

Reasons for my Faith as to Baptism

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REASONS FOR MY FAITH AS TO BAPTISM.

THE scripture that bids me be ready to give an answer to every man that asks a reason of the hope that is in me (1 Pet. iii. 15), may, in the spirit of it, if not the letter, be the justification of the present paper. Among many of those with whom I have the fullest sympathy and fellowship in spiritual things it is plain that there is more and more question of such views as I must acknowledge mine,—branded even as heresy by some; by others, considered at least to be the result of laborious reasonings—the fruit of intellectualism intruding upon what is the province of faith (—of “leprosy in the head,” as some claim). On the other hand, of all that to my knowledge has been written upon the subject,—and this will be thought, perhaps, a sufficiently damaging admission,—I am aware of nothing that exactly expresses the doctrine for which I am willing to be held responsible, and which I believe to be the doctrine of Scripture upon the subject. If, then, “*all* Scripture be profitable,” it would not be of faith to hold back what in my apprehension it teaches upon such a matter as baptism. Even for those who after all may never agree with me, it may do what is of more importance even than this,—it may show how little the faith as a whole is affected by different views about it, and how those who so differ

may preserve unhindered the unity of the Spirit, and walk in love and peace together.

It is our common shame, indeed, that, with regard to a simple external rite such as this is, Christians orthodox and evangelical, and professing adherence to the Bible only, should yet be unable to agree upon almost any point in connection with it,—form, subjects, meaning. Amid this wide spread confusion, there is little ground indeed for self-satisfaction, much that should keep us humble and distrustful of ourselves. What a reproach, if after all the long patience of God with all of us, we are unable still to have patience with one another, even perhaps enough to understand one another's speech!

On the other hand, it must be confessed that in the traditional creed upon the subject errors so gross and corrupting have been maintained—preserved in measure even in the creeds of the Reformation, that it is scarcely to be wondered at if that should seem the only true view which was in every way farthest from the "Babylonian" one, and which, in its adoption, would remove at once all danger of contamination with it. Nevertheless it has to be asked whether the truth does not most naturally lie between the extremes,—whether it is not rather, in general, by the perversion of some truth that Satan prevails among Christians, rather than by the introduction of a whole lie in absolute contradiction to it. If it be so in this case, the extreme recoil from traditionalism will not be found the point of rest but, in fact, will favor oscillation toward the traditional.

Our business is with Scripture, which the writer desires to have brought in the fullest way to bear upon all that is here put forth. He dreads not the keenest criticism, but invites it. Every untruth exposed is a

advancement of the truth itself; where the truth is known, it is yet a buttress for it.

I. THE CHURCH OF GOD.

WE need, first of all, to see with what we must *not* connect—or entangle—the doctrine of Baptism: the idea of baptism into the *Church*,—that is, of water-baptism introducing into it,—must be named in order to be refused, in whatever form it may be presented.

What *is* the Church as we find it in the New Testament? On the one hand, it is a body—the body of Christ. Its members are of Christ—*living* members of Christ, for there are no others.

What *forms* this body? No human power, clearly; none is competent: it is the baptism of the Spirit only. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Nor do I take up now the confusion of this with water-baptism, which is habitual in traditional teaching, except to say that when the apostles were baptized of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, (comp. Acts i. 5,) there was plainly no water-baptism at all. As plainly, it was not new birth that the apostles then experienced, but the gift of the Holy Ghost that they received. (Acts ii. 33, 38.) This gift, as something additional to new birth, is that which distinguishes the Church as united to Christ on high: “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 17.)

But the Church, as indwelt of the Spirit, is also spoken of as the “house of God,”—a building which Christ builds, and which is composed of “living stones,” just as the body is of living members. (Matt. xvi. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 5.) In this way, the body and the house are plainly but different aspects of the same thing: in extent, they are exactly the same.

But there is another aspect of the house also, which we find both in Ephesians and Corinthians. In Ephesians (chap. ii. 20-22), there is the double thought of the Church—as being built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, *growing* to a holy temple in the Lord, and of a *present* “habitation of God in spirit.” Here, human instrumentality is seen; and in Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 10), the apostle Paul claims himself to be a “master-builder,” and to have laid the foundation, warning those who follow him how they build upon it. The foundation, as he says, is Christ,—the truth as to Him which the first inspired teacher communicated. All after-building is by teaching,—teaching by which are influenced and fashioned those who accept it. Building and edifying are thus the same thing—in the original, the same word. The care was to be as to the material used: “gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble” (v. 12); and these materials therefore refer primarily to *doctrines*. The day is coming, says the apostle, which will try all,—a day in which the fire will try (and “our God is a consuming fire”) every man’s work of what sort it is. “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as through the fire.”

So, in responsibility for the present time, the house of God is being built. But, alas! what responsibility did man ever come under in which he did not fail? So have the builders failed in this case; and thus while in the first epistle to Timothy the apostle writes that he may know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, in the second he makes only mention of a “great house,”

i. which are vessels of gold and silver, of wood and earth, and some to honor, some to dishonor. And now the word is, that "if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."

I do not here go further into the doctrine of the house, because it is clear that whatever builders might in fact build, and with whatever far-reaching results, nothing can affect the fact that *Christ's* building is only of living stones, and that the Church, in either aspect, is thus one thing essentially: none but the living form any part of it. Also as to introduction into it, the two things by which alone any are introduced into it—new birth and the gift of the Holy Ghost—neither is in man's hand to bestow.* Man cannot form or introduce into the Church; he can but recognize what God has done.

But here we are brought at once face to face with the view that many have with regard to baptism. They would say at once, That is just what we believe baptism to be—the recognition of the work which God has done, and which He alone could do, in souls. Just as Peter, when the descent of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his house had taken place, asks, "Who shall forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

But this is too partial an induction; for if we infer from this that baptism is therefore that in which we recognize that the gift of the Spirit has been received, how entirely out of its place must the same apostle have used it on the day of Pentecost, when he bids the listening Jews "repent, and be baptized, every one of

*The laying on of apostles' hands in certain cases, as at Samaria and at Ephesus, will be considered in another place.

you, for the remission of sins, and ye *shall* receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38)! How wrongly must it have been administered in Samaria, where it is stated that "as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (viii. 16.) And again at Ephesus, where we read of certain disciples of John, that "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them." (xix. 5, 6.) Here it is plain that if baptism with water be the recognition of the reception of the Spirit having taken place, Paul, Philip, and Peter himself must have been mistaken. It is simpler to believe that the inference from the case of Cornelius is the real mistake.

And the more we think of it, the more we may thank God that He has not appointed any ordinance as introduction into His Church on earth. The contention about baptism to-day perfectly illustrates the confusion which would have arisen. Have you been sprinkled or immersed? as a child, or an adult believer? What was the formula used? Into what faith? By whose hands? How many questions with which to torture my own soul or the souls of others! How beautifully the very case of Cornelius rebukes it all, where the Holy Ghost falls upon those uncircumcised and unbaptized; and to Peter, hesitating with his Jewish scruples about ordinances, the voice from heaven replies, "What *God* hath cleansed, that call not thou common"!

If, then, the Church is formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and we find in the inspired history of Christianity at the beginning that the Holy Ghost is bestowed *both after and before* the baptism of water, we may see clearly that God has guarded His Church

from any such usurpation of ordinances over it. Christ has "blotted out the obligation to ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. ii. 14, *Gk.*), *not* to replace them with Christian forms for Jewish: baptism and the supper of the Lord stand upon other ground than this.

2. THE POSITIVENESS OF THE GRACE WHICH THE CHURCH EXPRESSES.

Now, if we will consider but a moment what is implied in being a member of Christ, we shall see that there is in it a positiveness of grace such as was never expressed before, such as we can find nowhere else. In Judaism, the house of God was the temple or the tabernacle, not the people of Israel. The body of Christ was a thing unknown. A Jew might look forward to being under Christ, a happy subject of His righteous rule; but of being a member of Christ he could know nothing. Christ had not come, still less taken His place as the human Head of the Church in heaven. The Spirit of God had not come: there was yet no baptism into a body of which there was no head.

The Christian is a child of God, and there were children of God from the earliest ages of the world; but he has, as none had before, the Spirit of adoption, by which he is able to cry, Abba, Father, and to take his place thus *as* a child of God. He has received an everlasting salvation. He is in *known*, near, and eternal relationship, possessor of eternal life, though in the world, no more of it, but dead with Christ, quickened and risen with Him, seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

This is not the place to enter into or discuss the

nature of these blessings: for my present purpose, I must assume them to be known, as they are indeed the common blessings of Christianity, though unbelief and bad teaching may obscure them more or less for even the mass of Christians. But all these things imply a security of blessing which Scripture proclaims to us as to be held in full assurance of faith, never would cast a doubt upon, even for a moment.

The conditional texts, (and there are many in the Word of God,) are all, as it is easy to see if one will examine them with this in view, *tests of profession*: they never imply doubt as to the real child of God. They may say, "Lest, having *preached to others*, I myself should be a cast-away;" never "Lest, after being *born again*," or "justified," or "having eternal life, I should be a cast-away." That could not be supposed without upsetting the gospel. On the contrary, "he that *saieth* he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness"—now! But may he not once have been in the light? no: he is "in darkness *even until now*." (1 Jno. ii. 9.) And if some have gone out from the Christian body, the apostle is assured by that fact that they were not of it: "They went out," he says, "that it might be made manifest that they all are not of us." (v. 19, *R.V.*) So, if justified by the blood of Christ, "much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. v. 9.)

All this is peculiar to Christianity. In Israel under the law such blessed assurance was not attainable, however God might and did minister strength by the way. There was no "Abba, Father," from the Spirit of adoption. God was a Father to *Israel*, a family of the earth brought nigh to Himself, but such relationship involved no necessary salvation, as it implied no

new birth. The best saints had to cry, "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." (Ps. li. 11.)

Together under the law, and in the final uncertainty which sprang from that, servants but not sons, the congregation of Israel was a mixed gathering of saints and sinners,—what indeed men have made of the Christian "assembly," but as far as possible from what it was designed to be; the result, too, largely of that Judaizing process going on, which we see at work from the beginning of Christianity, and so steadily resisted everywhere by the apostle of the Gentiles.

3. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE relationship of God to His people Israel was that of King. The temple was His palace, the ark His throne, the human king but His representative, as it is said of Solomon, they "sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel." (1 Chron. xxviii. 5.) The law of Moses was the rule of this kingdom, the terms of the covenant between God and the people. (Ex. xxxiv. 28.) Of the covenant itself circumcision was the sign, although, as we know, dating from Abraham: the circumcised man was a debtor to do the whole law. (Gal. v. 3.) Every male in the household had to be circumcised, whether Israelite-born or slaves, and only in houses where this was observed could they keep the passover. (Ex. xii. 48.)

Israel's condition under the law was that of bond-servants (Gal. iv. 21-26); they had no permanent standing before God (Jno. viii. 35): so that even the children of God among them in spirit differed nothing from bond-servants. (Gal. iv. 1.) God has always been gracious, and the just have always lived by faith; but

“the law is not of faith,” and the questions arising out of this contradiction between the two could not yet be settled. Under Moses the nation went on with the accuser to the judge, and the Babylonian captivity saw the glory removed out of the temple, the temple itself destroyed, and Israel branded with the mark, Lo-Ammi, “not My people.” (Hos. i. 9.)

The kingdom was now committed to the Gentiles by Him who from heaven governs all things necessarily, as He always did ; but with no longer any recognized throne on earth. The Gentile empires that succeed are bestial and without God ; and though a remnant of Judah return to their land and rebuild once more the temple, they are still subjected to them, and the decree that has gone out is unrepealed : they are Lo-Ammi still.

So the Lord finds them ; but from the Baptist-messenger who has preceded Him a cry has gone forth of recall, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew alone uses this term, for which the other gospels substitute “the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are one substantially, whatever difference may be implied in the expression. The parables of the one are able to take their place unchanged as parables of the other. The difference seems to be that while “heaven” is the place of the throne (Matt. v. 34) it is God who sits upon it. The kingdom of heaven seems thus clearly distinct from that which had been in Israel. Then it was “the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth,” that passed through Jordan. (Josh. iii. 13.) At the end of Chronicles, in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, it is of the God of heaven that we hear continually. And if

this implies withdrawal, in a sense, from earth, where the throne is given to the Gentile, yet God's steps are never really retrograde, but in advance. Heaven is now to be opened to us, as Daniel shows us One who is the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. In Matthew, in the sermon on the mount, which is in fact the announcement of the kingdom as it will yet be when Israel shall receive their Messiah, heaven is God's throne, the earth His footstool, Jerusalem the city of the great King; and if on the one hand, there are meek ones (comp. Ps. xxxvii.) whose blessedness will be in an inheritance on earth, there are those whom the world has persecuted for Christ's sake, and whose reward will be great in heaven. Heaven and earth are indeed to be linked together now, as the book of Revelation very distinctly shows us, the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, coming down from God out of heaven, not exactly *to earth*, which is not said: there is no confusion between earth and heaven, as now so often made; and yet into such close connection that it can be said, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them."

This is in the "kingdom and glory" yet to come; but there is a phase of the kingdom now, in which it is joined with another characteristic expression, "the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus" (Rev. i 9), truly the kingdom of heaven, for He sits upon the Father's throne (iii. 21), waiting to take that throne of His as Son of Man, upon which He will be able to grant His saints to sit with Him. The distinction between these two phases of the kingdom is therefore abundantly plain.

When the Lord came to His own, the kingdom was in His person offered to them; and of that therefore

the early announcements, whether of the Baptist or the Lord, speak. But when it becomes plain that He is rejected by Israel, and in the eleventh and twelfth of Matthew He has declared their rejection and judgment in consequence, He disowns His merely natural ties, proclaims that His real kindred were those who did the will of His Father in heaven, and then, leaving the house, and sitting by the sea-side, He gives utterance to those parables in which the new phase of the kingdom is presented. (Chap. xiii.)

The ministers of Christ are "stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) And these mysteries are "things hidden from ages and generations, and now made manifest to the saints." (Col. i. 26.) All that we have seen of the Church as the body of Christ is such a mystery (Eph. iii. 9); but there are "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" also, which the Lord opens in these parables (xiii. 11): the parabolic form being evidence that we have in them what was hidden from Israel, according to the prophecy which Matthew quotes: "I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (*vv.* 34, 35).

Accordingly, we find in them such a state of things as in the coming kingdom cannot be. It is a kingdom which is brought about, not by the coming of the Son of Man from heaven, but by the sowing of seed—"the word of the kingdom"—upon earth. But here in many, in whom it seems to have taken root, there is yet no fruit. Contrary influences, the world, the flesh, and the devil, destroy much. Worse still, the enemy, not shut up as he will be when the kingdom comes in power (Rev. xx. 1-3), sows his own seed, what is not the word of God, but its semblance only, and tares are

found among the wheat, not to be removed till the day of harvest. Then indeed the kingdom seems to root itself in the earth, but to become itself earthly, and shelter the birds of the air, the powers of evil. And into the good bread of life itself the "woman," the professing church, puts the evil leaven which diffuses itself until the whole is leavened.

These are the pictures of the kingdom which the first four parables present to us. Every where we see strife of good and evil in it, and even that the victory does not seem with the good, but with the evil; until indeed the day of manifestation come, and angel-hands apply the remedy when the Son of Man again appears. The first parable gives, as we might expect, the secret of the whole condition. It is a kingdom of truth (Jno. xviii. 37), into which men are disciplined (Matt. xiii. 52, *R. V.*); and where discipling may mean very different things,—mere head-knowledge, barren profession, or continuance in the Word so as to be disciples indeed. (Jno. viii. 31.) Subjection to Christ may be nominal or real; they may say, "Lord, Lord," and not do the things that He says. But this lasts only till the day of manifestation; and when the kingdom comes in power, then it is written, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

4. THE THREE CIRCLES IN EPH. IV.

IN connection with the sevenfold unity of which the apostle speaks in Eph. iv., a threefold sphere of blessing is plainly to be seen, based upon the relationships of the Godhead to us. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your call-

ing; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all and through all, and in all." There are here three concentric circles: that of the Church, that of the kingdom, and that of creation. Let us look at them distinctly a little.

That of the Church is plain: "one body" is, of course, the body of Christ. It would be impossible to multiply this into many bodies, impossible to have more than one Church. The "one Spirit" unites together the members of the body, and animates them, uniting them also to the head. Then, as the "calling" of the Church is distinct, so must be the special "hope."

The second circle is not less distinct, one would think, yet it is much more disputed. "One Lord" should prepare us, however, to read aright what follows. It has been seen by many that Christ does not take ever in relation to His saints now the title of King. He does not the less reign, surely; and it is His grace only that avoids the distance which might seem implied. Christians are known as those that "call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." This is for us the title He is pleased to assume.

"One faith" evidently means what some would call one *creed*, not faith as the principle of dependence upon God, in which sense "one" faith would hardly be intelligible.

In connection, then, with "one Lord, one faith," we have "one baptism." This has been thought by some to be the baptism of the Spirit; but this, as what forms the body, would certainly have place in the first circle, and there would be needless, as one Spirit coupled with one body expresses already all. Moreover, "baptism" by itself naturally means the rite;

when used with other applications, other words are added in explanation. Water-baptism also, as we shall find fully as we go on, is that which is connected with the sphere of discipleship, that is, of the kingdom, as that of the Spirit is with the Church.

We have now a third sphere, one closing unity, "one God and Father of all, who is above (or over) all, and through all, and in all." This last is undeniably the reading of all the oldest manuscripts though the early versions have "in *us* all." I apprehend that the manuscripts are right, and that the "Father in us" is not a scriptural thought. It is said of Christ, and of Him alone, who was the Father's representative in the world. But if so, that would forbid the "over all and through all" being said of persons, though "Father of all" must of course be of persons. But how widely, then, does this apply? Is it of all *men*, or of all *believers*? It seems to me designedly left vague. Creation is that which gives the first ground of the title; but here the fall has brought in breach and disorder, and the Lord says to the Jews, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me." New creation must, therefore, come, and by new birth we are children of God in a nearer and more wonderful way than before. But new creation does not take us out of creation as such, in which man alone upon the earth has been the transgressor. "Over all, through all, in all," seems to take in the whole sphere of things wherein, blessed be God, we still find Him.

There are certainly here three circles. The Church is not the kingdom, whatever the comparative extent of these two may be. And the sphere of creation is different from either. But all this will become clearer as we go on: it is by the comparison of scripture with

scripture that, as in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word must be established.

5. THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM: ARE THEY JEWISH, OR CHRISTIAN?*

A QUESTION must now be looked at which is of the utmost importance to the whole inquiry. It has of late been taught by some that the parables of the kingdom in the gospels are Jewish, and not Christian,—that they refer to a future time, when the Church of God shall have been removed from the scene, and Israel be in the troubles of the last days, through which they shall be awakened and brought to God. Thus we must not take the kingdom of heaven as applying to the present time, with which it is in entire contrast; the kingdom now is only by the personal presence of the Spirit of God in the individual, and in no other way. Church and Kingdom now are therefore in the strictest sense conterminous: the rule of Christ is only by the Spirit indwelling, and this is what forms the Church, as we have seen.

The arguments as to the parables are these:—

(1) First, and really, as it would appear, the foundation one, the word “then” in Matt. xxv. 1, whereby the parable of the ten virgins is shown clearly to refer to the period and events of chap. xxiv. “It is *then*, when the wide world owns the sovereignty of the beast, (Rev. xiii.) that the kingdom of the heavens, comprising those who are undefiled by the universal worship (Rev. xiv.), shall be like unto ten virgins who . . . go forth to meet Him whom their soul loveth (Song i.

* By those who have no question as to the Christian application, this section may be omitted without loss to the general argument. It necessarily refers to views and details of prophecy which cannot be here fully entered into, and may thus present difficulty to those not familiar with the subject.

and iii.); but in the lull which precedes the storm of the great tribulation (Ezek. xxxviii. 8, last clause), they all slumber and sleep till awakened by the cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom' . . . Then all arise to testify against the teeth of the beast, the false prophet, and the whole world."

Now, that the "then" which begins the parable refers in some sense to the "period and events" of the chapter before will surely not be denied. If we turn to the questions of the disciples, to which the whole prophecy is in answer, we shall find that they are three: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the *age* (not world)?" For the Jews, the "present age" was the age of law, the "age to come" the age of Messiah. The coming of the Son of Man would, according to Daniel, introduce the latter, and thus end the former. passing briefly over the answer to the first question, (which Luke, chap. xxi., gives in full,) Matthew dwells upon the last two. The prophecy shows us, first, Israel, then the Church, and then the Gentile nations in connection with the end, giving, naturally, along with this, sufficient of their previous history to make all intelligible. Thus, in the parable of the talents (xxv. 14), He goes back to the time of His going away to heaven, before which He delivers them to His servants. Are these also (as they should be, to make all consistent with the new interpretation,) a Jewish remnant in days yet to come? That is impossible: the Lord is speaking of Christian times; and this parable of the talents is so connected with the previous one as to make it certain that this must be also Christian.

This by itself is enough; for the "then," while it does refer to the coming of the Lord, does not pre-

clude the history of what precedes. But there are other things, as the *going out* to meet the Bridegroom, which is not an idea suited to Israel, who abide on earth, and are *not* caught away to meet Him. Then whose is the Bridegroom? I should agree in this with those who hold the new views, that it is Israel's; but then the virgins and the bride must be distinct, as in this case they are not, but confounded. Others have, I know, made similar confusion from the other point of view; but there is no justification of it on this account.

(2) In the second place, it is urged that "in the parable, the wicked are gathered first; in what is now, the saints are gathered first, and afterward come with the Lord. In what is now, the saints are taken out and the wicked left for wrath to come. In the parable, the scene is cleared of the wicked; in this dispensation, it is cleared of the Church; and whereas the former does not occur until the consummation of the age, the last may occur at any moment."

The fundamental facts here are in no wise a new discovery of the writer's,* although he states them in a way which is careless enough when one considers his knowledge of much that has been written. In the parable of the tares, they are gathered and bound in bundles to be burned, and then the wheat is gathered into the barn. The interpretation carries the action of the parable further,—the wicked are cast into the fire, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Here, the righteous are seen to be heavenly saints, as the figure shows; and also *where*

* He owes them, with many others, to the labors of one whom nevertheless he does not cease to attack and vilify in the most open and shameless way, but to whom multitudes, with himself, owe the recovery of truths lost to the Church from the earliest ages. I do not defend him: his memory has no need.

they shine, for the kingdom of the Father is *not* the millennial kingdom of the Son of Man. But these *must* be the wheat of the parable, if the interpretation is interpretation at all. It must surely be, therefore, that the gathering into bundles, though an angelic act, speaks of something different from removal from the earth, as indeed the "bundles" would seem also to imply.

In the net cast into the sea, however, it is different. There, the wicked are taken out of the midst of the just; and there, by the same rule, if the interpretation is really that, then the parable must refer to something outside the present dispensation. The truth seems to be that the parables as a whole take in the whole time from the sowing of the seed of the kingdom by the Lord Himself on earth till the time He comes in glory; and thus take in the present Church-period, and that which follows it, the time of the going forth of the everlasting gospel as in Rev. xiv. In this way all is harmony.

(3) The objection that "these parables summarize all prophecy in relation to God's earthly people," and that "prophecy is not connected with the Pauline dispensation," for proof of which, we are referred to Eph. iii. 5-9, is in many ways strange enough. Of course, if they *do* summarize all prophecy as to Israel, they cannot—primarily, at least,—apply to the Church, the *heavenly* people: that is clear. But it has to be proved that this is what they do. And *if* they do, it seems strange that they should be said by Matthew himself to be of "things which have been kept *secret* from the foundation of the world." Surely that which was uttered by all the prophets could not at the same time have been "kept secret"! And the reference to

Ephesians is on this account still more strange. That *Old-Testament* prophecy does not speak of the "Pauline" dispensation is of course true, though the *New Testament* is not similarly silent.

Thus if the disciples professed their understanding of the parables, it could not be, as the writer states, from their knowledge of prophecy! That was only a knowledge of *old* things, to which the parables added now the new. (xiii. 52.) Moreover, they could understand, in general, the drift of these parables without the knowledge of the special Church-truth committed to Paul afterward, which is not revealed in them, however much it may enable us to understand better certain details of them.

(4) But it is inferred that the kingdom of heaven involves "the rule of the heavens, therefore of God, over the entire scene," and in such sort that "the bare fact of the existence and triumphant wickedness of the murderers of the upright"—Rome—"should have convinced us that the sphere called 'Christendom' cannot possibly be the sphere of the rule of the heavens and of God."

To this it is sufficient to answer that the parables themselves speak quite differently. The first four parables, which, as spoken to the multitude, and not as the last three—in the house, speak of the open, external aspect of things, present to us a constantly increasing power of evil till the end of that form of the kingdom which they picture. The devil, the flesh, and the world destroy three parts of the good seed in the first parable. In the second, there are tares, the direct growth of Satan's sowing,—not truth, but a lie, therefore,—right among the wheat. In the third, there is but *one* seed, and the general result is pictured,—the

wonder being that a little seed springs into a tree, such as, in Dan. iv., the king of Babylon is compared to, and which shelters the fowls of the air, which in the first parable represent the instruments of Satan; while in the last, the woman (the professing church) hides the leaven in the meal, or corrupts the bread of life with the leaven of falsehood. Here the state of things continually gets worse, and, general as the picture is, it certainly does more than leave room for, rather it implies (if not in all her features,) the woman Jezebel of Revelation.

How, then, can her actual existence in Christendom convince us that the parables do not apply to Christendom? It is the exactness of the picture which should convince us of what it is the picture. And these four parables are exact, even as to their minutest features, in the delineation of Christendom, of those in professed subjection to Christ, which is just the sphere of the kingdom and of discipleship.

6. THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S DEAR SON.

MARK and Luke repeat some of these parables of the kingdom of heaven, just substituting for this phrase "the kingdom of God." And among these, Mark introduces another which gives plainly the present form of it (chap. iv. 26-29): "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how . . . but when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." This agrees exactly with the present state of the kingdom, as the fruit of the Lord's personal presence and labor in the world, now left apparently to itself, but the field

to be reaped when He comes again. Nothing but Christendom can possibly answer to such a picture as this. Israel will not have the Lord *personally* to cast seed into the ground after the Church is removed, nor will they be brought in as a continuation of present gospel-work. "As concerning the gospel," says the apostle, "they are enemies for your sakes." (Rom. xi. 28.)

But if this be so, it is monstrous to contend that the kingdom of God now is "by the personal presence of the Spirit of God, and in no other way." That "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20) does not prove it; nor that it is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) These things indeed characterize it where real in the heart, but there are, none the less, subjects that are not really subject, and disciples that are not "disciples indeed." No doubt, where what is thus truly characteristic is spoken of, it is the "kingdom of God" that is the term employed; yet in the parables of the kingdom of heaven also, it is the "good seed" that is "the children of the kingdom." Nor can it be well maintained, with the parables before us, that there are two kingdoms, contemporaneous with one another, unequal in extent, and both of God.

The kingdom of God's dear Son, once mentioned (Col. i. 13), is evidently again simply the kingdom of God as it now exists, with the Son sitting on the Father's throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) The apostle speaks of the saints as "giving thanks unto the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son," a thing in which every true child of the kingdom may unfeignedly rejoice, spite of the sorrowful fact that

others, outwardly in the kingdom, have not in heart bowed to the Son, nor found therefore the deliverance. It will not do to argue from such a scripture, as the writer referred to does, that "saints only are within it." This is not said, and one has no title no say it. Condition is implied, in the kingdom in its present form, as we may now go on to see.

7. THE KINGDOM RUNNING THROUGH THE DISPENSATIONS.

THE Church which is Christ's body we have seen to be peculiar to the present dispensation; and the House of God to be, in God's thought, but the same Church in another aspect. The Kingdom, on the contrary, in what is essential to it, runs through the Jewish and the Christian dispensations both, though not without a break, when Israel became Lo-Ammi, and the throne on earth was transferred to the Gentiles.

The members of Christ's body have a place in positive relationship to Him, and as children of God, with the Spirit of adoption theirs, able to cry, Abba, Father.

With the subjects of the kingdom *as such*, on the contrary, all is conditional. In Israel there was no formal separation even between believers and unbelievers. They were one of the "families of the earth" adopted by God as His, but on that very account the true children of God not distinguished from the rest. In the parables of the kingdom of heaven we find a mixture to a large extent similar, tares not for some time distinguishable from the wheat, and never allowed to be separated by servants' hands. Under Israel's legal covenant every thing was of necessity conditional, blessing suspended on obedience simply. In the epistles we are all aware of much conditional teaching

also, nowhere connected with the children of God or members of Christ as such, but in view of discipleship and a mixed profession—that is, the kingdom.

In Christianity, however, there is a notable difference from Judaism, because of the grace that has replaced law. The question is now whether this grace has been accepted, not of obedience to any legal code: but the acceptance implies that in case of such acceptance, a real change in heart and life will have resulted from it. Take one of the parables of the kingdom, Matt. xviii. 23–35: here the confessedly bankrupt debtor is forgiven freely an immense debt; but, untouched by this forgiveness, he exacts from a fellow-servant a paltry debt to himself, and is cast into prison without hope of redemption. Here, forgiveness itself is in the kingdom-view of it conditional.

In Israel a man was a Jew by nature (Gal. ii. 15), the necessary consequence of God's adoption of one of the families of the earth. Yet he must be circumcised, must receive in his flesh the token of it, or he would be cut off. The Israelite was circumcised at eight days old; infant circumcision was the rule and imperative; but if a stranger desired to partake of the passover, he could by circumcision enter the assembly, all the males of his household being circumcised with him. This was, if one may say so, the *grace of the law*.

But Israel have ceased in the meanwhile to be the people of God; the *national birthright entrance* into the kingdom has failed therefore with this. There remains but the other form, that of *proselyte* entrance; the bringing into a kingdom which is the fruit of the word of the kingdom sown as seed in the world, is "discipling." Men are "*discipled* into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xiii. 52, *Gk.*) The *grace of the law* is

that which abides, now that the legal form is passed away. Grace reigns. Circumcision which makes a "debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3) is passed away with the law. Has anything taken its place, as an outward introduction to the kingdom of God? And in this new "discipling to the kingdom," is there a place provided for the children of proselytes, as under the law when the males were circumcised? These questions lead us on directly to the doctrine of baptism.

8. THE BAPTISMS OF THE LAW.

BAPTISM as we find it in Christianity is not an entirely new thing, but has its roots in the previous dispensation. There were Jewish baptisms more than one, which had an important place under the law; and the consideration of these will naturally prepare us for the better understanding of the New-Testament form. It is well known that "there is an universal agreement among later Jewish writers that all the Israelites were brought into covenant with God by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, and that the same ceremonies were necessary in admitting proselytes" (Smith's Dictionary). But of this, Scripture says nothing, and we can build only on what is found in it. Apart from this altogether there were legal baptisms, although we must go to the New Testament for the word. This is applied in Mark (vii. 4, 8) and Luke (xi. 38) to mere ceremonial and traditional "washings," as to which we have only to note that they were clearly symbols of purification with a supposed sacramental efficacy. Similarly, it is when a dispute had arisen about purifying that John's disciples come and tell him that Jesus was baptizing. (Jno. iii. 26.)

It is only in Hebrews beside, and in two passages

that we have reference to Jewish baptisms. As clearest we may take the latter first, which the Revised Version gives as follows: "According to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshiper perfect, being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation." (Heb. ix. 10.) But this is not, as to the parenthesis thus introduced, an improvement on the common version. The word (*epi*) translated "with" has indeed very commonly the meaning of "with, in addition to," but it also means "dependent on," and this removes the parenthesis and brings what is contained in it into the main argument where it surely belongs. For why are they carnal ordinances, these gifts and sacrifices? Plainly, because they depend upon "meats and drinks and divers *baptisms*"—the real word. How could offerings consisting of such things set at rest the conscience?

The "divers baptisms" belonged, then, to this service of gifts and offerings. They were, according to what we have seen already, the directly purificatory part. In a sacrificial service they can only mean one thing, and that the apostle explains to us in the verses that almost immediately follow here: "For if the *blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling* them that have been defiled sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience?" Here are purifications, sacrificial, of diverse character, (blood and ashes,) and those which the apostle is comparing and contrasting with what *does* now perfect the conscience in the time of reformation which is now come.

One thing only here can be objected in the face of

this decisive argument, that these "baptisms" must be in this case sprinklings and not immersions, which, it is granted on all hands, is the *primary* meaning of the word. The answer is that Scripture has changed many words from their primary meaning, and that this is one of them. The force of "baptism" in the New Testament does not depend upon the mode at all. When Israel were "baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," they were not immersed in either, and to introduce the thought into the passage would turn its solemn significance into absolute folly. In that wonderful way they were broken off from their past in Egypt and taken into Moses' school: that entrance accompanied by a wonderful lesson of the power and majesty of a Saviour-God. After all this, to turn their Deliverer into a destroyer!

Then take the baptism into one body, baptism into Christ, baptism into His death, nothing surely but very strange prepossession with an idea could make the thought of immersion in one of these cases seem reasonable or right. But we are anticipating what will be more fittingly our subject at another time.

The other passage which speaks of these Jewish baptisms is in Heb. vi. 2: "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." These things, from the words immediately preceding them, and from the presence among them of baptism and laying on of hands, have been by almost general consent taken to be the *Christian* foundation, despite the evident fact that Christ is not so much as named in it! The common version of the previous words, not bettered in the revised, reads,

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;” but which the margin gives literally as “leaving the *word of the beginning* of Christ.” *This is Judaism*, which could not be more accurately characterized in connection with the full “perfection” of Christianity itself. Writing to Jewish converts, the apostle exhorts them not to go back to what they had left, and lay again a foundation which ignored Christ as come, though it might have many truths beside. Notice, that while repentance, faith in God, resurrection and judgment are spoken of in plain terms, the truth indeed to perfect the conscience, of which Paul speaks in the ninth chapter, is entirely wanting, while in its place we find that very “teaching of baptisms,” which he shows there to be but the Jewish shadow of it! That should surely make clear of what he is speaking, while “the laying on of hands” connected with this is easily understood as in Judaism that identification of the offerer with his sacrifice which was of such importance to acceptance through it.

But these things so necessary for the soul, were but taught in type and shadow. How needful to exhort them to leave the word of the beginning of Christ and to go on to perfection! How this strengthens the interpretation of the ninth chapter is easy to be seen.

9. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN AND OF THE LORD BY HIM.

A SLIGHT difference in the form of the word distinguishes the Jewish baptisms from those of the New Testament. The Jewish baptism is *baptismos*, that of the New Testament, *baptisma*. The difference in meaning is, that, while *baptismos* speaks of the tran-

sient act only, *baptisma* speaks of the *result* of the act, a state induced. The Jewish ones were transient and might be repeated; the Christian introduces into a permanent condition.

And this was true in measure of John's baptism, the forerunner of our Lord. To his baptism we next come, to learn from it what we may as to the Christian rite.

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance to prepare people for the coming Lord. Hence it was a purification—a "baptism of repentance,"—and marked out and separated a remnant from the mass of the people to escape the coming judgment. He stands himself aloof from the nation, not going up to Jerusalem, though the son of a priest, but in the deserts until the time of his showing unto Israel. In his dress and food he shows the same separateness. He preaches in the wilderness, telling the people that they must not think to say within themselves that they have Abraham for their father, because God was able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham. The multitudes came therefore to his baptism, confessing their sins, and were baptized of him in Jordan, the river of death, as owning that all was over with them as to natural claim, and divine mercy in a Saviour alone could meet their need. They are therefore baptized for, or rather *unto** remission of sins, awaiting this in hope, though not yet having received it.

John's baptism is thus a *baptisma* in bringing into a

* *Eis*, "unto," with a verb of motion, signifies a direction toward, generally, but not necessarily, reaching its end: "The other disciple came first to the sepulchre, . . . yet went he not in. Simon Peter, following him, went *into* the sepulchre." (Jno. xx. 4, 6.) Here it is both "unto" and "into." "When transferred to metaphysical relations," says Winer, "*eis* is used to express a mark or aim of any kind." (*Grammar of New Testament Greek*.)

state of discipleship to John, which was necessarily however to merge into another and higher condition when He whom John heralded should appear. John's disciples at Ephesus, when they have heard from Paul the complete gospel, are thus baptised with Christian baptism. (Acts xix. 5.)

Nevertheless the Lord Himself comes expressly from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. What was the meaning of this in the case of One who could indeed have no need of repentance, nor sins to confess? That the Lord could be in this a pattern of "believer's baptism" is a strange thing for any one with the least intelligence of Scripture to maintain. Was *He* baptized as a penitent believer, who was Himself faith's object,—not a Christian, but the Christian's Christ? And was it for *Him* to "fulfill all righteousness," to take His place as that He was not? Surely the Father's witness to His own beloved Son should check this strange and unworthy thought.

And yet there is a certain resemblance which we should not overlook. There is a fulfillment of righteousness in it which He plainly declares, and in which He joins others with Himself: "thus it becometh *us*." Who are intended by this "us"? It has been said that it means John and the Lord; but it does not seem as John in his baptizing others could be said to fulfill righteousness; and it does seem as if rather those who were being baptized would be associated with Him who was submitting now to baptism. It is, in fact, the first step in righteousness for the sinner to confess his sins. But how could there be any parallel to this in the Lord's case? Just in this, that He could confess for *them* the sins whose burden He was to take upon Himself! Righteous indeed was He who could diminish

nothing of what was in its awful penalty to be alone His own!

The moment we realize this meaning in His act every thing comes into solemn harmony. Jordan, in which He is baptized, is indeed the river of death, and in the death He took was His confession of sin and its ssert. At an after-time, He spoke of it under the same figure as here, a baptism with which He was to be baptized. (Mark x. 38.) Then the place in which this baptism takes place is just as He emerges out of His private into His public life, ending His own individual life where He enters upon His ministry for others, receiving from His Father the attestation of His own perfection, and that anointing of the Spirit by which He becomes, in actual fact, the Christ, that is, the Anointed! "Therefore doth My Father love Me," He says, "because I lay down My life that I might take it again;" and when in this symbol He pledges Himself to lay down His life, the attestation of delight is heard.

Thus it should be plain that the Lord's baptism by John signified what was absolutely unique and peculiar to Himself. It was not an example for us, but a precious witness for us of the work for us which He now took up, only to lay it down with full accomplishment.

10. THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

CHRISTIAN baptism was not instituted till the Lord rose from the dead. He did indeed baptize, though not personally, but by the hands of His disciples, while He lived upon earth; but this seems only to have been akin to John's baptism. We have only the briefest notice of it (Jno. iii. 22; iv. 1, 2). And it is plainly after His resurrection that we find the only commis-

sion of which we have any account, and which contemplates all the nations of the earth, and continuance till the end of the age. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

There are various reasons for this, as we may shortly see; but one is apparent, that if the "one baptism" of Christianity is connected with its "one Lord," or the kingdom in its present form, it is only as risen that He says, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," and upon this He bases the commission, "Go ye *therefore*, and disciple all nations."

Let us turn back from this, then, to examine what the Lord had said before this, as to entrance into the kingdom then not come. It is in immediate connection with His announcement of the Church, and to the same person: "And I will give unto thee the keys (not of the Church, but) of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 19.)

The fact that this is said to Peter only has been misinterpreted by many so as to reduce it to comparative insignificance. It has been supposed to limit the possession of the keys to him alone, and has been applied to his double opening of the kingdom, first, on the day of Pentecost, to the Jews, and then, in Cornelius and his friends, to the Gentiles. Thus the import of the announcement is wholly in the past, and we of to-day have but little interest in it.

But can it be possible that this is all? Are the keys of the kingdom of heaven something for which there is no need to-day? Has the kingdom been just opened and then left open? Is there no need of reception into it, and no power to receive? Are people born naturally into it now? or what else?

That the keys are for admission can scarcely be disputed. It is the proper use of a key to open; and where the Lord in Matt. xxiii. 13 charges the scribes with shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, He shows in Luke xi. 52 how they have done it: "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge." Knowledge must needs be one key to a kingdom springing out of the sowing of the seed of the Word. The taking it away must prevent discipleship. Here is one key, then, certainly, and the apostle at Pentecost and in Cornelius' house was plainly using this key to open the kingdom to them.

But were these the only occasions? And when Paul preached everywhere the kingdom of God, was he using the key any less than Peter? Or when he says, in Gal. ii., that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him as the gospel of the circumcision had been to Peter, did he mean in either case that no one else had commission from God to preach it?

Peter had in an eminent way the keys, no doubt, but no exclusive right: and this is plain; for if these words "to thee" excluded others, then the next clause gives him as exclusive right to bind and to loose; but that he had not this is proved absolutely by the Lord's extension of this elsewhere: "Whatsoever ye shall bind," etc.

Moreover, if Peter opened the door at one time to Jews, at another to Gentiles, this is opening the door twice, but it is not using two keys; nor could two keys be needed, if this were all. We have seen what one key is, but we must still find another: where shall we find it?

II. THE COMMISSION TO DISCIPLE.

It is after our Lord is risen from the dead that He

proclaims Himself now in actual fact the King of the kingdom. All authority is His; and his kingdom being a kingdom of the truth, He sends His disciples out with a commission to *disciple* all the nations. Here the power of the keys, then, is committed to them all, and certainly not to Peter only. Besides, it is not even as apostles He commissions them. They are not called such in the passage, and had it been intended that theirs should be an exclusive right, it would surely have been intimated. But it is not so; and the words of the commission are,—

“Go ye, therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them unto the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the age.”

It has been thought by some, because “all the nations” is the general expression for the Gentiles, that Israel is not in the commission; but if not, to whom did Peter apply it on the day of Pentecost? was it not to Israel? It is clear that he does so apply it, and that if Israel were, as we know they were, Lo-ammi, then they were simply part of the “all nations” to whom the gospel of the kingdom now was being sent. Thus alone can we escape from many serious difficulties, which at once disappear, if this be in fact the truth.

The common version translates “*teach* all nations,” but puts “make disciples” in the margin. The revised more correctly puts the latter into the text. Strictly it is, not a verb with a noun following, but a simple verb, “*disciple*,” and this has its importance: for in the former case, it would be *disciples* that would be to be baptized, while, as it really is, it is the *nations* who are to be disciplined, by baptizing them.

Now, if "discipling" be introducing into the kingdom of heaven, we have here the other key that we were just now seeking. Nay, we have the two, "baptizing and teaching," and in the last recognize the one which has already been named as such by our Lord Himself, "The key of knowledge." This confirms, if it were needed, that baptism is indeed a "key," which if we look on to Pentecost, we shall find the apostle using. For when the Jews are pricked to the heart by the proclamation of the King of the new kingdom, and cry out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" he replies, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

To this we must return. Let us notice first more fully the words of the commission: "Disciple, baptizing and teaching," show in their order that the teaching is that which perfects the disciple,—necessarily, because a "disciple" is a scholar: the baptism only gives him his place as that; it is authoritative reception into the school. It is the marking off, in a world which has rejected Christ and His words, of those who receive them and thus acknowledge Him. It shows that the kingdom is not territorial, that people are not born naturally into it, that it is individual now, not national, as in the case of Israel. The meaning of it as a symbol shows much more than this. Whether this subjection to Christ is real or not remains to be determined, and is not to be settled beforehand by the baptizer; although, of course, that in which it is professed must not be suffered to lapse from its meaning and be trifled with by frivolous use. But the King welcomes freely, and the place in the kingdom is after all a conditional one.

This baptizing is "unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The *name*, not the *names*, of the Triune. This is the Christian revelation of God; and what is not done in this way is not Christian. The "name" in Scripture gives the real character of what it stands for; and the name here is the truth of the Godhead as now made known to us: thus "baptism" and the "faith" are once more, as in Eph. iv. ("one faith, one baptism,"), connected together.

"Unto" is here manifestly more correct than the "into" of the Revised Version; for baptism cannot bring *into* this or any other *faith*, but attaches one *to* it.

Thus we have also the plain confirmation of baptizing being discipling; for what else does being baptized to a faith mean but that?

We are told, however, that "Jesus *made* and *baptized* disciples" (Jno. iv. 1), and that this gives a contrary thought. But, in fact, it only emphasizes what is true, —that it is the Word, the teaching, that *really* makes disciples, which is of course true. If we think of what is implied in discipleship, the Word is necessarily the fundamental thing, the water but the formal, although that too may have importance. Who would say that the dying thief was not a disciple, although he had no opportunity of being baptized? On the other hand, to say that Jesus "made and baptized disciples" does not necessarily mean that they were disciples *first*, as the second part of the statement may be explanatory of the former, and needed to complete the idea to be conveyed: as when it is said (Ex. xxix. 7), "Thou shalt pour it upon his head and anoint him," these two things are really one, and not different acts; and the last expression but explains the former.

12. THE EXECUTION OF THE COMMISSION.

ON the day of Pentecost, Peter uses the keys, as we have seen. First, he preaches the kingdom: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Then, in answer to their question, "What shall we do?" he replies, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "In" the name here might perhaps be better rendered "at." It is that same *epi* with a dative following, which often signifies "dependent on." Hearing of Jesus as Lord and Christ, and thus witnessed to by the gifts of the Spirit, at that name they were to repent and be baptized, baptism being the confession of His authority. They would then receive themselves the wondrous gift.

Israel had formally rejected Christ, and were outside His kingdom now begun. Repentance and the open acknowledgment of His authority were now necessary that their sins might be remitted, and themselves be sealed with His distinctive seal.

It cannot be doubted that the apostle puts baptism here as something to precede the gift of the Holy Ghost. It *has* been doubted,—and denied,—that he so intends to make it precede the remission of sins. And it has been contended that, instead of this, baptism unto the remission of sins means (like baptism unto the name of the Godhead) unto the *faith* of the remission of sins.

But there is this difference, that "the name" at once indicates doctrine,—the faith; and there is nothing similar to that here. We have also the kindred ex-

pression used by Ananias, "Arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on His name." (Acts xxii. 16, *R. V.*) Here one would think it would be too plain for doubt that baptism was represented as (in some sense,) the washing away of sins. It has, however, been objected that the person is active in washing away his sins, passive when they are remitted; but this is a distinction that vanishes when we take the original. Both verbs are in what is called in Greek the middle voice: hence we might as well translate "baptize thyself" as "wash thyself from thy sins"—this is the form. Yet we know, as to the first, he could only put himself into the hands of others.

But this view of "remission" is thought to be contrary to all Scripture. On the contrary, it helps much to the understanding of one passage which is Scripture as much as any other. For it was to Peter as well as other disciples that the Lord said, after His resurrection, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins ye retain, they are retained." Now, if the baptism of these three thousand at Pentecost was in fact the remission of their sins, then there is a clear illustration and example of what our Lord meant. In fact, if it be not found here, I know not where in Scripture we may find it. If baptism be in any sense for the remission of sins, then it is a remission committed to disciples, and whomsoever they baptize, they in that sense remit his sins.

Perilously near to Rome, some may think; but how can we get nearer to Rome than by blinking or denying Scripture? The words are there: we have only to look them in the face as friends, to find that they are in perfect harmony with the fullest and freest gospel,—that they set it forth, not cloud it,—that sins washed

away by the blood of Christ alone, and sins washed away in baptismal water are in no wise contradictory to one another, just because they are *not on the same plane at all*; as different from Romanist or ritualistic teachings as the Romanist keys of *heaven* from the scriptural keys of heaven's *kingdom upon earth*.

The Protestant thought of the keys is right, and it is not right: it is true in measure, yet is but a partial truth taken for the whole. The Romish view is bastard Judaism, wholly untrue and thoroughly mischievous: it is "the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews but are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." God has not made men heaven's door-keepers, to admit or exclude; and that remission of sins, which the blood of Christ assures to every one who in faith looks to Christ for it, needs and can have no go-between to dispense. Even in Judaism it was the cry of the convicted sinner, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt-offering." (Ps. li. 16.) The Jewish sin-offering was of no avail to wash away sin in view of eternity; and the Jewish priest's lips could never pronounce a passport through death into eternal bliss. God reserved this ever in His own hands; and the Jews, when they heard the *divine* words of peace from the lips of One who could really utter them, showed, even in their unbelief, a truer knowledge than that of Rome: "Who can forgive sins," they ask, "but God alone?"

Protestantism is right, therefore, in maintaining that as to this, Christ's ministers have no higher commission than to proclaim the gospel. And yet it is in this very way plain that when the Lord says to His disciples, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted," He cannot be speaking of the preaching of the gospel.

Whose sins do *I* remit when I preach the gospel? Whereas the words here are as definite as can be, and in the reverse order from what they would be on the other supposition: *not* "whose sins *I* remit, do *you* pronounce to be remitted," but "whose sins *ye* remit, they are remitted,"—that is, "*I* pronounce remitted."

But this cannot be, then, eternal, absolute remission; and if baptism be one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we have seen by our Lord's own parable, that forgiveness in it is conditional and revocable: "I forgave thee all that debt," says his lord to the uncompassionate servant; yet he "delivered him unto the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him." (Matt. xviii. 32, 34.) This is expressly called a parable of the kingdom of heaven. It is a kingdom which is now in men's hands to administer; and such remission is the only one that man can pronounce as to the individual, a conditional, hypothetical remission. Not indeed in a legal sense; not because, if discipleship be true, there is yet danger of not fulfilling the conditions; but because "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord" alone "looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) And this, as we have seen, harmonizes with all those conditional passages of the New Testament, which are simply for the searching of the hearts of professors as such, wholesome for all, and which those who know best God's grace have least cause to be afraid of.

The kingdom of heaven is the sphere on earth in which Christ is owned, in the midst of a world which has rejected Him. There may spring up seed where underneath is still the heart of stone, and fruit never be found. If men sleep,—and they have slept,—the enemy may sow tares right among the wheat. Nay,

the whole form of the kingdom may change to the likeness of the kingdoms of the world, and the leaven spread in the lump till the whole be leavened. Thus there is need of testing, where tares and wheat grow up together to the harvest: hypothetical remission is the only possible one, save for Him who still "knoweth them that are His." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) According to the mind of the Lord, however, the door of the kingdom is that by which men pass out of the world into the sphere in which He is openly acknowledged and obeyed; and baptism, as a key of this door, is the authoritative washing away of their sins, that they may come in,—conditional, because in man's hand it could be nothing else,—yet witnessing of what is in the Lord's heart for men, and of what His hand has accomplished too: a gospel preached in symbol to the eyes of men, whose full significance we have yet to inquire into.

13. THE SAMARITANS AND THE EUNUCH.

SAMARIA receives the word of God, and "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii. 12.) Here too it is seen how clearly the remission of sins must be hypothetical, even in the best hands. One who with the rest "believes and is baptized" is found to have "neither part nor lot" in the matter. Here too we find that, even after baptism, the Holy Ghost does not come on them until Peter and John come down from Jerusalem, and lay their hands on them. But there is nothing that seems to add much to our knowledge of what is now before us.

Leaving Samaria, Philip baptizes the eunuch on the

road to Gaza; and here there is nothing to remark, except that, by the common consent of editors, with the amplest foundation in manuscripts and versions, ver. 37 is to be omitted. I do not myself attach much importance to it. If baptism is discipling, faith in the heart is what is looked for from a disciple; and "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest" only puts the responsibility of this upon the eunuch. However, there is no need to discuss what is not Scripture.

14. CORNELIUS AND THE GENTILES.

THE case of Cornelius is of interest to us in this respect, that baptism here comes after the gift of the Holy Ghost; and as it is impossible to suppose that those whom God thus signally owned as His could have been yet unforgiven men, there is at once made apparent the difference between the forgiveness of sins as between God and the soul, and baptismal remission at disciples' hands. The identification of these two, as with the Campbellites, is thus absolutely set aside.

There is also here no laying on of hands to communicate the Spirit, and this precious gift is seen as no supplement of baptism, no effect of an ordinance at all. It might be before or after, it might be with laying of apostles' hands or without. And it is noteworthy that this is the beginning of the work among pure Gentiles, and that we never hear in their case of the laying on of hands for this at all. The words of the apostle in Galatians (chap. iii. 2, 5) are entirely in accord with the case of Cornelius.

15. BAPTISM UNTO CHRIST,—TO HIS DEATH.

WE will now go on to look at baptism as a symbol, and to see how its teaching in this way agrees with its

place as authoritative discipling or reception into the kingdom of heaven. Its symbolic teaching is most fully developed in the sixth chapter of Romans. We will take this as given in the best translation known to me, and any points that are in dispute can be considered as we come to them.

“Are you ignorant, that we, as many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus, have been baptized unto His death? We have been buried, therefore, with Him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that has died is justified from sin.”

It must not be supposed that all this is the interpretation of baptism; but it is all in close connection with it; and it is necessary to see where the line is to be drawn, and what is or what is not interpretation. In this translation the change of “into,” as in most translations, to “unto” has been strongly protested against, although “baptized *unto* Moses” (1 Cor. x. 2), holds its place as generally perhaps as “*into* Christ” does here. The Revised Version indeed, even in Corinthians, puts in its margin “*Greek*, into Moses.” But we have seen already that that is making the Greek more peremptory than it is. *Eis*, as we have seen, and as is confessed by all, means “into” or “unto.” But “*into* Moses” gives no just sense; for there was no position “in Moses” answering to the believer’s position now “in Christ;” and this alone it is, evidently,

which has led to the difference in the translation of two plainly parallel expressions. Apart from all else, the single consideration that "into Moses" cannot be the meaning in the one case would naturally rule out "into Christ" in the other. The translation objected to simply brings them into harmony.

"Baptized unto Moses" has, as we have seen, the force of "set apart to Moses" as disciples. So those who were baptized with John's baptism were John's disciples. So have we found the Lord bidding to "disciple, baptizing." "Baptized unto the name of the Father" is disciplined to the truth of what God is. "Baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix. 5) must be similar in meaning. After all this, "baptized unto Christ Jesus," as the true force of the words would surely seem to need no insisting on.

But baptism unto Christ is baptism to His death. It is a Christ who died who meets the need of the sinner; risen as He is His death remains in its virtue for the soul. If we put in connection with this John's baptism in Jordan, the river of death, we shall find the harmony and the difference between John's and Christian baptism. John too baptizes unto death, with the baptism of repentance; death being the wages of sin, and those baptized of him confessing their sins as justly entitling them to death the due of sin. But John could not yet baptize to Christ's death; for He had not died. Only in the Lord's significant action do we see the foreshadow of this, when to fulfill all righteousness He takes His place in this death which these repentant ones have owned their due. But now in Christianity we come into Jordan after Christ has been in it; the death to which we come is still our due, but it is *His* death. Here the gospel-note sounds, and the baptism

becomes Christian : "therefore we are buried *with Him* by baptism unto death."

Let us take another illustration,—this time from Old-Testament history : "Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men ; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha ; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet." (2 Kings xiii. 20, 21.)

Elisha was in his life in many ways a type of the Lord Jesus, and here he is so in his death. We have in the miracle a vivid illustration of baptism, just because it is a vivid and beautiful picture of salvation by the gospel. The man is dead, and so they bury him: burial is but putting the dead into the place of death. He is let down into the grave of one that had died before : he is buried with Elisha. So buried, he touches the one who had preceded him in death, and he is quickened out of it : he stands upon his feet a living man.

Let us notice, then, as to this burial with Christ : burial implies death, not life ; you bury the dead, not the living. How dead ? dead with Christ, since it is burial with Christ ? No : for it is only the one who is alive in Christ who can be dead with Him, and the man buried with Christ is buried to touch the dead Christ, and to live. Dead with Christ means dead to sin, as we see in this chapter ; but none can be dead to sin, who is not spiritually alive. Buried with Christ does not, then, imply dead with Christ, as might be thought.

Buried because dead in sins, then ? That is nearer

to, but is not yet, the thought. The death we see pictured in John's baptism is the death which is the *due* of sin, and not the inward condition, which is but the inveteracy of the sinful state itself. The death here is that into which Christ came; but He did not come into a sinful condition, but under its penalty. Hence burial with Christ is the owning of the penalty, which faith anticipates before it comes, finding Christ as having taken that place, that we may live. Baptism is therefore but a typical or acted out gospel; with a significant protest against ritualism, also: for the baptism is, as the word itself shows and the apostle's argument as well, but immersion, burial, Christ alone must give the life; and thus it does *not* go on, as Colossians in our common version teaches, to resurrection. It is the confession of death, for which we are put into Christ's sepulchre, that we may live. We are buried with Him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. What is sought is the power for a new walk; but itself cannot give this: it is a baptism to *death* and not to life.

But we need to look closely at what follows in the apostle's argument. "For if we are become identified with [Him] in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be [in the likeness] of His resurrection."

"Identified" seems free as a translation; the word means, as a note upon it says, "grown together," and the rendering of the Revised Version, with most commentators, "united," seems preferable. There is no "Him" in the original, but it is necessarily implied; and the passage so read argues that if the truth intended by baptism be a reality in the soul, and in it—

“the likeness of His death”—they were really, not merely professedly, united with him, then the result would be seen in the practical “likeness of His resurrection,”—that “walk in newness of life,” of which he had just before spoken. The resurrection of the buried man was the result of having touched Elisha; and perfectly sure is the result where Christ has been touched in faith. This touch becomes indeed a full identification, and the apostle goes on now to show the deliverance from the power of sin that would hinder the blessedness of a walk with God. Here he goes beyond what baptism in itself symbolizes, to show what identification with Christ involves, namely, the crucifixion of our old man in the cross of Christ, that the body of sin may be annulled. But this does not come within the scope of our present inquiry.

16. DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE RESURRECTION.

THUS far, then, Romans; and plainly it does not go on to resurrection. Walking in newness of life, the likeness of resurrection, is what is to follow. But in Colossians (chap. ii. 12), in perhaps every version, we have resurrection included: “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [Him], through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.”

There is, however, an alternative rendering. The word for “wherein” in Greek also means “in whom,” and Meyer and Wordsworth in their commentaries adopt this. The second “Him” in the verse is also wanting, and we may, instead of “with Him,” say “together.” Thus it will stand: “Buried with Him in baptism, in whom also ye are risen together, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised

Him from the dead." This rendering I have no doubt can be fully justified.

The primary meaning of the word *baptisma* is acknowledged to be "immersion," and though one cannot always insist upon this, as has been already urged, yet in the meaning of "burial" given to it both here and in Romans there seems good reason for accepting immersion as the mode which harmonizes with the thought. It may be said that in raising one from the water, the figure of resurrection is necessarily found. But though this follows, it is not really in itself part of the baptism.

But there are much more sufficing reasons. For, supposing it were fully admitted that in baptism we were symbolically raised up with Christ, yet how would this consist with the latter part of the sentence "through the faith of the operation of God"? Faith as the instrument would here be but a disturbing element as far as the figure is concerned. Baptism could not be a figure of anything "*through faith*" of something else!

On the other hand, if it be not figure, but reality, *then* we are really raised up with Christ through faith, but in an ordinance; which is Campbellism, but not Scripture. Nor need I take it up here.

The other translation makes all simple: we have only to remember that resurrection and quickening [or life-giving] are not the same thing. There is a double contrast in Colossians here which is instructive. In ver. 13 we have, "And you, being *dead*, hath he *quickened*;" in ver. 12, "*buried* with Him in whom ye are *risen*." As burial is putting the dead in the place of death, so resurrection is the living being brought into the place of the living. It is by faith in Him who

has raised up Jesus that we step into the ranks of those spiritually alive.

17. THE PUTTING ON OF CHRIST IN BAPTISM.

FOR the doctrine of baptism, as Paul teaches it, we have but one more passage to consider. It is the statement in Gal. (iii. 27), "For as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ."

This "putting on" is, of course, clothing: we have it elsewhere as an exhortation,—“put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Rom. xiii. 14.) Here it is evidently practical; and clothing often stands for practical righteousness,—always, I believe for something wrought out, as is a garment, thread by thread.

But when we speak of putting on Christ, this garment which covers the shame of our nakedness is, of course, nothing self-wrought. We are hiding ourselves in Another; we are arraying ourselves in a comeliness not our own. And this, we see at once, is the idea in baptism: *we* are immersed *unto* Christ. Self is owned as ruined, undone, and Christ is sought to as a refuge from self, a Substitute and Representative before God; before men also our glory and our hiding-place.

This is the *meaning* of baptism: it is not, of course, what as an act (sacramentally, as people say,) it accomplishes. It in no way supposes this, that the Apostle goes on to argue that in Christ there is no distinction of class or sex, and that if Christ's, we are Abraham's seed. He gives the ideal, the profession: we are that, or else untrue to it, for Christ on His side refuses none that come to Him.

Moreover, in the words used, we have not, as so

many suppose, any implication of necessary activity in the person who "puts on" Christ. The same word, only compounded with the preposition "upon," and in the first aorist middle, exactly as here, is used in 2 Cor. v. 2 for our "being clothed upon with our house that is from heaven," and we might there speak of "putting on" the resurrection body, or here of our being "clothed with" Christ. The responsibility of the baptismal place belongs to the one in it, however the grace of God may have wrought in putting him in. To a child who has been baptized in infancy—allowing for a moment that God has given them the privilege of this,—one could say, "You were clothed with Christ."

The exhortation in Rom. xiii. 14 is not inconsistent with this. It is, what we have not in English, an *in imperative in the past* (the aorist), and means, "be as one that has been clothed with Christ."

18. THE BAPTISMAL SALVATION OF PETER.

ONE passage outside of Paul's writings remains to be considered. Connected with the verse before, it literally reads: "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; which also, a like figure, now saves you, [even] baptism (not a putting away of filth of flesh, but a request of a good conscience unto God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

There is a general agreement that "the *answer* of a good conscience," upon which so much has been built, is not correct; though the word is a difficult one.*

* "The word has puzzled all critics and commentators. It means "a question." All the commentators speak of its use as a legal term, with the sense of contract, or rather, stipulations and obligations of a contract. Schleusner says it is never so used, but *epitrothesis*, (Bloomfield, after Dindorf, denies this;) and in Latin it is *interrogatio*. Tertullian, describing the

“Question,” “inquiry,” “request,” as variously given by commentators, will any of them give the sense, only we must get the right connection. Alford has, for instance, “the inquiry of a good conscience after God;” whereas the meaning must be rather, from what we have already seen, “the inquiry *for* a good conscience.” The conscience cannot be good, that is only inquiring after God. It is, as we have seen, what baptism means, the confession of a need which God alone can satisfy, and which it requires the death of Christ to meet.

Alford reads also, “which, the antitype [of that] doth now save you also, even baptism.” This makes the water of baptism the antitype of the flood, which is out of all scriptural proportion. The word used (though the original of our word “antitype”) is applied in the only other place in which it occurs in Scripture to the “holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true” (Heb. ix. 24)—types in *contrast* with antitypes. If any thing more than figure, then, be needed to explain the word, the rendering of the common version, a “*like* figure,” is certainly right.

Water in each case, with a like significance; the water of death, in the flood, yet salvation to those whom it upbore in the ark; the baptismal water similarly death, and saving because *His* death.

For this, however, you must bring in resurrection. Death, if there were no resurrection, would be awful defeat and ruin. “He was raised again for our justification.” And thus in a figure baptism saves by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

sponsio of a catechumen at baptism, refers evidently to this passage of Peter. But this was a much later form . . . The legal use arises from a questioning which settled the terms of the contract, hence called ‘the questioning.’” (*J. N. Darby.*)

This, as is evident, is the same doctrine as Paul's. Scripture is, as it must be, of a piece throughout.

19. "BORN OF WATER."

THE *doctrine* of baptism is now complete. But there is one passage so commonly taken and by many more than ritualists, to refer to baptism, that one can hardly be excused from saying a few words about it, in proof that it does not apply to baptism at all. It is that in which the Lord says to Nicodemus that "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The proof may be given thus:—

1. If this spoke of baptism, it would prove that without baptism no one could be saved.

2. It would also make it a magical ceremony by which to the degradation of the Holy Spirit of God, He would be made to unite with *water* to beget a soul to God!

3. The being born of God is a spiritual process, and the one so born doth not commit sin, and his seed abideth in him. He has eternal life, not one that can perish or allow him to be the sinner that he was before (1 Jno. iii. 9), which is not true of the baptized as such.

4. Cornelius had the Spirit, and was certainly born again before he was baptized at all.

5. To be born of water and the Spirit, two elements must come together, and thus it could not be that any would be born again except in the moment of baptism.

6. The apostle Peter assures us, we are born again by the word of God preached in the gospel. (1 Pet. i. 23, 25.)

7. Which Paul tells us the washing of water repre-

sents: "washing of water *by the Word*" (Eph. v. 26) is how Christ sanctifies and cleanses His Church.

8. The Lord's words to Nicodemus refer to Ezek. xxxvi. where Israel is prophetically seen to undergo the needed change in order to enter the kingdom at a future day.

9. And the Lord uses these terms not with an ignorant man, or mere convicted sinner, but with a teacher of Israel.

10. So that He might well marvel at his want of knowledge, which He could not have done, if He were speaking of the unknown effect of a rite not yet instituted in its Christian form.

This evidence is abundant and conclusive that the "water" of which men are born again is not baptismal water, but the word of God. Another expression, "the washing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5), often used in the same interest as the former, says nothing of baptism or of water at all.

20. CONVERSION TO ENTER THE KINGDOM.

To all the preceding argument as to admission into the kingdom, Matt. xviii. 3 has been objected as decisive against it. The words are indeed as positive as to the kingdom of heaven as those to Nicodemus about new birth are to the kingdom of God. Attentive consideration will show that they both apply in the same way, that is, to the kingdom set up in power when the Lord appears. It is of this the disciples must have been thinking when they asked, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" A small thing compara-

tively to be greatest here : a very different thing to be greatest there.*

21. HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.

WE enter now upon another inquiry, namely, as to the *subjects* of baptism. There is question really only as to one point. We have seen that in the Christian form of the kingdom, as distinct from the Jewish, the national birthright title has failed with Israel's being (for the time) Lo-Ammi. The scanty proselyte entrance of those days is become now the rule,—*disciplining* to the kingdom. But this raises immediate question: if in the old form, the children of proselytes were circumcised with their parents, and what we have called the grace of the law has become the rule in the kingdom of grace, must not the families of proselytes be received still with them, as of old they were, and the baptism of households be in this way the rule in Christianity?

Here reasonings perhaps do not count for much; nor do we desire them to count for more than they are worth; but it is well, surely, to compare the past with the present, and trace, if we may, the substantial unity of the divine plan all through. In the new form of the kingdom circumcision drops out and baptism takes its place. In accordance with the larger grace of the kingdom, male and female being but one in Christ, women are baptized as well as men. What as to households?

In the meaning of baptism is there any indication that families are to be shut out now, as they were

*In a tract on the "Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven," the objection is answered differently; but I am persuaded that the above is the true as it is the most conclusive answer.

formerly admitted? Circumcision had been, in the person of the one who first received it, a "seal of the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11); yet that did not hinder its application to the thirteen-year-old Ishmael, nor to the eight-day-old Isaac. Yet if baptism were a seal of life, a life now proclaimed spiritual and eternal, there might be still difficulty. But it is burial, the confession of death, and not of life, and so understood all is easy. Then notice that circumcision is the "putting off of the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11); the true circumcision "have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) How near this is to the "burial" of baptism! In both dispensations the entrance into the kingdom of God is marked by the renunciation of self as worthless, that He may have real supremacy.

That baptism is discipling is no difficulty; for in a school in which Christ is Master, who can tell how soon His grace may begin to teach? Of John the Baptist it was said, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke i. 15.)

Finally, if baptism is the putting on of Christ, even this does not necessarily imply any voluntary activity; for so it is said that "this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal immortality;" and man in dying puts off his tabernacle.

Yet this is all only preparatory: we must have positive Scripture if we are to go further. Here, then, the baptism of households comes in to reassure us. In Acts xvi. we have Lydia and her household, the jailer and all his, baptized. Of Lydia's household we have no certain knowledge; but the baptism of her house is put as if it were part of her own faithfulness, which she pleads: "A certain woman named Lydia heard us, whose heart the Lord opened; and when she was bap-

tized, and her household, she besought us saying, 'If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house.'" From the point of view already indicated, one would certainly conclude that her household was baptized upon her faith.

In the case of the jailer, who asks, "What must *I* do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answer with the assurance, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*" Here the salvation of his house is clearly put as the normal result of his own believing. Nor have we any thing of *their* faith in what follows, but only of his; though we are told that "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." He was baptized, he and all his, straightway; and *he* rejoiced greatly, with all his house,—but this is an adverb, *panoiki*, "domestically,"—having believed in God. It is "he" rejoiced, "he" believed.

In chap. xviii. Crispus of Corinth believes with all his house; and the expression is quite different.

To the Corinthians Paul writes his first epistle, learning of divisions beginning among them, and thankful he had not baptized enough of them to form a party for himself. "Were ye baptized unto the name of Paul? I thank God I baptized none of *you* but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say I had baptized unto my own name. And I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas: for the rest, I know not that I baptized any other." (1 Cor. i. 14-16.)

Now the common thought is, that in the last statement Paul is correcting his first one. It was not just the truth that he had baptized only two of the assembly. He had baptized a family beside; perhaps more: he is not clear. But this would go some way

toward upsetting the very thing he was thankful for.

If we look closer we may find that there is no mistake at all. "None of *you*" is absolute, save Crispus and Gaius. Too small a number to make a party in the assembly. But what about the perhaps half-a-dozen more? *They* were not in the *assembly*; they were a baptized *household*, in the kingdom only, And so if he had baptized even others here, it was no matter at all. The distinction between household and individual, kingdom and assembly, clears up the difficulty and gives absolute consistency throughout.

However, we learn at the end of the same epistle that the house of Stephanas had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints (chap. xvi. 15). Were *these* not in the assembly? Surely they were. But is not here, then, a contradiction to the former statement, and a certain proof that Stephanas' house were grown men? Again, one must look more narrowly; and then it will be found that the Spirit of God uses for this word "house" or "household," two different words, although very near akin. Is it without a purpose? I, for one, cannot think so. In the *first* chapter of the epistle the word is *oikos*; in the last, *oikia*: differing only in the last two letters, but still differing.

A difference in meaning has been suggested by some, but which is not generally admitted, and must, therefore, be scrutinized with the more care. Greek has many dialects, and New-Testament or Hellenistic Greek is not the classic. The Septuagint translation is well known to be for the most part the storehouse of New-Testament words. In it *oikos* seems the word invariably used for a man's own family, the general thought indeed where "house" is used for the inmates. But there are exceptions: "house" seems also used in

a wider sense, so as to include servants, and here we have the use of *oikia*. Thus in "the eldest servant of [Abraham's] house," "house" is *oikia*. And while at the passover they took every one a lamb according to the *oikos* of their fathers, yet (because the servants ate it with their masters) it is said, "a lamb for an "*oikia*," and "if the *oikia* be too little for the lamb." When Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," it is again *oikia*: for those who serve him are to serve with him.

The passages, no doubt, are very few in which the word is used; but the use is none the less distinct, and in the New Testament it is exactly similar. *Oikos* is used for the "house of Jacob," "of Israel," "of David," "of Judah," and in the baptismal passages. *Oikia* is never used in this way. The lost rich man in hades would send Lazarus to his father's house: it is *oikos*; for he has five brethren. The bishop is to rule his own house (*oikos*) well, having his children in subjection with all gravity. Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house. And if five in one house are divided (Luke xii. 52, 53), they are father and mother and son and daughter and daughter-in-law.

Notice that Matthew and Mark speak of a house divided against itself, and here it is *oikia*; but there is nothing about the inmates in this way. Passages are much less numerous—again as in the Septuagint,—but we are told that "the *servant* abideth not in the house forever; and of him who left his house, and gave authority to his *servants* to watch; and of the saints that are of Cæsar's household—clearly not his children; and under this word comes that household of Stephanas who have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Certainly in Scripture the distinction is maintained, which being confirmed, makes all clear as to the baptism of households. It is the family of the disciple that is baptized with the head,—not the servants: a distinction which in itself suggests that the relationship rules in this matter of reception into the kingdom in the Christian as in the legal dispensation.

22. "OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM."

THIS might be by itself conclusive. It proves that there was a class of the baptized, at least, outside the Church altogether,—that baptism was not into the visible Church, and that the class consisted, in part at least, of the families of believers. We can go further, however, and show by the authority of the Lord Himself, that children belong to His kingdom. The words we are all familiar with, but their significance has been greatly disputed. It is, let us remind ourselves, when "there were brought unto Him little children, that He might put His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*'"

Mark adds that He was "much displeased;" that He took them up in His arms, showing how little they were, and that He added the solemn words, "Verily I say unto you that whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." (Matt. xix. 13, 14; Mark x. 13-16.)

This last expression (which Matthew omits) is nevertheless believed by many to be the gist of the whole matter. It is "of such" as children that the kingdom is, but not of children themselves! We may well ask in wonder, Are not little children "such as" little

children? Or when the apostle, after naming certain sins, declares that "they that do 'such' things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," does he mean that people *might* commit *those* things, but not others like them?

Why, too, should He give this as His reason for blessing those children, that people who resemble them were fit for the kingdom?

But one need not add arguments. We see at once now how this underlies the baptism of household which is really Christ's blessing perpetuated for those who would still bring their children to Him and beseech His blessing. Here He sanctions fully what they do, and gives the little ones a special place under His own rule and teaching. We are thus bound, in Christianity, to bring them up in the nurture (or discipline) and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4),—that is, as disciples. For the word still holds, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is the practical faith which, acting on the promises of God, secures the blessing.

And here we see why the Lord says "of such simply. Not all children can be discipled: not because He has not love and desire, but because, if baptism imply such training, for the children of unbelievers it could mean nothing. Faith alone could realize the blessing.

NOW ARE THEY HOLY.

THUS we may see also why, going beyond the law, the children even of a marriage where one remains an unbeliever can be called by the apostle "holy." The words run thus (1 Cor. vii. 13, 15):—

“And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by (‘ ’) the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband. Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.”

The use of the word “unclean” explains the corresponding word “holy.” It is not *vital* holiness that he is thinking of, but external position. According to the law the children of such a marriage could claim none; but grace goes altogether beyond law. It is not said of the unbeliever that he or she is “holy,” as the child is; merely sanctified *in* the believer. The child has an acknowledged place as “holy” or “clean;” and this he takes to show that the marriage stands; for if the children were unclean, the marriage itself would be. Baptism gives this acknowledged place, a place in the kingdom of God, which under different forms runs through the dispensations.

24. CONCLUSIONS.

It remains only to add a few brief remarks upon some points not formally taken up as yet, but which it is hoped will not now present much difficulty.

As to the mode of baptism, that it should be by immersion results from the primary meaning of the word, connected with the thought of “burial” which we have plainly given to it. Yet that even sprinklings are called “baptisms” in Hebrews destroys that argument often made that only immersion can be called that. It is plain also that the word is used in other places where there was none, as at the Red Sea, and that the stress is laid not upon mode, but upon what it effects. It would be impossible, I believe, to *prove* in any single

instance that immersion was the scriptural mode, much more to show that all depends upon this.

There is no command to all to be baptized, such as would render it imperative that every believer should for himself fulfill it. The universal command is only to the baptizer, leaving room for it to be differently applied in different cases. "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved" is added to the injunction to preach the gospel, which accounts for the form; but one baptized in infancy and believing afterwards, has both these requisites. That the force is on believing the gospel is plain by the close, that "he that believeth not shall be damned." No one would apply this to children.

That baptism is not into the church shows that it is not into the house of God, which *is* the church. It shows also why a difference of judgment as to it cannot exclude from the Lord's table, which is the sign of membership in the "one body" of Christ. (1 Cor. x. 17.) Baptism is individual: the Lord's Supper, a fellowship. May He give His people grace "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

F. W. G.

