

A REVIEW OF
LETTERS ON BAPTISM ETC

BY

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VOLUMINOUS as the writings of J. N. Darby were that could be obtained in print during his lifetime on a great variety of subjects, nothing was printed by him on the subject of Baptism. Extracts from his letters may have been printed privately by others, and circulated in a limited sphere, or his letters may have been copied or handed about (as W. K. years ago complained that they were), but he never had anything printed on the subject himself.

Many until recent years in the same circle with him hardly knew what he held as to it; but a number on becoming acquainted with the fact that he held Infant Baptism, very suddenly changed their views — one at least who had printed a tract on Believers' Baptism, being amongst the number. The volumes of letters contain eighteen on the subject of Baptism; and where dates are given it can be easily seen that most of them were written after 1860 (the *first* about 1856).

The letters date back to 1832. Thus it is significant that for the first twenty-four years this subject had not been written upon; and when he did write, it was drawn from him as one unwilling to enter upon the subject.

¹ "Letters," J. N. D., 3 vols.; "Baptism: Its Scripture, Place and Use," F. W. G.; "What Baptism Is," by S. M. A.

“ You will perhaps be surprised to hear me say I do not like answering you (I do not say, writing). I believe all is in such confusion in the church, and I so thoroughly prefer dwelling on Christ to ordinances, that I have no comfort in speaking of them, and specially of this; as our real work as to this is to get Christians clear practically of a great corrupt baptized house, to which the Lord’s Supper helps; and the bringing them into it such as it is (though till judged it is owned of God—not practically) does not present itself in thinking [of it] with attraction, I believe they should be, but as a child ought to come home to his father’s house; yet if the house be in disorder morally, there is not satisfaction in thinking of it, even though right, and we should be glad as to him to see him return.”¹

“ I should not re-baptize a person sprinkled in infancy, though I do not like the form, because the intended signification *in the form* is lost. There is an analogy between baptism and circumcision; but such analogies must be used with intelligence, as the dispensations are different. But I say no more, as this occupation with the forms of Christianity (though bowing to them as such) I find has little edification and much wearying of the mind.”²

I have given these rather long extracts to show how J. N. D. seemed always to regard the matter. “ A form ”; “ little edification ” in it; “ much wearying of the mind ”; “ does not present itself with attraction ”; thus J. N. D., but not so his disciples, who, more zealous than he in propagating views on Baptism as if new and spiritual, seemed to find no weariness in urging it on every hand, even though warned that they were likely to cause division. Not only so, but, in a way unworthy of Christians, they sought to press into service for the upholding of their theories the writings of C. H. M., who never had the smallest sympathy with them in their false teaching. Andrew Miller, of London, having written him as to the use his little book on “ Thou and Thy House ” was being put to, received a letter, which was printed at the time,³ as follows :—

“ A.M., London. I am glad you have called my attention to my little book, ‘ Thou and Thy House.’ I am aware of the use which has

¹ Vol. II. p. 269, 1873.

² 1878, Vol. II., 521.

³ “ *Things New and Old*,” Vol. XV., 1872, by C. H. M.

been made of it in a recent tract on the subject of Baptism—a use which I consider to be aught but disingenuous. With the theory of that tract I have no sympathy whatever; still less with its monstrous statements. I believe the course of some of our friends in urging on this question of Baptism will, unless God in His mercy interpose, lead to most disastrous results. I complain not of any who conscientiously hold this or that view on the subject; but I do complain of those who, instead of preaching and teaching Jesus Christ, are disturbing the minds of God's people by pressing *Infant Baptism* upon them. For my own part—seeing the question has thus been forced upon me—I can only say I have for thirty-two years been asking in vain for a single line of Scripture for baptizing any save believers, or those who profess to believe. Reasonings I have had, inferences, conclusions and deductions, but of direct scripture authority not one tittle. I may further add that there is not a word about Baptism from beginning to end of my book, 'Thou and Thy House.'

“ C. H. M. Ed. T. N. and O.

“ BRISTOL, Dec. 22nd, 1871.”

No clearer evidence could be furnished that there were those forcing the subject until it compelled C. H. M. to write thus, and to bring home to them, if at all open to conviction, that he had for “thirty-two years been asking in vain for a single line of Scripture for baptizing any save believers, or those who profess to believe,” and also with special emphasis at the close of his letter to say, “I may further add that there is not a word about Baptism from beginning to end of my book, 'Thou and Thy House.'” Yet, in order to have the influence of his name it had been referred to as helping on these “inferences, etc.,” which have not, according to C. H. M., “one tittle” of “direct Scripture authority.”

But to return to extracts from J. N. D. Surely it is remarkable that he could continue to look upon “*Infant Baptism*” as being according to Scripture, and yet write of finding in it “little edification,” “much wearying of the mind,” and a “form.” Good that he felt that it was wearying if that had led him to give up his “form,” but a gross mistake when he called it “a form of Christianity.” A “form of *Christendom*” it has certainly become, and

most wearisome, seeing it is but a form without one tittle of Scripture to support it. Seeing it was so wearying to J. N. D., what a pity that he should have written eighteen letters (very likely others, but that number appears in these volumes) on such a form! Wearisome work, indeed, to wade through them, and to find nothing but false reasoning, with an attempt to support it by such Scriptures as Matthew 18., Mark 10., and 1 Corinthians 7.; for, although F. W. G. and S. M. A. have a good deal to say about "Households" of Scripture, J. N. D. has not. He seems only to refer to these three passages, and to him they were full proof for his "form," though Baptism is never named or hinted at in either of them. Did it never occur to him why it was so wearying? Surely Scripture never wearies one in communion with the Lord. Nothing, however simple, contained in it can weary a heart that loves Him.

But when Baptism is turned aside from those for whom it was alone intended, and turned into a "sacrament," a "form," a mere outward, meaningless thing as practised in connection with infants, no wonder if one is wearied equally with J. N. D.

These letters are significant. They were drawn from him. He says so in them:—

"I never seek to persuade any one of children's baptism."¹

Or again, when written to by another:—

"The subject you refer to is one on which I so far unwillingly engage that it is one which I feel is to be left entirely to individual consciences."²

Again:—

"I don't wonder at people being in doubt in the state of confusion in which the church is, so that I have no difficulty in respecting the consciences of brethren who believe that they ought to be baptized. If

¹ "Letters," Vol. III. p. 427.

² Vol. II. p. 333.

their conscience tells them that they have not been baptized, they do well to get baptized, if they do it peaceably—I say peaceably, because it is no longer the confession of Christianity, but an act which seeks to repair a fault of negligence. But if one makes it a sect, it is a very great evil.”¹

What a jumble of ideas! It is left to “conscience,” an “act” to be done “peaceably,” to “repair a fault of negligence”! Whose fault? would be an interesting inquiry—that of the one baptized, or his parents? But the purpose for which I refer to this letter is to point out that whereon every other subject on which he wrote J. N. D. would seek to refer to Scripture alone, on this one he constantly drags in “Conscience,” and leaves it to that. Is “Conscience” a safe guide? What is to control it? The Word of God ever must, or the one who acts apart from it under plea of conscience will find himself in the wrong. “They do well to be baptized”; but it cannot be well unless in it they are fulfilling some scripture. If in no sense the act results from the Lord and His Will as contained in His Word, how can it be well? It would have nothing to make it so. And if there is Scripture, then the believer should be referred to that, and not to his conscience.

Never for a moment would J. N. D., or any other with him, have allowed reference to be made to conscience on any other subject; but in this he left it to conscience, and influenced others to do the same. Thus in a paper on Baptism, in “The Girdle of Truth,”² the writer starts with the same assertion:—

“I would begin with Baptism, confining myself to the elucidation of the subject, and not treating of the question as to *who* are the proper recipients; the determining of *that* point I would leave to the enlightened conscience.”

Sad and significant sentence, showing that he was in such unity with those who held Infant or Household Bap-

¹ Vol. III. p. 385.

² Vol. III. p. 97. Edited by Dorman. 1864.

tism that, while feeling responsibility, and attempting to discharge it in connection with Baptism, he passes over the question as to *who* are the proper recipients. A teacher given for the help of God's children (assuming to be such, at least), he seeks to expound the doctrine, but leaves the rest to an enlightened conscience. Well to ask, therefore, where the light could come from save from the Scripture itself. Had he himself no light on it? Had he learnt so fully the meaning by study of all the Scriptures on Baptism from Mark 16. to 1 Peter 3. (he quotes them in the course of his article), and yet had he no light on *who* were intended by God's Word to be baptized? It would have been interesting to ask why he did not leave it all to an "enlightened conscience." For if that was sufficient for the one part, why not for the other?

It would have been well if he had acted more thoroughly himself on the advice he gave as a preface to his article:—

"Our only course, one that the servant of God ought never to have deviated from, is to disengage our minds from everything man has said on the subject, and apply ourselves to the Word of God, as if we had never heard of the subject before. It would reveal one of the mysteries of the mind if one could trace the prepossessions about the truth of God with which Christians come to the Scriptures; in fact, they too often do so more to establish their own convictions than to derive convictions therefrom. These remarks apply, I think, peculiarly to Baptism; for no truth has been so popularized and adopted by the world."

"SO POPULARIZED AND ADOPTED BY THE WORLD!"
Alas! how true; but has the world ever adopted Believers' Baptism? or has the Baptism of Believers ever been popularized? Acknowledged the fact that, when nothing else prevailed, professors bowed to it;—did the world? Never; but Infant or Household Baptism it adopted and popularized, until nearly all the leading denominations, commencing with Romanism, practise it; all of them connecting it with regeneration in a greater or less degree:—

"I am persuaded that so long as Infant Baptism is practised Popery will have a door set wide open for its return. It is one of those nests

which must come down, or the foul birds will build again in it. As long as you give baptism to an unregenerate child, people will imagine that it must do the child good; for they will ask, If it does not do it any good, why is it baptized? The statement that it puts children into the covenant, or renders them members of the visible Church, is only a veiled form of the fundamental error of baptismal regeneration."

The foregoing sentence is from the pen of another. But he was one who was prepared to help the children of God, instead of leaving them to "an enlightened conscience." He also does so by showing how the world adopts it; but he goes further, and boldly attacks the world's belief, and warns the children of God how Popery makes immense use of these teachings in reference to Infant Baptism. He shows the way in which it became popular; the leaven put in by the woman has been the teaching "that good does result from it." If it does not do any good, why baptize them?

"Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"Not only persons who are come to the use of reason, but also little children, and infants newly born, if they die without Baptism, do go into everlasting fire."

AUGUSTINE.

"If infants are guilty of original sin, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved unless this be washed away by Baptism."

JOHN WESLEY.

"But how God will deal with persons unbaptized we cannot tell."

G. WHITFIELD.

Can it be wondered at, in view of such teachings—coming even from men such as Wesley and Whitfield—that the common belief should prevail among the people that not only is good obtained by the baptism of infants, but that by it they are saved from hell?

II.

EXTRACTS such as have been given sufficiently show what it was that originated Infant Baptism ; for originated by man it certainly was. As one leading German writer says, "Neither in the Scriptures nor during the first one hundred and fifty years is a sure example of Infant Baptism to be found."¹

Not until the third century, and then springing from Africa, do we get in history the Baptism of Infants. The fact that Roman Catholics generally, and the High Church party in the Church of England, frankly admit that they have no Scripture for the practice, basing it upon tradition and the action of the early Fathers, is significant.

The necessity for getting rid of original sin by Baptism was first urged, then the doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants was taught, and became the effectual means by which to introduce the practice.

"The condition of the Church since the third century imperatively demanded the introduction of Infant Baptism. Christian Baptism sank, as it were, to the grade of John's Baptism, and the whole Church had sunk down to the legal state. Again (1 Cor. 7. 14), it is clear that Paul would not have chosen this kind of proof had Infant Baptism been in use at that time."

Thus another leading German theologian, Olshausen, wrote in reference to Baptism.

Let Christians lay it well to heart. Infant Baptism falls as soon as men are persuaded nothing can result

¹ Hahn.

from it for any one—that it leaves the person baptized, whether adult or infant, not only where, but as it found him. If it does not do any good, there is no use for it. But the sacramental theory has been attached to it, and widespread is the notion that not only is there good in it, but that there is danger in neglecting it. In another tract,¹ by H. T., written in dialogue form, for the purpose of showing the evils of teaching and practising Household Baptism, we read thus:—

“CHARLES.—There is something naturally very pleasing in baptizing little children, who have no will of their own about it. Hence it crept into the Church of God very soon after the days of the Apostles. And, on the other hand, the Atonement of Christ was very soon lost sight of, as is the case now all around us. And this is always its tendency. Only a few days back I heard of a sister who lost her little boy when he was only a few months old; and she is in continual sorrow, and cannot forgive herself, because she did not have him baptized. And we all know how ministers are often called out of their beds in the middle of the night to baptize dying infants a few days old.”

Thus H. T., in the same circle with J. N. D. and S. M. A., had to write of a sister also with them actually mourning over the loss of that which Christ never enjoined! doubtless because, unlike H. T., she had listened to the specious reasonings of such as S. M. A., who plainly asserts, in the tract before us, that there *is* value in it, for he asks whether earthly parents would deny some earthly blessing to their children. But the reader shall have it in his own words:—

“If it were a question of something pertaining to this life or worldly gain, they would not so reason nor act. If a parent knew some worldly advantage could be obtained for his child, he would be quick enough to secure it, without waiting till the child first grew up to see if he were worthy or deserving of it, or willing to accept it” (p. 30).

Now, if there is any meaning in this sentence, it is that something is to be gained for the child by Baptism;

¹ “Baptism: A Word to the Simple. A Dialogue.” H. T. Published by G. Morrish, London.

therefore the parents are urged to get it baptized in order that this may be obtained. S. M. A. appeals to them by an illustration of a parent keen to obtain some worldly advantage for his child ; so Christians ought to be quick to "secure" for their children this benefit!

A child is sprinkled. Be it so that a Roman Catholic priest has done it—it is just as valid ; "it has been done, and cannot be undone."¹ It has gained ; privileges have been secured. So S. M. A. declares, "Some may fail to apprehend the nature and value of these privileges" (p. 31). Again, in answer to those who ask, "What are these privileges?" his reply is, "Anyhow, privileges are privileges, for all that ; how people may treat them does not alter the fact that they are real and valuable" (p. 30). So that something "REAL AND VALUABLE" has been gained for the child : and, if S. M. A. were to be believed, this is not only true of the child of believers, but equally so of the child of unbelievers ; nay, more, these "real and valuable" privileges can be secured for the child of unbelieving parents by one who is himself an unbeliever just as fully and as readily as by a believer.

"Outside a believer's house there is no warrant for baptizing any unless there be repentance first ; still, the responsibility is with the one who baptizes in all cases ; and though, as is often the case in the present day, neither baptizer nor baptized, nor the parents of the baptized, may be true believers, yet the one is acting as Christ's servant, and baptizing to Him and to His name ; and the one baptized is baptized to Him and brought into the place of privilege—connected with Him, *outwardly, on earth*, and the act cannot be cancelled nor made null."²

What can the privileges be, or what can they be worth when obtained, when thus easily they can be got? Yet so securely are they ensured by the act that they cannot be "cancelled nor made null"! And where is God in the matter? The writer himself (mark it ; not one for

¹ So J. N. D., but not Scripture.

² S. M. A.'s tract, p. 33.

him by inference from any sentence) asserts in the plainest way that all concerned may be unbelievers—"NEITHER BAPTIZER NOR BAPTIZED, NOR THE PARENTS OF THE BAPTIZED, MAY BE TRUE BELIEVERS," but all is done as effectually as if they were all believers; and it is so although "outside a believer's house there is no warrant for baptizing any unless there be repentance first"! So that although but few, according to the writer, that is, the children of believers, are entitled to be baptized, still the rest, the larger number by far, are equally baptized and are in the position, the privileges theirs. Thus S. M. A. writes:—

"The Baptism holds good before God, as we have seen, and if the person is baptized a thousand times after it does not alter anything, nor add anything further to the one baptized; but the one who attempts thus to rebaptize is simply stepping into the place of a judge pronouncing on the work of a fellow-servant, judging before the time and saying that he can do the work better" (p. 34).

"The Baptism holds good!" One would be inclined to ask, "Good for what?" or to say, "Good for nothing!" The writer then says if such an one is re-baptized it does not add anything FURTHER. This can only mean that Baptism, though all concerned in it were unbelievers, added *something*! "The work of a fellow-servant"!—thus regarding an unsaved man, in his meaningless act of sprinkling, as a fellow-servant of a Christian who, winning souls for Christ, then seeks to lead them on, baptizing or teaching them!

Thus every priest of any and every corrupt system on earth who has performed this act is a *fellow-servant* who has in sprinkling or baptizing an infant done a work; and for one to rebaptize is "practically saying that HE CAN DO THE WORK BETTER." "What work?" one vainly asks. Still there it stands from the writer's pen; a work has been done! The one who did it is a "fellow-servant," although all concerned in it are unbelievers. "Be ye

not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is the strict command in 2 Corinthians 6. 14, written by those (Paul and Timothy) who could say, "We then as workers together," or fellow-workers; but if the pamphlet before us were true, how could such a command be given? The reply would have to be, "Why, Lord, I cannot avoid it. I am yoked by Thyself with every baptizer; even though such an one be an unbeliever. He is already in yoke. We are 'fellow-servants,' and I must not step into the place of a judge and try to walk and work apart!" Could anything more monstrous be found in print; or could one imagine that, led on in attempts to support such a fabric of evil, evil doctrine and evil practice combined, any one could have dared, in contradiction to such a solemn injunction, to say that an unbelieving baptizer was a fellow-servant of a Christian indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who therefore is further asked, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"¹ What agreement? "Much every way," the writer of the tract, to be consistent, would have to say; "we are fellow-servants, both carrying out the initial act, doing a work, and one can do it equally well whether believer or unbeliever; therefore we are yoked." Let the reader pause and consider such statements, if he needs time. Alas for one who does! Surely such words carry their own condemnation with them.

A Christian is² one able to say, "I am in no way 'fellow' with a worldling, with an unbeliever; no concord between us, nothing in common; no act done by me can make me 'fellow' with an unbeliever." "Stop," says the tract, "you are wrong! You are only able to do what another can do equally as well. You cannot 'add further' to it. You cannot 'do the work better.' You baptized a man who had believed in the Lord Jesus, whose sins

¹ 2 Cor. 6. 16.

² 2 Cor. 6.

were forgiven, but in so doing you did no more than that unbelieving priest who sprinkled, anointed, and salted the infant of godless parents. You both did the same work. You both brought the baptized 'on Christian ground.'¹ 'They were thus made Christians outwardly'²—'brought into the place of privilege, connected with Him, outwardly, on earth.'³

Could anything more distinctly go to subvert the Word of God, or hinder the real separation inculcated in 2 Corinthians 6.?

Work has been done, and the work is to bring into a position! In what, though accompanied by an attempt at Scripture reference, does this teaching differ from the old threadbare arguments, deductions, and inferences of the Church of England or any other "ism" built up by Infant Baptism? If Baptism alters position, then by that act of man it has been done. The thought conveyed is that there is "VALUE IN IT,"⁴ "WORK DONE,"⁵ "POSITION OCCUPIED,"⁶ and yet no work of Holy Spirit in connection with it! No God, Father, Son, or Spirit; no Christian interested in the matter; yet an act that God owns! and it can never be "cancelled" or "made null." The baptizer, who, with loud swelling words, announces as he performs the act, that this child is now "regenerate," has done it all, and is a servant of Christ; nay, more, a fellow-servant of any and every true believer who baptizes one who has believed!

These two things, so opposite, are to S. M. A. all one. Could a principle be more essentially Romanist? The infant, not having been united by faith to Him who died and rose again, its Baptism is not Baptism unto Christ Jesus, but another Baptism; which is not Baptism, but is the invention of man to the concealing of God's own and

¹ Page 17.² Page 31.³ Page 33.⁴ Page 32.⁵ Page 34.⁶ Page 33.

only teaching concerning Baptism, and is the very masterpiece of Satan to the delusion of millions, leading them to think that they are in a different position from the poor heathen or Jew. They have had a "work" performed on them, and by it *gained* something.

And S. M. A. is not alone in his bold assertion that there is "value" in it. F. W. G., in dividing his subject, set apart one section for the purpose of proving the same thing. On page 40 of his tract we read:—

“VI. THE VALUE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

“If a child is baptized as a ceremony without faith, it is of no value. On the other hand, if I bring my child in faith to Christ in it, who shall deny my right to the blessed assurance that He does receive him?”

Here F. W. G. distinguishes between infants who have equally been baptized and brought into the Kingdom as he teaches. Where no faith on the part of those who brought the one, it is "a ceremony without value"; yet, passing strange, they are in "the Kingdom" as much as any other one brought in faith! But *he* brings, and brings *in faith*; then he asks, "who shall deny his right to the blessed assurance that Christ has received?" J. N. D. says Christ has received, therefore the Church should—*i.e.*, by Baptism. But, according to F. W. G., the reception follows, and is in connection with the Baptism, and his faith gives value to it.

He then, to enforce it, appeals to the case of the palsied man (Matt. 9):—

“And when Jesus saw their faith, He saith unto the sick of the palsy.’ What? rise and walk? Nay, blessed be God! but, ‘Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.’ And I have no right to ask, ‘But had he not faith in himself?’ Scripture, perfect in all things, tells me it was faith in *them*,¹ not faith in *him*,¹ that Jesus saw. And I cannot be

¹ The italics are F. W. G's.

wrong in saying, therefore, that here we have express assurance of the fact that He does give forgiveness of sins itself to one on the faith of others."

Thus, in pursuit of Scripture to uphold his dangerous theories, he fastens upon this account his unsupported opinions, and seems to imagine he has an impregnable position to occupy, by making statements in the boldest and, I would add, most reckless way possible.

"Scripture, perfect in all things, tells me it was faith in *them*, not in *him*." Pray, where does Scripture say this? Nowhere! "When He saw their faith" are the words of Scripture. Now by what right does F. W. G. write as above? Does the word **THEIR** so absolutely refer to the others, and shut the man himself out, that he can safely and without fear of contradiction make such a statement? One would suppose that every Greek scholar would support him in it. F. W. G. should know better; but a desperate cause needed a prop, and no other could be found. Bold assertion often blinds and hinders reflection. "It is so," not "Is it so?" becomes the thought fixed by such statements. It should not be; but so, alas, we often find it. But, to return. Let us take two scholars (both of them believers in Infant Baptism), and see how they looked at this passage:—

"*αὐτῶν* must be supposed to include the sick man, who was at least a consenting party to the bold step which they took."¹

"*τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν*, 'their faith'—*i.e.*, of him who was borne, and of them who bare him."²

Thus Alford and Bengel agree as Greek scholars in saying that "**THEIR** faith" would include both; that is to say, they, being translators as well as critical editors of the Greek New Testament, never for a moment entertained the notion that "their" must mean the bearers to

¹ Alford, Grk. Test., Vol. I. p. 88.

² Bengel, Vol. I. p. 222, Clark's Ed., 1860.

the exclusion of the sick man ; but they both take it in the very opposite way to include him.

All this F. W. G. passes over in his haste to seize upon a passage (the only one he attempts to give) by which to uphold his dangerous and false doctrine that Christ forgives one person's sins upon the faith of others. Note the words, lest any in view of such alarming teaching should think F. W. G. was being misquoted :—

“ Here we have express assurance of the fact that He does give forgiveness of sins itself to one on the faith of others.”¹

Worse still, the passage is brought in purposely to uphold his proposition that, where the parent has faith in connection with the Infant's Baptism, *there* “value” attaches to it. In fact, the forgiveness of sins to the infant on the faith of the parent is the only conclusion ; else why the reference to Matthew 9. and the statements made as to “THEIR” faith, not his? There would be no purpose served by the reference to this man in connection with the “value of Infant Baptism” unless this was meant.

Thus, when F. W. G. seeks to show the value of Infant Baptism, he teaches doctrine false as it can be, and builds it upon the word “their” as if it could not by possibility include the man himself. The Church of England never taught more glaring falsehood. A more unsafe man than F. W. G. simple Christians could not have as their guide or helper on this subject.

¹ F. W. G. page 47.

III.

J. N. D., though holding Infant Baptism and writing privately on it in these "Letters," never went the length of F. W. G.; the reason being that he never went beyond Matthew 18. and I Corinthians 7. If Infant Baptism was not in those passages, he evidently did not believe it could be found, and he knew too much to attempt to build it upon the word "*their*" in Matthew 9. But though we search the "Letters" in vain for any reference to this chapter, S. M. A. is not one whit behind F. W. G. in reckless assertion as to it.

"In the first part of Matthew 9. we have the man with the palsy getting governmental forgiveness, and, as a consequence, perfect restoration to health, through *the act of faith in others.*"¹ "Another case is Acts 3., where the lame man is cured by Peter. In verse 16 Peter explains how it was effected. He says, '*His (Christ's) name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong,*' etc. But where was the '*faith in His name*'? Not in the man, but in Peter. It may have resulted in faith on the part of the man afterwards; but this is not said directly, and certainly his faith is not the ground of his being made whole. It was Christ's name, and faith in His name on the part of Peter; and the blessing received related to God's governmental ways. Administrative forgiveness as in Matthew 9. goes on the same principle (see James 5. 15, and John's Gospel 20. 23)."¹

Again, strong assertion is supposed to carry the day and *prove* everything beyond dispute. But it does not, save with those who give themselves up in their infatuation to certain teachings, and who seem to be unable to search the Scriptures for themselves.

Note that here in Acts 3. it is not said his sins were for-

¹ S. M. A., page 41. The italics are S. M. A's.

given, but he was found "praising God," having been healed as in Matthew 9. "Scripture is perfect," and it does not assert that the lame man had no faith. Though in this instance, doubtless, Peter was the one exercising faith, still it does not say (and, seeing that it does not, we have no right to say) that the man himself had no faith, much less to say that he could not be included in the expression. Take it for what it is worth, but a number of commentators on the Acts assume that he had. But then, though believers in Infant Baptism, they had no theory to maintain, as S. M. A. and F. W. G.

One would be almost curious to know what S. M. A. means by "governmental forgiveness" in connection with the palsied man. We know, however, what the Lord said, and that may suffice: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." And He meant what He said; and, what is more, never puzzled the poor man with long words, such as "governmental," "administrative." The man was forgiven: and to deny that he was so equally with any other who believed in Him then or since is to deny the plainest words that could be used by the Lord Himself.

The use of the words "governmental" and "administrative" by S. M. A. inclines one to think that he was somewhat appalled by his own rash assertions, and sought by these words to establish a difference between "forgiveness" and "governmental forgiveness." In the light of "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also,"¹ one could understand distinction being made if the assembly were in question, and their action toward a sinning one the theme. But with S. M. A. it is not so. It is Christ's own act; and therefore when He said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," by what right does S. M. A. attempt to set up a distinction? The Word says "forgiven." Who dare deny it, or lower it down to "govern-

¹ 2 Cor. 2. 10.

mental" forgiveness? No one would ever dare unless urged on in the effort to get hold of some Scripture that seemed to uphold the thought that Christ forgives one on the faith of others; then upon that to build Infant Baptism, the infant by Baptism gaining something. That which makes many parents so ready to listen to teaching concerning Infant Baptism is the hope that something will be gained by it. How common the question, "Surely you would not have me deprive my dear child of Baptism?"—which infers that, under the Baptism, through it, and in addition to it, the child gains something.

DOES BAPTISM BRING INTO THE KINGDOM OR HOUSE?

Here we get variance at once between the teaching of F. W. G. and of J. N. D. The former says "into the Kingdom"; the latter, "into the House."

"Baptism was the reception out of the Kingdom of Satan, the world of which he was prince, into the Kingdom of Heaven, where Christ was the acknowledged Lord. Holiness characterized the latter, as sin the former. True, men might come into the Kingdom and be *unholy*; they might sleep, and tares be sown among the wheat; but this did not alter God's Word as to what was His."¹

Thus he makes it very clear that he believed that Baptism brought *out* and brought *in*—out of the Kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of Heaven; and he refers to the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares in connection with it. Did it not occur to F. W. G. that in that parable that which is sown is wheat or tares?—two classes, and two only?

The enemy sowed the tares, and sowed "while men slept." But if F. W. G. is right, Infant Baptism dates from the beginning. Had men gone to sleep then? Were they asleep when infants were baptized? He would be compelled to say, "No," for he says Infant Baptism was

¹ "Baptism," p. 19, F. W. G.

of God ; and, being so, the infants baptized were brought out of the Kingdom of Satan. Then they could not by F. W. G. be classed as tares ! As what then ?—wheat ?

The tares are, according to the interpretation of the Lord Himself, “ the children of the wicked *one*.”¹ The wheat, “ the children of the kingdom.”² Thus two very distinct classes are referred to, and no allusion whatever to a third, composed of unconscious infants. The parable, it is evident to the simplest, deals with those who are intelligent and responsible. “ All things that offend, and them which do iniquity ”³ is a sentence sufficiently clear to leave no doubt on the mind as to that. As also is the term by which the other are then spoken of—“ the righteous.” It is only as “ Infants ” and “ Baptism ” as the means of their introduction, are *thrust* into the chapter that any one can find them there. And when thus thrust in the difficulty arises as to how to speak of them. What are they ? And if that when infants, if later on in their life they “ do iniquity,” what then ? Are they that still ?

Thus, to refer to the “ Dialogue on Baptism ” again, John, who stands for one who has been reasoned into “ Household Baptism,” and into having his infant baptized, says :—

“ But you see, Charles, the Church is now become a great House. And the Lord Jesus likens it unto a great tree. Do you not think the baptizing our children has some reference to that ?

“ CHARLES. Alas, John, the Christian profession has indeed become like a great House, and it is also likened to a great tree, and the fowls of the air find an easy lodging in its branches, and God will very shortly pour upon it His fiercest indignation. I do not want, therefore, to identify my child with their House, by baptizing him into it, even if I could ; but to which there is not the slightest allusion whatever in Scripture.

“ JOHN. Well, Charles, what would you have me do with my child ? How would you have me look at him—as a Jew, or a heathen, or a Christian, or what ? I must look at him in some position.

“ CHARLES. Yes, John ; I would have you look at him as your child,

¹ Matt. 13. 38.

² Verse 38.

³ Verse 41.

given you by God, to be brought up for Him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This you ought to be satisfied with, and not seek to place your child where God has not placed him, nor to try and fill up by the tradition of men what you think to be a blank in his history."

H. T. wrote thus confidently as to the notion that the infant has to be found a place! And John's question is not an uncommon one: "How am I to look at him—heathen, Jew, or Christian?" Can the baptizing him make him the last? Apart from the privilege of having Christian parents, is the child in any position differing from that which every other child occupies? Will the calling him by some different name make any difference? Yet this is the stronghold of those who hold Household Baptism. There is value in it because it introduces to a position!—to "the Kingdom," F. W. G. and S. M. A.; to "Christianity," or the "House," or "the public body," J. N. D.

"The public body exists, corrupted no doubt, but exists; and to form it again by Baptism is all false: it exists by Baptism."¹

Thus he assumes that which he should prove. And so in every "Letter" it is taken for granted that Baptism is into a position. "The public body exists by Baptism!" But where does Scripture convey this? There are around us sects of divers sorts, all making use of the Bible to prove their own position a right one, and all naming the Name of Christ. Are all these in the "House"? "the public body"? etc. Numbers of them, the children of those who hold Believers' Baptism and "the Friends" as a whole, are in it by profession, without Baptism. Or will it be maintained that they are not, because they never had Baptism performed on them?

Shall we be told, without one fragment of Scripture, that infidels by profession are in it because in early life, by priest or minister, they were baptized or sprinkled, and yet even Christians who never have been so are not in?

¹ "Letters," Vol. II. p. 338.

No one who values the place given to Baptism by Scripture, and the precious teaching connected with it, would, for one moment, wish to baptize into this corrupt "public body." Though one grieves over such folly, one is prepared to leave that to such as follow J. N. D. and his coadjutors in this matter—the clergy of Romanism and Protestantism, who are the chief means of adding to this "corrupt public body." Yet, passing strange, on coming into it these infants are removed from where Satan governs to where the Holy Spirit rules!

No wonder that to J. N. D. Baptism was a form.

"It is either public christendom or christening which we have, or the badge of a sect."¹

Thus no doubt is left as to the views of J. N. D. Baptism is a "sacrament," a "christening" process by which the corrupt public body exists, and the one who baptizes into it, though an unbeliever, is a "servant of God"² in the act.

And all this cold, formal dishing up of old views of Baptism is considered the outcome of an original mind, of deep spirituality, to be swallowed greedily and believed implicitly. And, seeing that J. N. D. termed Believers' Baptism "the badge of a sect," many, with him, turned from it to take up with that which in earlier days they had judged to be evil and to savour of Popery; whilst men among them, as C. H. M., had been for years asking, but asking in vain, for a single scripture to support such views!

Writing to another J. N. D. says:—

"I only add that your Baptism in the midst of confusion was *bonâ fide*, the same as your child's. I was exercised in the same way; but I felt I was introduced in good faith into the church as a public profession in the world, and this is what Baptism is—I was christened."³

¹ "Letters," Vol. II. p. 339.

² So S. M. A.

³ "Letters," Vol. II. p. 339.

This word "christened" occurs so frequently that one can easily see J. N. D. had become quite enamoured with it. In fact the editor of the "Letters" seems to have acted, in their selection, upon the idea that the greater the repetition the better. Letter after letter is printed with the same ringing of the changes upon "christening," "public body," "corrupt Christendom," "the public assembly of God on earth," "infants dying," and "holy"; with references to the "Establishment" as right on this subject, and the Baptists clearly wrong.

"The state of individuals in their souls has nothing to do with it." ¹

Therefore one can only conclude that it is quite immaterial whether the act be carried out in connection with a believer or an infant. It is the act of the baptizer, and he alone has a command, and therefore is serving God by daily adding to the "corrupt public body."

Surely, if any one might apply the term "monstrous," it is those who steadily go on their way controlled by Scripture, and not by the mere assertions of one who had to own that he was once "exercised," but, unhappily for him, passed out of that exercise into a firmer holding of his old corrupt notions held by him when in the "Establishment."

Do we again ask, "What good?" then J. N. D. answers:—

"The good done to them is that they are brought within, into the House where the Holy Ghost dwells, to be brought up," etc. ²

S. M. A. will have it, but without proof, that—

"The children of believing parents ought therefore to be in a distinct place from the world." ³ "Baptism is the admission to the place of a Christian outwardly."

And as Baptism effects this, parents should be quick to gain it by Baptism for their children!

Supposing a parent with a blind boy hears that if he

¹ Vol. II. p. 339.

² "Letters," Vol. II. p. 333.

³ Page 26.

takes his boy to London he can gain something to his boy's advantage there. If he goes, he certainly does so with the idea that his boy will be benefited in the way he needs—that is, as to his sight. But on going he finds that the gain does not consist in sight, but in having, with mystic incantations, some water dropped on the sightless eye-balls and the boy's name then registered on a list along with those who can see! On asking, "What has my boy gained?" the reply is, "He is now outwardly on the ground of one who sees"! "But he cannot see! Miserable comforters are ye all!" that parent would exclaim; and, returning home with his boy, blind as ever, he would only be able to say, "What a farce!"

But it may be well to show by reference to "Letters" that J. N. D. considered Baptism as an "introduction" into the House:—

"My thought has always been to connect Baptism ecclesiastically with the House, one of the two characters of the assembly. As a general thing the House and the Kingdom now have the same limits, though not strictly, so that I have not made any difficulty about people saying it. But the ideas are quite different. I was not aware of having connected Baptism with the Kingdom."

"The Quakers, as to formal order, are not in the House; but that does not hinder the sovereign pleasure of God, as in the case of Cornelius—thereupon he was received. But Baptism is only the formal and orderly entrance into the place of privilege. The Hundred and Twenty were never baptized at all, that Scripture speaks of, and could not be."¹

Needless to quote more—"only the formal and orderly entrance." As to "formal order," Quakers "are not in the House." Curious notion. Not in, and yet he seems compelled to admit that they are in! Exactly what I have sought to show, they dare not say that Quakers are not in the House. J. N. D. certainly did not dare to go that far. Then they were in the House and in the place of privilege, though not in as the result of "formal order." They had not come in by his door, yet they were in, and

he has to own it. Nay, more, the Spirit could not be hindered by lack of this "formal order." Then one would like to know what they lost by the non-observance of it? The Spirit, not hindered, would He have been helped by it?

How by J. N. D. Baptism is shorn of its teaching and place! reduced simply to a formal entrance into the House! Thus J. N. D. and S. M. A. wrote exactly on the same lines as Presbyterians long since (see "Confession of Faith" and "Catechisms") :—

"QUESTION: What is Baptism?"

"ANSWER: Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, . . . whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church."¹

Again :—

"Sacraments . . . put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world."²

And to refer to one other sentence, with which S. M. A. is in exact agreement, showing the source of his notions :—

"Neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers."³

Thus clearly do we see that no new thing is being taught, but the old error—Baptism turned aside to infants, for whom it was never intended. Then, as a necessity, robbed of its special meaning as applicable only to a believer, and changed into a "door," a "formal entrance"; and, no matter by whom it may be done, just as efficacious. And all this evil arises from the utterly false idea that Baptism is into a "kingdom," a "house," a "visible church," instead of its being "unto Christ," a symbol of death and resurrection.

¹ Larger Catechism.

² "Confession of Faith."

³ "Of the Sacraments": Confession of Faith.

IV.

PAUL NOT SENT TO BAPTIZE.

“FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”¹

This verse is constantly brought forward in these “Letters” and also by the other writers. In order that the reader may be in a position to judge the reason for this, it may be well to give a few extracts.

“Clearer views so set one on Paul’s ground—that he was not sent to baptize—and sets it in the background, that we lose our intelligent place when we propagate it.”²

Thus, by the word “it,” he would have his correspondent believe that Paul put Baptism in the background, and did not propagate IT; but the passage when read carefully teaches nothing of the kind.

The assertion made by Paul was, that he was not sent to baptize, to carry out the act HIMSELF; and no reference whatever is made to Baptism as such.³

“I have no doubt that each one ought to be baptized; but it is not the less true that it formed no part of the mission of Paul. . . . I believe that God intended to leave Baptism in the shade. The twelve were sent to baptize the nations. Paul was not sent to baptize. The ordinance has not been abrogated; and if any one believes he has not been baptized, he ought to be.”⁴

“Paul was not sent to baptize—the twelve were to baptize the Gentiles—but Baptism was accepted by Paul as already instituted.”⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 1. 17.

² “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 327.

³ Compare John 4. 1: “Jesus . . . baptized . . . disciples, . . . though Jesus HIMSELF baptized not, but His disciples.”

⁴ “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 175.

⁵ Vol. III. p. 467.

Well might one ask: Why all this assertion? "God intended to leave Baptism in the shade." Intended! Has He done so? What a curious idea to have concerning anything God-given! "In the shade!" Yet not "abrogated"; and Paul accepted it as an "institution"! Whose institution? If thus forced to admit that Baptism was instituted and not abrogated, why this dwelling upon Paul's mission? "It formed no part of Paul's mission." True, if by IT he means the act of baptizing; not true, if in any way he uses it as to teaching Baptism.

"For Christ," etc. The word "for" indicates the connection, and at the same time points out Paul's reason for thankfulness that he had not baptized many in Corinth. Baptism gains nothing from the one who baptizes, but in Corinth might have lost if Paul after baptizing the first-fruits had continued to baptize, instead of leaving it to others. "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"¹ is a question pointing out where he saw danger, and avoided it. If he had continued to be the one to baptize every one who believed, there might have been a tendency to say, "I am of Paul." He was thankful that he had not done so. The same principle, though not stated in so many words, was acted upon by Peter when preaching to the Gentiles for the first time. He preached, but when they had believed, instead of baptizing them himself, we read: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."²

An apostle could add nothing to it; he might possibly in the thoughts of others take from it, by their giving him a wrong place. When in Corinth the principle at work was the exaltation of man and his place and work, Paul rejoiced that he had, in the act of baptizing, kept himself out of sight. A lesson needed to be learned, and, what is more, *practised* still. Let the evangelist take it

¹ 1 Cor. 1. 13.

² Acts 10. 48.

to heart. Has he baptized the "first-fruits"? Then let others baptize, and thus no one in particular will figure in connection with it. He will, in so doing, prevent it from being looked upon as a ministerial act.

But, while it is important to learn this from the verse, it is well to see that Paul does not in the smallest way by his words weaken the truth of Believers' Baptism, nor does he make light of it. Far from it. But, on the other hand, he connects with this statement several facts worth remembering.

Be it remembered that Paul had himself been baptized¹; and had baptized others, apart from these in Corinth: Lydia at Philippi² and the jailer.³ He preached the Gospel, and baptized, and taught the truth that is conveyed by it.⁴ This being so, how can any one assume from these words that Paul made light of Baptism, or had risen into a higher sphere away from it? He had baptized the Jews at the outset, and his not baptizing more was in wisdom that he might by his acts teach. A most essential part of his teaching! By thus acting he deprived any from thinking or saying that Baptism was an act to be confined to an apostle or an evangelist; as he also prevented them from making him their centre, or being the more ready to do it. To such a question as "Have you been baptized since you believed?" it is no answer to say, "Oh! Paul was not sent to baptize," for such a reply confounds the act of baptizing with the teaching concerning it, and would make the words teach that which is false.

"Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Acts 18. 8 witnesses to the fact that Paul not only preached the Gospel, but spoke of Baptism as well. And he so spoke and wrote concerning it as to clearly establish the fact that it was only for the believer. The

¹ Acts 9. 18. ² Acts 16. 15. ³ Acts 16. 33. ⁴ Rom. 6., etc.

main thing was to make disciples; baptizing them was subordinate to that.¹ The apostle, therefore, thus writes in 1 Corinthians 1. It may be a wonder to those who exalt the baptizing into a position God never gave it, and make it a part of that by which the sinner obtains life and forgiveness; but it is none to one who exalts the Saviour, and who rejoices in salvation as the result of Christ's finished work brought home to the heart by faith. Baptism does not bring into a position. It does not take the one who submits to it out of one circle and introduce him into another. Baptism leaves a person where it finds him. If a sinner, deceiving himself, is baptized (never having believed), he is a sinner still; he is in no circle, he is in no place of privilege, or responsibility, not occupied before. Such teaching is the result of exalting Baptism into a Sacrament. It results from the utterly false notion that it brings into a "House" or into "the Kingdom." Nowhere in Scripture can such a thing be found. Baptism is unto Him as Lord, not into a position.

Let this be clearly seen. Then we shall not, on the one hand, exalt, nor, on the other, weaken the truth of Baptism or the place it occupies in the Word. Nay, more, we shall be delivered at once from the false teaching of Infant or Household Baptism. It was by turning Baptism and the Lord's Supper into external rites, and making them Sacraments in the hands of a human priesthood or clergy, that men in early days drew away the disciples after themselves. This Scripture should prevent us from this, and also hinder us from neglecting or undervaluing the privilege of Believers' Baptism.

Paul negatives the thought that he was sent to baptize. Very different thing to what has been sought to be taken from the words. Not to baptize would be one thing,

¹ Matt. 28. 19.

not to instruct disciples as to Baptism quite another. Not to do the former was wisdom, and, under God's guidance, he refrained from being the baptizing one during the eighteen months of his stay in Corinth and work there. Not to do the latter would have been positive disobedience to a command, and to have left the believers ignorant of that which it behoved them to do, as well as ignorant of that precious truth which it conveys.

Paul himself baptized, and never kept back the truth of Believers' Baptism from others. He taught it, and, by baptizing some, he enabled them to be obedient to it, and they, in their turn, could baptize those who followed.

Baptism was as much for those who had been of Israel as for those who were not. For Paul himself, and therefore he was baptized, as for believers at Corinth. Ananias taught him the privilege and responsibility of being baptized, as he taught others after that where he went. It is a small matter who was the baptizer. Paul was not *sent* to be so constantly, but, while asserting this, he never states that he was not sent to teach Baptism or any other truth of God. Strange that the ones who quote this verse in the present day do so to those who hold and teach Believers' Baptism, with evident intention to weaken their belief in it, or in the necessity for it now; yet those thus using it are holding and practising what is called Household Baptism. Because of that it is necessary to call special attention to what the apostle *did not say*, as well as to point out what *he did say*, so that young Christians may see clearly how the Scripture is misapplied, and be on their guard against accepting the wrong use of it.

The object of this paper is not to teach in connection with Baptism. It is not for the purpose of showing for whom Baptism alone is intended; but to recover this particular passage from a wrong use. The tendency is ever to decline to mere forms, ordinances, and rites, and, worse,

to urge them as needful for infants. Thus the "mixed multitude" is brought in, and divine testimony is corrupted. Baptism, kept in the place given to it by God in His Word, concerns the Believer only, and believers are to be entirely separated from the world; but when Baptism is taken out from that circle and applied in the world, then those who do it are already in the adversary's toils, and are with rude hands touching and marring the things of God.

It is a distinct gain, when we read such a verse as this in its proper connection, and do not, by a misconception, bring out of it what it does not convey. The only assertion made is that Paul was NOT SENT to baptize, and in no way does the statement lower the place Baptism occupies, nor does it weaken the obligation of the believer to be baptized. It gives no warrant whatever for the attempt to make Paul's mission so much higher than that of Peter and John. The Spirit of God used each of them in their ministry for Christ on earth, and, while He gave them different aspects of truth to minister by their writings, He never led Paul to make light of Baptism nor to put it "in the shade." Scripture does not in any way convey the thought that Paul acted differently from John and Peter in the matter of Baptism. Because Paul was chosen to reveal the precious truths concerning the One Body,¹ no one is justified in saying that he did so act. J. N. D. was bound to admit that Baptism was not abrogated. Then Paul received it, and he taught it. Would he have done so without authority? And was that authority found by him as by others, and by ourselves, in Matthew 28? To say that it was not abrogated is to admit all; for then it must have been instituted by the Lord to be observed, and to be observed as fully by Paul as by any other one.

¹ Eph. 3.

When distinctions were made in "A Voice to the Faithful,"¹ in connection with "the Bride," and an attempt was made to show (a miserable failure) that it was John's line of things, and not Paul's, J. N. D. could write with vigour against it.

"My objection to what I have read is this: generalizations as to divine teaching in Scripture are drawn from slight expressions without any adequate examination of the word, and consequently, when sifted, found sometimes very imperfect and misleading, sometimes wholly false."²

He then proceeded in his sifting to show how false these deductions were, and that Paul did bring out the true and proper affections of the Bride. Wholesome words follow, and, seeing that they apply with as much force in this connection, I give them.

"I would only add that pretending to be Philadelphia is quite another thing from being Philadelphian, and tends directly to Laodiceanism of heart.

"May the saints be kept in the simplicity that is in Christ. Assuredly I can have no wish to weaken true devotedness to Christ, Christ being all, which only is life; but I have not found this the effect of this teaching, but rather filling people with the thoughts of themselves and the wonderful new things they had got—not a self-judging knowledge of Christ."³

Let these words be remembered in connection with these unscriptural distinctions as to Paul and Baptism. And in view of the fact that it was given to, and observed by, Paul as much as by Peter and John, may we be saved from making such distinctions to our own loss and to the obscuring of Truth for others.

It must be evident as we consider the references to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1. that they are misapplied, and that this is done (perhaps unwittingly) with the object of making persons think lightly of Believers' Baptism; and in that consists the distinct wrong done by those who have introduced them into the question.

¹ Vol. XIII., etc. ² "Letters," Vol. III. p. 449. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

V.

THE COMMISSION.

To compare the writings of John, Peter and Paul that we may learn in the things of God, is one thing; but to do so for the purpose of disparaging John and Peter, or the other Apostles, and exalting Paul, is offensive because unscriptural. For that reason it was important to show that Paul's words, 1 Corinthians 1. 17, were wrongly applied. It is also needful to show that he must, in regard to Baptism, have acted upon the same commission as the Twelve, or else have acted apart from one altogether. Scripture certainly does not contain any warrant but the one, Matthew 28., Mark 16., and on that one Paul, equally with others, was baptized, and then he baptized others at Corinth, as elsewhere.

The upholding of Infant Baptism seems to necessitate on the part of these writers the denial that we have a command in connection with Baptism. For if there is one, it certainly is for believers, and for them only; therefore the effort made to reduce Baptism to "a form," "a christening," "an introduction to the public body," and also to deny the command.

Thus J. N. D :—

"I see the twelve sent to baptize, but not Paul. It is an external but beautiful ceremony which all received evidently underwent, though there was no commandment to baptize Jews."¹

"The only direction you have to baptize is Matthew 28., but this was from resurrection, not from ascension, and only Gentiles."²

¹ "Letters," Vol. II. p. 558.

² "Letters," Vol. II. p. 233.

Nothing could be plainer than this. J. N. D. held and taught that Matthew 28. was the only command; yet not for Jews, but for Gentiles. But, while so positive as to this, he never seeks to explain why Peter, a few weeks after this commission was given, baptized on the Day of Pentecost, JEWS ONLY! Mark the words: only one commission—for Gentiles only—not Jews. These statements raise the whole question, and that is whether, in the face of the Baptism of the three thousand, etc., J. N. D. was correct in thus writing? I would say, Clearly not. Peter was one of those who were addressed, Matthew 28., and on the first day (as Scripture records) that he preached at Jerusalem, when Jews from many nations¹ were present, he also spoke of Baptism, and they were baptized.

To revert to "The Letters":—

"Next remark, that they had no direction to baptize *at all*, save the commission in Matthew (though at the same time that was only to the Gentiles); but as none other is given, I always use that of Matthew."²

Samaritans as well as Jews were baptized—thousands before one Gentile. Passing strange if J. N. D. were correct in saying, "No command for Jews," but for Gentiles only! It is in reality no more true than when he writes that there is no command to the believer. W. Kelly, writing at a time when linked with J. N. D. in service, etc., says:—

"Remark the absurdity of making this the only commission to baptize. For on the face of it, either Mark 16. warranted Peter and the rest to baptize the Jews, or the Apostles baptized them without any commission whatever from the Lord."³

The tract in question contained such false doctrine, as to faith following Baptism in every instance, that it had to be withdrawn. But the writer was evidently led into it by the subtle reasonings of others. It is most dangerous and unscriptural to state that the Apostles had no com-

¹ Acts 2. 5, etc.

² "Letters," Vol. I. p. 497.

³ "Examination of a Tract," p. 3.

mission to baptize Jews when they did so, and it is coupled with the absurd inconsistency of approving the action. Yet could it be approved unless based on a command given? So also to say that there is a command to the baptizer, not to the baptized, is most mischievous.

“I admit that there is no *command* for infants to be baptized; it would suppose a moral effect. But there is none for adults—there is to the apostles to go and baptize the nations they had brought into discipleship.”¹

“The baptizer alone had a command!” But how did his command run? “Make disciples, baptizing them.” Is that the verse in which the command is found? If so, is it not exceedingly simple? Would not such a command of necessity include the “disciple” in it? How could the baptizer fulfil the command unless there were those who, having been made disciples, were then willing to be baptized? And who would make them willing? Surely the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, and not man. Intelligent action is looked for. Supposing it were a fact that the baptizer alone had a command, what would prevent the one he wished to baptize saying, “I do not intend to be baptized”? But the baptizer urges, “I have a command.” “You may have one, but I have not; and if yours does not include me, though *you* would be able to say you had acted upon God’s Word, *I should not!*” What could be said to such a reply? Nothing by one who, taking for granted J. N. D. to be correct, simply repeats his words. But J. N. D. told a “Quaker” he ought to be baptized because he never had been. But why? That he might “orderly” come into “the House,” and be in “the circle where the Holy Ghost rules.” One could not be surprised if the Quaker had said: “You tell me this, and yet you say, I am not commanded to do so. Why, then, do you command when God does not? I am

¹ “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 336.

a believer, saved by grace and in Christ; what shall I gain by acting on your command?" "But, my friend, you are not in the House," he would be told. "Wonderful fact!" he exclaims. "Why, the Spirit of God knew where I was, and He drew me to Christ, who saved me by His grace. He was at no loss to find me, nor had He any difficulty in bringing me." But (according to this theory of Baptism) such an one would have lost an immense deal. His parents did not secure for him all these privileges of outward position, such as belong to the baptized mass in Christendom, including murderers, thieves, rogues, etc., etc.!!! If a Roman Catholic priest had "done it" for him all would have been well; though J. N. D. would have said it was "*irregular*" (whatever that may mean), still he would have counted it as Baptism, and all these doubtful privileges would have been gained, and the position occupied from a few days old! Then, if one with the stigma of "Baptist" put upon him had said, "Scripture shows you should be baptized," J. N. D. would have replied, "No! you have been so, though irregularly in form; and it would be being baptized over again." F. W. G., on "The Commission" (p. 27), represents one as asking, "Is not Baptism a command?" And if we answered, "Yes, it is commanded," his next question is, "Have you then for yourself obeyed this command? It matters not what your parents may have in your infancy done for you, have you obeyed it for yourself?"

Thus, fully seeing that to uphold Infant Baptism they must destroy in the minds of Christians the thought of there being any obedience in connection with it, he adds:—

"Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them," was to the eleven. It was their commission, and defined their duty. Of course I do not mean but that it shows also the Lord's will plainly enough, that people should be baptized. Nor do I mean, God forbid, but that His mind, expressed to us in any way, is not as authoritative, and as simply to be obeyed, as any command whatever. Of course it is. But then we gather His mind surely from the way in which He had spoken. . . . He

does say to some, 'Baptize.' And if, in obedience to that command, I have been baptized in infancy, there is none other relating to me on that subject to be obeyed by me" (p. 28).

Thus he begs the question entirely; and whereas he starts with the bold statement, "no command," edges round to it as fast as he can:—

"If I were a believer, and yet *unbaptized*, I could understand the Lord's mind as to Baptism to be as strong to me as any command" (p. 28).

To enable the reader fully to grasp this line of reasoning (utterly false though it be—necessity arises for it from false views) I give another extract from the tract:—

"As regards Baptism in particular, it is perfectly certain that, according to Scripture, it is not a matter of obedience. The proof is this: when the eunuch of Candace comes to water he asks, 'What does hinder me to be baptized?' an expression which, if it were obedience, could have no place."

Why not? Surely it could be obedience, and at the same time one wishing to be obedient could ask such an one as Philip, "What doth hinder?" for if (as we believe) only a believer is to be baptized, and in being so he enjoys a privilege, as well as becomes obedient, it would be his first and his anxious question of the only one who could baptize him (for Philip was alone with him). "What?" Implying that he saw no reason himself; questioning Philip as to whether *he* did. But to resume, J. N. D. added:—

"Further, the obedience of a heathen or a Jew to a Christian precept, when not yet within, not yet admitted among Christians, is an absurdity contrary to the whole nature and principle of Christianity. Another case shows evidently that the notion of obedience is foreign to Baptism. Peter says, 'Can any man forbid water . . . which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' Both these cases prove that it was a privilege desired or conferred, and not an act of obedience—admission amongst Christians the act of the baptizer on behalf of the Assembly, not of the baptized. The truth is, there is no command of Christ to *be* baptized, there was *to* baptize, and it could not be otherwise; Christ could not, as to Christianity, give a command to those without. If the

man is within, it is by Baptism, so that there can be no command to be baptized. The importance of this is, that it shows that the baptist system falsifies the whole nature of Baptism."¹

If particularly strong and bold statements were enough, then the views advanced in the above extract would be well supported! There are a number of propositions dogmatically laid down by J. N. D. in it, which need at least to be carefully separated and analysed. The first is as to obedience. Here, without any hesitation, he not only writes that Baptism is not an act of obedience, but that, until baptized, a man is without, and until within by Baptism, he cannot be obedient! So that, although the eunuch had believed (after Philip had expounded to him Isaiah 53., and preached unto him Jesus) yet he was not within (one without cannot render obedience—Baptism brings within!). The eunuch was not baptized—therefore he was not within—therefore he could not render obedience! So reasoned J. N. D., correctly enough if his premises were correct; but, alas for him! they were false. Where did he find them in Scripture? He assumed here, as in every letter on the subject, that it was so, but he gave no Scripture. According to J. N. D., being without he was a Jew—a Jew still—though a believer, and able to say, "What doth hinder?" Unable to be obedient, and not a Christian, until the Baptism was over, and he was within! But not so the Scripture, which plainly teaches the very opposite: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great number of the priests were OBEIENT to the faith."²

"To the OBEIEN^CE of faith."³

"But they have not all OBEYED the gospel."⁴

One is at a loss to conceive how, with such simple

¹ "Letters," Vol. II. p. 328.

³ Rom. 1. 5 (Margin and R.V.).

² Acts 6. 7.

⁴ Rom. 10. 16.

scriptures before him, J. N. D. could have written so absurdly. Utterly at a loss, but for the fact that it was a necessity either to separate obedience from Baptism, or to give up Infant Baptism.

If priests (not yet baptized) at Jerusalem could be obedient to the faith, so could the eunuch, and, when obedient to the faith, they could be obedient in the next thing: Baptism. The way in which he plays upon the words "without" and "within" is sad indeed; not applying them to the real position before God, but first and altogether to the position assumed before man. The eunuch had obeyed the gospel, and was no longer a Jew. He had believed and was received by God. He rejoiced in the One who was wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities, and he had peace. J. N. D. is silent as to all this, able, seemingly, only to regard the man in his relationship to Philip and believers. Again, he brings obedience into contrast with privilege. According to him, if one fulfilled a privilege in being baptized he could not obey a command; but Scripture does not so deal with the matter. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."¹

Could there be a greater privilege than that of obeying the Lord? If a mother singles out one of her children to run an errand for her, that child in going quickly is showing obedience and enjoying a privilege; for it is both when flowing from love. What would one think of saying to the child, "You have been obedient, but not privileged"! Baptism is a command, and a privilege as well, and so the believer finds it to be; but when Infant Baptism has to be defended, then all command must be taken away, seeing that an infant knows nothing of it. Thoughts that flow in the channel of Infant Baptism are contrary to God's thoughts, and when first heard by us are counted strange.

¹ John 15. 14.

God forbid that our ear should ever become accustomed to them.

Before passing from this part of our subject, it will be necessary to refer to F. W. G.'s statements in connection with it, seeing that he does not confine himself to the assertions made by J. N. D., but goes beyond, and, by reference to the Greek, seeks to maintain that the discipling is accomplished by Baptism. He writes:—

“ ‘The commission binds me to baptize believers, and no others,’ says one. ‘To make disciples, and baptize them,’ says another. A third asks for an express warrant to baptize infants, and finds none in the commission.

“ Now it is remarkable that the passage which draws forth these remarks says absolutely nothing about believers, nothing of adults any more than infants, nothing about the Baptism of disciples. This last is indeed the only point open to question; and that is soon settled by a slight inspection of the original. For the word *μαθητεύσατε* (*mathēteusate*), translated in the margin of our Bible ‘make disciples,’ is a simple verb, and not a verb with a noun following. Strictly, it is not ‘make disciples,’ but ‘disciple.’ The difference is plain. If I say ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them,’ it may be at least open to question whether ‘baptizing *them*’ means baptizing nations or disciples. But if I say, ‘Go and disciple all nations, baptizing them,’ there cannot be the least question that ‘them’ refers to *nations*. Now in this case the argument as to baptizing disciples is gone irrevocably. And further, it is not said, ‘Go ye and disciple all nations, *and* baptize them,’ but ‘disciple, baptizing.’ . . . I understand baptizing to be given as a form of discipling. I do not confine discipling to that, because I find it added, ‘teaching them to observe all things,’” etc.¹

He then concludes by saying:—

“ And while, inasmuch as Baptism is discipling, and is in order to training up for God, we could not, in the case of adults, baptize any but such as were by grace made willing to sit at Christ's feet and learn of Him; along with these, if we are to be guided at all by the words of the commission, we should have to baptize their infant children.”²

Thus, while F. W. G. rushes boldly into the statement that “baptizing them” means *nations*, which, if true, would mean that any and all were to be baptized (and

¹ F. W. G., pp. 32, 33.

² F. W. G., pp. 34, 35.

more especially if, as he asserts, discipling is by baptizing), he limits himself at the end to adults by "grace made willing," etc., and "THEIR infant children."

Looking very much as if, after making the path, he hesitated to walk to the end of it himself!

Every point is strained, and Greek introduced in order to sustain what was to him the vital point in connection with Infant Baptism. Not only so, but he refers to Greek in such a way as to catch the unwary and simple, for he assumes. He is careful not to refer to it as a moot point even, or as a question which might be doubtful. "It is, soon settled by a slight inspection of the original." And then to his own satisfaction he settles it; and if the many who are unacquainted with Greek accept his statements, then they are involved in confusion and doubt, even if they are not led to give up Christian Baptism as previously held by them. And this it is that makes it so serious. While F. W. G. may have undoubted right to print what he believes, it is gravely to be doubted whether he acted wisely in referring to Greek as if there neither was nor could be the smallest difference raised in connection with it. And apart from such a thought, which may not weigh with him, he might have paused ere he referred to Greek, when such reference might result in many having to doubt his real scholarly ability to do so, as a mere cursory acquaintance with the language would enable one to sift such statements, and therefore to find that they are not only contested, but that thorough Greek scholars (of all shades of thought as to Baptism) utterly repudiate them. As a fact W. Kelly (being then with F. W. G. and J. N. D.) was writing about the same time "An Examination" of the tract from which I have already extracted, and in it took up the very point:—

"But what can one say of the assertion that Baptism is the means of making these heathen disciples? Who doubts that even the least esteemed in the Church can judge this to the writer's shame? Need I quote

John 4. 1 to prove the folly of the thought that baptizing is the means of making disciples? 'Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.' . . . Had the participle translated baptizing been like *πορευθέντες* (*poreuthentes*), in the aorist, before the verb *μαθητεύσατε* (*mathēteusate*), there would have been a ground of argument; as it is there is none."¹

Thus it does not appear to be so "soon settled by a slight inspection." Perhaps it was because F. W. G. only gave it a slight inspection that he fell into such a blunder! Quietly to assume thus in print that references to Greek will pass current does not always do. And let this case be a warning to Christians not to take in every new doctrine that comes to them as the result of altering "the Version" known to them, and by a reference to Greek entirely unsupported save by the assertions "slight inspection," "soon settled," etc.

But again: F. W. G. imagines his point proved when he asserts that the word "them" refers to "nations," and not to "disciples." Overlooking the fact that *τὰ ἔθνη* (*ta ethnē*), "the nations," are neuter and aggregate, *αὐτοὺς* (*autous*), them, masculine and individual.²

I think I may safely say that the more fully we inspect the original, and the more accurately we grasp the grammar in connection with these words, the further we get from F. W. G.'s dictum. And the more we become acquainted with the number of able Greek scholars who are utterly opposed to F. W. G. on the point, the more surprised we become at his audacity, and the more pained to think that he could have left his simple readers, unable to ascertain for themselves, in ignorance of the fact that it was not considered by others to be so simple or so soon settled. In view of his not doing so, one cannot wonder at the tone of indignation in W. K.'s sentences quoted above in connection with John 4. 1. "Need I quote?" says W. K.

¹ Page 4.

² See Bengel's *Gnomon in loco*.

“Most needful,” one has to say, “and most needed by F. W. G.”

“Jesus made and baptized.” Could anything be plainer? Not made BY baptizing, but made disciples AND baptized them. Thus John 4. is simple, and soon settles, and settles beyond dispute, for all who bow to the Word, the fact that Baptism is not discipling in any sense of the word whatever. There is no need to refer to Greek construction or grammar. Here it is beautifully plain for the youngest and the simplest: “MADE AND BAPTIZED.”

Before proceeding further, it may be for the benefit of some readers to enable them to look up for themselves the different passages where the word μαθητεύω (mathēteuō), “make disciples,” occurs:—

Matt. 13. 52—“Every scribe (which is) *instructed.*”

„ 27. 57—“Who also himself *was* Jesus’ *disciple.*”

„ 28. 19—“And *teach* (make disciples of) all nations.”

Acts 14. 21—“And *had taught*, many, they returned.”

These passages very plainly show its real meaning; no outward act is conveyed by it, but in each case instruction involving mind and heart. No adult could be disciplined by Baptism, nor could an infant be.

And if F. W. G. were correct as to “them” meaning “nations,” and “discipling” meaning “baptizing,” then the Apostles should have gone forth baptizing every one straight before them. But this was not what F. W. G. wanted to prove. He asserts in the boldest fashion “them,” and then limits it to “adults by grace made willing, and *their* children.” How crooked the path becomes when Scripture is departed from!

But to return to what is spoken of as “the Commission.” Is there not a laboured, unscriptural way of writing about Matthew 28. even by some who do not (one is thankful for it) go as far as F. W. G. or even J. N. D. ?

Let the reader carefully note that that which is recorded in Matthew 28. was the closing scene and the record of

the last words of the Lord Jesus as uttered on the Mount of Olives. But that scene is also recorded in **Mark 16.** and **Luke 24.,** and those words are also recorded, but only in part and as suited to the different gospels in which they respectively occur.

MATT. 28. 18, 19, 20.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, etc.

MARK 16. 15, 16, 19.

And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. . . . So then after the Lord had spoken unto them He was received up into heaven.

What we now get separately the disciples received at one time. Years elapsed ere the gospels were written. The gospel had been preached as far West as Rome (if not Spain) ere Mark wrote. We now have the complete record and separately in gospels that undoubtedly present different aspects of truth.

The Master of the House is prominent in Matthew. The servant in Mark. The command in the one is brought out, the obedience of the believing one in the other.

Christ risen, but no ascension named, in Matthew. Christ risen and ascended in Mark.

All this, when seen and carefully used in our application of Scripture, is most helpful, but, when carried to excess, results in leading into error, and strengthening it.

It is all important, therefore, to remember that the disciples addressed heard all in one last discourse from the Lord Himself, and then acted upon it, long ere it was in either gospel. And I am persuaded that we are right therefore in asserting that they acted upon authority—the authority of the Lord's own words. How miserable the expressions in the "Letters" already quoted which would lead us to believe that the words when spoken (afterward

to be recorded by Matthew) were the only commission given for Baptism ; but not for Jews, for Gentiles only ! Yet while refusing any commission to the disciples, J. N. D. acted upon it himself, because he had no other ! Does not this prove what I have stated, that *seeing* what is called dispensational distinctions is one thing, but to carry them beyond their place is to help on error ? How many now-a-days, scarcely knowing what they affirm, are talking learnedly about Matthew 28.—“It is not for us.” “It is not for the Church.” “It is for the Gentiles.” Going to the length of taking away these verses from the Church altogether. If they are correct, then there is no commission, no authority for us to act on. What did Peter mean when he said : “This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel” ?¹ Did he go on to say that was its exhaustive fulfilment, and that, seeing it applied *then*, it could not apply in a future day ? We know he did not. But just as that scripture could be fulfilled *then* and yet remain to have a *future* fulfilment in the latter day, so with Matthew 28. 19. “All nations” may be an expression that looks forward ; but it certainly was spoken to and acted upon by the disciples long before it was written by Matthew. Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, were all baptized. Men of various nationalities were discipled, baptized, taught—on what authority ? On that undoubtedly of the Lord’s own words, as found complete when Matthew and Mark are both read.

What are we to think of F. W. G.’s bold statements referred to : “The passage . . . says absolutely nothing about believers, nothing of adults any more than infants, nothing about the Baptism of disciples” ?² Yet he wrests it to teach that “Adults made willing by grace and their infants” are in it ! Certainly neither adults nor infants are in it. But “discipled ones,” as believing ones, are in

¹ Acts 2. 16.

² F. W. G., p. 32.

Mark 16. Yet such *only*, for neither here nor elsewhere in Scripture do we find the remotest reference to infants in connection with Baptism, either in the teaching of the Lord or the practices of His servants. It remained for a corrupt Church, with its already formed system of nuns, to institute that which until then was unheard-of.

VI.

“HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.”

IT now becomes necessary, in reviewing the Tracts, etc., before us, to see what they say in connection with the “Households” of Scripture. In so doing we shall find the writers are in no way different from others who before them have sought to bring Infant Baptism out of these Scriptures, save in the temerity with which they make bold assertions which they cannot support, and go to a further length—not only teaching that the infants of a believer should be baptized, but all in his house. Here they do not all hold together, a fact worth noting as we go along. I have to pass over “The Letters” of J. N. D. as to households, as, save a passing allusion in one, he never refers to them at all, basing all upon Matthew 18. and 1 Corinthians 7. Others, again, include the children and perhaps the wife; but some boldly state that all in the house should be baptized, servants as well as children. S. M. A. says:—

“It may be said there is no proof he (the jailer) had any children, or, at least, young children. I answer, this does not at all affect the point, which is that all his were connected with him in outward blessing and privilege, and therefore were baptized; and what is insisted on is that this principle includes the very youngest child. It was, as we have already shown, an instance of admitting the house, with the head of it, into the place of privilege. Are they entitled to this on account of their relationship? And if so, they assuredly ought to be baptized. And whether they are adults or infants is not the question, provided they are in the house, and, therefore, under the authority of the head of it.”

Thus unmistakably does S. M. A. teach Household Baptism. Mark, it is not Infant Baptism that he would repudiate,

nor adult. The head of the house brings all in it on to the same ground of privilege with himself. Equally true of a grown-up family still under the authority of the head of the house.

Thus, while most keep back from such alarming statements, S. M. A. (and he is not alone) clearly avows his belief in the baptism of adults still with their father. "All under the authority of the head." No matter what their life—no matter what open sin they were indulging in—S. M. A. avers they were to be baptized; nay, more, that they were so. Most wicked and appalling statement, as all are bound to admit when they remember this act of baptizing into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was apart from faith and the cleansing blood. In their sins, and the Name to be named upon them! How horrible the thought when the light of history is shed upon it, and we learn that men from earliest years of manhood practised the vilest sins in the name of their deities, and all excesses were gone to.

Yet S. M. A. would have us to believe that when an idolater in Corinth or elsewhere was converted to God every adult under the authority of that one was to be equally baptized and brought into the place of privilege!

Alas for those who can follow such as S. M. A., instead of turning with shame and disgust from the very thought that the Name of a Holy God should have been linked with such evil. It is abhorrent to one who thinks what it implies.

As has been stated, S. M. A. is not the only one who pursued this line of teaching as to adults. W. B., writing in 1875, says:—

"I did not conceive it possible that adults would be baptized by them, without some evidence of a work of grace in their souls, but I am astonished to hear that this is now earnestly advocated as an important part of *Church* truth. Even 'open rejectors of Christ' are to be baptized if in the household and they will submit. 'Drunkards' too, seeing that

the Holy Ghost dwells and works within the circle of the baptized, and all outside are in the domain of the Devil!

“An aged and esteemed brother has baptized a servant girl, and other baptisms of adults, unbelievers, have followed. I wrote to those concerned in the baptism of the girl, and my questions, with the replies, are as follows :—

“QUESTION.—‘On what ground is the privilege of Baptism granted to this girl?’

“ANSWER.—‘On the ground of my (the mistress’s) responsibility to God as the head of this house. I do not hold “Infant Baptism,” as it is called, but baptize my child as part of my household, which this girl is also.’

“QUESTION.—‘What, in your thought, is the present position (*i.e.* after her Baptism) of the girl in respect to the Lord Jesus, to the Church of God, and to the world?’

“ANSWER.—‘Scripture tells me that she is now *in* the church, *out* of the world, and subject to the Lordship of Christ’ (the italics are the writer’s, but no Scripture given.)

“She also said :—

“‘I would not have an unsaved servant in my household who refused to let me teach them of Christ, and none has a right to be taught who is not baptized.’”

W. B. proceeds to say :—

“Wishing to learn the thoughts of those who were labouring at the time where this Baptism took place, I asked them their judgment. Two openly avowed the fullest fellowship with it.”

Here we have the plainest evidence that “an aged and esteemed brother,” a lady, and two who laboured, were all of one mind in the carrying out this teaching of S. M. A.

Without the slightest reference in the Word of God to infants being baptized, those who now hold this doctrine have to try and find some passage from which they can extract it. This may seem severe, but let the reader remember that Roman Catholics, as well as large numbers of others who make up the bulk of those who practise Infant Baptism, never attempt to find it in the Scriptures. Nay, more, they deny that it is there, and rest it upon tradition. Also the fact is not to be forgotten that, so far as history goes, there is not the faintest trace of it until the third century, when it took its rise in Egypt.

Conjecturing and inference are resorted to, and, worse, as we have seen in the course of our inquiry, and will now have to see again, the Greek is referred to as if none could dispute the teaching brought out.

A large class of infant baptizers content themselves with saying, "But there were households." When challenged as to number, they are in many cases surprised to find they are limited to three as to which Scripture says they were baptized, and more surprised when told that as to the jailer, he "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," and that the house of Stephanas "addicted themselves to the Ministry of the Saints";¹ certainly not a very infantile pursuit.

Thus they find themselves limited to but one, Lydia's,² who could say "*my* house," which certainly would not have been her language if she had been married, seeing that woman's position then and in the East was a very different one to what it is in modern times in the West.

On seeing for themselves that Lydia was a long way from home, engaged in business, therefore with others working for her, and, above all, on reading verse 40, "And when they had seen the brethren," in Lydia's house (which could only refer to those of it converted at the same time, and therefore they are called brethren),—on seeing all this, many have been compelled to give up their vague notions, with the result that each Scripture read brought out the more clearly the simple fact that Baptism is for believers only.

But S. M. A. and F. W. G. would quickly have told them, "You are not aware that there are two different words in the original translated house. But, though translated as if they meant the same thing, they do not; and one of them means the family." But it will be well to let them state it in their own words:—

¹ 1 Cor. 16. 15.

² Acts 16. 15.

“Two different words are used in chapters 1. 16, and 16. 15 (1 Cor.). In the first place it is οἶκος (oikos), a word which strictly applies, in New Testament usage, to the children of the house (where applied to persons); whereas the word οἰκία (oikia) in the other passage is *never* so applied in the New Testament, but rather to the servants. Both alike are translated in our version ‘household’ or ‘house.’ The children had been baptized of Paul; the servants had devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”¹

I may notice that F. W. G. is not the originator of this utterly untenable distinction. Mr. Charles Taylor in America, and others there, taught it over fifty years ago; and concerning it one then said:—

“It is ingenious but untenable, the terms being *both* used of the *same* households, and having no more difference in them than the terms *brothers* and *brethren*.”

And a Mr. Howell speaking also in connection with it said:—

“In view of this explanation, we remark that the house of the jailer is called (Acts 16. 31) οἶκος (oikos), in the very next verse it is called (32) οἰκία (oikia), and again in the second verse from this (34) οἶκος.

“Assume as correct the criticism given, and you would read: ‘Paul and Silas went into the jailer’s house and preached the gospel to him and to his infant children, the servants (who, it seems, lived, not in a cabin or in a kitchen, but with the master) believed. He did not, however, baptize the believing servants, but proceeded to baptize the jailer’s infants, his οἶκος *as separate* from his οἰκία!’”

Another tract has come before me in which this difference is pressed.²

It is peculiar that this tract is headed “Private,” seeing that it is sold at 7s. 6d. per 100, and is solely occupied with what professes to be the true unfolding of Baptism. In it we read:—

“In the case of redemption by blood, we read, ‘They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house (οἶκος) of their fathers’ (Exod. 12. 3).”

¹ Page 24.

² “Scripture on the Symbols of Christ’s Death.” This paper may be had of Cooper & Budd.

Then in a note at foot:—

“If you continue to read this Scripture, you will find the word *οικία* used twice when it is a question of eating (or communion), but when it is a question of protection, *οἶκος* (*oikos*) is invariably the word. There is a very interesting analogy between the change of these words here and a change of the same words in 1 Corinthians 1. 16 and 16. 15.”¹

But for this reference to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the LXX., I should not have needed to refer to the tract, as, apart from that, it proceeds on the same lines as S. M. A.

The writer seems to take for granted that his readers will know that these quotations are from a translation; if not, he certainly ought to have informed them. But, when he set himself to search for authority in the Greek of the O. T. for the support of his theory that the two words are used very differently, it would have been well for himself if he had gone further and examined the Hebrew, the original language itself. For one glance at the concordance would have demolished his distinctions, so dogmatically put forth in connection with Exodus 12. Let us read it again: “You will find the word *οικία* used twice when it is a question of eating, but when it is a question of protection, *οἶκος* is invariably the word.” Such a sentence leads the simple to suppose that every point has been examined, and that these highly spiritual distinctions are fully established. One can imagine such, in the future, saying, “You see verse 4, that implies ‘eating,’ and verse 3, ‘protection.’” “Indeed! and how do you show that?” “Oh, the words are different; *οικία* is in the first, and *οἶκος* in the other.” All highly satisfactory till the query is put: “But is it so in the Hebrew as well as in the Greek translation?” Alas! the card house is demolished; for *οἶκος* and *οικία* are indiscriminately used as the translation of ONE Hebrew word, which

occurs nearly two thousand times from Genesis to Malachi. Thus "house," Exodus 12. 3, is exactly the same as in verses 4 and 7. The one Hebrew word, בַּיִת (ba-yith) is found in both, and all through. What becomes then of the "very interesting analogy between the change of these words here and a change of these words in 1 Corinthians 1. 16 and 16. 15"? The fabric disappears with the false foundation on which it was reared.

The fine-drawn distinctions, whether as to O. T. "protection" and "eating," or N. T. "family" and "servants," are alike a self product, as the evolving of the web from the spider itself; and, whether intended by the writer or not, certainly used by Satan to take captive God's people. At least, those of them who, instead of searching and proving, are apt to say, "How profound!" "How deeply interesting!" "What a spiritual brother! how deeply taught!"

Another sentence, and one may dismiss the tract into its own privacy, with the sincere hope that its writer may consign it to its proper oblivion.

Referring to Acts 16. 34:—

"The phrase, 'with all his house,' is only one word in the original, and an adverb (πανοικί)."

Then in a footnote:—

"πανοικί (householdly) would express his act in ostensibly bringing his own to the place in which he then stood in this world under the authority of Christ, rather than their act in accepting the privilege."¹

Let W. Kelly answer him:—

"Large-hearted and intelligent men on all sides admit that the households of Scripture decide nothing as to this. There may have been no infants, or, if there were, the household might be said to be baptized without including them, because of the nature of the case. We hear of people baptized,—men and women,—but not of children; we read of servants of the Lord brought on their way by the brethren with wives and

children, but never of children where Baptism is in hand. If it be a truth and a privilege intended for the children of the saints, does this look like His provident wisdom and way? He knows that multitudes of His own are not subtle-minded, but simple, and would prefer one word of clear Scripture, in doctrine or precept, or example, above all the theories that ever were spun, even if they could lay hold of them. They feel suspicious when one advocate rests much on the adverbial form, *πανοικί* (*panoiki*), Acts 16. 34; another on the difference between *οἶκον* and *οικίαν*, 1 Corinthians 1. 16, 16. 15; especially as those who ought to know as well, with similar views in general, reject these criticisms. When such evidence is caught at with eagerness, the candid must own that real proof must be sorely wanting.”¹

Sorely wanting, indeed! and it will be well if Christians, instead of being easily beguiled, are on the alert, and suspicious of these references to Greek.

There can be no excuse for a writer not informing himself as to the Hebrew ere he plays upon difference of words in a translation. In not doing so he is as foolish as if he sought to build distinctions upon two English words for the same Hebrew.

The house of Jairus, whose daughter Christ raised from death, by Luke² is called *οἶκος*, and in the same chapter,³ he calls the same house *οικία*. Mark⁴ calls the same house *οἶκος*. In the parable of the house attacked, Matthew calls it *οικία*,⁵ Luke, *οἶκος*.⁶ “Into whatsoever house (*οικία*) ye enter first say, Peace be to this house” (*οικίος*).⁷ How plain the Scripture! How distorted and stumbling man, as soon as he comes to Scripture, not to learn, but to obtain that which can be made to support, as he thinks, his belief! I trust enough has been written to show that no such support exists, and also to make Christians exceedingly careful to see that when assertions are made they can be distinctly shown to be in the Word itself.

To recapitulate that the reader may have the matter fairly before him:—

¹ Exam. Tract, p. 2.

² 8. 41.

³ Ver. 51.

⁴ 5. 38.

⁵ 24. 43.

⁶ 12. 39.

⁷ Luke 10. 5.

LYDIA'S HOUSE (Acts 16.).

1. Being named as hers would be in itself a sufficient proof she had no husband.

2. The proof that she had would lie with the one who asserted it, and such proof can never be found in Scripture, which is absolutely silent as to it.

3. Some 300 miles away from her own town, engaged in business, her house, it can be easily seen, would be composed of her workers.

4. As seen from verse 40, Paul and Silas being freed from the prison, went where the only "brethren" could be found—they of Lydia's house. Brethren whom they could "comfort," not children or servants, brought on to "Christian ground."

Note: if a husband and children, he as well as they, though unsaved, would have been included in the Baptism according to these theories.

THE JAILER'S HOUSE (Acts 16.).

Note verse 32: "And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." What, then, becomes of the thought that it was only a question of the jailer himself, and that all his were only baptized because he was?

Verse 34: "And rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

"Thus the meaning will be, rejoiced that he, with all his house, had been led to believe God" (Alford Greek Test.).

So Alford; but not so S. M. A., who would enfeeble it thus:—

"It is in the original, he rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God. It was a happy household now that he was saved."

Alford shows it means that that was true of his house which was true of him—he believed, they also; he rejoiced, so did they. But S. M. A. would make us believe that they were happy because he was saved!

Think of unsaved members of a house, dead in trespasses and sins, happy because another member of it had been convinced of sin, and by grace saved! What saith the Scripture: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."¹ "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;"² yet S. M. A. represents those old enough to be happy, and intelligently happy, as being unsaved themselves, though baptized and happy because the jailer was saved! To what lengths can men go in their determination to work out their theories!

To conclude: the house heard the Word as well as he, and believed as much as he, and were baptized with him, as equally saved, and through faith in Christ.

It may be well to note from the use of the word *oikos* (*oikos*), "house," in 1 Samuel 1. 21, "And the man Elkanah and all his house went up," that it does not of necessity include every one in the house, for in verse 22 it says, "But Hannah went not up." The word is used, yet Hannah and Samuel did not go.

Thus, when it has been proved (and it has never been done yet) that there were infants in one or all of the three houses—Lydia's, the jailer's, Stephanas'—of which alone Scripture records Baptism, then it must be also shown that of necessity such infants are included in the expression.

A very difficult task in view of Elkanah's house: "All his house went up." Perfectly true, though Hannah remained, unable to go because of Samuel's age.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS (1 Corinthians 1.).

Here F. W. G. creates a difficulty where there is none, that he may solve it in his peculiar style, so as to prove the Baptism of a family outside the assembly.

¹ 1 Cor. 1. 23.

² 1 Cor. 2. 14.

"The baptized family were outside the assembly.¹ That is the only key to what is otherwise inextricable confusion. Baptism is reception into the kingdom; and they were in the kingdom, not in the Church."²

And this, because he chooses in the most absurd way to read, "I thank God that I baptized *none of you* but Crispus and Gaius," with a full stop, as if the sentence was not prolonged and added to by the words, "And I baptized also," etc.

He makes the Apostle say distinctly that he had only baptized two, and then teaches that if the household of Stephanas were in the assembly, then Paul contradicted himself! But where is Stephanas in all this? For though the head of the household, he was a part of it! And if he alone was in the assembly, and not the others, F. W. G.'s difficulty would be as great. But there is no difficulty. One would say far more trifling than difficult.

His difficulty (he refers to it on pp. 23, 24) consisted in making distinction between *οἶκος* and *οἰκία*, but he quietly got over it after he had made it, and thus sums it up:—

"The children had been baptized of Paul; the servants had devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints."

I have shown how impossible it is for any to substantiate such a distinction, and no one is to be met who makes it save those who, in spite of plainest proof, choose to shut their eyes and maintain it at all hazards, because to let it slip would be the letting go of what they advocate as the main, if not the only support of their false doctrine.

¹ The italics are F.W.G.'s.

² Page 23.

VII.

“ELSE WERE YOUR CHILDREN UNCLEAN.”

WE have now arrived, in the course of our Reviews of “Letters,” etc., at the passage which, strange to say, J. N. D. made the most of. Strange, because there is not the slightest allusion to Baptism in it, nor is there the smallest reference to the bringing of children into any position whatever!

Two extracts will be quite sufficient from “the Letters,” as, where this Scripture is referred to, it is nearly always in the same language.

“If a Jew married a heathen, the Jew, who was holy, profaned himself, and the children had no title to be received as holy. Grace reigns now, and, if one party be converted, this one sanctifies the unbeliever, and the children are holy, and have a right to the privileges of the place of God set up in blessing, as in the Jewish case he had not. The child is not sanctified, but holy in contrast with unclean; that is, in Scriptural phraseology, has right to come in.”¹

“Is a Christian parent obliged to leave his child outside with the Devil, or allowed to bring him in where the Holy Ghost and the care of God’s house is? Scripture tells one that children of a Christian parent are holy, have a right to be admitted, are not as children of a Jew who had married a Gentile unclean—that is, unfit to be admitted among God’s people, but holy. I know it is said the husband was so too. It is not true where the sense is looked to.”²

Before pointing out the falsity of several statements made in these extracts it may be better to examine the passage in 1 Corinthians 7. with the object of seeing what it applies to. The Apostle was asked as to what was to be

¹ “Letters,” Vol. III. p. 465.

² “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 59.

done in the case of husband or wife being unconverted. Was separation between them necessitated? His reply is, "No." The Old Testament applied to Israel in its earthly position. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them"¹ absolutely prohibited such an alliance as that of a Jew and a heathen. And when made contrary to the command, then in a later day the word through Ezra was: "Separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives."² Nay, more, Shechaniah "said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God."³ And they put away not only the wives, but the children born of them. It was this action in connection with Israel that evidently caused Paul to write as he did in reply, calling attention to the fact that if, under such a Scripture, they had to put away their unsaved wives, they would on the same ground have to put away their children. "Else were YOUR children,"⁴ not *theirs*. How many commentators might have saved themselves from ingenious and elaborate arguments on this passage about the legitimacy of THEIR children meaning the children of a mixed marriage, if they had only taken note of the word "YOUR," meaning all the children of saints in Corinth, even though both parents were Christians. For the words YOU and YOUR take in all in this Epistle. If a wife is to be separated from her husband because unclean, then children, all unbelieving children, must be acted toward in the same way.

¹ Deut. 7. 3.

² Ezra 10. 11.

³ Ezra 10. 2, 3.

⁴ 1 Cor. 7. 14.

Another thing to be specially noted is the word "holy" in contrast to "unclean." That which is true of the unbelieving wife is also true of the unbelieving child; the one is no more accounted holy than the other.

The wife and the children of all in Corinth "holy" to whom? Those with whom they were, and from whom they would have had to be separated on the supposition that Ezra 10. was to guide them in their conduct.

Notice that same word is found in connection with "meats" in 1 Timothy 4. 4, 5. It means no more when applied to children than when applied to meats. It is no more than ceremonial cleanness that is referred to. Is there a word about Baptism? Can it be found in the chapter at all? It is entirely apart from the subject. If children, because holy to their parents, were to be baptized, then wife or husband ought to have been, or these verses that put them on the same level would be incorrect. I know that these theories have reached the length now of Baptism for "all in the house," therefore unsaved adults, if any in it, servants, etc., and all on the ground of the husband's individual faith; but I am not aware of any teaching that on wife's faith husband should be. But as C. H. M. puts it:—¹

"As to 1 Corinthians 7. 14, there is nothing about conversion on the one hand, or Baptism on the other."

Where in the chapter is there the slightest thought of a "position" not Christian, not heathen, yet "away from the Devil, where the Holy Ghost is"? Or where the thought of "coming in," for J. N. D. said, "that is, in Scriptural phraseology, has right to come in"? The verse says, "now are they holy." What has that to do with coming in? Nothing whatever! F. W. G., taking up same Scripture, differs from J. N. D. The latter says,

¹ "Things New and Old," Vol. XX. p. 140.

“baptize because holy,” but F. W. G. “holy because baptized.”

Writing in connection with verse 14, he says:—

“This will make it plain why children are in this place spoken of as holy. It is as having place in the kingdom that they are so.”¹

One is amazed that J. N. D. and F. W. G. did not pause ere they wrote thus. According to both of them (they have not the smallest doubt), children were baptized in Corinth. How is it then that Baptism is not introduced in this passage, just when to do so would have been not only to settle the minds of saints at Corinth on the point in question, but also for all time to set at rest any question as to whether children should be baptized or not?

Instead of “Else were your children unclean,” etc., Paul should have said, “Are you not aware your children are holy, because they have been baptized?” But he did not, for the very simple reason that they never had been. The whole matter of Baptism is dragged in by men at their wits end for some passage by which to substantiate their theories.

How beside the mark all these words, “right,” “position,” “leave his children outside with the Devil,” are can be easily seen by one who holds to the truth and refuses to accept mere statements of men.

As if a few drops of water from the hands of a priest could ever bring a child into a position, and, worse, as if the refusal to allow it on the part of Christian parents was the “leaving outside with the Devil,” when constantly praying for the real conversion of their children they look to God to accomplish it by His Spirit and Word. How a sacramental theory can stick even to a Christian and hinder, as it certainly did in the case of J. N. D.!

¹ Page 25.

“OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” (Matt. 19. 14).

This verse, as well as those in Matthew 18. concerning children, is also used in support of these views.

“The Scripture will have infants received; they that receive them receive Christ, and of such is the kingdom of heaven, and the child of a believing parent is holy. I do not doubt for a moment that children dying are received as saved into heaven (see Matt. 18.). It is monstrous to think they cannot be received by the Church on earth.”¹

Did it never occur to J. N. D. that in the above extract he was comparing things that differ, and treating them as if they referred to the same thing? He starts with infants, therefore all, and all whether dying young or not, but then he slides off by “the child of a believing parent is holy” to a *class*—a part, and only a very small part—for the infants of believing parents are scarcely to be spoken of when the enormous number of infants all over the world are considered.

“The Scripture will have infants received.” Bold statement! but he never referred to the Scripture which “will have it.” Clearly enough, however, does he teach that this receiving was by Baptism, or by the “irregular” sprinkling; not only so, but seeing that Baptism, according to him, is “the act of the baptizer,” and, however irregular, by whomsoever performed (believer or unbeliever), is accepted of God, every one thus treated in any and every sect, however corrupt, has been received and is henceforth in the house, outwardly Christian.

“I do not doubt for a moment,” he says, “that children dying are received as saved into heaven.”

He adds: “It is monstrous to think *they*” (to be consistent he should have added the dying, but he does not so limit—“they” with him means “all infants”)—“it is monstrous to think they cannot be received by the Church on earth.”

¹ “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 333.

But infants dying in infancy and being received into heaven by the Lord Himself has no parallel with infants living, being received by the Church on earth.

If infants dying are received by Christ, then there can be no question that it is true of all infants in all nations. As true of those in heathen lands as of those in any other miscalled Christian land.

But until such die in infancy, will any one be bold enough to say Christ has received them? J. N. D.'s proposition practically amounts to this. An infant dying (*i.e.*, when dead), Christ will receive into heaven, therefore the Church should receive whom? a dying or dead child? No, a living one who may never die in infancy! Christ's reception into heaven of such an one is after death. If any one speaks of Christ as having received an infant before, he affirms that which is not true; this once seen, it is easy also to see that Matthew 18. has nothing to say concerning Baptism at all. It is false reasoning from beginning to end. "The Church on earth receives by Baptism,¹ and should do so, monstrous if it does not!" yet Christ has not received; nay, more, they have received tens of thousands in this meaningless way who have grown up to rush into sin, and, alas! this is equally true of the children of believing parents in many cases. They all seem to confound "*of such* is the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 19. 14, with "*theirs* is the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 5. Two very different thoughts.

"Years ago, one said to me, when speaking of ministerial labour, a sentence which I never forgot: 'Our business is to bring Christians into the consciousness of their position in the midst of a great baptized house' (J. N. D.)—*i.e.*, to make them conscious that there is a Church of God on earth, a body of Christ of which they are living members. This sentence was one full of meaning and power to my own soul."²

A sentence so remarkable arrests attention. "Full of

¹ So J. N. D.

² F. G. P., "Paul's Doctrine," p. 36.

meaning and power," he says. What was? The notion that his business was to bring Christians into the consciousness of their position in the midst of a great house, and this sentence was given him as J. N. D.'s. How like it is to another one of Dr. Pusey's in 1879, when, as president of the English Church Union, he said to them:—

"The first point is to get people to believe in their Baptism."

He went the full length, and believed to the full in the old teaching of the "Fathers" so called of fourth and fifth centuries; namely, the actual regeneration of the baptized one. But both are on the same lines of error, and both wrote of Baptism as a sacrament. The "lustration" of the child by Pagans perpetuated! For it is nothing but Christianized Paganism. One would have people "remember their place in a great baptized house," the other would have them "believe in their Baptism."

"There is sacramental introduction into the place of blessing which does not secure a person."¹

If all this is not evil doctrine, I know not what is. Though it comes in the guise of spiritual phrases and under the authority of names, it cannot be received or tolerated by any one who has learned for himself, from the word alone, the place Baptism occupies there. It is *not* a sacrament, it brings into no position. It involves no privileges—save the privilege a Christian has in obeying it. It is sufficient to quote such sentences, one would think. They carry their own condemnation with them. They are abhorrent to a Scripturally taught believer, to be turned away from as savouring of a Popish-Pagan origin, and as containing in them all the subtle error that is ever to be found in Sacramentalism.

¹ "Letters," Vol. III. p. 464.

VIII.

WHAT IS BAPTISM THE SIGN OF?

It remains but to notice the views put forth in connection with that of which Baptism is a sign or symbol. For, as the object has been specially to review the most important points referred to in the "Letters," etc., there is no need to attempt in these papers to take up every detail in connection with the subject. The analogy between Circumcision and Baptism has not been referred to. Let the Christian see the place the former occupied from its first introduction, and there is no difficulty left to deal with. Suffice it to say that it was for living children of an earthly people, as Baptism is for living children of God belonging to the heavenly family. Those who talk about Baptism having taken the place of Circumcision might as well speak of the Lord's Supper as having taken the place of the Passover, and the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath, as if the latter had been changed into the former.

The notion that Circumcision has thus been superseded should be left to those who (ignorant of the fact that Israel will yet be restored) speak and write as if all the judgments recorded as the result of Israel's rejection of their Messiah had fallen on them, but all the blessings scattered throughout the Old Testament had become the possession of the Christian Church. The covenant is not rescinded. "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance,"¹ and the time is hastening on when Israel shall be saved, and shall again have their place in the land.

In writing on "Else were your children unclean," etc.,

¹ Rom. 11. 29.

I took the opportunity of showing that if there had been such a thing as Infant Baptism in Paul's days, he would not have reasoned as he did, but simply stated that their Baptism proved their position.

So in reference to Circumcision, and with greater force, it applies. If Baptism had taken its place, why did not James say so, as the question so sorely troubled, almost to the causing of division? Yet Acts 15. is silent as to it. Why? Simply because Baptism had *not*, but they were looked at and spoken of as being entirely apart. And what shall we say as to Peter,¹ who refused to eat because certain were not circumcised? These two passages leave us without excuse, if we allow ourselves to be troubled by such so-called analogies.

The teaching connected with Romans 6. of necessity comes in, as (if the teaching there and in other passages is that Baptism is a sign or symbol of the death and resurrection of the believer in Christ) the infant, not having faith, and not being in Christ, cannot be spoken of as being thus united to Him in death, burial, and resurrection.

So J. N. D. writes:—

“As many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ. They were not baptized because they had already done it. None but those who are in principle Roman Catholics suppose that the work is done in it, but it is the sign of dying and rising again, not of being dead and risen. No Sacrament is a sign or profession of what is done, but of the doing of it.”²

It is significant that J. N. D. (never having given up the old teaching of the Church of England on Baptism as to its including the infants of believers) was careless as to immersion being adhered to, although he believed that alone carried out the meaning of the Word. Yet he considered that sprinkling or pouring was sufficient, though he calls them “irregular.” Just as he continues the use

¹ Gal. 2.

² “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 329.

of the term "Sacrament," seemingly never seeing what gross error links closely with the word. He finds great fault, in the extract given, with those who say Baptism is a sign of being dead and risen with Christ. It was necessary for him to do so, or his own position would be proved at once untenable. He says it is a "sign of dying and rising again"—rather a confused thought, to say the least of it.

Did he mean the "dying and rising again of the Lord Himself," or "dying and rising again" as an abstract fact, or as being true in or at the time of Baptism? If the last, then he would make out that it was done by the sign, which he says only Roman Catholics do. The one who has believed is dead, and risen with Christ as the result; and Baptism is the symbol of it. It is refreshing to turn from the vague, meaningless sentence given above to the plain and conclusive words of Charles Stanley:—

"Baptism is a most striking figure of our identification with Him. Buried once unto His death, now for ever one with Him in resurrection. As He died only once, and rose again, so there is one Baptism. The believer is buried once in water, and then for ever out. We have not to die or be buried again; we reckon ourselves dead with Him, and alive again. It is very blessed when once the figure of Baptism is understood."¹

It may be well to note here that the passage Galatians 3. 27 was the one in particular which fixed J. G. Bellett in his judgment as to Baptism being an act of a believer only, and that led him clearly to see that Baptism was immersion. Thus he wrote to C. E. M. Paul, of Exeter:—

"Oct. 4th, 1842.

"I believe that Galatians 3. 27 more fixed my judgment as to Baptism than any Scripture, for it told me that Baptism was the intelligent act of a believer, the personal act of one's own faith, so to express it. I do not see in 1 Peter 3. 21 anything to give the mind a pause. For while it owns that the answer which the conscience is enabled to give when it

¹ "Things New and Old," Vol. XXIX. p. 224.

reads and receives the value of the resurrection of Jesus is the great thing, still it *implies* the putting of a believer's body under water."¹

Baptism is a profession of having died with Christ. "Know ye not that so many of us were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?"² In other words, we, at our Baptism, set forth that the old Adam life is laid down in the grave, and, having life in Christ in resurrection, we walk with Him in newness of life. Paul's whole argument is: "What! continue in sin? You who are baptized? What! do you not know what it means? Do you not know that you profess to be dead and buried with him?" But it goes much further. Christ did not remain in the grave, nor does He leave us there. He is risen, and we in Him,³ and the appeal is to those who are thus raised up. Their Baptism speaks to them; it testifies to them that there must be no living to the flesh. Death to the flesh there should be; no living in it.

Who can make this profession? Can the unbelieving world make it? Can unconscious infants? Certainly not; and therefore the effort to get rid of resurrection in connection with Baptism, and to make it stop short at burial, or, as is said by advocates of Household Baptism:—

"Romans does not look at believers as risen with Christ at all."⁴

Significant that this kind of teaching started in connection with Infant Baptism, and increased in volume as fresh adherents were gained, whose constant occupation seemed to be to make light of Believers' Baptism, and to attempt to rob it of one of its most significant teachings—namely, resurrection!

Surely Scripture is definite enough. "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath

¹ "Showers upon the Grass," p. 44.

² Rom. 6. 3. ³ Rom. 6.; Col. 3.

⁴ S. M. A., p. 9.

raised Him from the dead.”¹ A risen man in Christ is to live as dead to “vain rudiments” and philosophies of the world. Thus Baptism, precious in its teaching, is full of import for the believer. But for the unbeliever or infant it is but a meaningless form, or, if anything more, it is by constituting it a Sacrament—that in which “they are to believe,” or that by which they gained a “position.”

Did Christ ever mention the Baptism of an infant? Did He command it? Did He perform it? We know there is no such mention.

Did the Apostles? No. Is there to be found some example, plain and unmistakable? No, again it must be emphasized, no! No precept! No precedent! No example! Nothing of the kind can we discover in the Word.

How then can the want of that which God hath not enjoined endanger salvation or hinder blessing? How can it be supposed possible that Infant Baptism is of God when these are facts undeniable. I again repeat, “No precept! No precedent!! No example!!!” Nothing do they give us but distorted Scripture or doubtful Greek. Or, as we have seen, an attempt at originality and deep teaching, as the result of harping on a supposed difference between two words in a translation both of which stand for one word in the Hebrew language, in which the Old Testament was written:—

“Baptism is just christening—that is, the introduction into Christianity, and nothing else. Every other view of it is unscriptural and false.”²

J. N. D. thus wrote imbued with his notions, clinging to the traditions of the old National Church, which he had stepped out of early in life, but taking with him this great evil, Sacramental nonsense—the introduction of an infant by Baptism into a position.

¹ Col. 2. 12.

² “Letters,” Vol. II. p. 38.

It is doing the very thing that is so solemnly spoken against in Colossians 2. "Holding the head" we fully learn how incurably evil the flesh is, and learn the impossibility of God's taking it up.

The Baptism of any but believers as such is an unmixed evil, for it occupies flesh with itself, and gives men in mere nature to pride themselves that they are something, and that they have something in which to glory, whereby they differ from others.

Therefore, to repeat the sentence of Dr. Pusey, the effort is to get "People to believe in their Baptism."

There is nothing in this so-called Baptism but the religion of the flesh: that which man can see and glory in.

Take away entirely the thought that it does something for the infant, and you at once remove that which is the stronghold for it. Let parents clearly see that it is no Sacrament, and that it is a meaningless form where the one baptized has not himself living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they will turn from it with disgust, and wonder how they could ever have been ensnared. The brick has been substituted for stone, and the slime for mortar, in this Babel-building. But the Christian who stands on the simple word alone refuses the thought, and is enabled to remain distinctly apart from the rubbish around, built up as the result of man's intellect working to the introducing of that which pleases the flesh. The success of Infant or Household Baptism lies there, and the multitude who hold and practise it are the sad witness to that success and to the extent that Satan has been enabled to work in and through it. That Christians may be delivered from it is the reason for these papers; and the earnest desire of the writer is that they may be used to that end, and thus lead to more complete bowing to the Word of God, and to the Word alone.

APPENDIX A.

“HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM. A Review of Objections.”

By F. W. G.

This is the title of a 40 pp. tractate by the above writer, which has just reached me from Canada.

There is little in it that calls for notice, for, as a fact, it is chiefly a reiteration of what he had issued before.

“OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM.”

Under this heading he writes:—

“Consider that of old in His kingdom He had always had babes. That cannot be disputed.”¹

If by this he meant that babes, male and female, were in the nation of Israel as the result of natural birth, no one would dispute it, but at once agree, and then ask what connection there was between babes introduced thus and the baptized babes of professed believers, who are written about by F. W. G. as if they, and they only, were in the kingdom, whatever that may be. There is no connection between the two at all, and such a sentence can only result in throwing dust in the eyes of the simple, who may be prepared to receive anything from his pen, or in awakening suspicion, as it rightly should do, in the minds of those who challenge what they read by the word of God.

Then he adds:—

“He (Christ) was receiving from their parents’ hands those that the law enjoined to be received.”

But he omitted to give the reference in the Old Testament to the passage in which the law so enjoined! Where is it?

¹ Page 13.

Bold assertion again is supposed to pass muster. Were these children in and of Israel or not before they came to Christ? Surely no one hesitates for an answer. Christ received because the law enjoined, and the disciples did not want the law acted upon! Where is all this save in the imagination of F. W. G. If "old wives' fables" would apply to anything, assuredly it would to such nonsense. The law enjoined circumcision at eight days old. This by "household baptists" is generally looked upon as on the same lines with their baptism, but surely F. W. G. is not going to say that they were brought for that purpose to Christ, and the disciples wanted to refuse it to them.

He is combating "C." who has said (so F. W. G. avers) that "suffer them to come," means "suffer them to believe." No doubt F. W. G. is right in keeping to the word "come," but what he builds on it is all wrong. They came in spite of the disciples, but were they baptized? But were they baptized? F. W. G. says "No,"¹ and adds, "For the kingdom was not yet, nor therefore baptism into it. *When* this should come, *then* baptism for them would express in His own personal absence what at present He here gives them assurance of!"² Thus Scripture is added to. For there is not a vestige of Scripture that links the "personal absence" and baptism.

He further adds:—

"They are Mine: you as delegates for Me bring them up for Me."

But there is not a word of all this in the Scripture in hand.

"DISCIPLE AND DISCIPLING."

Under this head he repeats the unscriptural teaching that discipling is by baptism,³ in direct defiance of John 4. 1, "Jesus made AND baptized more disciples than John."

See remarks on this on pages 42 to 48, where I have fully dealt with the matter.

"But the keys were given to Peter, and to Peter alone!" F. W. G. quotes from an objector, and then adds, "It is not said *alone*." It certainly does, and F. W. G. should have known it.

¹ Page 29.

² Page 29.

³ Page 20.

“I say unto *thee*” (singular) (Matt. 16. 18).

“I will give unto *thee*” (singular) (Matt. 16. 19).

And, as he knows, the expression “keys” is never used in connection with the Apostles elsewhere.

“Keys” refer to administrative power, and were committed to Peter alone, as the verse above given shows.

F. W. G. is wiser than Scripture when he asserts that keys mean “key of knowledge” and “key of baptism.”

Such a style of acting with Scripture leaves room for the introduction of any false teaching. It only shows at what a loss any one is for Scripture on this “Household Baptism.” A 2 pp. leaflet is enough clearly to state Believers’ Baptism, but it needs many a page with ingenious yet confused statements by which to urge the other with Scriptures brought in like this one, in which there is not the slightest reference to baptism.

“*oikos* (oikos) and *oikía* (oikia).”

No less than six pages out of the 40 pp. are taken up with an attempt to prove from the LXX. and Greek translation fine-drawn distinctions, utterly without foundation, as shown previously on pages 52 to 59. He starts with the modest assertion that

“The baptism of households is then a thing of course.”¹

It certainly is “a thing of course” that all he builds on *oikos* (oikos) and *oikía* (oikia) in O.T. falls to the ground once the Hebrew word is turned up, and, as I have before stated, that Hebrew word is found to be indiscriminately translated by “*oikos*” (oikos) and “*oikía*” (oikia). But if Household Baptism is ever believed, it is by those who take a great deal as a “thing of course” because F. W. G. boldly states it.

In conclusion, I can only say that if flat denial of John 4. 1, if reference to a translation and not the original, if specious statements and weak arguments on “the kingdom” and “the keys,” if adding to the Word of God by putting Baptism into passages that have not the remotest allusion to it, if all or any of these can help to support the false doctrine

¹ Page 32.

of "Household Baptism," then certainly all these are to be found in the mischievous writings of F. W. G. on the subject.

Those who are in the same fellowship with him may well feel uncomfortable. As they evidently do—therefore the pamphlets of "C." (Craig), J. J., and others. Yet how feeble in many points they are because of that link. They admit the evil of the doctrine, yet are compelled to listen to its being taught, and to know, if not to see, it practised. The leaven is leavening, and gradually, but surely, out from such circles the truth of Believers' Baptism is being driven.

R. T. HOPKINS.

MELBOURNE, Jan., 1894.

APPENDIX B.¹

"Does the fact that a believer has been, after his Conversion, baptized by aspersion prevent his being received to the Lord's Table?"

"Would such a believer who sincerely believes in that mode of baptism, and who works for the Lord in an Assembly of God, be considered—he being in all other things of one mind with believers gathered to the Name of the Lord—a fit person to take part in the public testimony for the Lord?"

These two questions are so connected that I would seek to take them up in one answer. Yet such answer, as it must of necessity be short, it is difficult to give so as to take up each point.

I pass over the wording "received to the Lord's Table" with the simple remark that Scripture is silent as to any such reception. As readers of *Needed Truth* sufficiently well have had pointed out to them in various articles, reception is into the Fellowship, and not to an act.

We are "gathered together." Then the act from time to time we continue steadfast in.

Again, it may be well briefly to note the word "sincerely,"

¹ Reply to questions sent to *Needed Truth*.

and to point out that an act done in the Name of the Lord will never be made right because done *sincerely*, nor will it thereby be rendered acceptable. Only can it be so as Scripture leads to it. Scripture, not sincerity, is what we have to look for. However sincere one may be, therefore, in his teaching or practice, he must have Scripture for that which he advocates and seeks to do.

Again, I would point out that if a Christian sincerely believes that Scripture teaches "aspersion," then, having submitted to it himself, he will seek to teach others also to submit to it as he has done. This brings us at once to the simple query, "Where is such a thing to be found in the Word of God?" "Aspersion" (or "Sprinkling," the word better known and commonly used) is not the translation of the Greek word "Baptisma." There is a word for sprinkling, and it occurs twice—"Rhantismos."

"To the blood of *sprinkling*" (Heb. 12. 24).

"*Sprinkling* of the blood" (1 Pet. 1. 2).

And the verb is found in Hebrews 9. 13, 19, 21 ; 10. 22.

If the Greek language had been defective here, and contained no word for sprinkling, then one might have excused a person, perhaps, for imagining that "Baptisma" might express that.

But when not only is a word for sprinkling used, but also six other words connected with water, then surely all should see that a specific, fixed, and invariable meaning is fastened to each word.

However *sincerely*, therefore, one had submitted himself to aspersion (sprinkling), a scripturally taught saint would say to him, "I do not question your sincerity, but I will not accept your teaching, nor will I for a moment accept your act as that of baptism." Such an one is as much an unbaptized person as any other one who has not yet been baptized (immersed) in water.

One who was unbaptized and owned it could not do the harm that one could who represented himself as obedient to God's Word in baptism because he had been sprinkled, when, whatever his sincerity, he was not baptized according to God's Word. David was sincere enough when he put the

Ark of the Covenant on the new cart (2 Sam. 6. 3), and he rejoiced in his deed (see ver. 5), but he had only copied the Philistines, and, in so doing, displeased the Lord. But David learned; and when (mark it) he had learned himself, then he could teach others and say, as he instructed the Levites to bear it on their shoulders, "For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15. 13). He learnt that the Word of the Lord had to be obeyed down to its (seemingly) smallest injunction, and that God hated the copying of Philistines' ways. Sprinkling is not of God, and therefore is not for God, but is a substitute of the world for that which He has given—namely, immersion.

That being so, could instructed saints allow the thought that it could be taught in His assembly? Or could they take on themselves to say to one, "You may teach on all points but this?" Why, a *sincere* believer in aspersion (sprinkling) could not agree never to speak of that which he believed, any more than rightly taught saints could allow for a moment another voice to be heard in their midst, confusion thus being brought in, and young ones stumbled, as one said, "immersion!" and another "aspersion!"

In conclusion, I would only add that surely every effort should be made by Christians taught in the Word to help such an one when they meet him; and he, if sincere and anxious for all to "speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1. 10), should be most willing to open the Word, to take that, and that alone, as his guide. And surely when, as quickly he would, he found that there were so many Greek words connected with water, expressing fine shades of distinction, he would pause ere he said baptism was sprinkling; and once he learned the deep spiritual meaning of baptism it would be utterly impossible to do so. Therefore simple souls, who know nothing of Greek, and who are quite ignorant of these various words, are never troubled, because they have learned from Scripture:—

"Buried with Him in baptism" (Col. 2. 12).

R. T. HOPKINS.

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