witness that from the pierced side of his Master there flowed both blood and water.

It is not suggested that there is a unity in all these references, but so many of them are coupled either with cleansing or with new life, that it is plain that in the mind of John, both these thoughts are closely associated with water, and when he speaks of being born of water it is not an inapt symbol of that renewal which, though it can only be wrought through faith and by the Holy Ghost, is manifested in various ways, and sometimes through water as the chosen medium.

When, too, turning to the Epistle, we read of Him

"Who came by water" as well as by blood, it is impossible to dissociate the thought from the baptism with which His ministry commenced, and in which it was attested, and that other baptism concerning which He so emphatically declared that He was straitened till it was accomplished. If it is right to say of Christ's baptism that He came by water, though water was only the symbolic medium through which He passed, it is surely not inappropriate to speak of us as "born of water," when it is the instrument which symbolises to us the end of the old life and the beginning of the new.

Here, then, we have the very same truth upon which we dwelt in the last chapter—a resurrection to newness of life, only the figure is different and the new birth is dwelt upon, to the exclusion altogether of the preceding death. And there is immense advantage in the presentation of the idea of cleansing, not in a merely superficial manner, but, as Paul expresses it in the Epistle to Titus, "The washing of regeneration." This is cleansing, for the person remains the same, but it is thorough, a veritable new birth, the commencement of a new life, the title to a new inheritance. And it is very significant, as spoken to Nicodemus—a man of whom we know no evil beyond his cowardice—to whom the message of Christ dwelt on faith rather than on repentance, but whose blind groping amid carnal things plainly showed the need of a higher life from above. For some approach Jesus from the standpoint of a felt need of spiritual illumination rather than of forgiveness; they desire to be taught more than to be saved, and it is necessary that such should know that the gift Jesus has to bestow is life rather than knowledge, a life to which apart from Him they are utter strangers. "Ye must be born again," directs attention to that simplicity as of

a little child, without which there is no entrance into the Kingdom.

Still it may be urged, what has baptism to do with the new birth? If it cannot accomplish it, why is it referred to as essential? To which the simple answer already indicated may be repeated. Because the emblematic use of water expresses the faith without which the new birth is impossible of attainment. And from this standpoint we may be devoutly thankful that it is written "born of *water* and of the Spirit." For the Spirit's manifestations are mysterious, and without the positive assurance "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," we might remain in trembling uncertainty as to whether this essential birth from above had really taken place in our experience.

When, however, interpreting the third chapter of John by the first, we read, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God," then we learn that the *believer* is born again, and the confession of his faith in baptism brings home to his mind with fresh assurance the certainty of that renewal of the Holy Ghost, of which faith is the first evidence.

So, too, the teaching of this ordinance becomes invested with all the glories of adoption. This distinctive title, "Sons of God," belongs to the believer, as well as the possession in Christ of the risen life. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," for ye are born again, not into the first Adam, but into the second; not to an inheritance of death, but into the Kingdom of God and the glories of His grace.

Thus, the believer, in his baptism, is made to share, in

his measure, in the attestation of sonship which his Lord received when, coming up out of the water, the voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"Behold, what wondrous grace  
The Father hath bestowed  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God.

If in my Father's love  
I share a filial part,  
Send down thy Spirit like a dove,  
To rest upon my heart."

## CHAPTER IX.

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### THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST.

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Matthew iii. 11 : I indeed baptize you with (in) water unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost and fire.

Act. i. 4 : And being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from Me : for John indeed baptized with (in) water, but ye shall be baptized with (in) the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts ii. 38 : And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

THESE are two baptisms named in each of the above passages. That in water is distinctly material, and though possessing a very full symbolic meaning, is scarcely to be regarded as a symbol of so spiritual a fact as the gift of the Spirit of God. And yet the very term baptism in the second case must be regarded as a symbolic use, or why employ it at all ? One great difficulty in the understanding of the term has

arisen from the tendency, due to mistakes in practice, to use the word baptism as referring to the application of the water to the disciple instead of its Scriptural and philological use as descriptive of the application of the disciple to the water. The Holy Spirit of God is only known to us in His activities. Hence water becomes a fit emblem of the Spirit when it is spoken of as a flowing stream, but not as a silent pool. Just as wind is a fit emblem, while air is not, and oil may set Him forth when its active, healing virtue is the point upon which stress is laid.

Now, what John said Jesus would do was not to pour out the Spirit on the disciples, but, having shed forth the promise of the Father, to baptize the disciples in the Holy Spirit thus given. And the record of Pentecost is strictly in harmony with the description. The presence of the Spirit was made manifest by "a sound as of a mighty rushing wind." Its abundance was betokened by the fact that it "filled all the house where they were sitting." Their baptism in the Spirit was manifested to the eye by tongues "parting asunder like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them." It was manifested to the heart and to the ear by the fact that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The baptism in the Holy Ghost, therefore, was not the coming of the Holy Ghost, but the personal, individual share of the disciples in the power of the Holy Ghost, just as the River Jordan was not the baptism of John but the plunging of each separate person into the water was.

And as baptism in water serves to make definite to the disciple and to the spectators his faith in his Lord ; so the baptism in the Spirit, which can be given by none but Christ, is a more or less definite experience in which

the believer apprehends his sonship and receives power from on high.

The term "baptism in the Holy Ghost" is not used in Scripture except for the miraculous manifestation to the Church on the day of Pentecost. The thought passes into the different expression, "a gift" or "received," for there is this essential difference, baptism or immersion in water is ours in the fullest sense when we are completely surrounded by water, but baptism in the Holy Ghost can only be realized, not merely when He is here but when we are filled by Him; for it is the inward nature with which He deals and not the outward. As the term baptism, assumed for the special purpose of contrasting John's mission with that of Jesus, is dropped, so also the thought of "once for all," which is so suitably associated with baptism in water, is dropped also, and the believer's relation to the Holy Spirit, once established, abides. Not a momentary surrounding, but an abiding indwelling. Such is the teaching of Scripture regarding the Spirit. The gift of the risen Christ, though definitely received from Him, is a gift varied in its manifestations, and may be repeated, even in highest degree, as we see clearly by observing that the same men who were filled at Pentecost are described in Acts iv. as being filled again in a new and blessed experience.

If, then, we lay stress on the words, "*He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost,*" the very coming to be baptized will suggest the further coming to Jesus to receive from Him a spiritual confirmation of our faith, and a power to live it out. For the teaching of the Acts of the Apostles is clear on this point, that, altogether beyond the work of the Holy Ghost on the heart of the believer, leading him to repentance and faith, there are gifts to be bestowed, which include the realization of



both the presence and the power of the Lord Christ.

The first bestowal of these gifts of the Spirit is, in Scripture, closely associated with baptism. There are four instances given represented by the four cities, Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, and Ephesus, and taken together they present a very complete view of the relation between baptism in water and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

At *Jerusalem*, Peter, speaking immediately after the special manifestations of Pentecost, exhorts his hearers to repent and be baptized, assuring them that thus they too might share in this marvellous and gracious bestowal. They were not to seek the Holy Spirit first. There was a duty lying before them. When duty calls, the only right way to seek a blessing is to obey. So he told them to repent and be baptized, and they would realize the promise, "He will give the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him." Here we learn the importance of obedience to God's order.

The next case was at *Samaria*. Here the truth marvellously prevailed. Christ was preached, the multitudes gave heed. There was much joy in the city. "When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized, both men and women." But they were only baptized in water. As yet the Holy Ghost "was fallen upon none of them." What was wrong? Was there any mistake in the baptismal formula? No. "They had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Was there some lack of virtue in the baptizer? No, we do not read that they were re-baptized. Was there something defective in Philip's teaching? It is just possible he may have omitted to tell them to expect and ask for Christ's own baptism in

the Holy Ghost. We do not read that they were conscious of any defect, but as soon as Peter and John came down they saw it, and prayed for them ; for this gift, though it usually came with the laying on of the Apostle's hands, was never mechanically associated either with that or with baptism, but must be sought and obtained from Christ Himself. From this we learn not to be content with baptism in water, but when we are baptized to seek and obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost."

At *Cæsarea* the order was reversed. It was the first occasion of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. Peter was the preacher, and the word was with power. To quote his own words, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said John indeed baptized with (in) water, but ye shall be baptized with (in) the Holy Ghost."

The Church to whom he told these things exclaimed, as they heard the story, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life. They had the essential. They were recognized by Peter, and by all who heard of it as being fellow believers, saved by the grace of God ; but Peter did not say to them, "You are baptized by the Lord, there is here no need of water." On the contrary, his conclusion was thus expressed, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ." From this we learn that while the gift of the Spirit is not dependent upon baptism, its possession is by no means a reason for dispensing with the outward ordinance, but rather the most conclusive reason why it should be observed.

At *Ephesus* we find certain disciples to whom Paul addressed the very pertinent question : " Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed ? " Some who regard the work of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit as identical, would resent such an enquiry even from the lips of an Apostle, but the reply in this case proved the need of it, for they answered : " Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given." Such defective knowledge immediately suggested to the Apostle a deeper reason, and he pursued the enquiry with the question : " Into what then were ye baptized ? " He felt that there was sufficient in baptism itself, rightly observed, to save the baptized from such gross ignorance, and finding that they knew only John's baptism, with its merely anticipatory belief in Jesus as a coming one, and no recognition of the glory of His Messiahship as the Son of the living God ; he pointed out the difference, and this they recognized was so great that they felt they had not been baptized at all in any real Christian sense. " And when they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Then Paul having laid his hands upon them, " the Holy Ghost came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

Thus, once more is baptism in water closely connected with baptism in the Holy Ghost, the first being not so much a symbol as a promise of the last. From all four instances we learn not to despise the one nor neglect the other.

Obedience in baptism is the forerunner of the gift, as at Jerusalem. Baptism in water without the power of the Spirit is incomplete : this we learn at Samaria. The possession of the Holy Ghost in power does not dispense with the obligation on believers to be baptized : so Peter taught at Cæsarea. A baptism that is so little

understood as to leave unknown the Christ's great gift of the Holy Ghost is no Christian baptism at all, and leaves the duty unfulfilled: such is the instruction from the incident at Ephesus.

“ Lord thou hast promised to baptize  
Those in the Holy Ghost,  
Whose faith on Thee alone relies,  
Thy Cross their only boast.

“ Baptize us in Thy Spirit, Lord,  
And in that promised fire,  
Which may to us all zeal afford,  
All gratitude inspire.”

## CHAPTER X.

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### BAPTISM IN FIRE.

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Luke iii. 16 : There cometh<sup>1</sup> He that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost and *with (in)* fire.

II. Thess. i. 7-8 : At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke xii. 49-50 : I came to cast fire upon the earth ; and what will I if it be already kindled. But I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.

Acts ii. 3 : And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as of fire ; and sat upon each one of them.

JOHN THE BAPTIST contrasted the baptism of the coming Messiah with his own by saying, "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance . . . He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire." As far as baptism in water is concerned we are distinctly told, "Jesus baptized not but His disciples" ; and as to the baptism in the Holy Ghost there is no reference to it through the entire ministry of the Lord Jesus until, just

before His Ascension, He referred to this contrast between John's baptism and His own, and said to His Apostles, "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence." In that case, however, there was no mention of baptism in fire. To what then did John refer? There are three suggestions, each of them full of practical import, and in the absence of any authoritative decision in Scripture, we shall do well to look in all three directions and lay to heart the lessons they teach.

The first is an exceedingly solemn thought, namely that John presented these two, the Holy Ghost and fire, as alternative portions which Christ offered to men. The connection certainly supports this view, for both Matthew and Luke tell us that as soon as they were uttered John said, almost as if in explanation, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." Luke also records that He had just said, "Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." It is a good rule in interpreting Scripture not to give two different meanings to the same word when used twice in the same passage. The "unquenchable fire" is clearly an emblem of the Divine wrath and punishment of sin, and so may it not most probably mean that Jesus will baptize believers in the Holy Ghost, while for those who refuse to believe there is the alternative of his baptism in fire? If the fact were dependent on this particular application, we might well try to explain it otherwise, but it is not so. No figure of condemnation is more frequently used in the New Testament than the fire which cannot be quenched, and no contrast can be more sharply drawn than that in the

passage we have so frequently had occasion to quote : " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be condemned."

There is therefore a glance through this passage at the unspeakable mercy by which we are saved from a doom so terrible ; and as we are baptized in water on profession of our faith in Jesus we may take the assurance from His lips, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment but hath passed out of death into life."

Another passage from the Saviour's lips may suggest a different meaning in John's words to that referred to above. He declared that He came " to cast fire upon the earth," and, as if there were some connection of thought in his mind, added : " But *I* have a baptism to be baptized with." Using the term fire as it is so frequently used in Scripture, as the emblem of trial and persecution, it will unite both these figures of speech which at first seem so incongruous—fire and baptism—for the fire so spoken of is not a fire of destruction like the fire unquenchable, but a refining fire through which even the Son Himself passed in those sufferings which all admit He was speaking of as His baptism. Referring again to John's words we find *he* had the same thought in *his* mind when he spoke of " baptizing in the Holy Ghost and fire"; for he added, " He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor." The threshing floor is never cleansed with fire till all the wheat is gathered in and only chaff remains, but after all the " tribulation " and the " fiery trial " are identical in fact and only differ in the figure used. The one speaks of the thresher with his flail, and the other of the refiner with his furnace fire. And if the Lord Jesus thoroughly cleanses His threshing

floor, He also "sits as a refiner" among His people. Are we then to be reminded, at the very threshold of our Christian life, that Jesus not only baptizes in the Holy Ghost but in the fire of trial? Why not? Human wisdom may try to hide the fact from the new convert, but Divine wisdom does not. "If any man would come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every one whom He receiveth." It is wonderful, considering His purpose and our shortcomings, what good times the Lord gives to most of His people now-a-days, but we must never forget that He does not promise us ease. It is no going from His word when He calls us to endure hardness but rather a fulfilment of it. He does baptize in the Holy Ghost but also usually more or less in the fire of trial.

The third meaning for the words, "baptize in fire," is the one which most commonly associates them with Pentecost and the "tongues parting asunder like as of fire" which were one manifestation of the fulfilment of the promise, "ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The obvious objection that there is no need to say "and in fire" if that is included in the baptism in the Holy Ghost of which the fire was merely an emblem is supported by the fact that this manifestation was limited to the solitary instance of Pentecost, and even then is only described as "*like* as of fire." We have noticed a similar repetition in the words "born of water and of the spirit," and observed the weakness of an interpretation which makes the water and the spirit mean exactly the same thing. If, however, as in that case, the fire adds something to the thought expressed by "the Holy Ghost," though not identical with



it, the words are not used in vain. In the present instance the tongues of fire were needed in order that the presence of the Holy Ghost should be recognized; and this manifestation and the unseen power itself, are quite separable to our thought. Besides this, the visible fire of Pentecost contrasts more sharply with the actual water of John's baptism than the term Holy Ghost could do, and as contrast was the thing John desired to express, it is most appropriate. We acknowledge at once the difference between repentance expressed by immersion in water and the filling of the Spirit manifested by tongues as of fire.

When fire was thus visibly connected with the gift of the Holy Ghost it was as significant of the effect on the believer as when the Divine Spirit assumed the bodily form of the gentle, peaceful dove to rest upon Christ at His baptism. As fire *purifies*, so does the Holy Ghost, who, by conviction of sin and revealing righteousness, cleanses the heart and conscience and purifies and sanctifies the members; so that the tongue is touched as with a living coal from off the altar, and its iniquity is taken away. As fire *illuminates* with light so does the Spirit of God take of the things of Christ and show them to us, opening up the treasures of Scripture and showing us wondrous things out of God's law, and by its agency becoming "a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path." As fire *kindles* dull material into a glowing flame so, too, does the Holy Spirit of God set our souls on fire with holy devotion and zeal, as the love of Christ is shed abroad within us and constrains us to ardent service. We must look for these manifestations if we are really baptized in the Holy Ghost. *That* baptism, like the water baptism, which is its emblem, must be more than a form or a name, it must lay hold of a man, transform

him, enwrap him in all holy energies, and send him forth to be like his Master—a light in the world, by which its darkness shall be illumined.

And when we think of Christ's baptism in fire in its wider aspect, as it concerns the world rather than the individual, we again see the effect, as well as the power, of the Pentecost which He gave. Fire may well tell of the method He has employed, for it is by souls which He has kindled that the flame is spread. Human instrumentality conveys the blessing, and as a tiny match may fire a forest, so when the Holy Ghost shall give the tongue of fire, apostles will speak so that multitudes shall believe. Water may *carry* a blessing, but it dilutes or corrupts it by its contact. Fire, on the other hand, communicates its own nature and increases as it spreads. Oh, for the baptism in fire, that the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of God and every heart may burn with love to Him !

And, then, He not only came "to bear witness to the truth," but "to destroy the works of the devil." The one effects the other. He sent the fire on the earth which is destroying greed and violence and corruption, when He sent forth His heralds to proclaim the glorious gospel of His love, and tell all mankind of His divine compassion and grace. "He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire." It was a prophecy which looked beyond the appearance of the Messiah by the waters of Jordan ; beyond the astonished multitudes in the Holy City on the day of Pentecost, right on through the ages of divine manifestation to the end ; when every evil work shall be destroyed and in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, the City of God shall be established, wherein nought that defileth shall ever enter in.

May the Lord hasten His word to perform it and meanwhile, may every soul baptized in water received direct at the hand of His Lord and Master the baptism in "the Holy Ghost and fire," as a continuous experience.

•  
"Oh, never may our souls forget  
Those solemn, joyful days,  
Which live in grateful memory yet,  
And prompt our heart to praise.

"Let not those holy joys be lost,  
Let not our love expire,  
Baptize us in the Holy Ghost,  
Baptize in sacred fire."

## CHAPTER. XI.

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### FOLLOWING CHRIST IN BAPTISM.

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Mark i. 9 : And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.  
Matt. iii. 15 : And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.  
Matt. viii. 19 : Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

NOWHERE in Scripture is baptism set forth as a following of Christ. Grave difficulties would occur to our minds at once if it were. Jesus submitted to John's baptism. We are baptized in the name of Christ. Jesus had no sins to confess, we come to the water to express our repentance and dependence upon Him. Jesus was baptized on entering His public ministry at the age of thirty. We are baptized, or should be, at the beginning of our Christian life and utterly irrespective of age. Jesus received the confirmation of His sonship by a voice from heaven and the visible presence of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove.

We are but taking one step more in the path of believing obedience and do not expect any other than the spiritual witness to our acceptance and adoption.

Yet it is almost invariably the case that believers speak of following their Lord in baptism. Is this a mistake to be corrected and repressed? Surely not. This view is confined usually to the time of baptism itself. One rarely dwells upon the fact after the events, as a following of Christ, but at the time the thought is full of power for it assists the soul to realize His living presence. The action is not one apart from Him, He has passed the same way before. In all outward respects we are doing just what He did and as He did it.

And this aspect is needed, for baptism is very often a cross bearing and only the realization of His presence can sustain the heart.

Some indeed, owing to prejudice of custom and training, find in the act itself a cross, which scarcely existed in the land and time of its first institution; but, with Jesus, they are quite prepared, at His call, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; knowing we are called to follow Him, not in the path of ease, but of self-denial.

To others the very publicity usually attendant on baptism, altogether apart from any real or fancied inconvenience, is a cross, but they are wonderfully helped to bear it, as the ordinance itself assists them to realize Jesus with them in the baptismal waters. To how many is baptism the way of shame and sorrow; the act that brings upon them contempt of friends and opposition of enemies. It is the first step in a life-long martyrdom; a going forth with Jesus bearing His reproach.

In heathen lands to-day, tens of thousands who have received Christ into the heart, shrink from confessing

Him in baptism ; for it is the final step that separates them from the love of parent and the kindness of friend, that makes them outcasts, dependent for their bread and in danger of violent death. We cannot wonder at the tendency under such conditions to lessen the obligation of the ordinance. It is but human. Yet we dare not suffer ourselves to forget that our Lord is not content with a cheap obedience only, but clearly declared, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." "Whosoever shall deny Me before men him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven."

In face of the painful consequences of an open siding with Christ everything that can help to the realization of His sympathy by tracing His example is of the greatest possible value. Surely our Master must have had some such intention as this, when, standing in immediate prospect of His agony and death, He drew a parallel for His followers in such case by the word, "I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." In this spirit He faced His cross and in the same spirit He calls on us to follow.

Happily for us, however, baptism is more often a joyous privilege than a heavy burden. It is given to us to be honoured in confessing Christ before men. Still there is a danger even here. The danger of lightly passing over the significance of the act. Of treating it merely as a custom of our community and of coming to it without the solemnity which befits it. In this case it is a manifest advantage that we meet our Master in the waters of baptism, hallowing them with His own presence and directing us to the true significance of the ordinance, with those words, so pregnant with meaning, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

It becometh *us*. Then He is not alone even in His baptism. The differences which clearly exist in the circumstances and in the persons do not exclude a true communion. When Jesus was baptized He was evidently really thinking of those who would be afterwards baptized in His Name, and even in this, "leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps."

*Thus* it becometh *us*. In a similar *manner*; for even the mode of baptism is not lacking in instruction. Thus; certainly in the same beautiful spirit of humility, putting it among the "all things" in which He sought to please His Father. Thus; for we read "Jesus being baptized and *praying*." Using the ordinance as a ladder up to heaven, He made it an occasion for seeking a special manifestation of the Father's grace. Nor did He seek in vain. The voice from heaven came to strengthen, both for temptation and service.

Thus it *becometh us*; as it became Him, *fitting* His entry upon special service in His three years' ministry, so it becomes *us* when declaring ourselves His disciples and committing ourselves to the life of faith and obedience. Thus it becometh *us* to *fulfil*; to fill full the life, not passing over the very least of the commands of God. Without picking or choosing to take up to-day's duty looking for to-day's grace. Despising no injunction as too trifling, no service as too small to render, no word or work of God as too insignificant to value. Yes; thus it becometh *us* to fulfil *all* righteousness. In the same spirit of meekness, in the like attitude of devotion—rejoicing to do His will whatever the work may be—seeking, above all, that "the Father who seeth in secret, Himself may reward openly"; but taking care, at the same time, that we "let our light so shine before men that they may glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Yes, in *all* righteousness; "add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." We only begin following when we follow Jesus in baptism. We are baptized in acknowledgment that we have received grace, but it yet remains that we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The fruit of the Spirit is varied—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and it is only as we abide in Him that we shall bear much fruit.

It is worth noting that in the Gospels much of the teaching respecting following Christ clusters round the record of His baptism. His disciples were certainly not baptized with Him, that is at the same time, probably they had already made their acknowledgment of repentance and expectation at the hands of John, but as soon as He was baptized we read of two, John and Andrew, that they followed Jesus and speedily the little company gathered round him, that was shortly, in direct response to the call, "Follow Me," to be devoted to the work of the apostleship. Even in this the baptism of the Master is not without parallel in the similar experience of the disciple. Perhaps no act of Christian worship except preaching, is so often followed by decision for Christ as the confession of faith in baptism. It is not unlikely that the three thousand who acknowledged Jesus on the day of Pentecost, did not all at first declare their faith, but that the number grew as confession was made, and when they had so borne their public witness we speedily find that the number of the men who believed had increased to about five thousand. The solemn, yet joyful, observance of the ordinance



brings vividly before the mind of onlookers the necessity for decision ; while the doctrines of Scripture illustrated by it are the most important in the whole range of Christian truth. And so it comes about that that which is a personal duty becomes at the same time a blessed privilege, and many who will never lift up their voices in the congregation are by their own acknowledgment of Christ enabled to win others for Him.

Thus is the disciple often permitted to share with his Master, not only the cross, but the crown, and while entering on the path of duty, in some measure, at the same time, to enter into the joy of his Lord.

Surely then we may be said, in a very real sense, to follow Christ in baptism.

“ Hast Thou said, exalted Jesus,  
‘ Take thy cross and follow Me ’ ?  
Shall the word with terror seize us ?  
Shall we from the burden flee ?  
Lord, I’ll take it,  
And rejoicing, follow Thee.”

## CHAPTER XII.

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### PUTTING ON CHRIST IN BAPTISM.

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Gal. iii. 27 : For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.

Matt. x. 32 : Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven.

II. Tim. i. 8 : Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord.

Mark viii. 38 : For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

IT is not any symbolism in baptism that constitutes it a putting on of Christ, but the very fact that we have been baptized. And this can only be the case when our baptism is our own free act ; our testimony to the world that we have believingly accepted Christ as our Saviour and Lord. The expression is very commonly used " profession of faith in baptism," but it is, we fear, as commonly misunderstood. Profession, as the setting forth to men of our hope and trust in Jesus, is an accurate use of the word, but as it is too often taken to

imply profession of superior virtue, it might be better to use the kindred term "confession of faith." This being associated usually with confession of sins, is the humbler and more suitable term, fitting both the faith and repentance of which our baptism is intended to be the expression. Both terms are used in the Authorised Version, but the revisers have, in nearly every case, rendered *homologeîn* to confess. It is also translated "giving thanks," so that the spirit of the confession is clearly indicated; not that of boastful promise, but rather of grateful acceptance. We do not proclaim our faith as though it were a merit, but trusting in the grace and mercy of our Lord we show our confidence in Him by openly ranging ourselves among His disciples.

The term distinctly associated with baptism in Scripture is not, however, confession, which is usually made with the mouth, but "put on Christ," for the meaning of which we may turn to the original word as employed in the New Testament seeing that the immediate context of Galatians iii. 27 does not supply more. The first and most simple meaning of *endueîn* "to go in" has taken on the more distinctive thought of "putting on a garment." This is so completely the case that the verbal form has itself passed into the substantive *enduma*, a garment. So that the act of putting on Christ becomes associated with all the varied uses of clothing, both as a benefit to the person clothed and an expression of the relation of that person to some other person or community.

How many thoughts are thus suggested to us when reminded that in being baptized we then and there clothed ourselves with Christ as a garment. We confess Him to be our *Robe of Righteousness* in which henceforth we desire to stand before both God and men,

accepted in the beloved. The *wedding garment*, by receiving which we have at once the title and the fitness to sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The *priestly robe*, wearing which we are recognized as associated with our great High Priest in the offering of spiritual sacrifices. The *soldiers' uniform*, indicating that we have taken sides with Christ against all evil ways. The *servants' livery*, pointing us out as ever ready to do our Master's will and to represent Him in acts of lowly obedience as He may appoint. The garments of *beauty* in which, clothed with holiness, we may show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The garment of *humility*, which like the seamless robe worn by Jesus shall fitly accord with the body of our humiliation in which our lot is at present cast. The garment of *comfort* to protect us against the chilling blast of temptation and maintain the comfortable assurance of an inward life. The garment of *safety*, otherwise called the whole armour of God, by which we shall be enabled to stand in the evil day. Christ is to us all this and more. It is an infinite privilege to be helped to realize what a friend we have in Jesus. How completely dependent we are on Him! How solemn are the responsibilities of bearing His name! At the same time what honour is put upon us by our being permitted to be definitely and openly associated with Christ!

The word *enduein* thus translated to "put on" or "to clothe" has passed into our English tongue, and we speak of being "endued" with power from on high. The Apostle Paul couples with this figure of clothing, the endowment of the believer in Christ, when he bids him "put on as God's elect, holy and beloved, a hearty compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering,

forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any, even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on love which is the bond of perfectness." All this is included in the more concise expression in Romans xiii. 13: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," for it is only as we realize in our outer life the grace of the indwelling Lord that we shall show these graces in our conduct towards men.

While it is perfectly true, therefore, that in the single act of baptism, we did openly put on Christ by acknowledging Him before men, there remains the continual need of exhortation to put Him on in holy deed. In baptism we enabled men to witness our confession of *faith* in Christ once for all; but that very act constitutes a ground of appeal for *conduct* consistent with such a confession; and the daily putting on and consequent manifestation, of what Christ is to us. For as the Apostle Paul in another passage expresses it we are to "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and true holiness." "The new man which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created Him." This new man is nothing less than the life of Christ within working itself out in conduct. "I live and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." So it is "if any man is *in Christ* he is a new creature, the old things are passed away behold they are become new."

The comparison of these scriptures connected with baptism as describing an accomplished fact, and the others using the same expression "putting on" demanding a continued action, abundantly prove that to put on

Christ is a spiritual act and certainly not a merely ceremonial one. We use this very term sometimes for an empty profession, a mere outward conformity. To put on humility when the heart is proud is nothing but contemptible hypocrisy. To put on religion when it is only a cloak to hide evil deeds, is condemned alike by God and men. If in our baptism we put on only a Christian profession, an approval of the reason to certain tenets, without the heart conviction and conversion wrought by the Divine Spirit, then we do not in any true sense put on Christ. In such a case the ordinance has no meaning to us, except as a swift witness to our condemnation, because we allow the truth but deny its power.

We must take care, however, to give due prominence to the thought of open acknowledgment which is so clearly intended by the expression putting on Christ. Some are willing to have the benefits of His redemption and are desirous to conform to His teaching but would like to do so in secret. The world is continually putting the question of the Maid to Peter, "Art thou also one of this Man's disciples?" And in view of the uncomfortable consequences of open confession there is always the temptation to give Peter's reply, "I am not." It is easily done. "He that is not with Me," saith Jesus, "is against Me." Neglect of the appointed ordinance of confession with its closely associated Church membership is a virtual saying, "I am not." Such rank themselves with unbelievers and can surely not complain if they are so regarded by the Church as well as by the world. "In your faith supply virtue" (courage) says the Apostle Peter and perhaps as he wrote it he thought of the moment when his own faith and courage failed and led to bitter tears.

On the other hand how great a privilege it is, what a holy joy to take sides with Christ before men. It may involve earthly shame but it looks forward to heavenly glory. It may be forsaking father and mother, but it is doing so for Christ. It may be irretrievably committing oneself to a despised community, but at the same time it is acknowledging a union with the Church which Christ hath purchased with His own blood.

Even if it be possible to be ashamed of Jesus and to hide our hope in Him from men, so avoiding persecution, and yet deep in the heart to love Him, and by and bye to be saved; yet surely we should eagerly avoid giving Him the slightest reason at any time to be ashamed of us; still more to be ashamed of us when He shall come in His glory and with the holy angels. No, our faith, when it is as it should be, makes it glorious to be associated with Christ anywhere. On the Cross itself amid the ribald shouts of a murderous throng, He was "the brightness of His Father's glory," and if I may be permitted in any way to be linked with Him, even there, it is an honour higher than any other which earth can afford.

Happy then are those who in humble faith and sincere obedience have put on Christ in Baptism.

" O happy day that fixed my choice  
On Thee my Saviour and my God !  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.

" High heaven that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear ;  
Till in life's latest hour I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear."

## CHAPTER XIII.

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### BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY.

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- I. Cor. xii. 12-13: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free.
- I. Cor. xii. 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.
- Eph. i. 23: And he put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.
- Rom. xii. 4-5: For even as we have many members in one body and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ and severally members one of another.

“ BAPTIZED into one body.” At first sight this seems to present baptism as an ordinance of initiation into a Christian Church. Some sections of the Church have so treated it and have spoken of “our baptism” and “their baptism,” as if it were



merely the symbol of a particular creed or of union with a certain ecclesiastical organization. This is to be strongly deprecated. Even the Church of Rome, notwithstanding its exclusive claims, accepts as valid baptism in the triune name, by whomsoever administered, and will not repeat the administration to converts already baptized in what she regards as heretical communions. This fact affords us an illustration of the thought of the text "we were baptized into one body." The union expressed thereby was not local nor limited; not with this church nor with that, but with the one body of the saints in Christ Jesus.

Looking, however, more carefully at this, the only passage of Scripture which speaks of being baptized into one body, we observe two important points. First, that it is in one Spirit that "we are baptized into the one body." Mere baptism in water will not effect this union of itself. The body referred to is a spiritual body, composed of spiritual members, and it is only when our baptism is the sign of the regeneration of the Holy Ghost that it is in any true sense an initiatory rite into the Church of God. Indeed, seeing that it is "in one Spirit" that "we were all baptized into one body," and there is a baptism in the Holy Ghost, our place in that body is not dependent upon the outward act of baptism at all, although it may be desirable to require this act of obedience as a condition of recognition in the earthly organization of believers.

The second point, which is manifest on comparing the Scriptures quoted above, is that the essential of union with the body is a vital spiritual union with Christ who is its head—"so also is Christ." We come into the body by becoming united to *Christ*, not by joining with those who are either nominally or really united to Him.

We have already repeatedly seen that this union with Christ is effected by a true faith in Him, and that baptism is primarily an acknowledgment and expression of that faith. We therefore also see that we may say with truth and force, even of the outward ordinance of baptism observed by a believer, "we were all baptized into one body." On the other hand, if these things be so, no baptism, so-called, which ignores the necessity of faith on the part of the baptized can be regarded as expressing, still less as effecting, a union with the visible Christian Church. As Christian baptism it lacks the essential characteristic.

There is great value in associating the personal confession of faith in Christ with the relationship to other believers into which we are thereby brought, for not only may we help one another when we realize our common life, and aim, and privilege ; but our risen Head will manifest Himself to us ; not only by the spiritual influences flowing direct from Himself, but also by the graces which He distributes among those who are the members of His body.

It is possible to dwell too exclusively on the personal relation to Christ as our Lord, ignoring the corporate element in redemption. It is the same apostle who exclaimed, "the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me," who reminds the Ephesian elders of their duty to "the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood." The sufficiency of the atoning death of the Lord for all who believe is not made, in Scripture, to rest upon the supreme dignity of His person, but upon His representative character as the Second Adam ; into whom we are born, not as into the first Adam by natural birth, but through receiving Him by faith. And when we are so born again from above it

is not only into relationship with Him as our representative and head, but also into relationship with all those who are also "partakers of the heavenly calling." These, together with Him, constitute "the one body" into which we are baptized in one spirit when we confess and obey Christ the head.

This involves many important truths tending to enhance our sense of security, and at the same time, widen our sympathies with all who are in Christ. For to be truly part of the body of Christ is to stand in vital sensitive relation to it, and especially to its great and glorified head. However many the trials and weaknesses to which we are prone, while He is safe so are we. The feet may be "as though they burn in a furnace," but the head is crowned with glory and "His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength." Well might good Rowland Hill sing:—

" But one thing I find, we two are so joined,  
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind."

Our security and happiness, our victory and future are dependent upon Him, and assured by His certainty of triumph and meanwhile it is His to plan and direct, to command and to nourish the members of His body who are designed to be the instruments of His will.

What a fellowship is this into which we are baptized, a fellowship not only with our Lord, but with all who own Him such. We share the common life with the apostles and prophets of the early Church. We have partnership in their devoted service and soul consuming zeal, for we and they are of the one body. The gifts and graces bestowed by the risen Lord upon His members are for the profit and advantage of all; though the larger number may receive from the fewer, they, too, are necessary to the body. It is a helpful thought, the very

opposite to that which makes envy in the world, that "if one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it." In like manner too, "if one member suffereth all the members suffer with it" The noble army of martyrs, who in days gone by laid down their lives for Christ are our spiritual kinsman though we have fallen on easier times; and the large proportion of Christ's people who to-day endure hardness for His sake, or suffer poverty or distress, shame or contumely, these too are figuratively part of our flesh, in whose griefs we are to have our share because "there should be no schism in the body but the members should have the same care one for another." Looked at from the close of the nineteenth century, this body of Christ, into which we are baptized is a mighty host. It includes all who "having fought the good fight" "have finished their course" and "present with the Lord" have received "the crown of life"; "the multitude which no man can number out of every nation and people and kindred and tongue, who stand before the throne and before the Lamb arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands," and it includes too the striving, weeping, and suffering, imperfect multitude on earth who though of all colours and under all climes, some newly delivered from the foulness of heathenism, and some sorely assailed with temptations of the devil, and many living lonely lives feeling themselves solitary and despised, yet are all one through a living faith in the one Christ and reckoned by Him and commended to us as "members of his body," of His flesh and of His bones.

It will be well if the remembrance of our baptism shall help us to realize this broad comradeship more fully and enable us to recognize a close kinship with every true believer in our glorious Lord, notwith-

standing differences of nationality, creed or social position.

And there is also something to note in this connection in the fact that the body with its variety of members was never designed of God, to be a useless encumbrance but an active instrument. When the Eternal Lord assumed a human body it was to enable Him to do the Father's will, and that flesh and blood that was honoured to be the tabernacle in which He lived His earthly life was the means by which he achieved the two-fold design of revealing God and accomplishing our redemption. In carrying out His purpose of love He used all His powers; eye, lip, hand, foot, in turn or together expressed His love or communicated healing virtue.

Now that He is ascended the same purpose is fulfilled through His Church on earth ; the part of that Church which is His body the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. To be baptized into the one body, therefore, is to be called to a ministry. To be a member of the body is more than to have vital union with the head, it is also to be an instrument to carry out the designs of the head. And so to be united to Christ by faith is not only to receive from Him the pardoning grace and quickening energy of His salvation, but also to be consecrated to carry out His wishes and express Him to men and women around. Thus using another figure the Apostle says, "Ye are epistles of Christ known and read of all men." Infinite is the variety of this ministry. "The body is not one member, but many." If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand I am not of the body, it is not, therefore, not of the body. "There are diversities of gifts but the same spirit." What we are to be most concerned about is that we are not idle or useless members, but however

much we may lack honour among men take care to fulfil our high calling to glorify God.

It is, therefore, by no means to be forgotten that "in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

" Those who have once Thy truth confessed  
As their own faith, and hope, and rest,  
We in Thy name with joy embrace  
As fellow heirs of heavenly grace.

" As living members may they share  
The joys and griefs which others bear  
And active in their stations prove,  
In all the offices of love."

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### NOAH AND BAPTISM.

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I. Peter iii. 18-21 : Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous that He might bring us to God ; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit ; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved through water : which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THERE has been so much curiosity as to the meaning of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison that the reference to baptism in this passage has received less attention than it deserves. There is, no doubt, considerable room for discussion over the somewhat involved sentences and peculiar expressions of the apostle, apart altogether from the allusion mentioned ; but there are certainly some very clear comparisons, and

very definite assertions, concerning baptism and its relation both to Christ and to the believer.

We have again the close coupling of baptism with salvation, so strongly expressed that one is immediately reminded of "the laver of regeneration," the birth "of water and of the Spirit," and the joining of baptism with faith in the promise, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; but as when considering these passages we observed that it was not the outward act itself, but only the fact that the outward act of baptism expressed the faith and apprehension of vital truth on the part of the baptized, so here again we have it most clearly and definitely asserted that baptism saves "after a true likeness," and that it does this, not by any inherent virtue which it possesses for "putting away the filth of the flesh," but only as it becomes an "interrogation" of the conscience. Nothing could more distinctly assert the uselessness of baptism apart from the intelligent faith and apprehension of the baptized than this passage which nevertheless declares that "even baptism doth now save you."

When we enquire what is the "true likeness" by which baptism saves, we find a most distinct reference to the same symbolic meaning on which the Apostle Paul dwelt so clearly when he urged that we are "buried with Him in baptism," and thus "planted in the likeness of His death." So the Apostle Peter here says, "Christ . . . being put to death in the flesh but quickened in the Spirit"; and after coupling this with baptism, he significantly adds "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." So far we have nothing fresh in the teaching upon baptism beyond what we have already found in the Epistles to the Romans and Colossians, but incidentally there is mentioned here an historical com-



parison to the ark of Noah and the eight souls saved therein which is of great interest. "They also," says the Apostle Peter, "were saved through water," and thus he couples baptism and its instructive symbolism with the marvellous deliverance wrought by God for the family of Noah.

The surest way to miss all the force of the comparison here is to try to use the passage to support either one view or other of the way in which water should be used for baptism. That must be settled surely on quite other grounds. Here we have as the link between the two, death, burial, and resurrection, realized by the family of Noah and expressed in the baptism of a believer. These eight souls died, were buried and rose again, after a symbolic fashion. They died to the old world and rose again to the new. They truly might be said to be twice born—once into the world of disobedience and wrath and then into an altogether new condition, in which their first act was to offer acceptable worship and to dwell beneath the arch of God's bow of promise. It is a beautiful illustration of the change that comes to the believer in his relation both to God and to the world around him through the death and resurrection of Christ which baptism sets forth.

But of those eight souls saved by water only one of them was declared to have personally found favour in God's sight. Noah surely was a type of Christ in this. The other seven of his kindred were saved for His sake, through His work, and by virtue of their being with Him in the ark. So, too, it is only as baptism sets forth our union with Christ by faith that it is of any avail or can in any sense be said to save us.

One might almost say that Noah like Christ "suffered for sins once," for he, though righteous, had to be cut off

from the world in which he lived through the unrighteousness of others. He did not actually die, but symbolically he did, and rose again too. And those other seven souls who, though themselves "children of disobedience," were by divine grace shut up with him by God's own hand in the prison of the ark for thirteen months, experienced not only the temporal deliverance, but had preached to their spirits, by the fulness of the type, a foreshadowing of that redemption which, in process of time, Christ would work and make available for all who should believe in Him.

Certainly no comparison could more vividly set before us that newness of life which should follow faith in Christ and which we have already seen is associated with baptism, through the truth concerning both regeneration and resurrection in Him.

But there is much more than an illustration in the passage before us. We have a distinct statement as to the meaning of baptism expressed both negatively and positively. Baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." If in these words there is an allusion to circumcision, it is to disown any connection between that rite and baptism, but it would be the only passage in which the two things are even compared. The New Testament does not give the smallest sanction to the idea that the one took the place of the other. Circumcision was a covenant in the flesh; natural birth entitled to it. Its significance depended usually not on the faith of the circumcised, but of that of the parent. It establishes a connection not immediately with God but with Abraham and through him to God's covenant with his natural descendants. Baptism, however, as introduced to the Jews by John was altogether a personal matter. It expressed repentance, preparation for Christ

and was usually accompanied by confession of sins. John emphatically disowned any qualification for it based on natural birth, saying, "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham."

Circumcision, in a sense, was a putting off of the filth of the flesh; but this is not so likely to be what the Apostle had in mind as the cleansing effect of water. He had just been saying that the eight souls in the ark were saved through water, that is by its buoyant qualities, and now, he says, baptism saves us, but not even by its cleansing, there must be something much deeper than this quality of the water to make it effective, even "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." Some say that the only idea underlying baptism is that of purifying. It is of course the simplest and most obvious suggestion from the use of water and yet it is not used in the New Testament anywhere without such further explanation as shall call attention to the deeper purifying of the heart which can only be effected by faith. Hence, if Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, "Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins," he is careful to add "calling on His name." If Paul speaks of the washing or laver, it is the "washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost," and if our Lord mentions the necessity of being born of water, it is coupled with the same deeply spiritual change "born of water and of the Spirit." In harmony with this case, to point through the form to the reality, Peter too, says plainly here, "Baptism saves, not by any purifying quality of the water used but by the interrogation of a good conscience toward God."

This passage, then, is one of the most explicit we have

in answer to the question, what is baptism? for it not only gives a positive but a negative exposition. The meaning of the use of water in baptism it declares, turns on something other than mere washing; while the context points like the kindred words in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, to the "true likeness" being found in our being buried with Christ and risen in Him to newness of life; for as the first chapter of this Epistle expresses it, our regeneration is through His resurrection, He "begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

But what are we to say of this positive exposition of the meaning of Baptism? It is "the answer of a good conscience," says the Authorised Version. "The interrogation of a good conscience" according to the Revised Version. Alford translates it, "the enquiry of a good conscience after God," and quotes Bengel as rendering it the "request," and Wiesinger "the prayer (or desire)." As the original *eperôtēma* occurs only here it may be difficult to determine the exact meaning, but the verbal form *eperōtaō* is frequently used, no fewer than forty-seven times, with the translation "to ask," varied once or twice by the equivalent "to demand" as in Luke xvii. 20, and Luke iii. 14. Surely then the rendering of Bengel is most simple and appropriate to the subject, and with this we understand Peter to say, the value of baptism is not in anything that it does to the baptized by way of cleansing him, but it is "the request of a good conscience toward God," in other words it is administered in response to the desire of a sincere heart enquiring, "What doth hinder me to be baptized? I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It is this very element in baptism that most agrees with every scriptural reference to it. The responsibility for baptism

rests on no one but upon the baptized himself. The baptizer can confer no grace, the spectators give no validity and, indeed, are not even required. No one can stand sponsor for the repentance and faith demanded. The one condition is, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest," for baptism is to be administered at the "request of a good conscience towards God." When this is done there is something to appeal to in the very fact of having been baptized. Such a baptism is not a mere ceremony of cleansing but a personal confession, a personal dedication, a personal acknowledgment of the truth expressed in this graphic symbol of burial and resurrection to a new life in Christ Jesus. May God help us to recognize that it means all this to us.

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,  
I'll follow where He goes;  
Hinder me not shall be my cry,  
Though earth and hell oppose.

"Through duties and through trials too,  
I'll go at His command;  
Hinder me not for I am bound  
To my Immanuel's land."

## CHAPTER XV.

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### MOSES AND BAPTISM.

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I. Co. x. 1-2: For I would not brethren have you ignorant how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Heb. iii. 5-6: And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken; but Christ as a Son over His house whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end.

Isaiah lv. 4: Behold I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the people.

THE Red Sea deliverance was to, the children of Israel, the outward and visible sign of the gracious remembrance of them by God to which Moses bore testimony. It seemed specially designed by God to be witness, both to them and their foes, that they were in a peculiar sense God's people. It formed the dividing line between Egyptian bondage and the wilderness liberty, which in due course culminated in their restful life in the land which flowed with milk and honey. It was a point to which memory returned continually, as completing

and demonstrating the redemption God had wrought, and the Psalmist and Prophets hundreds of years after quoted it as the turning point in their natural history. This particular miracle was only one of a long series exhibiting the grace of God to them as a people; but it most graphically set forth the difference of the Divine attitude toward them as compared with that toward their enemies, and vividly illustrated the completeness of the deliverance wrought for them. They stood on the other side that sea rejoicing in the promise: "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." It was also an open witness to the surrounding nations that God was with them. Forty years after the event the Gibeonites referred to "all that He did in Egypt," and doubtless the repetition of the wonder, wrought at Jordan, which so paralyzed the nations of Canaan, gained considerably by being a second instance in the memory of living men of similar wonder-working in dividing the waters.

Remembering how baptism, standing at the beginning of our Christian life, accomplishes the same purpose for us in setting forth our complete deliverance from condemnation through union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, and serves the same end as an open witness to our relation to God, and a point to which our memories may go back; we cannot be surprised that they are momentarily associated together in the passage before us. The likeness is figurative, and symbolic of the great deliverance, rather than identical. No one will wish to claim that the Israelites were actually immersed in the Red Sea. The passage before us does not assert it, but requires the cloud to make the comparison complete. Yet surely all will recognize how close the likeness between Israel

entering and coming forth from their watery grave, leaving Egypt and their enemies and their bondage behind, and commencing a new and happier life, and the confession we make in baptism that we are "dead to the law through the body of Christ, that we should be joined to another even to Him who was raised from the dead." "Buried with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

Alford on the passage in Corinthians well remarks : "The allegory is obviously not to be pressed minutely ; for neither did they *enter* the cloud, nor were they *wetted by the waters of the sea* ; but they *passed under* both as the baptized passes under the water ; and it was said of them, Exod. xiv. 31 : '*Then the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.*' "

This acceptance of the mission of Moses is the one and only point on which the Apostle comments. We may be able to make other comparisons between the Red Sea experience and baptism ; but the only one really recognized in Scripture is that indicated in the words : "They were all baptized unto Moses." This very fact, again calls our attention to the necessity of looking at baptism always in its relation to Christ Jesus Himself—apart from Him it has no meaning. In Him we are buried ; in Him rise again. Into His name and that of the triune God we are baptized, and in so doing we are simply acknowledging that we are believers in His saving grace and power in us.

But this reference to Moses adds a meaning to baptism nowhere so clearly expressed, and presents the Lord whom we confess, not only as our Saviour, our example, our deliverer and our life, but also as Isaiah was enabled



to proclaim Him, "given as a leader and commander to the people." For this emphatically was the relation of Moses to Israel, and the Red Sea was the point at which it became specially recognized. Hitherto Moses had been a deliverer, henceforth he was to be leader and law-giver. "He was king in Jeshurun." Responsible for every movement he was looked to to provide food and drink, to supervise the military defence, and to judge between man and man. He held this position, not so much by Divine authority, though that was afterwards given, but by the free consent of the people. When they obeyed that most extraordinary command to take the pathway through the divided sea, they virtually committed themselves to follow Moses as their leader. As it is expressed in the Greek: "They baptized themselves unto Moses." The force of it is shown unhappily in the verses which follow by instances of their failure to live up to the position in which they had so generally acquiesced. They murmured; they turned aside to idolatry in the temporary absence of their leader; they sinned openly and foully so as to set Moses himself against them with the destroying sword. By their discontent with the rule of Moses, they tempted God and perished by serpents. And yet they had "all baptized themselves unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." How solemn is the consideration here pressed upon us: "With most of them God was not well pleased." We have been baptized unto Jesus at our own request, and baptized, too, in realization of a marvellous deliverance obtained at His hand. What has been our subsequent conduct? Have we been loyal to Christ? Have we proved our love by deeds? Have we trusted His leadership when the waters have tasted bitter? Have we diligently sought to carry out His will and to walk in the

ways He has indicated in His Word? How far have we subordinated our own desires and our own will to Him who by right and by our own declared choice is our Lord and our King. Alas! how often is the story of Israel in the wilderness re-written in our experience! Well may the Apostle press the warning home in the words: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

While this warning is prominent in the Apostle's thought, we need not overlook the positive intimation that Christ is our leader. If we rightly apprehend our relationship, we shall recognize him as appointed "to choose our inheritance for us." "What shall I do?" said the persecuting Saul of Tarsus as soon as he had yielded his heart to Jesus. And the answer came, "Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things that are appointed for thee to do." Henceforth Paul's life was completely under the direction of his Master and Lord.

It is both a stimulating and a comforting thought that every believer may have the same direction from his great leader. We are not left to puzzle out our own way through the wilderness of life. The Saviour adopts for His flock the same simile used by the Psalmist to describe the progress of Israel. Asaph sings, "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron," and Jesus says, "He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out." He who directed the course of Israel by the pillar of cloud and of fire, guides us by His word, His providence, and His Spirit. And as they were directed to Elim with its wells and palm trees, so the leading is sometimes in the green pastures and by the still waters, for His promise is, "Learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest for your souls." Sometimes

it is through the valley of the shadow of death, but His assurance, "Lo, I am with you all the days," is a rod and a staff to comfort. Happy those who have learned the secret of "committing their way unto the Lord" in the common things of life.

"I would not have the restless will  
That hurries to and fro,  
Seeking for some great thing to do,  
Or secret thing to know;  
I would be treated as a child,  
And guided where I go."

The guidance will probably come largely through our own mental processes, enlightened by the Word of God and prayer, but these will be less likely to err and more certain to correspond with His will, when the attitude of the heart is like that of its Saviour in His earthly ministry. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing." "My judgment is righteous; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."

The leadership of Moses involved many things, such as obedience to His commands and trust in his discretion, which we have already seen to be essential in our following of Christ, but there is one point, to which we have not been led by other scriptures, that is worthy of note. Moses, as the leader of Israel, became their representative to God, and procured on their behalf innumerable blessings. This is set forth in the sacred narrative with variety of description but unity of result. Sometimes He went into the mystery of the cloud glowing with the glory of the Lord, sometimes He entered the thick darkness on the summit of the mountain and returned with messages from the Most High. All these

serve to remind us of an exalted Saviour, now "in the presence of God for us." The pathetic pleading of Moses with Jehovah to spare the people who had so grievously offended, points us to Him "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." An erring and oftentimes rebellious church indeed needs that its leader and representative should obtain mercy for it. And Moses on the hill top with uplifted hands, determining the issue of the fight with Amalek on the plain below may at least suggest to us how dependent we are in our struggle with sin, both within and without, on our spiritual leader who directs the battle and procures for us the power from on high. The figure is capable of almost endless illustration but the one prominent thought we must not fail to keep in mind. We, like Israel, have a Leader whom we are pledged to trust, follow and obey. At our baptism we took His name upon us, and in so doing assumed the responsibilities and entered on the privileges, involved in this relationship. Let us then take care to remember that He will provide for all our necessities, and if we are faithful to our confession will eventually bring us safe into "the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

"O, Jesus thou hast promised  
To all who follow Thee,  
That where Thou art in glory,  
There shall Thy servant be;  
And Jesus I have promised  
To serve Thee to the end,  
Oh, give me grace to follow  
My Master and my Friend."

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### THE BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH.

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Acts viii. 36-39 : And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water ; and the Eunuch saith, Behold, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? [And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.] And he commanded the chariot to stand still ; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch ; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip ; and the Eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

“ **W**HAT doth hinder me to be baptized ? ” said the Eunuch. There are four questions in Scripture associated with baptism which may well be put side by side. The first is that of the repentant Jews on the day of Pentecost, who being pricked to the heart on account of their sin in rejecting Christ, asked *What shall we do ?* The answer was explicit, “ Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.” Three thousand of them responded, “ they then that

received His word were baptized." There seems to have been no hesitation, no further inquiry, no delay with them to know God's will was to do it. The converts were anxious openly to free themselves from complicity in the sin of crucifying the Messiah; the Apostles were satisfied to accept their submission to baptism as an evidence of faith and repentance.

The next question, we may notice, was of a different sort. Peter was the querist, though his question did not express doubt. *Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* No one could answer the challenge, so "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The fact that the question was asked shows that the Apostles did not treat baptism lightly. The ordinance was not to be administered without due evidence of the reality of submission to Christ. The circumstances of the case suggested inquiry. They were Gentiles, some of them probably had had little opportunity of instruction, but the gift of the Holy Ghost removed all doubt. It would be wrong to keep any waiting for the symbol who so manifestly had the substance, and so he without further delay commanded them to be baptized.

The third case occurred before the instance we have just referred to. It is interesting to note that as far as the record of Scripture is concerned, the Eunuch was the first Gentile to accept the Gospel Message. And the first, therefore, was a man of the despised race and colour of Ethiopia, albeit one who had attained to distinction and was at the same time a lover of the Jewish Scriptures and an earnest follower of Jehovah. He was probably a Proselyte of the Gate, and may, therefore, have been regarded by Philip as almost a Jew, but in

the Eunuch's own mind, there seems to have been a slight suspicion of personal unfitness expressed in the question, "*What doth hinder me to be baptized?*" It is evident that Philip had preached the Gospel to him in its unmutilated form. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The passage in Isaiah contains nothing that could in the remotest degree suggest the subject of baptism except as it led up to the necessity of faith in Jesus, and to the fact that baptism was the appointed sign of that faith exercised; but the Eunuch eagerly embraces the opportunity. There is a wistfulness of desire about his inquiry that suggests thankful joy that such an ordinance was appointed and that providence had led him at that very moment to "a certain water," wherein he might be buried with Christ in baptism and go on his way rejoicing.

The question is one that well befits the lips of a believer and happy is he if no inward reluctance keeps him back from confession of his Lord. Too often the inquiry is answered in a very different way to that in which the Eunuch intended, for very trifling things are allowed by some to hinder them from being baptized. The Eunuch, if he had any misgivings, was wise in putting the question to Philip, and Philip practically answered that there was no hindrance at all, for "he baptized him."

These three instances of immediate confession of faith make the fourth question to which we allude the more striking. It was addressed by Ananias to Saul of Tarsus. "*And now why tarriest thou?*" followed by the injunction, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Ananias was specially sent to Saul in fulfilment of the promise given on the Damascus road, "Enter into the city and it shall be told

thee what thou must do." The future Apostle sat in solitude for "three days without sight and did neither eat nor drink." How those words must have kept ringing in his ears, "I am Jesus whom thou persecuted."

It is the only instance we have in the New Testament of long continued conviction before rejoicing in Christ. The darkness in which he dwelt was doubtless typical of that deep heart searching and perhaps despair which he felt as he called to mind his cruel persecution of the believers of his day. It probably accounts for the form of the direction Ananias gave him: "Be baptized and wash away thy sins." The memory of his sin never left him, notwithstanding his great commission to the Gentiles, he confessed himself "not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." And in his old age he takes the title, Chief of Sinners, because he says, he had before been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." If after the long lapse of years he felt so keenly his position, how great must have been the agony of his soul while he tarried alone in blindness, cast off by his co-religionists, doubted and feared by the disciples of Jesus, fasting and praying, and waiting for the voice to tell him what the Lord would have him to do. We do not wonder that Saul tarried before he was baptized. It was not with him a hesitation to obey, but a waiting for the warrant and the opportunity. They came together with the gospel preacher Ananias. The Lord had seen fit in this case to let His servant taste the agony of remorse, yet it was but a taste. After three days Divine mercy provided a special messenger and a special message, and the yearning heart of the convicted sinner heard that there was a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Oh, what a joy to Saul of Tarsus was that grave of Christ! With what



intensity of feeling must he have said to himself: "We are buried therefore with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life."

Considering the clearness with which this ordinance sets forth the application of salvation, we need not wonder that it is the reply to the question: What shall we do? We may be very thankful when there is no response to the challenge: "Can any man forbid water?" and may expect to hear on the lip of every new convert the inquiry, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" If, however, we do not hear it, as alas, is often the case, it is our duty and privilege to go to such, as Ananias did to Paul, and say with brotherly affection, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized."

The Eunuch, then, asked why he should *not* be baptized. The Revised Version omits verse 37, and leaves the question unanswered except in the practical fashion of the immediate compliance with his desire. The omitted verse undoubtedly does not stand in the most approved manuscripts extant, but there is a great deal nevertheless to be said for its genuineness. Its quotation by Ireneus and Cyprian proves that it was to be found in MSS. of the second and third centuries, which were older than any now existing, so that it cannot be lightly pronounced a forgery. It is an emphatic statement of what is clear from all Scripture regarding baptism, that the one essential qualifying grace is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having dwelt on this repeatedly already, we need not further comment upon it. There seems to be no question that "confession with the mouth" in this particular form was made in the very early Church and as such was a clear testimony, not only to the connection between

faith and baptism, but also to the absolute acceptance of the deity of the Lord. If it stands rightly here, it brings into beautiful conjunction the recognition of the deep humiliation of the suffering Messiah and the essential glory of the Divine Redeemer. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah touches the lowest depths of suffering, the confession of the Eunuch rises to the greatest heights of glory.

This desert baptism is very interesting. Except the baptisms in Jordan it is perhaps the only New Testament instance in which the very spot on which the ordinance was administered can be recognized. To quote from "Robinson's Biblical Researches": "When we were at Tell el Hasy and saw the water standing along the bottom of the adjacent wady we could not but remark the coincidence of several circumstances with the account of the Eunuch's baptism. This water is on the most direct road from Beit Jibrin (Eleutheropolis) to Gaza on the most southern road from Jerusalem, and in the midst of a country now 'desert' i.e.—without villages or fixed habitations. There is no other similar water on this road." We may without much difficulty imagine the scene. But of more consequence far to us is the bright, brief sentence: "he went on his way rejoicing." For the same truth concerning the crucified Saviour accepted by the heart and obeyed in the life will produce a like result in us. "In keeping His commandments there is great reward." As we realize our union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection set forth in baptism, how powerfully are those Scriptures brought home to our hearts: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." When faith grasps the fact and love prompts

obedience, we may confidently expect that joy will fill the heart and with new hope the believer will go on his way to live out the grace received in the Divine gift and to tell, as tradition says the Eunuch did, the same Gospel to all among whom our lot may be thrown.

"A bleeding Saviour seen by faith ;  
A sense of pardoning love ;  
A hope that triumphs over death  
Gives joys like those above.

"These are the joys which satisfy,  
And sanctify the mind ;  
Which make the Spirit mount on high  
And leave the world behind."

## CHAPTER XVII.

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### BAPTISMS AT PHILIPPI.

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Acts xvi. 14-15 : And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira one that worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized and her household she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.

Acts xvi. 29-34 : And the jailor . . . fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the Word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his immediately. And he brought them up into his house and set meat before them and rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God.

THESE two most interesting conversions seem to be brought together to exhibit the most striking contrast of character met by the same word of life. It is difficult to conceive anything more opposite in human nature than Lydia of Thyatira and the jailor of Philippi. The one was a pious, god-fearing woman, who

though far from home loved and sought out the place of prayer ; the other a stern prison official with no compassion for men professing godliness, no appreciation of superior education, quite ready to thrust a Paul and Silas into the inner prison and make their feet fast in the stocks. Death had less terror for him than degradation, and but for the interposition of Divine Grace he would have died by his own hand. Can the Gospel meet such opposite characters as these ? And if it does, will it operate in the same way ? If the Apostles had preached theology on their evangelistic tours, the difficulty might have arisen. The propositions which might have seemed simple to a Lydia would have sadly puzzled the jailor ; but as they were careful to preach only Christ and Him crucified, both Lydia and the jailor found a gospel that went straight to their hearts. There was a startling difference in the way in which they were led to Christ. Lydia's heart was first gently opened by Him who possesses the key to the human spirit. She listened to Paul quietly conversing by the river side on the things of God. She gave heed and obeyed in baptism. The jailor needed an earthquake to awaken in him a sense of need. In the midst of fear and trembling, he prostrated himself before the Apostles and heard, in response to his own earnest entreaty, the word that brought him life ; and so the same same gracious Lord who had peacefully entered the heart of Lydia a short time before, almost with violence, took possession of the jailor in the name of a God hitherto unknown to him.

The same contrast is continually seen in the method of conversion. " There are diversities of workings but the same God who worketh all things in all." We shall not find all led to Christ in the same way, neither will the victories of the Cross be won among any single

class of disposition only. Jesus is the only Saviour either for a Nathaniel or a Peter, a Nicodemus or a Magdalen, a Dorcas or a Paul, a Lydia or the Philippian jailor.

As soon, however, as we have noted the contrast of the means we begin to see the likeness in the effect of the Spirit's working. Trust in Jesus is the one message and confession in baptism is the first duty for both. In neither case does there appear to have been considerable delay, but the baptism of the jailor is said to have been "immediately"—"the same night"; while that of Lydia is associated with the expression "*when* she was baptized." It is not impossible that at first she shrank from committing herself to the new faith. It would be quite in harmony with her character as described in the Acts. The truth entered so gently that she scarcely knew when the change was wrought, and in such a case would need reflection and instruction before she felt the desire to confess her faith. There is not one word in the narrative to suggest that there was blame attaching to her for waiting, but there is an intimation that she herself felt the ordinance of baptism to have closed a controversy in her own heart. It was not till she was baptized that she ventured to invite Paul and Silas to abide with her and the words in which she expressed herself are very suggestive of her thought. "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord." This certainly looks back to her baptism. She may have meant to appeal to it as an act that proved her fidelity for it is of small avail to us as He said, to "call Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say." If so, then the freedom which Lydia felt when she had acknowledged Jesus, is a strong recommendation to all, who like her have had the heart gently opened to embrace

the opportunity of giving definiteness to their decision by obedience in their confession.

It may, however, have been that she appealed to the Apostles' acceptance of her testimony. "Ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, or you would not have baptized me," she seems to say, "now, therefore come into my house and abide there." It would be a very dangerous principle to adopt that baptism should be relied on as a testimony on the part of the *baptizer* to the reality of the work of the Spirit. The introduction of this idea has already wrought much mischief. Delay of baptism till the candidate has received so much instruction or gives evidence for so long a period of change of life, has the effect of making it, when it is administered, a kind of certificate to character or spiritual attainment instead of what it always is in Scripture, a personal confession of faith. At the same time, the administration of baptism must always express a conviction on the part of the one who baptizes. He is not merely an instrument of the baptized person. His consent to baptize one is a declaration, that as far as he can judge by the profession of the candidate, the conditions of salvation have been complied with. The immediate baptism of the jailor was not intended to be an acceptance of the genuineness of his faith, but it was intended to give emphasis to the teaching, "believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." The responsibility for the doctrine rested with the Apostles, but the responsibility for the reality of the faith must rest solely with the persons baptized.

And what a comfort baptism must have proved in this respect when the gospel of salvation by faith, "apart from the works of the law" was new and strange. Was it not this that made 3,000 on the day of Pentecost eager to confess their faith in Christ by baptism. "Repent

and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus" was Peter's word. In their case faith produced the repentance; for believing in the Jesus they had just crucified convicted them of sin, and baptism expressed to them the glorious truth that even this great sin would be forgiven to all who repented and believed. In like manner the jailor found baptism the prelude to rejoicing greatly, for it certified to him as it were, the Gospel Paul and Silas preached, that he might at once enter into a condition of acceptance with God by believing on His Son, and so, too, Lydia, in whose heart the work had been wrought so gently that she had little or no definite experience to trust to, was greatly encouraged, because the Apostles by accepting her simple confession of faith in Jesus as quite sufficient for baptism, had, by baptizing her, "judged her to be faithful."

The world still needs this testimony to the sufficiency of faith. As a testimony to the reality of faith, baptism is quite valueless. That will require the whole life, not the profession of a moment merely. "He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved." Baptism celebrates the beginning of faith, not its completion, and while casting the responsibility for the reality of the faith upon the confessor, re-asserts that "to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto Him for righteousness," and "being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is another characteristic common to these two baptisms at Philippi, in the fact that in both cases households were baptized, and these households, with their heads, entertained the Apostles. Much learned ingenuity has been spent over the argument whether these households could possibly have included infants or not. In



the one case we are told the Apostles entered the house of Lydia, and when they had strengthened the brethren they departed; in the other instance, that of the jailor, "They spake the word of the Lord unto him with all that were in his house," and "he rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God." In a similar instance at Corinth, where the household of Stephanas was baptized, we are told also "They have set themselves to minister to the saints." There does not appear from these passages any solid reason for supposing that the invariable connection between faith and baptism was departed from in the least degree. So great an exception to the whole teaching of the New Testament as making baptism a testimony of faith by proxy would require positive evidence before it even need be discussed.

There is, however, great beauty in the two pictures here drawn for us of the blessing brought to the home by the acceptance of the truth of the Gospel. It seems frequently to have been the case. We read of the house of Chloe, the household of Onesephorus and the Church in the house of Aquila and Prisca. It speaks well for the earnestness both of Lydia and the jailor that they both sought the welfare of those immediately around them. It is a great mercy and a subject for much joy when those who are one with us in the flesh are also "heirs with us in the grace of life."

The welcome these households gave to the Apostles was cordial and generous. Use "hospitality one to another without murmuring" says the Apostle Peter; but they seem to have done it with exuberant gladness. Lydia's persuasive constraint and the jailor's midnight table were both evidences of Christian love and gratitude for spiritual blessings received. And this warm Christian affection is a grace we must take care to cultivate.

"Love one another" was an injunction of the Master. "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren" said the beloved disciple. It is well that this should be associated, as it is here, with baptism, for it is part of the Gospel: "This is His commandment that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another even as He gave us commandment."

Experienced believers will gladly welcome the new convert, and the new convert should turn with joy to the fellowship of the saints as being to him a foretaste of heaven.

"Witness ye men and angels now,  
Before the Lord we speak :  
To Him we make our solemn vow,  
A vow we dare not break.

"That long as life itself shall last,  
Ourselves to Christ we yield,  
Nor from His cause will we depart,  
Or ever quit the field."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### BAPTISMS AT CORINTH.

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Acts xviii. 8 : And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house ; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.

I. Cor. i. 13-17 : Is Christ divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul ? I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius, lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas : besides I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

I. Cor. iii. 2 : I fed you with milk, not with meat ; for ye were not able to bear it, yea, not even now are ye able : for ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk as men.

IT is well that we should clearly recognize the limitations as well as the profound suggestions of baptism. There is an easy possibility of making too much even of God's ordinance. To make it a saving rite, and think of it as accomplishing regeneration apart from faith and repentance is a grievous error, finding no support from Scripture. To make it necessary for salvation, except in the sense that obedience is necessary to prove true faith, is equally contrary to the Word of God. The penitent thief upon the cross was assured "To-day shall thou be with Me in Paradise." And want of baptism

is never named as bringing condemnation; "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." "He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." Thus all the stress is laid upon the personal faith of which baptism is the ordained expression.

Paul looking at the matter probably partly from this side declared that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach. There were other reasons, however, which evidently prompted this remark. He did not think lightly of baptism except in comparison with the Gospel. He did not neglect its administration, for even at Corinth he could name more than one baptized by him. He assumes they have all been baptized, though not by him, and having in mind the development of party spirit of which he complains, and the abuses that had crept into the Church there, he exclaimed: "I thank God that I baptized none of you." It was a severe rebuke; very sad is it if any have to congratulate themselves that they have not assisted in a confession of faith in Christ of persons whose conduct is so unchristian as to deny the confession made. It may well stand before us as a warning. Even our baptism may come to be looked back upon as a reproof to us because of the contrast between our lives and its image of death to sin and resurrection with Christ.

Undoubtedly Paul chiefly desired to disown the very possibility of their imagining themselves to have been baptized into his name. Among the errors which have associated themselves with this ordinance, we may be thankful that in the main the Christian Church has been kept from the danger of associating baptism unduly with the person of the baptizer. We have baptism too often regarded as a door of admission to some particular section

of the Church, but the association of the individual baptizer with the ordinance is happily not conspicuous. While this was evidently Paul's chief fear, we cannot altogether limit his intention in disowning their baptism to this. To a great extent he tells us he was supposing a case to illustrate a principle. His great condemnation was for the spirit of jealousy and strife, apart from the particular persons with whose names it was associated. Such conduct proved that they were still carnal, though professing to be baptized in the Spirit. At best they were babes, while it was their privilege to be full grown men in Christ.

There is another incident in the Acts which illustrates the feeling that must have possessed Paul, though no mention is expressly made of it. The baptism of Simon Magus, at Samaria, had doubtless caused some stir. He gave out "that himself was some great one and they gave heed to him." When, therefore, he also "believed and being baptized continued with Philip," the "much joy in that city" would be increased. There came a testing time however. The disciples at Samaria had been baptized in water, but they had not received the Holy Ghost. It was at this point that Simon failed. As through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the wondrous gift was bestowed, the carnal thought of the old magician running in its accustomed grooves exclaimed, as he offered money to them, "Give me also this power that, on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." To feel the full force of the Apostle's reply, we must remember that it was to a man recently baptized upon profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus, that Peter, so unhesitatingly answered, "Thy silver perish with thee because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither

part nor lot in this matter for thy heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." The Church has invented a special name for his sin and calls it "simony," but the true solemnity of the incident is found in the fact that the gift of the Spirit is only bestowed on spiritual men, and that spiritual men are made not by outward confession or solemn rite but only by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. As a mere failure to understand a new mystery, Simon's mistake did not surely deserve such scathing condemnation; but, as the discovery of a hitherto unsuspected condition of heart, it was the kindest possible treatment and we may earnestly hope was followed by the opening of Simon's eyes to his need of a Saviour such as he had never before had.

The incident stands, however, a signal warning to all not to trust in anything short of the Divine Saviour Himself, to purify, renew and maintain the spiritual life in us. The necessity of making our calling and election sure, by the exhibition of God's working within us, should be a life-long aim. We cannot take up with Christianity, conform to its requirements and have done with it. Christ is our Life. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature: the old things are passed away, behold they are become new."

The profession of faith for baptism has to be accepted, as was that of Simon Magus and the "carnal" Corinthians, and being accepted, those who have been baptized are to be treated as believers, unless some glaring act of sin persisted in reveals the unrenewed nature. Baptism may be appealed to as a witness to profession

made and truths believed, but only Christ's own baptism in the Holy Ghost is a certificate of true regeneration. Alas ! the history of the Church of Christ has abundantly realized His own parable of the tares of the field ; and the necessity of the injunction " let both grow together until the harvest " is abundantly verified. " The Lord knoweth them that are His." We do not always—even the Apostles did not in every case, notwithstanding the endowment of the gifts of discernment. An Ananias and a Sapphira were found in the earliest Church, and of some Paul had to say, " Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ : whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

A church baptized on profession of faith is not necessarily a pure church, though it ought to be ; but the fault does not lie in baptism. Unless that ordinance is slighted, divorced from personal faith, and its teaching neglected, it will prove a powerful instrument in the preservation of the purity of the fellowship of believers. Baptism, by making the primary confession definite—to some extent public, and setting forth in itself the radical nature of the change effected, as well as the source of power for holy living—will serve to safeguard the Church from idle and thoughtless adherents. Yet it makes no demand on the obedience of the candidate which is not essential for the true realization of Christ's rights over His people. Our obedience must not be in word only, and this simple appointment provides an early test of our sincerity. At the same time it is quite certain that circumstances may exist which will make literal compliance impossible. There is scarcely any outward act that may not be thus affected. Such an impossibility will be a

sorrow to the obedient heart and prove a trial of faith of a different kind. The believer really unable to do his Lord's will in this respect will cast himself upon the all-knowledge and compassion of his Master, and accept the assurance given to David : " Thou didst well that it was in thine heart."

We read in the annals of the third century that certain desired baptism on their sick beds and had water poured around them ; a substitute for baptism afterwards strongly repudiated by Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, and Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople. Surely here the incomplete obedience exhibited a lack of faith rather than a strength of it. It sprang from a making too much of baptism and too little of Christ by supposing the administration of the ordinance to be essential for the forgiveness of sins. " Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel " said Paul ; and in like manner we must take heed that nothing, not even the keeping the commandment of God, shall obscure the completeness of Christ's Atonement, the freedom of salvation by faith, and the absolute necessity of a spiritual change wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

" When any turn from Zion's way,  
Alas, what numbers do !  
Methinks I hear my Saviour say,  
Wilt thou forsake Me too ?

" What anguish has that question stirred,  
If I will also go.  
Yet, Lord, relying on Thy word,  
I humbly answer, No ! "