

BAPTISM.



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BAPTISM.

BAPTISM AN ACT OF ADMISSION TO PRIVILEGE,
NOT AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE.

THE subject you refer to is one that I so far unwillingly engage that it is one which I feel ought to be left entirely to individual conscience. If a person has never been baptised, clearly he ought to be. If he has, he cannot be again. The mere testimony—say, as an honest sacrifice of self, in which case it might be accompanied with felt blessing—is to me null, because, were I to be baptised to-morrow, no one would say I had become a Christian. They would merely say I had become a Baptist, or at least, as it is expressed, that I saw baptism. At the first it was a further testimony that one put on Christ and bowed to the grace of the gospel. In the first place, I am quite clear that the whole system of the Baptist is wrong in principle from beginning to end, and in their ideas of the purport of the act they speak of obedience. Now the obedience to ordinances is the setting aside of the whole character of the gospel and of Christianity; in all cases it is unscriptural.

Baptism, moreover, is the act of him who baptises, not of him who is baptised. He is received by it, he bows to it as the appointed way of his reception by the Church;

and this is what is suited to Christians which is grace that seeks and admits into the place of blessing, not the voluntary act of the person coming, though he is made willing. A voluntary act of obedience being the introduction of the sinner into grace is contrary to the whole nature and spirit of Christianity and Christians, though in their fundamental character. Hence there is no command to be baptised, though there is to go and baptise, and this marked on a very signal manner.

As the twelve apostles were never baptised with Christian baptism (with John's only, which has nothing to do with the matter), because, being an act of admission, they were sent to admit—had it been one of obedience they surely would have been the first to do it; this shows its real character most clearly—the whole adult baptism falls before my mind as utterly unscriptural and ill-founded.

Scripture, moreover, in practice never speaks of a testimony, but of a benefit conferred. "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" The following verse, I apprehend, is not authentic Scripture, though I doubt not in such cases very right, but not the way of dealing, however. And who can "forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Hence the question as to children is entirely changed. It is a simple question as to who shall be received.

All the arguments from mere incapacity of the infant have no weight; it is a question of grace, and whether the infant is to be brought into the place where the Holy Ghost dwells or left in the world where Satan governs. But before I turn to this, the point with me, I would note another principle of baptism which is wholly false, viz. that baptism is the expression of the state in which the individual already is. This, I apprehend, is wholly unscriptural. It is an external reception, it is true, but in its meaning it is the reception or entrance, not the ex-

pression of a previous one. The believer is dead and risen with Christ. The reality of this is, of course, by living faith; but as to the further act, as many of us as have been baptised have put on Christ, not witnessed that we had previously put Him on—we have been baptised unto (it is really unto, and so always) His death, not because we were there before; we are “buried with Him by baptism unto death, wherein also we are risen with Him.” Baptism signifies undoubtedly death and resurrection, but it is there and then; as to the meaning of the form, we die and rise again, we enter into the Church by dying and rising again.

Now as to the reception of the child. Matthew xviii. seems to me to have great force. The question is, Are children to be received by Christ as the kingdom of such? I am aware that He is giving them as a pattern of our spirit; but there was an actual infant there of whom He was speaking, and if he were a saintly person who was as humble as an infant there would be no sense in saying, “It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish, for their angels,” etc., that is, it is the infant. This being, I think, clear, the passage becomes remarkable, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” They are spoken of as in the way of perishing, but that they are not to be rejected, because as a shepherd seeks a lost sheep, Christ was come to save that which was lost. I refer to this as defining the character of the persons admissible into the kingdom. As to the manner of admission, all are agreed that there is something more positive than this. If a Jew married a Gentile the wife was unclean, and not admitted into the house of God by circumcision. This question arose when one parent was converted, and instead of a Jew being relatively profaned though still a Jew, so that the child was unclean, the heathen and the Jew was relatively sanctified, so that the

child was holy, not intrinsically, of course, but relatively, so that he would be received among the people, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

People have talked of their being legitimate, but this has nothing to do with the matter.

The Jewish principle brought out in Nehemiah is perfectly clear. It said, Why not give them the Lord's Supper? The Lord's Supper is symbolical of the unity of the Body, and it is by one Spirit we are all baptised into one Body. Hence I apprehend it is one who is really made partaker of the Holy Ghost who is properly partaker of the Lord's Supper.

Now I admit there is no command for infants to be baptised; it would suppose a moral effect; but there is none for adults. There is for the apostles to go and baptise the nations the Lord had brought in, and households are spoken of in Scripture. We know it was the habit and thought of those sent. I am told that Christianity is the opposite of this in nature. This is true as regards individual salvation, but I do not think introduction into the House the same as that. If one parent be converted, they are, it seems to me, entitled to that; unjustly deprived of it if it is refused them. This thought was soon lost, and individual salvation connected with it and the new birth.

Acts ii. I think the passage is of moment as confirming the habit of such thinking, for the Gentiles were as those "far off," by sovereign grace as far as God had called them; but it inspired the Jews with the hope that their children would be partakers of the benefit, and such was their thought. It is here they rejected as a nation the testimony of the Holy Ghost, but I do not think that the remnant who did receive it would have let go the privilege as regards admission to the House where the Holy Ghost dwells. The result would show itself independent of ordinances where the operation of the Holy Ghost was

manifested—and the liberty and understanding begun to the members of the Body there—then they would enjoy the privileges belonging to the members and to the unity of the Body according to the intelligence of faith brought up meanwhile in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and the precepts of the House addressed to them in their place. The call of the Gentiles came in a new state with Paul, and the unity of the Body was made the basis of the ministry. Nothing was professedly changed, and he preached still the kingdom, and said to the Jews still, “Unto you first”; but while having people and households baptised, he speaks less of it and attaches less importance to it. The making it a matter of obedience never crosses his mind. Such I believe to be the true scriptural history of the subject. But if anyone thinks he ought to be baptised in that he has not, surely he ought to be, or he will have his conscience ill at ease about it, and that is evil, no matter what the subject is—only he would do well to search the mind of God.

First, obedience to an ordinance is, I am satisfied, wrong, and there is no commandment for it in Scripture. It is not the act of the baptised nor a public testimony. All this I believe to be most unscriptural and, in its principles, most unchristian, though often most honestly done.

NOTES ON BAPTISM.

BAPTISM has nothing to do with communication of life. You came out of it just as Noah did. In Romans I get Christ dying and risen for me. I do not get risen with Him. In Ephesians I get the whole thing. In Colossians I am between the two. Colossians you may say, according to the tenor of the epistle, risen with Him by baptism, it is the only passage. The question is whether it should be where or in whom we are risen by the faith of the operation of God. Baptism in Colossians has nothing to do with communication of life. Baptism is death; it has not the most distant allusion to membership of Christ risen and the Holy Ghost. I do not use any sacrament as a sign of what man is already, that is the Baptist error. Regeneration (Matt. xix. 28; Titus iii. 5). As to the millennium, baptism as a figure has never anything to do with the new birth. Baptism is death.

Baptism is always a change of state. See illustration of Peter as to the flood. Even regeneration is a state. Quickening is not salvation, though even quickened persons are saved. He was saved through the flood just as the old world ceased to exist. Baptism is not the figure; the flood is the figure; baptism is the antitype. We are not baptised into Christ, but unto Christ; into is all a mistake.

Baptism is a sign of my dying, not of my being dead already. I die there. Baptism is a fact for me, not a sign of what has been done; it is a real thing. There is no such thing in Scripture as investigation whether a person is a Christian before baptising him. There is no such thing as a new heart spoken of in the beginning of Acts, say chapter ii. Acts viii. 37 is a false scripture, and was introduced to favour the idea of baptism. "Palingenesia," regeneration, is a change of life. "Anoginesia," new birth, is used for an actual communication of life. Baptism is regeneration in the sense of christening, and is the true name for baptism, that is, making a Christian of them. I deny baptism being obedience. "Who can forbid water?" (Peter). "What doth hinder?" It is the reception by the baptiser, not the ordinance of the baptised. The quantity of water is made a contention versus sprinkling.

Regeneration is not a change of mind condition, but a change of state. I should not think, if the bread be in three pieces, that I had not taken the Lord's Supper, although the breaking of the loaf is the appropriate symbol. So from this he argues that a sprinkled person is not baptised because he is not immersed. Is the unbaptised child of a Baptist in the house, viz. Christendom?

I don't call an unbaptised child, and even though a member of Christ, a heathen. I do not call him a Christian, I call him holy (Cor. vii. 14). A man may be in the house; he is not therefore a partaker of the Holy Ghost. In the house, and yet such may be professors, like Balaam; power is not light; He could make the dumb ass speak.

A FEW NOTES ON BAPTISM.

The word "regeneration" is only twice used in the New Testament—Matthew xix. 28 and Titus iii. 5.

Baptism as a figure has never anything to do with the new birth; baptism is death, baptism is always a change of state, illustrated in Peter iii. 21; even resurrection is a state.

Quickening is not salvation, though every quickened person is saved. He was saved "dia sothe," that is, through the flood. Just as the old world ceased to exist, that is, perished, so as to the old man I have ceased to exist. Baptism is not the figure; the flood is the figure. Baptism is the antitype. Baptism has nothing to do with the communication of life; you come out of it just as Noah did. There is no such thing in Scripture as investigation into whether a person is a Christian before baptising him. There is no such thing as a pure heart spoken of in the beginning of Acts ii.

BAPTISM.

THE testimony in which Christians are called to walk in these days is of deep importance. It has two great features. 1st. The unity of the Church, the Body of Christ, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. 2nd. A remnant character, separated from the evil of the professing body around, witnessing to the truth.

There never can be restoration to original state. Still, the Word of the Lord abides for ever, and there is no deprivation of power which can hinder obedience to it. It is always incumbent on the saint to bow to it, and everyone who names the name of the Lord (*κύριον*) is to depart from iniquity (2 Tim. ii. 19). We are called to follow Paul in the truth given us through him. His ministry takes a twofold character. He is the minister of the *gospel* to every creature under heaven, and of the Church to fulfil or complete the Word of God. The revelation of the mystery of Christ and the Church completed all the circle of revelation (see Eph. iii. 6-9; Col. i. 23, 25).

Creation, Providence, the Law, Incarnation, etc., all had been revealed. One subject remained to complete the circle of revelation. This was the Church, the body of Christ constituted and formed on earth by the presence of the Holy Ghost, while Christ, as man, having ascended

upon high, was hid in God till He came again with its collateral truth. As following Paul, and as baptised into one body by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, the Church has no commission to baptise like that of the twelve to the nations in Matthew xxviii. Our business as serving the Lord and His people is to seek to bring Christians into the consciousness of their position as members of Christ in the midst of a great baptised house. Paul was converted to testify of the union of Christ and the Church, His Body, subsequently to this house having been formed at Pentecost. He came into it by baptism and found baptism there, not abrogated by his subsequent commission, but was not sent to baptise (1 Cor. i. 17). Still, finding it there, and not set aside by his commission, which was subsequent to that of the twelve, he did baptise when needful. He took it up and used it and let it down again, making no more of it than was necessary. He owned its importance in the place God had given it, used it, but was not sent to baptise. It formed no part of his commission. I believe it is in such a spirit we should view it now. It was unquestionably an initiatory ordinance, yet was not set aside, as we shall see.

JOHN'S BAPTISM.

It need hardly be said that the baptism of John was not Christian baptism in any wise. It was "unto repentance for the remission of sins." Those who were baptised looked for a living Messiah to come, who would baptise with the Holy Ghost. Christian baptism is "unto death." Baptism is always "unto" (*εἰς*) something (see Rom. vi., and for "into" read "unto" or "to"). Christian baptism and John's baptism are put in contrast in Acts xix. 1-5 as truly distinct. Those who were baptised of John were professedly coming in under the dealings of God in sovereign grace and when grace called them. It was no

use now, as he told them, to say that they had Abraham to their father. This did not entitle them to the promises. They knew what it involved, viz. the meaning of accepting the baptism of John as the renunciation of everything to which they clung as man after the flesh. Hence the Pharisees sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou? Why baptisest thou then if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?" Sensible of what baptism involved, as throwing them out of everything they prized after the flesh, as entitled merely by being children of Abraham, they would not accept what was to them so intolerable unless from someone such as Christ, Elias, or that Prophet who would be entitled to change the whole constitution. The people and the publicans who accepted it justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John (Luke vii. 29, etc.). They recognised His justice in condemning them and His grace in calling to repentance such as they, while the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves not being baptised of him. They refused to surrender what they prized after the flesh, and come in under God's dealings in grace on the level of those they despised.

If John's baptism had been received by the nation, Christ would not have been rejected and put to death, and there would have been no Christian baptism consequently at all.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

It is very important to see that Christian baptism is founded only on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His claims over man on earth, by death and resurrection, not on His ascension to the right hand of God, from which, as Head of the Church, He sent down the Holy Ghost to form the Church. This puts it properly in its own place as connected with resurrection and the twelve,

and not with the ascension and Paul. Christ had died and had ended the history of the first man on the ground of his responsibility before God.* His death proved the condition in which all men lay. If one died for all, then were all dead (2 Cor. v. 14).

The commission was given by the Lord to the twelve on this ground, and before He had ascended to the right hand of God. It was, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things which I have enjoined you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Here I may remark that the command was, "Go and . . . baptise." It was to be the act of the baptiser, not of the baptised. This precludes the thought of obedience altogether. There is no command in Scripture to "be baptised." The words, doubtless, are used as in the case of the Jews at Pentecost by Peter (Acts ii.), and in the case of Saul by Ananias (Acts xxii. 16) it was the act of Ananias and of Peter. The persons who, when baptised, bowed to the act of the baptiser as doing it under the Lord, as the way He had appointed that they should be received. Were I to desire A to do a certain thing to B (say to admit him into my house), this is not telling B to do it; B bows to A's act as having my authority to do it, but the act is that of A, and never can be that of B. Of course, grace is needed to make B willing to bow, but he accepts it as the way I had ordered that A should receive him. To introduce obedience into it is to make a Christian subject to ordinances, and so far deny the character of Christianity.

* His responsibility now is on another ground, that of rejecting sovereign grace when totally and irrecoverably lost. Christ had borne the responsibility of His people, and drank the cup of wrath as well as died, was buried and rose again.

The meaning of Christian baptism is that it is "unto death." So many of you as were baptised unto (*εἰς*) Christ were baptised unto (*εἰς*) His death (Rom. vi.). Resurrection follows (Col. ii. 12) in the person coming up out of the water. It is an outward change of state, as of the old world when it passed through the water of the deluge into a new order of things. Thus the person was held to be on the professed ground of Christ's death and resurrection. The baptised person has put on Christ (Gal. iii. 17) as the profession of His name; there is no thought of being a witness, of his having already put on Christ. If not true and real by an inward change of heart, it was worthless; still, it was merely putting on the profession of the name. If the passage meant a real putting on of Christ, *i.e.* getting life, Popery would be right, which attaches the communication of life to baptism; and more, Simon Magus would have been a true Christian, which he was not, if baptism meant a real putting Him on, for he was baptised. The passage at length is, "As many of you as have been baptised to or unto [*εἰς*] Christ have put on Christ." It does not say "as many," etc., have witnessed that you have already put on Christ, but simply that you have put Him on.

The baptised person is "regenerate" by it, that is, he has passed out of an old state into a new order of things. The word "regeneration" in Scripture, as has been remarked, is never used for "new birth," or for being born again, the modern meaning which has through custom been attached to it. The word is only found twice in Scripture—in Matthew xix. 28 with reference to the millennium, and in Titus iii. 5 as to baptism. In the former the world will have passed out of its present state under Satan's rule into another condition under the Lord, and Satan bound. An *outward* change, a new order of things. In the latter the person has passed out of one

state into another through water on the ostensible grounds of Christ's death and resurrection.

The words in Scripture for "born anew" or "born again" (*γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν* and *ἀναγεννάω*) are quite different from that for "regeneration" (*παλιγγενεσία*), which is never used for "new birth" in the language of Scripture.

BAPTISM ADMISSION TO PRIVILEGES, NOT A WITNESS TO THE STATE OF THE BAPTISED.

The idea of baptism being the confession of or witness to a state in which the baptised is already never enters the thought of Scripture, although the state may be there in the baptised all the while through real faith. The thought of those who hold the baptism of believers as such is that because the person possesses a certain condition of soul he is to be baptised as witnessing to that state. Now with reference to these and like views, it will be found that Scripture will not support them. I admit fully that the state of soul *may* be, doubtless was, there in many of those baptised in the cases of Scripture. Still, it never enters into the thought of Scripture that baptism is the witness to or confession of this state. That is, because he is a believer, therefore he is to be baptised. For instance, when Peter begins to baptise the Jews at Pentecost he says, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you . . . for the remission of sins." They were baptised that they *might get* forgiveness of their sins. It plainly was not because they *had been already forgiven*, but "for" or "unto" (*εἰς*) "remission of sins." It was not here a witness to a condition which they had already, but a sign of what they were about to receive in being baptised. Again, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," not because ye have received the Holy Ghost already, for clearly they had not, but were being baptised that they might receive Him.

The cases of the Samaritans, the Ethiopian in Acts viii., come next. Philip announces the glad tidings in Samaria, and receives all who come by baptism.

In the case of the Ethiopian, it is now pretty well known that verse 37 is not authentic Scripture; verses 36 and 38 read consecutively. All well in its place, but here it is perhaps a well-meant but human addition to the Word of God.

As to Cornelius and his house (Acts x.), there is no controversy. God had so plainly marked His call of the Gentiles into the Church by giving them the Holy Ghost, that Peter appeals to the brethren who come with him, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts x. 47.) Even a Jew could not forbid their reception by baptism, God had so plainly set His mark on the Gentiles. "And he commanded them to be baptised." Now this was not commanding them to go and get themselves baptised, but that those who were with him should receive them through baptism. To put a case: Suppose a king commanded a traitor to be beheaded; this is not telling him to behead himself, for no one could do that. No more could anyone baptise himself. Those present with Peter received them through baptism.

In Paul's case, in Acts xxii. 16, Ananias says, "Arise, and be baptised, washing away thy sins," etc. This plainly was not a witness that they had been already washed away. Ananias was about to receive Paul into the House of God (of which more again), and baptism signified what he was receiving; it was not a witness to that which he had already, but a sign of what he was about to receive.

In Romans vi., "So many of you as were baptised unto Christ were baptised unto His death," not "because you were dead already," every true Christian is dead—dead with Christ. If a person was baptised unto death, it could

not be said of him he was dead already, and that baptism only witnessed it was so. If so, Scripture would have said, "So many of you as were baptised unto Christ were baptised because you were dead already" as Christians. This also shows that it was a sign of that into which the person was entering, not of a state in which he was already.

Again, in Galatians iii. 27, "As many of you as have been baptised unto Christ have put on Christ." It was the sign of what they were putting on (1 Peter iii.). "In like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us," not "is a witness that you are saved already."

Again, it was not the sign of the condition one was in already as saved.

Then, as an act of obedience in the baptised it never enters the thought as to baptism in Scripture. When the Ethiopian says, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised?" it was plainly not an act of obedience in his mind, but a sign of some privilege he was about to receive; for you cannot "*hinder*" obedience if such was the thought. The same way in Acts x., when Peter says, "Can any man *forbid*" obedience if it were so. Those present could not deny to those whom God had so plainly marked in His reception and admission into the privileged place where His Holy Ghost dwells.

Here I would note the different manner of Peter with the Jews (Acts ii.) and the Gentiles (Acts x.). In one case he *insists* on baptism, which in its evident meaning was to a Jew an intolerable thing, because it threw him completely out of all he valued as one of the elect people of God. Hence at Pentecost Peter's word was, after charging them with crucifying their Messiah, "Repent, and *be baptised, every one of you,*" etc. He insists on it with them, yet when we come to the case of the Gentiles they were losing nothing, surrendering nothing, but receiving a favour from

God. Hence it was not insisting, as in the case of the Jew, on that which threw him out of everything he prized, but "Can any man forbid," etc., as if to say, "We cannot refuse to admit them to the place of privilege which we occupy ourselves."

I now come to look at its import as being an act of reception to privilege by those inside.

The Holy Ghost had descended at Pentecost to dwell in the Church, taking up His abode in and with the disciples, who were gathered together on that day (Acts i. 11), thus constituting them collectively "the House of God," the habitation of God through the Spirit. There was no revelation at this time of the unity of the body of Christ, by the Holy Ghost come down. Paul was not converted yet, and the first intimation we receive of it was at his conversion.

The disciples collectively were thus the "House of God," built in the name of the Lord Jesus, who had gone up on high. Now none of these, including the twelve apostles, were ever baptised with Christian baptism. Having been already constituted this House, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, they could not be received into it by baptism. There were none to receive them; they were already "the House of God." Peter addresses the Jews (Acts ii.) from the platform of "God's House," so to speak.

Judaism was now a judged thing. He tells them they had slain their Messiah, and God had raised Him up again, and exalted Him and made Him Lord and Christ. He calls on them to repent of this and be baptised, every one of them, and they would get remission of sins and the Holy Ghost (who dwelleth in the House of God, built in the name of Him whom they had slain); they were then to be received by baptism, the door of entrance into the House of God.

Now those who compose this House not having been

baptised themselves, and those who were received into it having to be baptised as admitting them, shows that the act, whatever other meaning it had besides, was that of outward reception to privileges, and was the act of those who received them, not the witness of the condition of those received, but was a sign of what they were about to receive, and of their outward reception into the place of blessing. I need not repeat the cases of the Gentiles (Acts x.), Paul (Acts xxii.), as also his receiving Lydia and her house (Acts xvi.), and the jailer and his house (Acts xvi.), Crispus and Gaius, and the house of Stephanas (Acts xviii. and 1 Cor. i.).

I note here Paul's question to the disciples of John, whom he found at Ephesus (Acts xix.). They were believers, as far as they knew, *i.e.* John's baptism, who had not yet received the Holy Ghost, nor had they been yet received into the House founded by the descent of the Holy Ghost. They were received into it by Paul through baptism, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Besides all this there is no commandment to baptise believers ascertained to be such and as such. The only command was to "go and disciple all the nations, baptising them," etc. ; it is not the thought of Scripture. Baptising believers as such attaches baptism imperceptibly to the doctrine of Paul and the Body of Christ, which is only composed of believers, rather than to the House of God, into which Paul was himself received by baptism, and outside of which you could not be recognised as a Christian ; consequently it narrows up the thought of the House and makes it and the Body coextensive terms.* This would consequently remove, as far as the thought goes, all responsibility from the House of God in its true

* They were coextensive for a time only at the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Beyond that period it could not be said they were so.

character at which judgment must begin. It would make the House and the Body conterminable; therefore judgment should begin at the *true* thing instead of that which outwardly bears the name of Christ, here below constituted by those who profess the name of Christ. The idea of rebaptising (?) has no possible meaning whatever, *i.e.* baptising when believers those who had been received into the House of God previously by baptism. Supposing the person had been received by baptism at any time of his life, whether as an infant or as an adult, it was a *bona-fide* act done under the profession of Christianity in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and unless that act can be blotted out of the category of things past, it is quite impossible that a second baptism can have any meaning, and it goes for nothing. I question even the very term "second baptism"; it is not a baptism. The act was done and could not be repeated. No one could say a rebaptised person had become a Christian then, and, as Scripture plainly shows, it is not the witness of the state one is in already. The person had been admitted through the act, however clumsily done, and by whomsoever performed, and he cannot get outside in order to be again received. To put a case: Suppose a person had come into this room through the window; you may say he came in in an improper manner. True, I reply, but he *did* come in, and the proof is *he is here*, and he could not by any possibility be received now at the door, which, no doubt, would have been the correct way of entering. So once the act has been done, it cannot either be undone or redone—there it stands. The person had been received into God's House, and there the matter ends. It is an external reception, not a witness of a previous one. Besides, this rebaptising persons (again I question the term—once done it could not be redone) really calls in question the baptism of the whole House of God

as a responsible thing here on earth. It narrows up the House to those who have been baptised as believers, or gives no definite thought at all to it. Hence, if the House of God is only believers, the judgment which must begin at the House of God must have to do with them only, and the professing body goes free.

Before leaving this section I would remark that the only formulary ever given as to baptism was "unto [$\epsilon\iota\varsigma$] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii.). Some have thought that the formulary was changed in the Acts of the Apostles (we do not get *doctrines*, but *history* in the Acts).

When the commission was given in Matthew xxviii. the Lord was *present*, and baptism is founded on resurrection, not on ascension. But in Acts He was absent, and the point was the owning of One who was not there in person in the Acts, hence the recognition of His name. Yet we find in nearly every case the term is changed, carefully guarding the thought of its being a formulary. In Acts ii. it is "in [$\epsilon\pi\iota$] the name of Jesus Christ." Chapter viii., "in [$\epsilon\iota\varsigma$] the name of the Lord Jesus." Chapter x., "in [$\epsilon\nu$] the name of the Lord." Chapter xix., "in [$\epsilon\iota\varsigma$] the name of the Lord Jesus." Certainly the formula in Matthew xxviii. is the correct form to employ, while the recognition of the name of the Lord is added as presenting the person to Him.

BAPTISM OF THE HOUSES OF THOSE RECEIVED.

There is another thing now to be considered, the testimony of Scripture as to the baptism of the houses of those who were received—children, if you will.

Here we find that God has graciously observed a principle in His ways since the deluge which was not discontinued when Christianity came in. This was enunciated to Noah in the words, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark ;

for thee only have I seen righteous before Me in this generation"; and his house is brought into the sphere of privilege with its head, who had found grace with God. This was what Satan's power in Pharaoh tried to hinder in the case of the "little ones" of Israel. The proposition was, "Go ye that are men" (Exod. x. 11), thus seeking to hinder them taking their children to the same ground with heads of the houses of Israel, and go out of Egypt with their fathers. This Moses refused. God would not separate the parents from the children. In result we have, "They were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. x.). Alas! how frequently do we find the sad result of the departure from this divine principle now—parents allowing in their children what they must refuse for themselves, looking on them as on a different ground before the Lord! When the House of God was first constituted by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts ii.), Peter announces to the Jews, when telling them to repent and be baptised on the day of Pentecost, that "the promise is unto you, and to your children." The Holy Ghost had come and had manifested His power and presence among the disciples on that day. Peter had quoted the prophet Joel (see chap. ii. 28-32), and said, "This is that which was spoken of him." It was not, I need hardly remark, the accomplishment of the prophecy, but that kind of thing of which he spoke; the fulfilment of the prophecy is yet to come. Still, the Holy Ghost had come and was amongst them who spake. The remnant of Israel were called on to repent of their rejection of their Messiah and come into the place where the Holy Ghost was, that they might receive the Holy Ghost in like manner, as also the remission of their sins.

Baptism of water was the mode of entrance. But a blessed word was added than which, next to their own personal blessing, nothing could be a greater mercy. They

were told that the promise "is unto you, and to your children" (Acts ii. 39). It was a true mercy which I do not think any Jew would have refused that day. He was being received by baptism into God's House where the Holy Ghost dwelt, built in the name of the Lord Jesus whom they had rejected and crucified, and it was a true mercy that his children were not to be left outside in the world that Satan governed; to leave them there would be to leave them in a sphere where God was not working, instead of bringing them in to be participators of the operations of the Holy Ghost who dwelt in God's House.

It may be said that this was for the Jews only and their children after them as such. So it was; but when we come to the Gentiles we find the same principle carried out with them. Of the house of Cornelius there is no question. God was marking His reception of the Gentiles so plainly that no Jew could deny their right of reception to the place of blessing in which he was himself. The Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word (Acts x. 44); so also the house of Crispus (Acts xviii.), who "believed on the Lord with all his house."

We are, however, on strictly Gentile ground with Paul—the apostle of the Gentiles—in Acts xvi. In this chapter we read of "houses" being baptised. Lydia's, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised and her house [*ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς*]. . . ." There is not a word of their believing or of hearing the word, or of having their hearts opened; it is that she was the one whose heart was opened.

When we find cases where a house is all said to have believed with its head, as in the case of Crispus, etc., Scripture is careful to state it so particularly, and Scripture is more accurate than we are generally aware of.

Here Lydia is called into blessing, and we read of her house all having been received with her—all were baptised.

When we turn to the case of the jailer at Philippi, we find that the man came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul enunciated to him these words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* Then "he was baptised, he and all his, straightway." In verse 34 we read literally, "and [he] rejoiced with all his house, [he] having believed in God." The verbs are all singular, agreeing with the man who did so.† Now here it is plainly that the man rejoiced, believing in God, and there is no statement as to the house believing at all; and I have before said that when a house did believe with its head it is so stated. I do not say that they did not; that would be drawing a negative conclusion from a positive statement of Scripture, *i.e.* that in houses when all believed it is so stated; and in Lydia's and the jailer's, when the head of the house believed, or attended to the things spoken, such is distinctly stated of them only, and nothing is said about the others, yet all were in each case baptised. More still, when it might have been left an open question the writer precluded the thought by using a singular verb when he speaks of the jailer "believing" and "rejoicing." Of Lydia there can be no question.‡ Now these two houses

* Griesbach, with the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian, reads in this passage "with all," etc. (σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τ. ο. α.).

† "He rejoiced" (ἠγαλλιάσατο), in the middle or reflective voice; literally, "he rejoiced himself."

‡ I note here that in every case when houses are said to believe, in Scripture, I have found the expression "with all his house" or the like is conveyed by the full sentence in Greek except this one case of the jailer at Philippi when the word *πανοικί* is used (the only place in Scripture).

In John iv. 53 it is *καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη*, "his whole house." Acts xviii. 8, *σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ*. I can only call attention to this fact. I do not think the variation here can be deemed of no importance, coupled with the fact of the verbs being singular also.

plainly show the question that the admission of houses was not confined to the Jews.

Then we find in 1 Corinthians vii. 14 that if but one parent was a Christian the children were holy (*ἅγιος*). Some have tried to interpret this as "legitimate," but the word would not admit of this in any wise. They had a relative holiness with respect to others, as the Jew of old had with respect to the Gentile "afar off" from God in a dispensational way. It has been observed that in Nehemiah the Jew under the Law who had married a Gentile wife had to put her away and her children. But the grace of Christianity changed all, and they were to abide with each other—Christians, having been called to peace, the unbelieving husband being sanctified (*ἡγιάσται*) by the wife, and the wife by the husband; and the children of such a marriage were not merely sanctified, but holy (*ἅγιος*). As having this character of relative holiness, it makes this case still more plain why God in His grace should accord them a place in His House, where the Holy Ghost dwells, where their parents are, if even one of them was a Christian; making them also subjects of the exhortations of the Holy Ghost, which belong to those who are "within" where He dwells; to be brought there meanwhile in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, and the precepts of His House addressed to them, and in due time a place at the Lord's table—this latter, of course, only belonging to those who are truly members of the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians x. 16, 17 teaches us that the Lord's Supper has now that significance, as well as other features, of being the symbol of the unity of the Body of Christ. In bringing up his child in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, the Christian parent refuses for his child what he cannot allow for himself—baptism unto death, the death of Christ, which proved the condition in which all lay—"If one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. v. 14); he refuses to

reinstate him in the world as in the first man. He does not put him in "the world," of which Satan is the prince; *i.e.* while he has to work and pass through it he must do so in such a condition as that in which he may "abide with God." He refuses and disallows for his child all that as "dead with Christ" himself he cannot allow for himself. He looks upon his child as in God's House with himself, and there, under the acknowledgment and recognition of the Lord, he brings him up under the yoke of Christ.

It is said there is no command to baptise the children of Christians. To this I reply that I have no command to baptise believers as such either. The only command given was to baptise nations, having disciplined them, and I may safely say there were children in them.

I do not think that when the discipling and baptising of the nations is carried out any will refuse to have his children baptised then. It would be to refuse the acknowledgment and recognition of the Lord.

It is simply a question, Are they to be received "within" in Christ's name into the House where the Holy Ghost dwells, or to be left "without," in a world where Satan governs? The parents had received them on the ground of nature, and they cannot bring them and present them to God on that ground; the death of Christ ends that. God can have nothing to do with man now, apart from the death and resurrection of Christ, even in an outward way. They are received in Christ's name into God's House through baptism, and the parents received them back again, as it were, from the Lord on totally new ground, to be brought up in God's House in the yoke of Christ, in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

Then it is said, "Can we not do this without baptism?" I reply, "It is inconsistent to seek to do this with one hand, while you have left them still on the ground of paganism with the other." No doubt the children, with

or without it, are relatively holy, but they are not Christians, nor are they formally in God's House, where the Holy Ghost dwells, until they are baptised. Three points will now have been established, I trust, in the mind of the reader from the direct teaching of Scripture.

First, that baptism as Scripture views it is never the confession of, or witness to, a state in which the baptised is already. The state may be there by real faith, but it never enters the thought of Scripture that baptism is the confession of it.

Second, it is the act of the baptiser and one of external reception to privilege of the baptised by those who are within.

Third, that the houses of those who were received were also baptised, and the children of believers being holy makes it still more plain why they should have a place in God's House with their parents. In concluding my remarks I would add a little as to the differences and yet connection between the House of God and the Body of Christ.

At the first moment, *i.e.* when the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost, the House of God was constituted of those disciples who were together on that day, amongst and in whom the Holy Ghost took up His abode. Although the doctrine of the Body of Christ was not yet revealed, we know that at that moment the House and the Body were coextensive. The revelation of the Body of Christ was kept in abeyance until after the Jews had refused the offer of the Holy Ghost by Peter that Jesus would return (Acts iii.), and until they had sent the messenger Stephen after Him, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Acts vii.).

The first intimation of the truth of the Body of Christ we have in Saul's conversion, in the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" In the opening of Acts viii.

we read of the assembly at Jerusalem being scattered abroad everywhere, except the apostles. Saul is converted to the truth of the union of the scattered ones with Christ. He calls them "Me," as when you tread on my foot I say, "You have trodden on me." Now in the truth of the House or Habitation of God there is no thought of Head, Body, or union at all, but a place where I shall dwell. I dwell in my house, but its walls are not united to me, whereas of my body I say, "It is myself." At the beginning all were doubtless members of Christ, but for one moment only could this be said. All who came then were received by baptism into the House of God, and although wood, hay, and stubble might have come in, still it did not cease to be the House of God, for the Holy Ghost did not leave it, and in responsibility it remains God's House upon earth, where the Holy Ghost dwells. Of course, neither wood, hay, nor stubble enters into that which Christ builds. You get an analogous thought in John ii., where the Lord finds the Temple a house of merchandise, or as in another place, a den of thieves; still, He calls it His Father's house. The House is still the House of God, although materials have entered in, where man has built, which Christ has not introduced.

The not distinguishing between the House and the Body has brought in the confusion. Baptism of water was the mode of reception into the former, while baptism of the Holy Ghost constituted the latter.

Man soon began to attribute to the House the privileges of the Body of Christ, hence, in the professing Church, pronouncing the child "incorporated into the mystical Body of Christ" by baptism of water, and giving the Lord's Supper to all the House (or parish in a smaller sense) and to children, as in the infant communion of the early Church, which only belongs to the members of Christ as the symbol of the unity of the Body (1 Cor. x.). In both cases the distinction was lost and confusion came in.

The word "assembly" is used in two ways in Scripture ; the word "church" is not to be found there. Substitute for "church" the word "assembly," and the meaning of much of what men say is gone. For instance, say instead of "Church of England," "Church of Scotland," "Assembly of England," "Assembly of Scotland." You ask, "What is that?" The meaning is gone at once. The word "assembly" is used in two ways : When we look at Christ on high, the assembly is His Body (Eph. i.) ; when we look below, it is the professing body, the House. If we look at what He forms, all is perfect ; nothing can enter into it but what Christ builds and what is united to Him.

If we look at the house that man builds (1 Cor. iii.), there are many who have, so to say, an ordinancial relationship with Christ, who after all are lost, ordinances being no security of life.

In 1 Corinthians x. the apostle talks of the history of Israel, who stood, so to say, in an ordinancial relationship with Christ, partaking of initiatory and other privileges, baptised to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ate the same spiritual meat, drank the same spiritual drink, and yet many of them were overthrown. He deduces from their history lessons of warning to those who profess the name of Christ. He writes the epistle "to the assembly of God at Corinth," and embraces "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Calling on the Lord always in Scripture signifies profession. Of course, to be valid there must be life and faith. Many call Him Lord, Lord, whom He never knew. He presses on us the necessity of there being realities as well as privileges, as the latter are no security of life.

It is in the midst of the House of God we have to walk, apart from the iniquity and falsehood which abound there, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. ii.). There was no such distinction made at first ;

now the faithful are bound to do so, obedient to the Word of God and to the never-changing principle of the Church's existence as one Body and one Spirit.

As to baptism, we follow Paul in his use of it. He noted its importance in the place God had given it, used it, but was not sent to baptise (1 Cor. i.). His doctrine changed nothing as to it, though subsequent to Peter and that of the twelve.

As to Mark xvi. 16 being adduced to prove believers' baptism, if the whole passage be read it refutes the thought. A believer, as we think and speak, is a saved person. Here it is the case of one who professes to have received the doctrines of Christianity. It says: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved," thus showing that he is not saved already. It is here a question of a person refusing or not to become a Christian.

After Paul has introduced the thought of the Habitation of God, in Ephesians ii. 22, he at once runs on to responsibility—"endeavour to keep"—and you soon find (chapter vi. 1) children made the subject of the exhortations of the Holy Ghost, the precepts of the House being addressed to them. None can say these children are or are not believing children without adding to Scripture. They have a place in his thought in the House where the Holy Ghost dwells.

If Scripture be studied, it will be seen the remarkable way *οἶκος* and *οἰκία* are used. The former has a wider thought than the latter, though at times used interchangeably. In Attic law the *οἶκος* embraced all the man's property and belongings; the *οἰκία* was what he dwelt in. It is significant that the Temple was called *οἶκος*, "My Father's house" (John ii. 16-20). But when the Lord speaks in chapter xiv. of His actual dwelling on high, He uses the smaller thought, "My Father's *οἰκία*," like the Holy of Holies in contradistinction to the Temple itself.

In Acts xvi. Paul baptised the *οἶκος* of Lydia, told the

jailer that his οἶκος would be saved, etc., and went in and spoke to the οἰκία and baptised (what in Attic law would be, I suppose, designated his οἶκος), *i.e.* all his, straightway. He says in 1 Corinthians i. that he baptised all the οἶκος of Stephanas, and yet we find in chapter xvi. it was the οἰκία that addicted itself to the necessity of the saints.

Some have a difficulty as to accepting the baptism, say, of the Established Church (?) by sprinkling, etc., and other informalities. I cannot but accept it or any baptism done under the *bona-fide* profession of Christianity in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Suppose a person in all godly sincerity had been eating the Lord's Supper all his life with the bread cut up into morsels and from the hand of a clergyman, I could not say he had never eaten the Lord's Supper. It was so to him. If he knew better and did not follow it, it ceased to be so to him, as it would be to me, because I know better now.

So with baptism; it was done, however informally; but after all, it was done, and I cannot undo the act now so as to do it. I am better instructed from Scripture. Here it stands, and the responsibility rests on those who did it, not on me.
