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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

ITS MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
SIGNIFICANCE,

DEDUCED
FROM THE APPEALS TO IT IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

BY
STEPHEN P. HARVARD.

MANCHESTER:
TUBBS, BROOK, & CHRYSTAL, 11, MARKET STREET.
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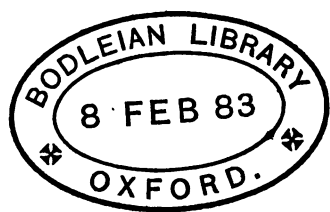
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My relation to this Tractate requires a few words of explanation. Compelled in 1879 to rest awhile, I employed my leisure and returning strength in committing to writing the thoughts of many years on its subject. Having *no* leisure in my present sphere of labour, I have employed a friend to condense and edit my material. Room has been gained by omitting almost entirely all reference by name to other men's views. These chapters, besides, have been written to the level of purely English intelligence.

Ormskirk,

July 7th, 1882.

STEPHEN P. HARVARD.

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INTRODUCTION.

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CONSIDERING the voluminousness, into which controversy has expanded the subject, it is remarkable that comparatively so little is said about Baptism in the Sacred Scriptures, which supply not much more than “inferential teaching” from some incidental references to it.

In the Primitive Church, as exhibited in the New Testament, the general consent as to the meaning and force of Baptism was so thorough, that we have but slight hint of any erroneous view of it among its members. In St. Peter iii. 21, the Apostle does but suggest that some notion of a ceremonial purifying had crept into the minds of a few; but he contents himself with merely contradicting their error, and strongly reaffirming the proper place of Baptism in securing human salvation.

Each incidental mention, however, may well be supposed to contain the undisputed meaning of the term “baptize.” Any sense which will not bear carrying through *all* its uses should be suspected, and if some one sense befits them more seriously than others, that is the one which should be accepted, wherever possible.

With a conspectus before us of all the texts in which Baptism is mentioned, we should see how meagre is their aid to the solution of the question, Who are proper subjects of Baptism? With reference also to the ceremony itself, the texts which most interest thoughtful men, commend no one form in preference to another.

In vain also is the symbolic intent of Baptism dragged in to do unwilling service to pretentious ritual, or to settle the mode of administration. That this sacrament has symbolical force,—that

is, it *teaches truth by representative rites*, we learn solely, if at all, from *St. John's First Epistle*, ch. v. 8; "The water" beareth witness to the coming of the Son of God "in the flesh."

St. Paul, rightly understood, never once turned aside from his proper purpose to teach symbolism. He argues and appeals most powerfully upon our burial with Christ, by our baptism into His death, because the strong moral sense of it, which the Romans and Colossians had, in common with himself, constituted a sufficiently firm basis for argument against schism and indecision; but he affords no help whatever to any modern theory of symbolism in baptism.

St. Peter, seeming to parallel Baptism with Noah's saving his house by the preparation of the Ark, may add solemnity to our estimate of the family as a Divine institution; but neither does he, at all, help the symbolic idea.

When, however, we consider the *moral* and *religious* force of Baptism, as binding the conscience, it is surprising to see what a consensus of suggestion is poured around the subject from St. Paul, St. Peter, and from some earnest words of our Lord. It is worthy of any effort to recover from the incidental allusions of our Lord and His apostles, what was the *agreed sense* which underlay *all* their arguments, appeals, and illustrations, based upon Baptism; to educe what, by the ordinance of God, it *does for* any one; what there is *inevitable* in it, when reverently administered and received; and what that is, in it, which, by its recurrence on *every* occasion, and to *every* one, young or old, duly baptized, constitutes it the "*One Baptism*" in the summary of the glories of the Catholic Church, in Ephesians iv. 4—6.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM - - - - -	9
II. ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED - - - - -	20
III. JOHN'S BAPTISM - - - - -	31
IV. SPECIAL TEXTS, ELUCIDATED, CONFIRM THE VIEW ALREADY ATTAINED - - - - -	40
V. ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED - - - - -	50
VI. ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED - - - - -	56
VII. ST. PETER ON BAPTISM - - - - -	62
VIII. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT - - - - -	69
IX. ANALOGY RATHER THAN SYMBOL - - - - -	73
X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION - - - - -	78

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM.

“Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?”—1 Cor. i. 13. “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”—Ch. x. 2.

ST. PAUL had repeated occasion to appeal to the moral and religious force of Baptism, as acknowledged in the Churches which he had planted; even when writing to those whom he had not yet visited, as to the Romans, and, perhaps, the Colossians. He nowhere explicitly states his own view of Baptism; but his appeals and his manner, both assume that, everywhere, one and the same estimate of it prevailed. Indeed, his opinion of the *strength* of the sense of Baptism, held in common by all the early Christians to whom he wrote, is perceptible by *what he bases upon it*.

An illustration early meets us in 1 Cor., i. 13—15. Over this Church, at Corinth, he affectionately gloried—“The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” Their unseemly contentions and rivalries over favourite preachers were sapping their life of love in Christ. In setting himself to remove these contentions he asks them three questions in succession, each rising in intensity; until, in the third and last, he makes the chord of Baptism thrill aloud. “Is Christ divided?” Righteously jealous, perhaps, for that which I have planted

among you, some of you say, "I am of Paul." But can all I have done to rescue any from the darkness of sin, by preaching among you "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (Ch. ii. 2), have availed so little, that you have already averted your gaze from that one rallying centre. "Was Paul crucified for you?" Before they could recover, either from his first or his second charge on their Christian conscience, he bears down irresistibly with, "Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

The two latter questions are not alternatives; the "or" connects them vitally; indeed the latter is thus enabled to urge its appeal from the vantage of the unexpended force of its predecessor.

To some it may seem wonderful to find Baptism used for such a purpose; seeing it is a subject about which, in modern times, Sectarianism has been surprisingly aggravated. Baptism is publicly such a stumbling block to charity, that it cannot now be made the basis of recal to unity, as it is here to the Corinthians, by their spiritual father in the gospel (Ch. iv. 14, 15). This is a strong presumption, that some of the prevalent modern opinions on it are erroneous. If its primitive moral force could be recognised, and generally accepted, however, it would surely be as potent as in the ancient days to discourage contention leading to schism.

St. Paul and his hearers were so thoroughly in agreement about Baptism, that no statement of the truth about it was required here; as, later on, was necessary about the Lord's Supper (Chaps. x. and xi). If, to bring into view the cross, by which all alike are redeemed and bound to love, had been sufficient for his purpose, why urge, *in addition*, the Baptism of his hearers; but that this was regarded as having given a completeness to their Christian standing, or as laying on them a

weighty seal of obligation, to ignore which, would have left his previous appeal in comparative suspense.

Whatever else then Christian Baptism does for us it formally lays on us an obligation to undivided allegiance to Christ crucified. The *name* into which we are baptized, that is, the summary of what Christ has accomplished by his interposition, is a very important factor in the whole business. The Apostle so felt this, under the circumstances, that he thanked God he had not celebrated many baptisms amongst them, "lest any should say I had baptized into my own name."

The thorough agreement with himself of most of the Corinthian Christians, as to the nature of Baptism, is evident from the *stress* to which St. Paul here puts it as the basis of his first severe rebuke, and most stirring appeal for unity.

The next mention of Baptism in this Epistle is chap. x. 2. "Were all baptized unto Moses," &c. This subject furnishes common ground whence he might carry their convictions as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, about which their views seemed confused and less formed.

In the church, where some had been vaunting their Jewish nationality, he himself speaks as an Israelite,—“Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.”

From Heb. ix. 10, we learn, that in the system of Moses there were, “divers baptisms, carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.” A few illustrations will suffice. After burning the annual sin offering, the priest had to wash the clothes he wore, and bathe his flesh in water before he could re-enter the temple. The priests serving in the Holy place daily were obliged to wash their hands and feet. Persons who had contracted defilement by contact with the dead, or with the ceremonially unclean, were “sprinkled with the water of

separation." The one idea of the Old Testament baptism was that of purification of the outer man for association with the pure, in relation to the Divine presence among His people, and their charge of His sanctuary.

Were the baptism of Israel "in the cloud," &c., to be accounted as an instance of such Old Testament baptisms, it would be quite out of place in this context; the idea of purification unto Moses is wide of the Apostle's purpose. Comparatively modern Rabbins have called the lustration at the foot of Sinai (Exod. xix.) "a baptism by Moses;" here, however, the Apostle speaks of a baptism "unto Moses;" an act of the Almighty rather than of Moses.

In moving us to ponder these stupendous miracles, St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, presses the analogy between their intent and that which our Baptism does for us in relation to Jesus Christ and His death; in order that from the discipline, which, in the context is shown to have followed every disobedience, the careless and erring may be warned. The new Christian idea of Baptism which he and the other Christian professors held in common, and which he projects back into these signal events of the Exodus, overshadows, quite out of sight, the Mosaic one of "the purifying of the flesh." This notion lingered in some over whom Jewish associations retained their power; but St. Peter disclaims, and all but rebukes it when he says, (1 Epist. iii. 21), "Baptism doth now save us, *not* the purifying of the flesh."

There could have been no force with these Gentile Christians, if the Baptism on which St. Paul bases his cautionary remarks to them, had been merely a Jewish ablution.

The very absence of explanation of the manner in which these facts apply proves that he uses them in an *analogical* way, familiar to his readers at Corinth. The consideration of

the strict meaning of "Unto Moses" may be deferred awhile; these Corinthian Christians, however, *all* baptized into Christ Jesus, knew well what that phraseology implied, and what that holy Sacrament had done to, and for themselves; St. Paul therefore imports the full force of their correct views of it into the survey of Israel, "all baptized unto Moses."

He then proceeds to draw warning for baptized Christians from the severe discipline of Israel, baptized, but disbelieving and disobedient, during the wanderings in the wilderness. It is a *remarkable* fact, that the warnings against Fornication—the Corinthian sin (x. 8.)—and tempting Christ (x. 9), are taken from the experience of Israel, on the borders of Canaan, near the end of the forty years, which had made into adults "the little ones," carried through the sea by their fathers, "whose carcasses had fallen in the wilderness." (Heb. iii. 7).

In his statement, the Apostle places the miracle of the cloud in the forefront, not as a secondary thing; it is mentioned *twice* over, as of equal importance, not as a mere accompaniment to the other miracle of their passage through the Red Sea. The article and the preposition are, of set purpose, repeated "In the cloud, and in the sea:" two distinct miracles!

The Baptism in the cloud may be said to date from its first appearance at the head of their "hosts," (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). This cloud then vouchsafed, was in many ways a great comfort to Israel, leading the way infallibly, themselves having no concern as to the direction of their march. It was ever, as a banner, within sight of every individual of their myriads, and yet beyond the control of any one, ruler, priest, or tribe; and it was the proof of the presence of the Angel of God hovering over them in all their wanderings for forty years. In this lowest sense of being subject to the dictation of the cloud, they were "all under the cloud."

It was also, now, a shade from the scorching desert blaze, and now a brilliant cresset of fire for a night journey, or an illuminating protector of property and purity in their encampment, (Psa. cv. 39).

At the commencement of the passage of the Red Sea, the cloud took up a position exceedingly serviceable to those directed by it, altogether different from that before and ever after maintained by it. It came *behind* their host, (Exod. xiv. 19, 20), and could thus cast effulgence from behind upon all their line of forced night march; far more usefully than if it had blazed before their eyes, while passing through the sea. To the Egyptians it presented a dark lurid side—ominous, to all but themselves so impious, of long deferred judgment unto perdition; moreover, it effectually kept the hosts apart, and calmed all fear of surprise on the part of the rereward of Israel. This confirms the suggestion of a *moral* sense in "*All were under the cloud.*"

Ordinarily it was upon the tabernacle to command rest from travel; sometimes at its door to certify God conversing with Moses for their good. The last mention of it in their history is (Deut. xxxi. 15,) when the heavy charge, so long borne by Moses, was transferred to Joshua; indeed the cloud seems to have departed with Moses; after his decease the Ark of the testimony led the way down to Jordan, and on into the Promised Land.

The miracle of the cloud extended over many years. The passage of the sea, though accomplished in a few hours, equally exhibited the power and the care of the Almighty for his chosen people. He himself had gone before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, all the way from Egypt to Pihahiroth, where the wilderness shut them in, leaving them no way of escape but the sea—the Red Sea! Here, to their great terror, they

saw the Egyptians marching after them; but the Angel of God removed and went behind them, and the cloud came between them and their dreaded foes.

Pursued by these, the fugitives crowded the only opening left them; parents carrying the "little ones," who survived to enter Canaan, themselves being excluded for their too speedy unfaithfulness to the sanction of the cloud, (Num. xiv. 14); strong youths managing the flocks and herds, or urging on the beasts burdened with the camping equipage, or drawing their wagons of heavy goods; maidens steadying on head or shoulder their vessels and portables; all, together, pressed down the rocky defile into which they were crowded, until they reached the strand, where towering rocks were succeeded by cliffs of water; "the deep held up its hands," astonished "at the presence of the God of the whole earth," (Hab. iii. 10), and stood on either side to open a way for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over, beetling overhead, until at last, their presumptuous pursuers were enclosed, as in a fatal trap, by daring to follow where no divine call of duty warranted them safety.

It must have been an awe-inspiring sight! All Israel present, the thousands of their tribes, the entire descendants of Jacob and their circumcised servants, all and each must have been deeply impressed, while in the dry bed of the sea, by the manifestation of the power of God thus encompassing them; and, as rank after rank marched out in safety on to the beach of the peninsula of Sinai, the sea returning to overwhelm their dreaded task-masters, there was not a man among their exultant multitudes that did not, at the time, *feel*, "Jehovah is the only God, and Moses is His servant for our good!"

This sentiment occupies a large place in St. Paul's reference to these events. They went down into the sea a *throng* of

fugitives, fleeing from "horses and chariots" gathered to compel them to return to the "bricks" and "pots;" they came out of it, a *free nation of men*, with possibilities before them, such as have never fallen to the lot of any other men.

By these miraculous signs they were irrevocably bound to the system of Moses. "Then Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses." (Exod. xiv. 31).

They were now placed on a new probation. Bound to follow Moses in all things God should command further by him; they were no longer free to choose their God or their prophet. They knew that One, and He Almighty, had delivered them, on purpose that they might travel to the Inheritance promised for them to their fathers. God had, however, deeper "thoughts towards" them; on their way thither He had communications to give, which would make them the wisest of the families of men; and institutions to ordain, by which to weld them into an enduring wonder; a "people formed for Himself."

By the covenant of circumcision Israel was already severed from all other peoples, as the seed of Abraham. Our Lord affirms (St. Jno. vii. 22) that this rite was "*not* of Moses, but of the Fathers." Something more was needed to *bind* them to the religious, educational institutions about to be appointed; and that, St. Paul here informs us, was done by the miracles of the cloud, and of the sea.

The Passover arrangements had tested their faith in God, and sealed the protection of themselves as the children of His "friend;" but their further use in the world, as a people, was to be in the service of God "after a pattern in the mount," and, though taking them to be His "elect," He chose to communicate with them through the man, to whom it was *to be* shown

at Sinai. The covenant, the sprinkling of blood, "the ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," the perfect Law, the restored Sabbath, all these and much more followed; as earnest of that marriage of the nation to Jehovah upon "the high places of Israel," on which the "Holy Prophets" descant so glowingly, or so tenderly; the glory of which is surpassed only by the spiritual espousals of the one indivisible Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "the Bride the Lamb's wife." The formal impact was given by the cloud and the sea, by which, it is surely not too much to affirm, Almighty God pledged them to all that followed, they were "baptized unto Moses." It was refusing faith and obedience to these further things, whose restraints they disliked, that destroyed Korah and his company out of the congregation of the Lord.

"Baptized *unto*" has been abundantly shown to sustain the moral force of "allegiance unto." The preposition (ἐς) which is nearly always used to complete the phraseology of Baptism, is rendered in our Authorised Version with a variety which would bewilder all efforts at interpretation, were it not now fully agreed, that, wherever used in connection with the word, "baptise," it includes all its equivalents, "*unto*," "*into*," and "*in*;" implying, that in Christian Baptism, at least, there is an *object*, to which our attention is directed, a *sphere* into which our life is removed, and a *duty* in which we abide with God; whose solemn ordinance every instance, in which He has proposed the religious use of water, has been, for the revealed ends and uses of each dispensation.

As in Rom. vi. 3, we are said to be baptized into a *teaching* fact: "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death"; and as those, discipled unto God by John the Baptist, are said to have been baptized "*unto repentance*" and "*unto John's baptism*," but

never unto John himself; so the phrases "unto Moses" and "unto Christ" may be well understood to signify unto the system of doctrine and duty introduced by means of them severally.

Evidently the most prominent idea of Baptism found in the New Testament, is that of binding to some duty. It was this purpose, manifest in the miracles of the cloud and sea that made St. Paul speak of them as a baptism; and this transcends *all other* associations and circumstances of Christian Baptism. Wherever the word "baptize" occurs, it should, if possible, be clothed and armed with this sense of "obligation."

Alas that some allow this sense, but overlay it with so many other things, especially with symbolism, as to render it practically ineffectual. The cloud has long been used as a beautiful emblem of shelter and guidance from the Almighty for His elect; but in no way can it be either a symbol or an emblem of anything in the history or character of Moses. It vouched for his institutions, as being from God; and that he was the *sole* channel of moral communications from Heaven for Israel; but it represented no truth in his, or their own part, and yet "in the cloud they were all baptized unto Moses." A good, valid baptism before God, from the Apostle's own point of view. God's after dealings with them are recited as warnings to us, who are similarly related by baptism, to the revelations "through His Son." This, their baptism, being without symbolism or commemoration did not render the analogy less exact to St. Paul. We may, therefore, fairly gather that these are *but secondary* things, and not essential to the binding purpose of our own baptism. Neither was there anything in the past life of Moses, represented or symbolised by the passage through the sea, certainly not his having been "drawn out" of the water.

There was no symbol in either cloud or sea of the moral or ceremonial Law to be given by his hands.

Symbol there is, in Christian Baptism, but *there* surely it must be a very subordinate thing, if the absence of it did not, in Paul's judgment, evacuate the force of Israel's baptism. Christian Baptism is a binding ordinance, and by it we are pledged to the doctrines and duties of the New Dispensation, by our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever else it may have *done to us*, *this* is its *dominant* intent in the Divine appointment; and in it God addresses our *moral*, more than our *imaginative* nature. The use the Apostle makes of it, is the *all* important one.

Another phraseology, used as a substitute for Baptism, here claims notice. Some have allowed that, by these miracles, Israel was "*initiated*" into the system of Moses. The institutions of Moses, however, had, at the time of these great events, no earthly existance; they were as much hidden in God as is our future life (Coloss. iii. 3); and were not revealed through Moses until the dread scenes of Sinai.

If by "initiation" is meant, the solemn formal acceptance by the soul of man, in its movement towards the Divine call, of that which has been proposed by God, and is now approved by man; the "initiation" of the nation of Israel had better be understood as taking place at the time the "First covenant was dedicated with blood," when the full tenor of it, written in the Book, was read aloud in their audience; and the Book and the People were put under the awful sanction of the sprinkled blood of victims, whose death implied the desert of anyone on either side violating the covenant. Those standing to be sprinkled, virtually imprecated such doom on themselves if transgressing. The Holy Ghost (Heb. ix. 18-20) refers to this transaction as their formal acceptance of the Mosaic Dispensation. (Exod. xxiv. 3-8).

CHAPTER II.

ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED.

“Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death;” Romans vi. 4, strictly *the* death (*τὸν θάνατον*) of the previous verse.

ALL instructed Christians are supposed to know that the central fact of our allegiance is the death of our Lord; to be “ignorant” (Revised) of this was no sign of spiritual apprehension: the *additional* point in v. 4 is, “so then, by baptism into that death, we are entombed along with Him.”

It is surprising how, for ages, commentators have mostly been content to see this passage, and its parallel (Coloss. ii. 12) through the eyes of their predecessors. If antiquity, and a long catena of names, some deservedly venerable, are to *settle* the interpretation, there is no help, but to follow suit, and say, “here is a reference to Immersion, as the Apostolic mode of baptizing with water.” On this subject, however, it is as possible, as it is desirable, to distinguish between “ancient,” or even “primitive” practice, and that which is *truly* Apostolic. When St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, penned or dictated the previous context, he had thoughts, engrossing his mind, far higher and finer than about *mode* of baptism.

The use here of the expression, “buried with Him,” goes far the other way from ancient stress, even to show that immersion, as the necessary mode of baptism, was not *at all* in the mind of the Apostle. In a just interpretation of Rom. vi. 1—4, immersion has no place. It is an intrusive vanity, for which the worldly Apostacy, by losing sight of its purely spiritual force, is responsible.

“Buried with Him!”

Final severance from the living, is the universal idea of the tomb. Love ever seeks to place the remains, so appealing to its care, where they shall be undisturbed; and asks society, in every age, to respect the deposit in perpetuity. The diffusion of Christianity, as the ultimate, and therefore universally needed revelation from God, has assisted this feeling by that article of its creed, “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” It was meet that our Mediator should hallow the associations of sepulture, by His brief sojourn in Joseph’s new tomb. Those who gave up His corpse to the care of tender friends, knew well that He was dead, ere they granted it; and they who hurriedly and sadly fulfilled the duties of His burial, depositing his remains in the winding sheets of fine linen, and strewing around the limbs the choice dust of the spices, as alone meet to mingle with His sacred dust, confessed His separation by death completed. The end, common to all, had come to Him. The anointing, further proposed by the loving women, was to conclude all that reverence was wont to fulfil on such occasions. This last had, however, been anticipated, at the entertainment in Simon’s house, by Mary’s alabaster box of unguent of spikenard, very precious, only fit for royal use.

“Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.” (St. John xii. 7). “She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.” (St. Mark xiv. 8). His remarks show touchingly the thought uppermost in His heart, when all others thought only of His royal deserts as the son of David. Can any be found to affirm gravely, that in the company among which He spake of His burial, the subordinate matter of the *mode* of placing the corpse in the cavity of the tomb, was *at all* in mind? Can any countenance such a notion, who *know* that the word used by the Apostle (Rom. vi. 4) refers equally to *all*

the modes of disposing of the corpse of a fellow man; and that this term is *never* used of the deposit of anything else in the earth; as, *e.g.*, of the carcase of a beast, of money, jewels, raiment buried for concealment, or of treasures of wheat or other grain; and *never* of a corpse hid by a murderer?

Burial in sacred Scripture means incalculably more than the hiding a corpse in the earth. *Sepulture* is the generic word; entombment, as a mode, is a far more correct interpretation of it than *interment*, which specifically refers to the idea of "Earth to Earth;" but would be impossible to carry through all languages and customs.

The climax of misfortune, (Eccles. vi. 3), implying life's affections defeated, and society's neglect to appreciate worth, is, for a man "to have no burial." Of course the unfortunate remains would be disposed of somehow, for the sake of the living; but this would be no "burial" without the usual Oriental accessories.

In the account of our Lord's entombment, (St. John xix. 40), occurs the remark, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." The binding up of the corpse in the "fine linen," and strewing in the spices, were as much a part of the burial, as the bearing it afterwards into the memorial tomb, and laying it in the niche selected for it.

The Romans, to whom St. Paul sent these stirring words, in their associations with sepulture, dwelt little, if at all, on the mode of the disposal of the "humiliated body" in its final resting place, but were conversant rather with the reverence due to a corpse, and the complete and formal severance of the deceased from society. The empty place, the function dropped, the parting outcry of survivors, when the ashes were deposited in the Columbarium, calling thrice the name of the deceased, with lament (*'conclamatum est'* thus becoming a phrase for "all

is over"); all these affected men at Rome, far more than what became of the corpse at last; whether it was cast into one of the puticulæ, entombed above ground, interred, or burned; *all alike* were sepulture.

Similarly the one word used, in the New Testament (*θάπτειν*), as current among the Greeks, in their description of funeral rites among the nations with whom they came into contact, has just the same comprehensive sense. Whether burned or interred; laid up in deep caves or in artificial imitations of them, hewn, as Joseph's tomb, out of rock, or erected of stone; whether left on some height to dry up to dust, sunk in lakes, or floated down rivers; this *one* word expressed *all* modes of sepulture.

It is high time that this should be as popularly known, as it is familiar to scholars; and that the special mode of disposing of the dead, which faith in the resurrection of the body, has fostered in Christendom, should take its own rank, *as one* among equals, in antiquity; *interment* should not arbitrarily engross the word, "burial;" nor be urged by intelligent expositors, as its sole force, where baptism buries us with our Lord.

In St. Paul's appeal, burial is the last act, the service finally paid; the formal separation of the deceased from society. As a friend's latest claim upon us, it is the completion of public and social life.

Job could say (Ch. iii. 18, 19) of the grave and its associations, "There the servant is free from his master"—"the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor." These words are interesting, as germane to the purpose of St. Paul in the context, to enforce the bearing upon our sanctification, of the death of our Lord, and the mystery of His sepulture; and of our baptism into His death, as involving us in the same fellowship.

The passage in Romans vi. 4 has been obscured by an intense ritualism, insisting on an interpretation involving a special mode of baptism. The text, however, remains in its own yet more ancient glorious setting to be a blessing to those who understand and embrace its appeal to conscience. The closing verses of ch. v. introduce the notion of sin as bond-service, which ch. vi. fully develops, but as being dissolved by death and burial. In chap. vii. the idea of release is illustrated from Matrimonial Law, which also death dissolves. In all, our being dead with Christ is the basis of the assertion of our freedom from sin, and also from the condemnation of the Law, which had delivered us over to the mastery of Sin, as the punishment of the Fall.

To teach most rousingly, our liberty from sin, in the Divine plan of Regeneration, as opening out to us the power for our sanctification, the Apostle declares, we are so thoroughly dead with Christ, as to be *buried* with Him, by our "baptism into His death." In commanding us to be baptized, in order to bind ourselves to the *entire* doctrine of His death, as the means of our sanctification *as well as* of our justification, it is the will of God we should consider ourselves freed from sin, and condemnation by the law; the new obligation having excluded the old one; released, therefore, as much as a buried man would be; and bound to be as much separated from the ways of worldly society, as are those over whom the burial lament has been pronounced, and on whom the sepulchre has been finally closed. Thus much our Christian Baptism binds us to think and enact.

Though not itself sanctifying, it includes among its sacred purposes, our obligation to Holiness, which the Holy Ghost enables believers to fulfil. "When the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" operates, He shall further

quicken our energies for the Divine walk and victory of faith. Baptism into the death of our Lord *buries only*; Faith raises: as we shall see further on under Col. ii. 13; but it is really the use which the Holy Ghost makes of both, which accomplishes in us, that which glorifies God.

To enter somewhat more into detail:—As baptism unto Moses (1 Cor. x. 2) bound to the moral, social, and religious institutions imparted by means of Moses; as baptized “unto John’s baptism,” (Acts xix. 4) means similarly bound to fulfil to the utmost those things which the Son of Zacharias was entrusted to bring; even to accept our Lord Jesus Christ, and submit to a further baptism unto His dispensation: and as baptized “unto repentance,” means Divinely pledged to repent of all sin, and forsake all confessed; so, “baptized into Christ Jesus,” means, pledged and bound to the system of doctrine and discipline vouchsafed through Him; being the final revelation of Him before the Judgment day. Yet further, to be “baptized into His death” must imply, as that is the central fact of His history, and its doctrine the central truth of our Christianity, so obedience to all which that death teaches and demands of us, is bound upon every one that is baptized into it. Each of us is thereby pledged to all the intents and purposes, which Divine mercy has summarised, in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The case of the Ephesians (Ch. i. 12, 13) (6, 7) (20, 21) shows how primitive Christians received and held fast Christ Jesus the Lord. The sincere among the Galatians also rejoiced to be “crucified with Christ,” and to live, as St. Paul, “by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. ii. 20.)

The whole analogy of baptism unto Moses and unto John’s baptism also implies, in the baptized, an openness to *further* information, which did not clash with what they had received and proved by experience. Israel was pledged, by the miracles

of "the Cloud and Sea," to things, not manifested as yet, even to the honoured servant of God, through whom they were to be given at Sinai. John the Baptist's disciples could not be supposed to know about Jesus what John himself did not know as yet. But he taught them, "that they should believe on Him that was to come." This fact was the fulcrum for St. Paul, with the disciples he evangelised at Ephesus. (Acts xix.) So, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" was to be *followed* by "teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

In "buried with Him," it is important to observe, Baptism *in itself*, does *not* bury with Christ, but just *so far as* it is baptism into His death. Baptism unto Moses did not entomb with Moses, in his mysterious grave. Baptism into Christ, if all thought of His death could be omitted from Christianity, would not have buried anyone with Him. It is not the nature of baptism to bury, but to *bind*, in every instance in the New Testament.

The death of our Lord has claims on us for holiness and separation from the world of sin, *as well as* merit for our release from condemnation. This latter is a most precious fruit of His passion; we cannot "serve the living God" until His blood has purged our "conscience from dead works;" (Heb. ix. 14) but He is not "the minister of sin;" He gave Himself for us, to redeem *from* all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a "people zealous of good works." Worthy pastors are to urge these things at all risks. (Titus ii. 14, 15.)

These twin doctrines, Justification and Sanctification, pervade the New Testament, and the relation of His death to Sanctification will be found specially urged in this the 6th chap. of Romans. All its expositors, with one consent, elaborate the truth of our "death unto sin," as an obligation on every one

who is justified, demanded by the death of Christ; but missing the force of Baptism, as a binding ordinance under the new dispensation, they have had to assemble here other forces, not needed by those, to whom the Epistle was first sent. Restore into this passage, the sense of "baptized" which they accepted, and the symmetry of the argument helps the appeal to Christian conscience; and corroborates the ancient sense; which is, as baptized consider yourselves as buried men; you are bound to act as those finally severed from a sinful world.

No wonder this interpretation was early lost. It evaporated in the arid worldliness of the working of "the mystery of iniquity," which had begun to leaven the churches, even in St. Paul's time; as indicated by him in his early epistles. To unspiritual professors the duty of separation from the pleasurable world was unwelcome; and was regarded by them as too transcendental. Tender consciences gravitated to asceticism without the "joy in the Holy Ghost," which had characterised the first believers. The rites of baptism were multiplied to *represent* the ideas of men, overlaying the Divine intent with symbolism. The teaching *pastor* was turned, inevitably, into a sacrificing priest, with awful powers of manipulation. Thus was delayed the kingdom of God, in which the obedient shall reign over all things with Christ.

Yet the thought of obligation to holiness has survived, even in the Roman manifestation of the apostacy; not because it is of the apostacy, but because that which Rome has *corrupted*, for its political purposes, is Christianity after all. At a Temperance Meeting, in Exeter Hall, (October 13th, 1879,) Cardinal Manning remarked, (*Telegraph*, October 14th, 1879,) "For himself he had no wish to give a Temperance pledge to a baptized Christian; for he was already bound by the vows of his baptism to a temperate life; bound never to darken his

intellect, dull his conscience, or weaken his will by any form of intemperance." The Divine intent, rather than "the vows," is *our* point.

The Hindus, Chinese, and other heathens, as well as the Jews, hold decisive views of Baptism. Up to this crisis, they spare no pains to sway the thoughts and affections of their friends and relations; but, after baptism, they regard them as for ever severed from their society; they give them up as dead and buried; and, in some instances, enact the lamentations and garb suitable to the sepulture of a lost loved one.

Just as much as conscience responds to the demands which Christ's death makes upon the baptized, so far only does Baptism *morally* benefit, except that before God, the demand is formally registered by it; and until the response comes forth, the man is buried for resurrection to "newness of life." The "one baptism" (Ephes. iv. 5) that thus buries with Christ, is that "unto the name of the Father" manifested by "the Holy Ghost" as reconciling the whole world to Himself through His "Son," incarnated to die; implying obligation to learn and obey all that Jesus Christ has taught by His Apostles; who, in their *special* function have no successors.

An Antinomian blight necessitated the change of topic, which is apparent in Romans vi. Men, though disciples, and even itinerant preachers, dared to quote Paul himself on the side of license. Holy reaction impels him, in reply, to place in the forefront his most pungent thought, "dead to sin," and he posits it as the basis of a mighty argument *against* "making void the Law through Faith"—"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

In pressing Baptism as a basis, St. Paul trod on firm ground. Various degrees of appreciation among His hearers were contemplated, but *all* were disciplined by baptism, which laid

obligation of some sort upon them. He urges further, that which must have been equally familiar to them, "So then" by our baptism "into His death;" by the bond laid upon us to accept *all* which that fearful, blessed fact implies, we are actually more than "dead to sin;" we are even "*buried with Him.*" "He died unto sin once for all." His errand here was, once and for ever, to meet the claim of the creditor, the Law, and to release us from the bondage of our old tyrannical master,—Sin. The dishonour done to the Law by the original offence is for ever done away; "He that is dead is justified from sin" (v. 7); that is our Lord, and all who know they are dead with Him.

But, as sin will ultimately bury us all in the grave of Adam, so our representative was laid in the same humiliation, to intimate His complete severance from sin and from sinners; "numbered with the transgressors,"—"made sin for us," treated as a sinner, even to burial, there ended His fellowship with transgressors. *Before* He was made "higher than the heavens," He was "separated from sinners." (Heb. vii. 26.) He is yet among His people, gathered in His name; and among them alone. (Matt. xviii. 20.) We, too, by our baptism into his death sealed by burial, are bound to account ourselves as buried also: as separate from sin, and from sinners as such, as are the buried. Our baptism carries *this* obligation, or there would be no force in the appeal here made. The penalty which the Law required is discharged by our Substitute. St. Paul puts this explicitly in (Gal. ii. 19) "By the law I am dead to the law." By its pressing its just claim on our Holy Kinsman, Jesus, I, personally, am dead to the Law. "I am crucified with Christ."

All this, however, has a further use, another side; even our responsibility for holiness, voluntary separation from sin. If dead, in the sense of no further obligation to satisfy, then, all

the more bound to be dead in affection to sin, and its concrete, "the world." Baptism *formally seals* this obligation to sanctification, as well as our release, as the justified. We are freed from the claim of the old master, as in the grave, the servant is freed from his master.

Upon Baptism all is prepared for the resurrection of those, who are to become "dead to sin;" as bound by obligation laid and formally sealed in that sacrament. The Divine rule, that all advantage carries obligation, is well enforced. In the Divine intention, we are dead and buried with Christ, in relation to our *future*, as well as to our sad *past*; and as He was buried to rise, so we are to secure a spiritual resurrection, in order to "walk in newness of life."

The union with Christ, in the Divine regard, proposes a *likeness* of death and resurrection: the "newness of life" is to be the proof, that the Spirit has used the truth for our salvation; as the manifestation that we have been "taught of God," and that the truth has come to us "in power," and "not in word only."

Another phrase also is rescued from Antinomian abuse, "crucified with Christ," (Rom. vi. 5,) (Gal. ii. 20,) as well known to the Roman as to the Galatian Christians. *This*, so blessed in its reference to Justification, is also urged for its bearing on Sanctification. That which is crucified, is, of course, the transgressor, "our old man," "the body of sin;" not the sinful body, but our entire unrenewed nature, in its sins of the mind and flesh, in order to its destruction.

The relation of Faith to the subject of Baptism is not raised by anything in this context; and may be deferred to the consideration of Coloss. ii. 12, where it is distinctly present: *here* the Apostle had to deal with some who professed faith, but had not that "of the operation of God."

CHAPTER III.

JOHN'S BAPTISM.

"When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."—Acts xix. 5.

IN considering the general subject of Baptism, our attention is at once fixed on one prominent name, that of John, emphatically styled, "the Baptist."

The angel Gabriel, announcing beforehand his birth, and our Lord himself, both vouch for him, as fulfilling the Prophecy by Malachi, ch. iii. 1, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." The first three Evangelists also declare him to be the Pioneer foretold by Isaiah (ch. xl. 3—5); and he himself affirmed to the national authorities, and to his own disciples, that this was his relation to our Lord. (St. John i. 22—31.)

He preached Salvation by the remission of sins, as it had never before been revealed, in the Law and the Prophets; though not as clearly as it is now everywhere published by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remission of sins by shedding of blood was not unknown; it was a part of Moses' system (Heb. ix. 22) but not of *all* sin. The Psalmist speaks of forgiveness with God (Ps. cxxx. 4) almost in Evangelical style; but this was only as the "Day star" with promise of the "Dawn" (2 S. Pet. i. 19,) until "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," was perfected through suffering. John was enabled to point him out as come; and to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven "at hand." (S. Matt. iii. 2.)

In St. Matthew xi. 13, Jesus says, "All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John." In its typical relation to the Kingdom of God, the Law may be said to have "prophesied;" but it is better to understand Him to mean, that the mission of John the Baptist closed up the period of authority assigned by God to the Old Testament. At the same time such statements as those in Acts i. 22, on the eve of Pentecost, and in Acts x. 37—at the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Gentiles, prohibit our drawing any sharp division between his work and that of Christ's personal ministry. Together, these constituted a transition period, during which the Kingdom of God was heralded, but not revealed. On this account "he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than "even" John the Baptist." (Matt. xi. 11.) St. Mark, (Ch. i. 1—4), describing his work, as "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God," and as the fulfilment of the words of Isaiah and Malachi says, "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins." "The remission," &c., is closely dependent in exegesis, on the whole phrase, "Baptism of repentance," the proper name of his entire mission.

A wide reformation of the population of Palestine, was needed, if the brief ministry of our Lord was not to be wasted upon an altogether unprepared people. A generation had arisen, of sects with viperous hate of one another. During the ten years immediately before John, the Roman yoke, emphasized by the presence of the Publicans, had embittered national discords; and the patronage of the Gentiles and their ways by the Herodian family had led to careless intercourse with these condemned sinners, and increased risks of pollution, necessitating the frequent baptisms of purification. A reformation introduced by a *rite* like his baptism, with offer of for-

givenness upon repentance, was certainly addressed to the lowest level of religious capacity.

Our Redeemer also, at the first, called to Repentance, and, by the ministry of His disciples, baptized with water; doubtless for the same purpose as John: the people of that day saw no difference, at first, in the call of either. A reason seems, therefore, required, why the Forerunner should, so constantly, be called, "the Baptist," by nearly all who mention him, in the New Testament. In obedience to our Lord's latest commands, baptism with water is respected among nearly all Christians: there must be something special and peculiar about John's relation to this ordinance, that it should, in Christ's lips, at the close of His ministry, give name to His whole errand; "The Baptism of John." It was no invention of his own; himself averred its source Divine: "He that sent me to baptize." (Jno. i. 23.) Jesus (Luke vii. 29, 30) commended those who obeyed, and condemned those who held aloof: public opinion was so unanimous, that, when pushed by our Lord with the celebrated dilemma, (Matt. xxi. 25), sufficiently indicating his own view, the high authorities at Jerusalem dared not affirm, that the mission of John was "of men." It is most desirable, therefore, to elicit the moral signification of John's use of water.

Some have suggested that an idea had gone forth, of a great national lustration preparatory to the coming of Messiah. There is no historical confirmation of this supposition; nor does it account for the *rulers* holding aloof, nor for the Baptist's rebuke of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This notion, too, would place his baptism merely among the other purifyings, to which the nation were accustomed; and would imply that he was specially sent of God so to use water, but with no *new* purpose or idea in it. He came among a people sedulously attentive to daily purifyings, out of regard to the "traditions

of the Elders," never taking a meal without thus baptizing themselves. St. Mark enumerates these exaggerated occasions of baptism, and says, these things were done by "the Pharisees, and *all* the Jews." Many will remember the purpose of the waterpots at Cana (Jno. ii.); also the displeasure of His host, when our Lord forebore to baptize Himself ere taking His place at table (Luke xi. 38); and the criticisms upon his disciples for their neglect of these customs. (Mark vii. 2—5.) Baptism then, for religious purification's sake, was not such an innovation as to give a special name for ever to the son of Zacharias. Further, to suppose his baptism to have been a mere lustration increases the difficulty of understanding it, inasmuch as it was essentially *once for all*; an important element in relation to the general subject. John came to introduce the "time of Reformation," when the carnal ordinances of Moses, including "divers baptisms," were finally superseded.

Those who mention "Proselyte baptism" in connection with John's baptism must be very bold, after the array of names, for and against, the very existence of such a custom before his time. Moreover, *all* the Jewish authorities produced by either side, speak of proselyte baptism as used for purification only; basing its obligation upon the lustration ordered through Moses, at the foot of Sinai, before the giving of the Law, and all appoint it to *follow* circumcision. Some of the *later* Rabbins speak of a proselyte, as "new-born;" but Jewish usage was *always* in this order, circumcision *followed* by baptism. In the Rabbinical view then, baptism was not the being "born of water," but merely a purification in order to religious privileges; and this is the sense of it all through the Old Testament.

In the Christian Baptism, along with the idea that the act should not be repeated, we find the duty of allegiance to a

system of doctrine and discipline *enforced* by it; while the notion of its being an ablution for purification's sake is distinctly repudiated by St. Peter, (ch. iii. 21), who says it is "*not* the putting away of the filth of the flesh."

It seems highly probable that the idea of sealing an engagement by a once for all baptism, was, at the Divine command, introduced by John. Here was a truly worthy reason for the epithet historically attached to his name, "the Baptist." To the sincere, his baptism was a commencement of all things anew; while to all it began a new probation under new duties and hopes. It may well have originated the phraseology, "Born of water"—so important in relation to Christian Baptism.

John knew of another baptism, and announced it as the glory of the coming dispensation, which was thus to transcend his own beyond all comparison: it is this other which lifts Christianity to a height beyond all preceding itself, the Baptism of "Fire and of the Holy Ghost." Wherever this is conferred, it also is unto new and higher responsibilities, as well as into opportunities, in which the faithful, though "the least in the Kingdom of Heaven," are "greater than John the Baptist." It was this baptism, probably, that John coveted, when Jesus introduced Himself to him; though, soon after, he must have come to know that it was not to be manifested in his own lifetime.

When the Immaculate One, with no sins to confess, presented Himself at Jordan, John, out of true modesty, forbade Him; suspecting that this was the One about whom the sign had been fixed when he received his commission in the desert. (S. Jno. i. 33.) He might well say, "I have need to be baptized of Thee," &c. (S. Matt. iii. 14); referring to the energies for usefulness rather than to the purifying power of the new dispensation, himself having been filled with the Holy Ghost from

his very birth. He yielded, however, to our Lord's request for baptism when He indicated His purpose in using it, as His own fulfilment of all righteousness under the formal pledge of John's baptism, thus also honouring it before all men. There cannot be imagined any intent of purification for the sinless one; this test for ever evacuates that idea from John's baptism. But further, as this baptism was the commencement of a new probation to its recipients, it was analogous that our Redeemer's inauguration to office should be thus celebrated at John's hands. Then followed that other effusion "from Heaven," which, by Divine appointment, certified Him to John beyond all doubt; namely, the descent of the Holy Ghost; formally sealing Him for ever "the Christ of God."

John "came in the way of righteousness," acknowledged to be a preacher of rectitude, whose ascetical practice exceeded that of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, till they cavilled, but could not condemn; to the nation, whose multitudes he had roused to better lives, it is well that such a one as he should also designate our Lord as their Messiah. At his own instance some of his own disciples went over to Jesus, and when the remainder were perplexed by the delay of the kingdom, he fearlessly referred them to Him personally. The magnanimity of this "man sent from God" was severely proved by the early success of the Lord Jesus: with constancy he affirmed himself as but pioneer herald of Jesus, repeatedly he refused to be honoured instead of Him.

A deputation of "Priests and Levites" visited John at the acme of his ministry. They were sent by some authorities at Jerusalem to compel from him a declaration of his commission and of his relation to the ancient hope of the nation. In reply to their interrogations this noble-spirited man declared, "I am not the Christ," nor even Elias, in the sense in which

he is expected to come; nor that Prophet for whom that age looked. He affirmed himself come as the fulfilment of Isaiah ch. xl. 3, in the lowly relation of harbinger to the long desired Messiah. The deputation required an explanation of what seemed a dictation of duty to the nation, unbecoming any one lower than Elias or Christ. Their tone implies that they were startled at "the once for all" baptism as at something new and solemn, and far above all their own customs, in which they felt themselves accurate and approved. Their interpellation fairly amounts to this, "We can have no objection to thy preaching:—the reformation of publicans and sinners is certainly a social advantage; but why require all, even ourselves, to be baptized once for all?" They received as solemn an answer as the earnestness of their questioning demanded; an answer to the authorities that sent them, to the full extent of their right to interrogate; an answer to resound wherever his ministry had excited attention and desire, "One, boundlessly greater than myself is among you." The very "next day," our Lord was pointed out by the Baptist to certain prepared hearts, some of whom soon after followed Jesus and left Him no more. By the death of the Baptist, men came to understand that his baptism bound to his dispensation rather than to himself, and that the subordination it certainly implied was to the duties and hopes revealed on the part of God, through John: and that the baptized were released from all other obligations incompatible with these.

The narrative in Acts xix. gives certainty to this view. Far away among the Greek cities of Ionia, St. Paul met with some effects of John's mission; at Ephesus, certain disciples, having a religious bond in common, were in the habit of associating together. Finding that they knew nothing of those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God, which were signs of

Apostleship on the part of the person communicating them to others, he perceived that there was some defect in their relationship to the Kingdom of God, and asked "into what then were ye baptized?"

The form of his question is very suggestive. To men baptized into some expectation of advantage, it was equivalent to, "under what obligation have you placed yourselves; unto what dispensation of truth have you pledged your adhesion?" On their replying that they had accepted all that John's baptism involved, he proceeded to call them to the principal duty it had laid upon them, namely, to accept the Christ foretold and about to reveal Himself. He carefully showed them that the Lord Jesus was *that* Christ, and already revealed; for they were prompt and unanimous in their acceptance of Jesus, as the One John bound his disciples to receive when he said, "that they should believe on Him that should come after him:" they could not have refused Christ Jesus without transgressing their first baptism. But St. Paul baptized them again, because baptism, into the crucified Lord, lays its own peculiar obligations, of which John could know but little and communicate less. Note: they did not transfer themselves merely in conviction, and consort, and labour with St. Paul; but they took on themselves, by *another* baptism, the obligations under which he also was placed.

The chief glory of John the Baptist was to inaugurate our Lord by his baptism. It recognised his true manhood without sin, come of the stock of Abraham, in the line of Israel and Judah, in fulfilment of "the promise made to the Fathers." (Rom. xv. 8.) Purification was obviously out of place in His case. Further, it formally pledged Him to fulfil all righteousness, as His Father's "righteous servant" (Isaiah liii. 11); and the whole course of His earthly ministry exhibited the pledge

redeemed. For His Heavenly ministry, He had another baptism, for which he intensely longed. (Luke xii. 50.)

The word "probation" might seem unsuitable for the Incarnate One, who could not fail, had we not been told, "It behoved Him, in all things, to be made like unto His brethren," and that John's baptism of Him commenced the period of his proof by devils and men, as the Holy One of God. Our nature, assumed by Him on our account, "without sin," as essential to the idea of atonement, needed recognition in the presence of His contemporaries. From the acknowledgment of Him at Jordan's brink, by the Father and the Spirit, He retired into the wilderness for His first recorded conflict with the Devil, an earnest of another "hour and power of darkness." When he returned from His manifestation to the Fiend, as Son of God, "without sin," though truly man, John Baptist could speak of Him to those around as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The *sacrificial* seal of God the Father, (Jno. vi. 27), was recognised on Him; the events of His baptism received their highest interpretation as He is the Son of God with authority to baptize with the Holy Ghost. (Jno. i. 29—34.)

CHAPTER IV.

SPECIAL TEXTS, ELUCIDATED, CONFIRM THE VIEW
ALREADY ATTAINED.

- (i.) "I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."—St. Luke xii. 50.

THE views of Baptism, so far educed, as laying obligation, and commencing a new probation, under the peculiar advantages offered to those who obey the Divine call, will be found to underlie and permeate some passages of the New Testament, which, otherwise, seem obscure and unprofitable.

After the glorious miracle at Bethany had set His enemies plotting anew against His life, "Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews," but came to a place of retreat "near the wilderness," and tarried there with His disciples. His steps were thus retracing the ground along which He had been impelled by the Holy Ghost, after His baptism at Jordan, to encounter the buffetings of Satan.—St. Mark i. 2.

Wherever the impassioned utterance of the text broke forth from Him, no one now attempts to find in it any expression of desire for further purification. Thus early after the mission of the Baptist was fulfilled, and John himself released from the power of Herod, the word baptism had come to be used, on the very ground where it had once been in everyone's thoughts, and on everyone's lips, without any reference to purposes of lustration. This surely adds to the probability, already very strong, that, *that* idea had not entered into the purpose of John's mission from God, however misinterpreted at first by some. (John iii. 25.)

Nor can we suppose that our Lord referred to any further effusion of the Spirit on Himself, of whom, long before it had been said by the Baptist, "The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (John iii. 34.)

Popular comment, at present, refers this utterance to His Passion, and makes baptism suggest the overwhelming sorrows of Expiation's work. It may suit the strenuous symbolism of some to press this meaning; but it further remains for them to show that our Lord was ever overwhelmed by His sorrows. The agony in Gethsemane was not His expiation; but was in expectation of grief and pain unutterable, and inseparable from the work to be performed in the midst of the humiliations of Calvary. But He was strengthened at that time, in physical power, until He had accepted "the cup." The subsidence of excitement appears also in His recurrence to this idea, "If this cup may not pass," &c. His agony without His death would not have redeemed our souls.

Instead of this unsatisfactory interpretation, we may find a sense in which His expiatory work itself was the baptism, for the accomplishment of which He *longed*; as "I am straitened" strictly means. His words were but another expression of His anticipation of the "Joy that was set before Him," for which "He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." (Heb. xii. 2.) Here is no impatience of predestined torture; human nature on its way to a foreseen violent death, cannot but shudder; and the verity of His incarnation *appears* in the fact that, He suffered by anticipation, as we read. It made His suffering more difficult, but not more meritorious; His merit rests on that *Person* who was incarnated. "I am straitened," is the utterance of one, reaching forth to something desirable, but which must be postponed awhile.

Further, it is the *accomplishment* of His *baptism* which He desires; and of His sufferings and expiation only, if at all, as they are the way to it. Our Redeemer never coveted pain; no creature is formed on purpose to suffer; nor can it be ordained to do so, except as a way to the Creator's will, under some other idea than that of mere creatureship, *e.g.* economical appointment. There is indescribable, but affecting dignity in our Lord's submission to the inevitable events of His decease at Jerusalem; the meanness of betrayal by Judas; being rejected by His nation, as a malefactor; and abused by ignorant brutal Gentile cruelty; and the bitterness of being bruised in soul by His heavenly Father. But throughout, He cannot be discovered to have desired suffering. Really He desired to commence His work of saving individual men, and adding them to His church, to the end of time; and all connected with this, His work of exaltation.

It is better to understand baptism here, of His new responsibilities to commence from His passion and ascension. Ever since God sent the son of Zacharias, Baptism is always *unto* something. Our Lord's baptism at Jordan was unto His earthly ministry, in which men and devils proved Him "the Holy One of God." We shall see that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is always unto ministry of some sort. (Acts i. 5.) How natural for the Redeemer now in the midst of the scenes of His inauguration to His earthly ministry, to speak of His longing for the events, which should inaugurate His heavenly functions, which He now exercises from the right hand of His Father: "Priest for ever," "able to save to the uttermost."

This interpretation has a strong presumption in its favour, in that it seems confirmed by the context. The burden of the verses preceding the text is the responsibility of the Christian minister, in reply to Peter's interrogation as to the *general* or

the *special* bearing of Christ's exhortations to serious watchfulness: the wise steward in the household, contrasted with the unfaithful drunken fool; and the reward of the one over against the condign punishment of the other; the servant that knew, but neglected his duty, beaten with many stripes; the principle, the more entrusted, the more severe the demand in return.

Known to the Son of God was all the grand succession of the glorious ministry of the gospel. In verse 49 He surveys this wondrous witnessing agency, from the time of the emblematic baptism at the approaching Pentecost. Around Him were the men, on whom that fire should earliest kindle, "the weak things of the world" chosen "to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Cor. i. 27.) The front rank of the preaching succession who have spread the fire, that irradiates while it consumes the "man of God," creating its own agents throughout all time, known by the same impulse, and by the same trophies of souls converted from the error of their way. The view fired His own soul: the struggle, and ultimate victory, under His own administration, gladdened Him. His heart grasped His heavenly function, as ascended and giving "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry," &c. (Ephes. iv. 10—16.) Between this momentary view and its realisation, stood His expiatory passion, by which He was to "enter into His glory." (Luke xxiv. 26.) He surveys and accepts it as the inauguration to His new offices, to which He longs to stand pledged; and in which He is now as faithful as He was in His earthly ministry.

This sense of the text expresses an object of stupendous importance, to which His expiatory death, His resurrection, ascension and enthronement stand related, as His baptism at

Jordan did to His earthly ministry. In the midst of the scenes of the one, He might well, by a stirring analogy, call these events "a baptism."

ii. (St. Mark x. 38, 39.) "And with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized."

By a comparison of the evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke, we find that the request of James and John was made by their mother, after our Lord had finally set out from the scene of His baptism by John, to *die* at Jerusalem, and not as His disciples fondly hoped, to take possession of earthly dominion. The crowds from Galilee, making their way by Bethabara to the passover at Jerusalem, had swollen the number of His followers; and the twelve were full of expectation, that "the kingdom of God," as *they* understood it, would immediately appear." (Luke xix. 2.) Again and again He announced the true issue of their journey, His passion; not to ask their sympathy, but to prepare, by such prediction, a ground for restoring their belief, after the unwelcome event. They were, however, too full of carnal ambition to be able to profit by His solemn sayings. There was no more of this in James and John than in the rest, whose disgust was roused at their eagerness to be the *earliest* to grasp at what each anticipated as equally his own due.

Our Lord did not rebuke them, but, compassionating their future, which He foreknew, challenged them thus: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Oh, how faithfully had He fulfilled the solemn pledge, under which He had been placed at Jordan, now finally left, but not far behind; and He was now on His way to the awful circumstances, in which He should bind Himself anew to serve His Father's purposes, in human salvation secured by redemption. His own lot of

suffering staggered Him not; but the struggle which these faithful men should sustain till most of them should, as Himself, be "perfected through suffering," was all present to His affection; as also the baptism of tongues of fire and hallowing energy of the Holy Ghost, which should bind them to their life-long work, after His own pattern. What a change from the scene of these petty ambitions to that which awaited the Incarnate Son on the other side of the next few brief momentous days! His comforts could not be shared by those about Him, any more than His sorrows: the cross was an offence unto them, till interpreted after the event. He knew whom He had chosen; one had grievously failed, under all his advantages and warnings; but the rest would fulfil the work for which He had chosen them: "He loved them to the end."

Confident of their competency and fitness the two brothers said, in reply to His challenge, "We are able;" that is, to administer from Thy right hand and Thy left hand we are willing to share Thy lot; and under Thee are prepared to bind ourselves to it. He tenderly allowed, they should indeed share His lot. James' violent death first broke the dream of immunity while in His service; and the others, in due time, followed suit.

But our Lord declared also, that in the baptism He already had, they should share. With the Spirit that was upon Himself without measure, they were baptized after His ascension, according to the promise, repeated in His last converse with them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." (Acts i. 4, 5.) In their several measures, they were "endued with power from on high;" but it was in order to "be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

To these duties they felt their new endowments pledged

them; and well they fulfilled their part. Their behaviour illustrates thoroughly the power of the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon the conscience of men, as their understanding develops. With their Lord, the faithful Apostles responded in the vigorous faith of His resurrection and ascension (1 St. Peter iii. 21, 22), to the obligations of saving others. Their after experience fully explained His words as to sharing His cup, till each had laid down his life. His sufferings unto expiation were *unshared*: He is *sole* Priest, to save by meritorious intercession; yet the tribulations of the Apostolate under Him, are called by St. Paul "the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Coloss. i. 24); because inevitable in fulfilling His ministry and work, in gathering men to Him. In this sense, they drank of His cup, strengthened thereto by His Spirit, whose gifts made them feel "debtors" for saving ministry unto all men (Romans i. 14.)

iii. (1 Cor. xv. 29.) "Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

St. Paul's argument here was very forceful at the time he wrote it; but, as the idea of obligation evaporated in the blaze of increasing conformity to the world during the next two centuries, and only that of advantage remained, the text early became a puzzle to Commentators. Neither Jerome, at the commencement of the 5th century, nor Epiphanius or Chrysostom, at its middle, could give any worthy meaning of these words; but their attempts show how completely St. Paul's appeal was lost upon the nominal Church of that secularised, ceremonial, and ripe symbolistic age.

In the context, returning to verse 19 and linking on 30th to 32nd verses, the Apostle is speaking of the voluntary exposure to risk and suffering of the first labourers, the pioneers of the Gospel; men "of all men most pitiable," but for the bright hopes of eternal glory, which their Lord's resurrection

sealed to them: men exposed daily to danger, and even to murder, by an infuriated populace, stirred by Jewish hate or Gentile superstition. This they dared from a sense of duty to a world dead in sin. (Ephes. ii. 1.) They felt themselves pledged and bound for those whom their Lord called "the dead," in St. Luke ix. 60, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

It is observable that St. Luke, the acknowledged companion of Paul, is the only Evangelist who preserves this hard saying of Jesus. Of course, the word "dead" is not supposed to be used in its strictly classical sense; but, long before the New Testament was written, the word (*νεκρός*) had become adjectival in its use. This is one of many words in Lxx and New Testament, the usage of which confirms the date of their preparation. Any reasonable objector to the interpretation of the word in 1st Cor. xv. 29 in two senses, physical and mystical death in one short sentence, must allow a comparison with our Lord's words in St. Luke as parallel and helpful. In a Church where we may presume St. Luke's gospel rendered the Saviour's utterance familiar, St. Paul's similar use of terms could not be misleading or even perplexing.

As one pledged thus to labour at the risk even of dear life, "baptized for the dead," St. Paul counted himself "debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians." (Rom. i. 14, 15.) In this sense, the Apostles showed that they shared the baptism of their Lord with the Holy Ghost, and, responding to the impulses of His Spirit, obeyed their vocation, and for a world of dead burying their dead, counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might fulfil their "ministry," received from the Lord Jesus, thoroughly to "testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.) Thus baptized for the dead, they lived "in jeopardy every hour."

When St. Paul penned these remarkable words, at Ephesus, for the Church at Corinth, he had but recently escaped from the riot raised by Demetrius ; and his soul still throbbed with the excitement of that memorable day, when the lively faith of the resurrection enabled him to dare to face the rage of the Ephesian "beasts" assembled in their amphitheatre ; but his friends suffered him not : and so we have these Epistles, vastly more valuable than his martyrdom before the time. As a man, however, he felt the terrible alternatives of his position. Indeed, the entire band of the Apostles felt and acted like men under a solemn obligation to a world redeemed, but insensible to their own highest interests, and resisting the gospel through ignorance.

Those who were called to Christian Baptism, in the first age, would be taught that the uppermost and chief thought, in the use of the term, was that of obligation laid and sealed. It was the loss of this, as inconvenient, out of the teaching of the following ages, which led men to accumulate other meanings to an ordinance which had become insipid for lack of the lost one.

The efficacy of baptism, in itself, to "wash away sins" was one idea ; and this led worldly-wise men to postpone their baptism until near death, that it might discharge in one ceremony all the liabilities of a guilty life. Thus Tertullian, A.D. 217, dissuades from baptizing children, and unmarried people, and widows, so as to leave them a chance of lustration from inevitable sin. This postponement had certainly become the preference at the time of the marriage of the nominal Church to the Empire ; Constantine, the Emperor, submitting to be baptized only when so near death as not to be likely to commit any act regarded as sin in that age. The bishops, who allowed this, may be reputed orthodox ; but they could not have been "spiritual" men in St. Paul's own sense of the term.

Its efficacy in itself to remove the taint of original sin, and renew the soul in righteousness, was another early fiction; which survives to our own day, as the terrible "*Lie*" which men prefer to believe instead of the Truth, wherever the Preacher-pastor is metamorphosed into the Priest: and it well subserves his domination over families and youth.

Symbolism too, was heaped around this sacrament very early after Scripture ceased to be the sole guide; and ceremonies were multiplied to set forth what was believed about it. Immersion, to symbolise burial and resurrection, and that three times in the several names of the Holy Trinity; three steps down into the water of the baptistery, to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; naked baptism, recesses veiled off, or curtains round the water, changes of garment and names; and other puerilities early accumulated: so that antiquity, only not so old as Sacred Scripture, can be pleaded for *all* these practices, and many more.

The savour was gone out of the salt when the Divine intent had faded out of men's thoughts; and ceremonies amused the multitude, or somehow fussily answered the interrogation, "Why require this service at all?" Henceforward few commentators can be found to suggest *How* Israel was "baptized unto Moses," &c. Most writers seek to show *how* the passage through the Red Sea can be made to subserve the idea of Sprinkling or Immersion as *the* valid mode of Baptism. Even "the cloud," which was behind them, is made to shed some drops upon the people; and some spray from the upright walls of water must be imagined to have dashed upon them; while the great moral purpose of binding them to the system of Moses, under God, is mournfully unobserved by most.

CHAPTER V.

ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED.—Coloss. ii. 12.

THOUGH the subject of saving faith could not have been absent from St. Paul's affections, he does not name it in the 6th chapter of Romans, nor indeed till ch. ix. 30. Baptism was sufficient for his purpose in dealing with those who made void the Law while they talked much of Faith. But in Coloss. ii. 12, the phrase, "buried in baptism with Him," is closely conjoined with, "risen with Him by the faith of the operation of God."

This faith should be understood as the trust of a contrite heart upon God through Christ, as the Father who loved the world so as to give His Son to be a propitiation for their sins; and, having received in His death a full vindication of the outraged Law, and declared it satisfactory by His resurrection, can now exercise His delight in mercy through the forgiveness of sins unto the justification of our persons, and the sanctification of our entire nature. Comp. Rom. iii. 26; iv. 24, 25. 1 St. Pet. i. 19.

The trust is exercised in the *presence* of the death, resurrection, and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, (Rom. iv. 23, Heb. vii. 24, 25,) interpreted to the individual soul by the Holy Ghost alone; when complete it is sealed upon the heart, by His own hand, in the same hour. (Ephes. i. 12—14.) The suggestion of our new relation as children of God by adoption, prompts the utterance of "Abba Father," Rom. viii. 16, and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, Rom. v. 5, transforming our souls into the same element, love to God and man; especially to those who love God also, 1 Jno. v. 1—5.

This faith, wherever it exists, is felt to have been *received* from above; and, though not apart from a mental process which some can recount, is more and more discerned by each to be "the gift of God" by the operation of His Holy Spirit.

This is *Saving Faith*, as distinguished from faith in *general*, which may be described as a conviction of the truth of God in the Gospel; such as was possible to Simon, the sorcerer, under the overwhelming influence of miracles, and of the social elevation at Samaria, caused by the preaching of Philip. Acts ch. viii.

The expression, "believed," in the New Testament, as the outcome of an Evangelistic effort, must not be necessarily understood as "Saving Faith," any more than in the case of those whose discipleship our Lord purposely tested by His searching teaching, (St. John vi.), and who, in consequence, "walked no more with Him." Others at Jerusalem were so convinced and gained, that "they believed on Him," and yet quickly after stumbled at Him with irretrievable displeasure, because He urged upon them Salvation from sin, (St. Jno. viii.) Many "that received the word" preached to them, were the first subjects of Christian Baptism, after the descent of the Holy Ghost. Philip, at Samaria, admitted many, Simon among the rest, who desired to bind themselves to the new, thrice blessed truths which had been preached and authenticated among them. The parable of the Sower, and the fortunes of the Seed, here naturally occur to our minds.

Uninspired men can never affirm of others the possession of Saving Faith; but St. Paul addresses the Colossians, as persons who were "risen with Christ" by means of the faith "of the operation of God;" and his whole appeal thenceforward is worthy of the firm basis upon which he can instruct them. He did not use it when he wrote to the Romans, because of the

mixed condition of their Church at that time; he therefore took with them the *lower* ground of their baptism, from which all alike were accessible, even though some were Antinomians, or tempted to be such.

Certainly very many of the disciples at Rome needed much further instruction. It is fair to assume that as he did not use the same basis with them as he did with the Colossians, he felt unable to do so with the *entire* company. So far as the address to the Romans enables us to judge, we may affirm of all who are baptized into the death of Christ, that they are, by that Sacrament, entombed with Him, and so pledged to separation from sin, and a sinful world: (there is a world of duty, as well as a sinful world.) Certainly the expression, "Should walk in the newness of life," (Rom. vi. 4), is not equivalent to the triumphant, "Ye are risen with Him." Obligation to do so is as far as the Apostle could carry most of his readers at Rome. The rest of his address deals with average experience, rather than with that to which believers actually attain, as suggested in Coloss. iii. 1—4, where, "if then," implies no doubt of their being "risen with Christ," but, it powerfully resumes the affirmation of Ch. ii. 12, after having roused them out of the tyrannous temptations with which false teachers were undermining their faith.

In Rom. vi. 4, the Apostle is explicit as to our baptism into the death being the *means* of our formal association with Jesus Christ in burial. The preposition he uses ($\delta\acute{\alpha}$ with a Genitive), as there occurs, should always, if possible, be understood of the *instrumental* cause: as explicitly by the use of this same preposition is "Faith of the operation of God," in Col. ii. 12, made the instrumental cause of our resurrection with Christ to the new spiritual life.

Our burial is said to have taken place in baptism, "wherein

also ye are *risen*," &c. The preposition (*ἐν*) is occasionally used before the material employed in an action, and approximates thus to the instrumental cause; "in baptism" might be so understood; but, as in the second clause, an adequate instrumental cause, with a suitable preposition, is expressed, "by (*διὰ*) the Faith," &c., the fair rendering of the first words must be "wherein" or "in which;" and, parallel to the former affirmation, "in baptism" must be the sense. And this must be understood of either, "the time when" or "the sphere in which."

1st. "*The time when*;" that is to say, at the very moment of their baptism, however administered, these Colossians were formally buried with Christ; and, out of his inspired knowledge, St. Paul could affirm of them, that at *the same instant* they were spiritually raised with Him. No delay, therefore, would be interposed in their transition from death in sin, and their death *to* sin, and new life in Christ. Instances are on record of such favour to some; this, however, is not the rule even in baptism of adult Christians.

Those who come to Baptism, already possessed of a lively Christian faith, are *already* "risen with Christ." Such persons are baptized with water, on the same ground as were Cornelius and his friends. Before he baptized them, St. Peter knew that God had purified their hearts, as he says in Acts xv. 9. But, as it would not have been suitable to have some in the Church baptized with water, and some *not* so baptized; some under the formal pledge, severing them for ever from their whole sinful past, and some not so bound; that the whole Church might be addressed as by St. Paul in Rom. vi.; and that we might have the mighty sympathy of "One baptism," St. Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Whilst this view of Baptism confines its appeals to a comparatively few favoured ones, there is an alternative abundantly corroborated, cheering to all sincere baptized persons :

2nd. Let us now understand the phrase "in Baptism" to mean *in the state, relation, or sphere of the baptized*. Compare such phrases as, "dead in trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh," "called in one body," "in Christ," and "in the Lord," "Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind," "Bring them up in the nurture of the Lord." All these are instances of the use of this preposition (*ἐν*) indicating a *state*, rather than a *time* or *event*. But Rom. iv. 10, is even more germane to the phrase under examination, "in Baptism." Speaking to the point of Abram's justification by Faith being important to all, Gentile as well as Israelite, it asks, "How was it reckoned then," &c.? that is, in what ceremonial state or relation did he stand towards God? And the reply is, "Not *in* circumcision, but *in* uncircumcision." For Abram to be *in* circumcision would indeed have been a change of relation and state ceremonially. So, to be "in Baptism" implies a state into which we come, on being baptized: we then stand under solemn obligation toward God in Christ, in the advantageous position of being buried with Christ.

The general subject of circumcision will be discussed further on. In the context it is used in passing to illustrate our regeneration, in which the body of sin is stripped off, a far grander thing than the Jewish rite. But this momentary proximity of circumcision and Baptism, in Col. ii. 11, 12, was intended to *sever* them for ever, in serious thought, by the interposition of a *tomb*;—the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which every baptized person is for ever freed from the old rites and legal claims; as well as from the tyranny of Sin by the right it holds under the Law.

In Col. ii. 13, the Apostle stands, as it were, and looks back jubilantly, as from the *other side* of the tomb, out of which believers are spiritually and morally risen. From the position thus attained he proceeds to develop our freedom for holy service. Our response to him measures our attainment in Christianity.

After this grand survey and majestic appeal it rouses indignation to hear men attempt to interject into his stirring words a petty purpose of enforcing immersion, as necessary to salvation, or even in order to perfection; as though the leading thought was not our rescue out of ancient ceremonies and symbolisms altogether! To attempt to pivot all this rescue upon a new, tyrannous symbolism, immersion in water, essential to perfection before God, is unworthy of the whole argument of the Apostle and of the very subject of baptism. "Ye must be immersed," is an echo of some who urged, "Ye must be circumcised." St. Paul does not anywhere say, we are "buried with Christ" *by faith*: as soon as faith comes the person is "risen with Christ," though accidentally denied Baptism, by circumstances over which he has no control.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. PAUL ON BAPTISM, CONTINUED.

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”—
Galatians iii. 27.

To realise the state of the Galatian church, when this Epistle was written, it will be necessary to weigh well what degree of Christian experience its members had attained before “some” had begun to “trouble them.”

Previously to Paul’s first visit they were idolaters (Ch. iv. 8) among a Jewish population, and opening to their arts of proselytism, so successful about that era, in the Eastern world; when old gods and religious systems were becoming worn out. From the Apostle they had heard of a crucified Saviour; eyes of faith had been vouchsafed to them; the story of the Cross had been made affectingly real, and blessedness had followed the cry of Adoption. What remained, but to be zealously affected in the good thing always; to continue to sow to the Spirit, until of the Spirit they had reaped life everlasting? Alas! such glory had suffered sad eclipse by the endeavours of certain visitors, who would have had no access to these Galatians, except as they too were Christian professors, baptized into the sacred name.

At the time of Paul’s second visit (Acts xviii. 23) the errors denounced by the Council at Jerusalem, were rife around them; but he seems then to have deemed it only necessary to caution them explicitly against the emissaries of circumcision. This may be implied in the “again” of Ch. v. 3. These “false brethren” wish to stand fair with their own countrymen; but

while aiming to promote external conformity to Judaism, they, as Christians, did not keep the Law ; excusing themselves from all its inconveniences, whilst practically seeking to be justified by it.

The pertinacity of these visitors from the mother-Church in urging circumcision, shows that at Jerusalem, where both ordinances were understood, Baptism was not supposed to have been ordained *instead of* circumcision.

These men brought with them no miracles or Spiritual gifts, which, at that day, were seals to doctrine and experience ; but they had a precious volume, "the Scriptures," which they mis-used for their own petty ends. St. Paul, however, by the legitimate use of the same book, as given by "Inspiration of God," foiled for ever these false teachers.

The appeals of the Epistle show that their efforts had been painfully successful ; so that the major part of the church were in a state of spiritual backsliding from Gospel truths, and from evangelical experience ; and were immersed in the discussion and eager observance of the Old Testament festivals ; expecting perfection by mere human energy, or by that which terminates in outward expression. By a subtle use of the promises of God to "the Seed of Abraham," these visitors proposed to their hearers a status in a Church of God far more ancient than the Gospel, a Church succoured in the Old Testament miracles, speaking in its Psalms ; stimulated by its Prophets, and expressing its life in festivals which poured such a glory round Jerusalem.

They would allow that Paul had done good by his preaching ; but now, they wished to complete all things by conformity to the Scriptural system ; and they say virtually, "your emotions need a proper channel of expression, else they will run to waste or into extravagance. As men, what a help to us are days, and months, and times, and years. Observances,

divinely appointed and regulated, are better than new ones without authority. Our Lord, as 'under the Law,' (ch. iv. 4), recognised and used them. In our Scriptures, men were admitted to these advantages upon submitting to circumcision. A fair amount of Gentile blood has been thus already absorbed in the 'Holy Seed,' and now is your opportunity. We run great risk ourselves with our nation by any association with you (Acts x. 28.); but we desire your benefit, though verily you are not Abraham's seed, as we are, (ch. iv. 7.) Time will show the Christianised Israel to be the glory of the nations, with Jerusalem as their metropolis. There are in Judea many myriads of Jews who believe, and they are all zealous of the Law."

It was a difficult position for these Galatian Christians; from the fascination of which, nothing but a lively faith could extricate them. There is always the same tendency in human nature to be affected by authority and antiquity, and by that which is material and good for the eye. It was just as natural for the Jews to require superior reverence for their national religious institutions, as for those in our own times, who believe that we cannot be made perfect, except through their "orders." Jewish and high ecclesiastical pretensions are very similar.

The "again," in chap. iv. 19, implies that the work of the new spiritual life in these mistaken Christians had to be begun anew. If Christ had never been formed in them, or if the work had been indelible, St. Paul could not have said, "I travail again." In a most rousing allegory he insists on the utter incompatibility of their new preferences, with the very idea of Christianity. Hoping to have recovered some, he entreats them to "stand fast in the liberty," &c. *This* "again" has nothing to do with "their state of prior heathenism." Agar and her children, with the earthly Jerusalem, are sufficiently in bondage from the Christian point of view.

For Gentiles circumcision brought in upon Baptism reversed things fearfully. It renounced the yoke of Christianity, formally laid on each member. Christ crucified is soon lost out of sight, if anything nearer our moral vision is joined with Him. Christ *and* works of any sort, as a joint basis of justification, must end in obscurity of Christ and of grace too. The Apostle concludes with a hopeful sense that all would return to their loyalty to Christ, and their affection for their spiritual father. Our possession of this Epistle is a probable guarantee of this result.

The persons addressed in this Epistle, as having "fallen from grace," are connected in St. Paul's argument, with the only thing which remained not disannulled, and which, we may therefore conclude, ever continues inviolable before God, whatever becomes of faith and its resultant experience. The sense of this context is vital in its resolution of what, by the grace of God, Baptism does to us.

1. Some believe in its regenerating effect. But the idea of *Ethical conformity**, however obtained, would be fatal to the Apostle's purpose here to teach justification by Faith *alone*.

2. Others say; it celebrates enrolment into Christ: such is the virtue of the outward profession, that, for its sake, God now accepts you as in Christ, your privileges last on, irrespective of faith or works. But *Galatians v. 4.* affirms virtually, "Your justification through Christ, is abrogated."

3. Some teach that Baptism declares and presupposes faith; the use of water, even in the Sacred name, is not Baptism, unless faith is present in the recipient. But this view would require a *transposition* in the order here given; we should have read:—"As many as put on Christ, were baptized into Christ."

To say that these Galatians had the faith at Baptism, and their

*In *Romans xiii.* 14 those already baptized are bidden "put on Christ," in this sense of "Ethical Conformity." See Meyer in loco.

loss of it had not evacuated the force of the Sacrament, is more to purpose. But St. Paul makes his appeal turn entirely on this force, and leaves faith out of the argument, because he knew it was not in them; they had gone over to another gospel.

Whatever the actual state of the persons, both at the time of Baptism and ever after in their history, we see in this appeal to the fallen Galatians, and in the case of Simon, as well as in the enforcing it upon Cornelius and his company, though already sealed with the Spirit, which had been refused to Simon, that it did not admit them into Christ; but in every instance a formal obligation to put on Christ was laid, in behalf of God and revealed duty, which can never be reversed. The question of faith does not affect this part of the subject. But the idea of obligation was never absent from the Apostle's mind when he urged their baptism as a basis of appeal to the Churches, which he frequently did, especially as here in behalf of Unity and Equality.

The ordinance respects either duty or privilege, or both. But privilege comes and goes with true faith, ch. v. 4. The Divine part in baptism, then, is to lay obligation with conditional promise of privilege: every reference to it in the New Testament contains this meaning, and it is this which is all important, because *invariable*.

Observe, while chap. v. 6 says, "In Christ Jesus circumcision availeth nothing," this context forbids us to say, "Baptism avails nothing;" for evidently its sacred force may be used as here to *recall* men to faith and duty. The erring teachers attempted to abolish Gentilism by inducing the Galatians to conform to Judaism. The Apostle rebukes them, and declares that putting on Christ had obliterated both, "Ye are all one in Christ."

The Corinthians were not free to say, "I am of Paul," &c., 1 Cor. i. 13. It is noteworthy that the Apostle there too urges

their baptism, as well as Christ's crucifixion, against their incipient Christian schism. Borrowing the New Testament idea of baptism, St. Paul raises the guiltiness of the disobedience to Moses from the obligation laid on the Israelites by the miracle of the cloud and of the sea, (1 Cor. x. 3.) Further, all are baptized, with the Romans, ch. vi. 3, into Christ's death; to undivided trust in its merits, and unhesitating separation to its purposes. We are under obligation to reckon ourselves as buried men, in regard to the penalties of the Law for sin; and equally so, where worldly associations require bond service to sin.

The fact that the experience of the Galatians was in question, all through the discussion of the privileges of believers, confirms this sense of the meaning of Holy Baptism, as developed from the context, and as indeed necessary to its interpretation. Here, it teaches obligation to assume a relation to Christ, disannulling all others incompatible with it, and binding to the fulfilment of the duties arising out of it, especially to those who are under the same pledge. In Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians it implies obligation to Sanctification, as in Corinthians to Unity and Charity. The full view must be gathered from them all.

Baptism on God's part is always good for His purposes. It does not confer grace, but Divine grace welcomes to the ordinance. Neither does it confer privilege; that is always suspended on faith; but it lays obligation to "put on Christ." This remains unalterable for backsliders, as well as for learners. The sacrament of Baptism understood, as sealing by the decree of God, the rights of sonship in Christ, and as binding all to assume them and His moral character, affords in Gal. iii. 27 an evident basis for restoring the erring to their privileges, upon their return to the simplicity of faith: though they would certainly not require a second Baptism.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. PETER ON BAPTISM.

“Water; which after a true likeness doth now save you, even Baptism; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God; by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
—1 Peter iii. 21.

THE testimony of this passage is important, as showing that a healthy conscience is essential to the saving efficacy of Baptism. The time out of mind association of ablution with religious services, all round the Mediterranean, and right away to India, the evident meaning of all the Old Testament baptisms, and the education of all God-fearing Jews, favoured the preservation of the belief, that, if Baptism is not principally an ablution, its symbolism is based upon the notion.

But in this passage, “Putting off the filth of the flesh,” if it has any place at all, is declared to have no importance, as compared with the relation of “a good conscience” to the sacrament. For the presence of water in it, St. Peter suggests a far more stirring reason than that of ablution; the rescue of godliness and the Family institute, by the interposition of the Ark, in Noah’s flood. A few, that is eight persons, were saved by means of water; which same element, now present by God’s command in Baptism, saves us with a sort of correspondency explained in the following context on to chap. iv. 7.

“Doth save,” in the present tense, while resuming the thought in ‘were saved’ of the previous verse, represents that which is being done for us is yet *in process*. The lives of Noah’s family, truly, were saved *by the Ark*, into which they

entered, and which the water bore up ; whereas, here, they are said to have been saved by *water* ; which means that the flood rescued the children of Noah in a *moral* sense ; else they would have been carried away by another tyrannous flood, that of surrounding ungodliness and social filthiness. Instead of this, for the good of the human race, ungodliness was swept away by "the waters of Noah."

The burden of the whole context on to chap. iv. 7 is *moral* rescue. There is an intensity in the expression, "Saved by water," which should not be overlooked. The children of Noah were thoroughly rescued as to lives and morals by means of water, in honour of their father's faith, Heb. xi. 7 ; himself, besides, obtained a standing in the succession of those justified by Faith. His household were saved, however, only so far as a miracle can save men, on whose choice, after all, the improvement of it must depend.

Sinners of the old world had so defiled the family institute, that, instead of blessing individuals, it *corrupted* them. The Creator, disgusted with the prevalence of impurity round the fount of society,—matrimony and the domestic affections,—violence and fornication leaving almost none pure, scarcely Noah's own family, as appears too soon after the flood, drowned the whole, and *began again* with three comparatively young couples, childless at the time, who might be terrified into upholding marriage as a solemn transaction, and regarding children as sacred trusts for God. Bad as it is, the world does retain something of this effect !

The context suggests a parallel between Noah's times and the period in which St. Peter lived and wrote. The day of vengeance, on Jerusalem and Judaistic ceremonialism and worldliness, was hastening. Meanwhile, it was a struggle for virtuous people to keep themselves and their families from

being dragged away by the suck of the filth of ungodly society. It was "as in the days of Noe;" and so it will be at every visitation of the Son of Man to stay the ungodliness of each age, until "the Brightness of His coming" shall have, at last, rendered Christian worldliness an impossibility.

As the water, bearing up the Ark, saved the eight persons to begin anew the probation of the human race, so does the baptismal water save those gathered under its sacred obligation, to begin an individual Christian probation, if the conditions of the context are fulfilled in them. The Apostle speaks of the *present* safety of himself and of all who understand and respond to their Baptism; safety from the overrunning flood of ungodliness, drowning in "lusts, revellings, and idolatries" all who continue disobedient.

Baptism, by its demand in God's behalf, draws out the good and conscientious from the bad. As in Noah's day, some, the most part, perished, notwithstanding his preaching, through disobedience to the Holy Spirit who urged him to warn unto repentance; so is it "now" in this day of evangelisation upon the resurrection of Christ Jesus. Saved and unsaved, who are called to repent, prove the influence of Christ, of whom they hear, but in *diverse* modes; certainly they part from one another, ch. iv. 2—5.

The assertion that Baptism "does save," seems to require qualification. We have seen, from other texts, that it does not save, in the full and proper sense, unless a lively faith follow, or be present. It binds or lays obligation. Baptism into the death of Jesus Christ buries us with Him: "Faith of the operation of God," raises us along with Him. Baptism, then, that is, water used in the name of the Holy Trinity, saves us, as a physician, by his presence and skill, may be said to save a life that is in peril, if other things essential are present also.

The death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, are all assembled here, as the Divine provision for Sanctification by grace; and "a good conscience" on man's part, exercised on these facts, cannot respond in vain to Baptism's demand on God's behalf. With these conditions, the saving efficacy is sure to follow, in a way which the next chapter fully unfolds.

The uncommon classical word, rendered "answer," in the authorized version, is good for the purpose of the context; its strict meaning in the text, however, is "interrogation," as in the Revised Version. Baptism, so far as it is the ordinance of God, is of the nature of a question put to each man's moral sense. It is a proving of the quality of each conscience in relation to God and His proposals; so much so, that only "a good conscience" can respond correctly.

Some seem to have no idea of a conscience as good, *except as purged from guilt*. But this is found in no man, until by "the operation of God" (Col. ii. 12), faith of the Lord Jesus is imparted to him: "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works," (Hebrews ix. 14). In the summary of fitness to enter into the Holiest, on the part of each believer, all stand (Hebrews x. 22) having their "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Note here also, another than ourselves has applied the "precious blood" which made peace, and that one the Holy Ghost.

But there is a good conscience which is a blessed gift of God; a preparative to receive and retain the Gospel; the ingenuousness of a human soul, yet plastic to the hand of the Holy Spirit of free grace; and indeed anywhilst, until judicially given up to a 'reprobate mind,' (Rom. i. 28.)

There is, perhaps, but one mention of "a good conscience" in this sense, namely, in Acts xxiii. 1, where St. Paul, a criminal before those who once employed him to crush Christianity and

its faith, of which he was now become such a prominent ring-leader, affirms his perfect consistency with his former self; "I have lived in all good conscience," etc. By asserting his utter honesty, he appealed to that in them, which alone could respond.

Our Lord refers to the same thing in other words, where, in His exposition of the fortunes of the good seed, (Luke viii. 15) He speaks of "an honest and good heart." At any cost, men must enter in at the strait gate of this requirement. Baptism does not *save* until moral honesty or sincerity is found in the recipient. It was Peter himself who called, in a terrifying manner, the attention of a baptized man to his lack of this as excluding him from all possibility of participating in the higher gifts of the kingdom, Acts viii. 21.

But wherever the baptized err, however long, through ignorance or insincerity, the obligation before God remains, Baptism abides, an interrogation addressed by God to conscience, to lead into God and preserve in God. By this means, He is still *enquiring for a good conscience from age to age*, and rescuing all in whom it is found. Under John, the answer was repentance, in earnest waiting for the coming Christ. Christian Baptism, as now commanded, is a demand by God made in the presence of the facts and purposes of Redemption, as sealed by the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. When a good conscience, with faith in these facts, rouses all the energies of the soul to respond, to the extent of fulfilling the duty of separation unto His service, to which God calls each of us, then, indeed, does Baptism "save us."

As there is nothing so individual as conscience, so there is nothing so individualising as Baptism: the other sacrament, by its very form is a communion. The holy Apostle does not, in the context, direct attention to the help of others, any more

than to the help of God. "He that hath suffered in the flesh" had no fellow in His struggle (ch. iv. 1.); so with each one in this vital obligation, "Arm yourselves with the same mind." The good conscience will inevitably expose its possessor to suffering from sinners. He may have to resist "unto blood" as did Christ. St. Peter forewarns the baptized of a conflict. But there will be no resistance by one that is not forearmed; and God calls for a decisiveness, sharp but saving. Baptism will not save from ruin through sin, merely by teaching you to rejoice that Jesus died, and rested from sin for you. Assume for your armour the same sentiments and purposes as He had, or you will fail. By thus undertaking and maintaining the conflict with evil, your salvation will progress. God will see to His own part for His elect: He who demands a good conscience will finally honour it.

Where the opportunity for such a response is not given, as in the case of baptized children dying before the possibility of education in the Gospel, the peril of worldly association, described in the context, has not any place. He, whose name has been honoured over them in His own ordinance, saves them into their eternal heritage, by the resurrection of Him, who is Head and Lord of all children, (Rom. v. 14.; Mark x. 14.)

In the form used by the Anglican Church there is, very properly, a reference to the rescue of the family *at* the flood: but the fact, that it was rescued *by* the flood, requires expounding and enforcing, wherever there are children to be trained for Christ. Over the education of these the Church is pledged by her Head, to watch in His name, "of such *is* the kingdom;" and it must be the education, 'the nurture of the Lord,' of a child under the same pledge along *with* its parents, Ephes. vi. 4. There is 'one' sacred ordinance in the case of children *and* adults; and the Christian education of *both*, by God and man,

must follow, till conscience thus addressed responds right loyally in a life-long self consecration, and consequent separation from the world. Such catechumens become Church members when this response manifests itself; the obligation upon consciences, however, abides 'till the Lord come.'

St. Peter's whole language, when compared with St. Paul's, shows impressively that the minds of the Apostles could not approach the subject of Baptism without causing the correlates of the death and resurrection of our Lord to crowd to the front, with their bearing on Sanctification in order to holy living; the Holy Spirit of Scripture having inwrought these things with the very texture of His whole teaching in their hearts and minds. While Peter refuses to allow Judaistic purification any place in this subject, he certainly uses Christian Baptism to insist on purification of heart and life. We should make every effort to keep the truth and its symbol unclouded by unscriptural additions and questions of rites and administrations.

Notably, Baptism in its earliest form and mode did not put Peter in mind of *entombment*. In Acts xi. 15, 16, he tell us the promise of Baptism with the Spirit came to his mind when "the Spirit *fell on*" all his listeners. He draws all he needs for His purpose in this context from the Passion of our Lord. Paul mentions Burial, as we have seen, in order to push to the utmost limit, the idea of our obligation, as baptized, to severance from sin and sinners, but not to indicate anything in Christian Baptism resembling the circumstances of our Lord's entombment. It seems a positive descent of topic to advert here to rival modes of administration, where such associations seem to have no place in the minds and object of the great Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

"The covenants, and the giving of the Law."—Romans ix. 4.

"THE covenant of circumcision" (Acts vii. 8), certainly is not the basis of the argument in Gal. iii. for the privileges of *all* nations. It was in connection with this "token" "in the flesh," that the full name, Abraham, was given; and, very suitably, this may be called *the* Abrahamic Covenant. But it must not be confounded with that made "in the mount," from which St. Paul draws *all* his weapons against those who misused the term "Abraham's seed," Gal. iii. 29, to enforce circumcision and the law of Moses upon Gentiles who had received the gospel.

Thrice did God make a covenant with His servant and friend.

1. The first, most formally enacted, whose solemn rites survived all through the Old Testament, (see Jerem. xxxiv. 18, 19) and illustrated the principle laid down in Heb. ix. 17—22, is that in Gen. xv. 8—21. This followed his own justification by faith; but the sole gracious promise in it, is the grant of Canaan to his posterity, after sojourn and suffering in a foreign land (Egypt) and restoration to Canaan, with much substance, in the fourth generation.

2. The second covenant, in Gen. xvii., explicitly stipulated circumcision at eight days old, as marking off his posterity through Isaac. The object of circumcision is to exclude Gentile blood, as far as possible; and the grant of Canaan is suspended on its observance, 14 v. The uncircumcised man-child is an alien upon that land. None but the circumcised can hold it in perpetuity.

The Jew, reasonably, preserves his nationality thus. It was their sense of the importance of this badge, in preventing their melting away among the Gentiles, that roused the resistance of the nation to Antiochus Epiphanes, who sought to extirpate all religious distinctions among his subjects B.C. 170.

If a Christian Jew should care to secure for his children a reversionary share in the land of their fathers, there is nothing in the New Testament to prohibit circumcision for such a purpose, but rather the other way. It was a false report, *bearing upon* this practice, which had roused a prejudice against Paul, among the believers at Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 21; the report that he taught the *Jews* dispersed among the Gentiles "*not to circumcise their children.*" It was like the conspiracy against their nationality which the Maccabees had so signally and heroically defeated. The "Elders, with James" protest that they had no wish (25 v.) that the Gentiles should be teased with their customs. They knew well what baptism meant; "the ten thousands of Jews which believed," who had been baptized with their children, also understood its import; yet, they piqued themselves on their circumcision, for none of these supposed that Baptism had been ordained of God to supersede circumcision for *them*, to whom it was the tenure of the heritage of their fathers.

This view, alone, justifies Paul's circumcision of Timothy; that he might associate with the people, who, on such sufficient ground, clung to it as a badge of nationality: while he strenuously forbade its use among those of other lands or nationalities. Evidently he regarded it as unmeaning in the case of these, unless to swell the number of the heirs of the earthly Canaan, for he declared that the spiritual relation of believers is not, in any way, affected by circumcision or the absence of it. (Gal. v. 6, and Cor. vii. 18, 19.)

The Abrahamic covenant included Old Testament religious

advantages, Gen. xvii. 7. 8. These too, for Israelites, were suspended on circumcision. When the Passover severed them from Egypt, none but the circumcised might eat of it, Exod. xii. 48; and when, after forty years' cessation of the rite in the wilderness, they kept the Passover *on the promised land*, all had to be "in circumcision" in order to participate in the festival, Joshua v. 2—12.

The covenant from Sinai, Gal. iv. 24, into which they were baptized by the miracles of the cloud and the sea, *arose* out of their national relation to God; and fulfilled, in its possibilities, the engagement "I will be a God to thy seed," &c., Gen. xvii. 7.

3. But *another* covenant, that called by Zacharias, the "holy covenant," Luke i. 72, was made with Abraham in Gen. xxii. The law of circumcision had ruled in his family more than twenty years, when he was bidden to offer up his beloved son. At this period, Isaac was no mere child, being able to bear on his shoulder the wood sufficient for his immolation. This severest proving of the father's faith, on the Mount in the land of Moriah, was honoured by the most distinguished revelations.

The promise with 'nations' substituted for 'families' is now, for *the first time*, affirmed of his seed: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (18^{v.}) St. Paul, in Gal. iii. 16, teaches us that *this seed* is Christ.

Attention must be carefully fixed on this covenant, that it may not be confounded with that of circumcision in Gen. xvii. In this latter, the inheritors of the land of Canaan, only, are concerned: but in the one made in the Mount, *all* nations are equally interested *with* them. The channel through which the blessing was to come, was mentioned *only* "in the mount."

All was, very suitably, confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, by the repetition to them of the promise in Chap. xii. 3, with the addition, "And in thy seed," &c. (Genesis xxvi. 4, xxviii. 14.) Isaac's last recorded words, however, and Jacob's vow at Bethel,

seem more concerned with the things summed up in the covenant of circumcision than in the "blessing of Abraham," which suggested so much to St. Paul. Abraham *abides* transcendently, "the father of all them that believe."

In Galatians iii. 16, 17, St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, affirms spiritual blessings for a spiritual seed, whose distinctive mark is *faith* alone; and for this Gen. xxii. 18 is quoted. The covenant in Gen. xvii. was not imperiled (Gal. iii. 17) by the Law; but perfected by it, as the fulfilment of its *best* promise.

St. Peter, in his most conciliatory address to the thousands who had just witnessed the miracle at the gate of the Temple, after quoting Gen. xxii. 18, to show that he did not understand them, the natural posterity, to be *the* "seed" there spoken of, goes on to add—[*not* by receiving Him, shall *you* become this blessing to the world, but] "Unto you *first*," of all the kindreds of the earth, "God, having raised up His servant, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." This, the "blessing of Abraham," Rom. iv. 9, Gal. iii. 14, is intrinsically personal, and irrespective of rites and customs.

The covenant with Abraham, as the progenitor of Christ, made him the "heir of the world," Rom. iv. 13; that, suspended on circumcision, made his posterity heirs of Canaan only: Psalm cv. 8—11 illustrates *their* glorying in the Divine faithfulness to this last.

The argument for the freedom of the Galatians *turns upon* the lack of authority of all merely Mosaic institutions, for any but Israelites. For *them* only, the Law upheld circumcision; which even our Lord said, was not essentially Mosaic, but "of the fathers," St. John vii. 22. Let the obedient "stand fast in the liberty," &c., Gal. v. 1, not from the *moral* law, but from the rigour of mere Jewish ordinances, whose object for the world expired *with* Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

ANALOGY RATHER THAN SYMBOL.

“Born of water and of the Spirit.”—St. John iii. 5.

ANCIENT interpretation, down to the 16th century, understood “born of water” to mean Baptism. Since Calvin’s time the Society of Friends, and some others, have endeavoured to see in these words merely a symbolical phrase qualifying the mention of the Spirit, so as to crush the whole into ‘born of the Spirit, with a purifying effect.’

Sound Exegesis, however, will not allow such a construction. If even there were what is called a Hendiadys here, the rendering should be, “born of water with a spiritual purpose”; which would be destructive of their theory. Modern New Testament Greek Grammar recognises *no such mode* of interpretation as Hendiadys.

The words ‘symbolic’ and ‘symbolical’ in their modern use, are not so close to ‘symbol,’ as once they were. They now too frequently imply merely representation and illustration; whereas a symbol is not necessarily illustrative. It is further from this than its cognate word ‘emblem.’ Really, it is something which, with common consent of the initiated, sums up for them some fact or principle. A word, a letter, may be a symbol.

“The cup after supper” is not illustrative of the violent death of our Lord; but it is commemorative of it, by His injunction. If we could fetch the wine out of a loaf, or even a wafer, by the stab which is given at some sacerdotal celebrations, it might be illustrative of some circumstances of His passion; but too much so to be strictly symbolical. The break-

ing of the bread also is commemorative rather than illustrative. The cup is convenient for expressing our individual acceptance of the death, which secured our pardon; and it is also commemorative, but certainly not illustrative. The revised version has relieved the sacred feast henceforth, of any intention of *representation*—; the “show forth” in 1 Cor. xi 26, “Authorised,” is well supplanted by the *closer* rendering, “Proclaim the Lord’s death.”

To the initiated, the bread and the cup of wine are symbols, if merely on the table; silent witnesses, which require explanation to the uninstructed. In Christian catacombs, the cup, just roughly sketched on a slab, is a symbol, vouching for the faith of the sleeper behind it.

The pouring of water in Holy Baptism, is *illustrative* of the shedding forth spoken of in Titus iii. 6; but the mere presence of water in Christian worship is symbolical, so far as water is understood to be a symbol of the Holy Ghost in His sanctifying offices.

But the idea that water can illustrate a birth, entangles those minds which have become oppressed with the notion, revived in very modern times, that to baptize is to immerse; and the further idea of emergence is thus heaped upon this hallowed phrase “born of water and of the Spirit.”

Really, the word ‘born’ is *analogical* here, and not illustrative at all. The saving operation of the Holy Ghost, alone, commences a new life in Him. To understand this, one needs to be in experimental sympathy with the subject of “the new birth.” Nicodemus understood not our Lord’s discourse until he was himself “born of the Spirit.”

The truly godly before Christ heard to purpose, the call “Seek ye my face,” and found the “fear of the Lord” the “beginning of wisdom” by which they departed from evil.

There never was a saint of God on earth, without a transition from natural to spiritual life; over which he rejoiced, as he reaped its advantages; and, mostly, there were some others who gladly welcomed him into their fellowship, as, with themselves, "alive from the dead."

Under the New Testament Dispensation the beginning of this conscious life is called "born again," "born of the Spirit;" because to the godly it is *analogous* to being "born" naturally, "of the flesh," which *commences* physical life.

By this analogy our Lord roused the interest of Nicodemus in his own necessity. With the woman at Sychar's well, He used *another* analogy, deduced from her errand thither, which covers the *whole* work of the Spirit; whilst that with Nicodemus was intended to suggest that he was without the very commencement of it.

The true notion of a *beginning of life*, which born always means, must maintain itself in this expression, 'born of water,' as well as in 'born of the Spirit.' Their being under one regimen insists upon a like interpretation of 'born,' in *both* elements of the birth named; that is, analogical in both; by water, and by the Spirit. Here is no reference to 'emergence,' or to appearance for the first time, but to an actual commencement of a *life*. A life of *moral consciousness* towards God, by His Spirit; a life of *probation* under obligation, sealed by Baptism; each with its own history, succours, objects and sympathies. Both conditions of entrance into the kingdom of God are found respected throughout the New Testament age, which is our model of antiquity.

None, however, who have been 'born of the *Spirit*,' would be disposed to see an equal emphasis here laid by our Lord upon 'born of water;' because Baptism is the ordinance which man must administer; and he may cruelly place

difficulties in the way ; but the Spirit of God as the wind, goeth His own unhindered way ; and many have been ‘ born of the Spirit ’ who could not have Baptism with water, by reason of the prejudices of their friends, or the tyranny of their rulers. For instance, “ Pains and penalties ” drove the Society of Friends to seek justification for their compelled disuse of the sacraments ; but their lives and deeds demand respect.

Calvin, through desperate pressure from the Popish party, on the one hand, as to the regeneration of *all* in Baptism, and through his own objection, on the other, to consider any blessing of Redemption as belonging to those for whom it was not *reserved*, was led to depart from the interpretation that our Lord, by ‘ born of water ’ referred to Baptism.

Here Jesus Himself, however, named the conditions of admission into the kingdom of God. The ‘ Pharisees and Lawyers ’ were on another occasion openly condemned by Him (St. Luke vii. 30) for having “ rejected ” for themselves “ the counsel of God, being not baptized of John.” Few indeed of the Pharisees ever believed in Jesus ; and Nicodemus, one of that sect, at the outset of this interview, was at once reminded of his *own* duty to *commit himself* by baptism, as Jesus and His disciples had done ; but *not to rest there* ; a still weightier part of the qualification, to see and enter the kingdom of God, was required. On this, our Lord proceeds further to insist. The surprise of Nicodemus was excited by the proposal of any kind of *second* birth ; and his continued questioning about the subject of the 8th verse, being ‘ born of the Spirit,’ brought on him the deserved rebuke, that he, an honoured teacher, had read the Ancient Scriptures to so little spiritual purpose.

In 1st John, v. 8, it is said “ there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood,” to the coming

of the Son of God "in the flesh." Certainly the experience of believers on earth, the dignified presence of Baptism, and the tender Communion of the blood in the congregation, do, from age to age insist on a *cause*, as well as a *date*; and the sufficient cause is the Incarnation and Passion of our Lord, at the date assigned by Holy Scripture.

This is the best passage as to symbol present in Baptism by Divine appointment. There was no symbol in the baptism "unto Moses," nor in that "unto repentance;" but when Almighty God took water up into Sacramental relation to His purposes in Christ Jesus, He clothed it with this witnessing energy, and constituted it a symbol.

Some other passages, supposed to refer to this relation would be better understood *without* the idea of symbol; such as "washing of water by the word" (Ephesians v. 26); "washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Titus iii. 5.) In these passages the New Birth is connected with our progressive Sanctification. "Wash away thy sins, calling on His name," (Acts xxii. 16): certainly nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away sin; and invocation of "the Name" connects Faith for Pardon with Salvation to the end of Life," (Rom. x. 10.)

CHAPTER X.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

“One Baptism.”—*Ephes. iv. 5.*

i. From all that has gone before it seems evident that,

(1) In the *Divine intent* New Testament Baptism *formally lays obligation*; the response to which depends upon the amount of moral sensibility in each person.

(2) Testimony to the new truths manifested in Jesus Christ is another purpose of the command to continue it from age to age.

(3) It visibly commences a *new probation*, as is implied in “born of water,” under an education by the Spirit and the Church using the Holy Scriptures.

(4) By its *essentials*; water applied in any mode to a person with reverent invocation of the name of God, Three yet One; it *insists* upon all which that Catholic doctrine carries:

(5) While it symbolises *solely* the sanctifying energy of the Holy Ghost, Vicar of Christ, as the culminating glory of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh.

Beyond these five it is hard to find any other purpose recognised in the New Testament.

ii. It is never said to *confer* Grace, neither Regenerating nor Confirming Grace. No one is ever addressed in the New Testament as having received either of these energies, or any other, at the moment of Baptism. No one in the New Testament is said to have “*declared* his faith” by Baptism, nor to have “*illustrated* what he believed” by the mode of his Baptism. It could not be a “*refreshment* to the faith” of those,

who at the day of Pentecost, were baptized "unto remission of sins": every true believer *has*, at once, the witness of adoption and knowledge of remission. At that glorious day the men pricked in heart were bidden *expect* remission in the name of The Crucified, to whose dispensation they proceeded to bind themselves *in hope to receive* forgiveness.

iii. Baptism does not save in the *same sense* that Faith of the operation of God saves: such Faith *adds* nothing to the *force* of *Baptism*: this continues though faith is *lost*; as we have fully seen in the recal of the Galatians, baptized but "fallen from Grace."

Being "in Baptism," however, places in the midst of the means of faith; and, except where the Church is ambitious to obliterate all distinctions between itself and the world, to be "in Baptism" protects from the perils of the world: it protects those severed from the world, and those under instruction in order to their understanding and choosing such separation. To both classes, however, that *is done* in Baptism to which The Spirit and The Word may appeal; they have been formally placed under obligation of Christian faith and obedience.

iv. There is nothing in these views of Baptism to discourage the Baptism of infants: but very much the other way. The Christian system possesses from our Lord and His Spirit such an *explicitness* as to the claims of children, as was *needful*, where experience is so much *insisted* upon in the case of adults: far-fetched analogies are therefore not needed.

The children carried through the sea, and forty years afterwards addressed as bound to Sinai's revelations, is one good analogy.

That circumcision was enjoined upon infants is another: beyond this no further analogy to circumcision exists: Bap-

tism is *not* "the circumcision of Christ," *Coloss. ii. 11*: this is regeneration itself, and is "made without hands," which Baptism, of course, is not; other hands *must* administer it.

In *St. Mat. xix. 14*, *St. Mark x. 14*, *St. Luke xviii. 16*, our Lord's word is explicit as to children. He did not more explicitly say of "the poor in spirit" *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven, than He did of the "*babes*" he embraced, as representative of all children, "of *these* is the kingdom," &c. The pronoun here found, when emphasised by the article as here, almost always referring to the persons or things *last* mentioned, and not to those similar to them: the one possible exception to this, *Philippians ii. 29*, may really include *Timotheus of 19 v.*, as well as *Epaphroditus 25 v.* The usual passages *Acts ii. 39*, and household Baptisms, need not delay us now: they satisfy those who can be satisfied.

1 Cor. vii. 14 affirms the everywhere recognized privileges of children. Those who attempted to use Old Testament severance from the "unclean," as a reason for a believer divorcing his yet undecided wife, are challenged upon the term "holy." If she is to be dismissed as "unclean," because not yet a believer, what about your children, not yet old enough to understand the truth; are these also unclean? Nay, about these there has never been any doubt, since Christ determined their claim; "they are holy"; not because they are your children, but by His authority: now also, of His grace, she, *for your advantage*, is declared "clean unto you." (Compare *St. Luke xi. 41*, *1 Tim. iv. 5*.) If, with some, we regard "holy" in the sense of "claimed by God," this is true of the children; but it does not serve the case of the relation of the parents as well as the other view.

v. Baptism is evidently in order to *education*. How great the sin of those, who neglect to train a child baptized for the

faith and duty of a Christian, as a charge from the "Head of every man"! No such opportunity can recur.

The education of the human being commences from the very moment of his natural birth: and the only rational and Christian system is that which recognizes his entire nature, "spirit, soul, body," as designed by our beneficent Creator to receive harmonious development.

For this department of duty, the New Testament, as for every other, furnishes principles of action, leaving the details to the common sense of "the Children of Light," who need not be less wise than "the children of this world." The Family Institute furnishes *special* facilities that the child may be trained for the Church of the Lord Jesus.

In the choice of a trade or a profession parents do not think it expedient to wait till the child has attained the ripe judgment of manhood; but using their own, bind him to teachers and masters, to whom the law of man requires him to render obedience. Why should the *religious* binding, of so much higher importance, be deferred, when another master is so eager to avail himself of the opportunity? As in the choice of an earthly calling, so in that of the heavenly service, a man may refuse to practise what he has been taught; yet the parental duty is clear to "*train up*," &c. Prov. xxii. 6; Ephes. vi. 4.

vi. They are certainly most loyal to the doctrine of original sin who hold, that even in the case of infants there must be given an energy of Regeneration, fitting them, though born sinful, for heaven's fellowship, if removed by death, but, if spared, rendering them susceptible to the utmost of all the advantages of a Christian education as summarised in Ephes. vi. 4. Such must be a Divine gift for the sake of *the* one expiation for every man, Heb. ii. 9; and in relation to it, an infant must of

course be merely receptive, entirely passive. Furthermore, the moral operation sufficient to save an infant is not sufficient to save it in after life, if nothing more is freely sought, as the child develops into youth. The practical error to be avoided is any teaching, that this operation of the Spirit of God is *tied to baptism*; or even *delayed until baptism*, in the case of children reverently received by their parents as a charge from "the Lord." They depart from the New Testament who thus add a purpose to it never once named therein; they misapply a sacrament, which may recognise and seal but not confer: this is to needlessly weight the ordinance, the Divine purpose of which is amply important.

vii. In Ephes. iv. 5, "One Baptism" is presented as one of many motives to bear patiently, courageously, all the costs of the effort to preserve that unity, which the Holy Spirit desiderates in the body of Christ; comp. Ch. iv. 15—16 also. There is no mention here of the "one bread," 1 Cor. x. 17; it was not necessary to assemble everything; but it is precious that *the* Sacrament should be mentioned, which, in its very nature, is *once for all*, and so *individualising*; bringing each before the charitable observation of "the flock of God," as the name of God is named upon him; which indeed cannot be *repeated* without implied doubt being cast upon the previous celebration. So that the consciences of Christians have, in every age, dreaded such a taking "the name" in vain; and have recognised any baptism as valid, where there was reason to believe *it* had been once duly honoured upon a recipient.

Such Christian Baptism does no more for an *adult* than for a *child*; indeed the adult must become a child in order to benefit by it. *By itself* it does not *admit* into the kingdom: the children brought by Christ were *already* in the kingdom, and *therefore* not to be forbidden to be brought to Him.

Baptism does not *confer* but may formally *seal* the gracious privileges to the heirs. If our Lord had not come "by blood" His command to baptize would not have saved any of us. The privileges of each adult or child are secured by His "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Suitably St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John draw *all* their resources of salvation from the Passion, rather than from the Incarnation, St. John vi. 51. For *adults* there is the *further* experience, of being "born of the Spirit," ere they can enter the kingdom. They have consciously sinned away the "free Grace," which embraces every infant, whether baptized or not.

Repentance does not restore a *right to* Grace; but results from an awaking to discern the Grace abused, resisted, but unchanged. If anyone has "obtained precious Faith" previously to Baptism, yet he must *formally* be put under its pledges, as Cornelius, &c., that the "one Baptism" may rule.

viii. But if Baptism in *itself* does not admit into "the kingdom," certainly they err who think it admits into the Church. The Apostolic mode was, apparently, by "laying on hands," Hebrews vi. 2. They also err who speak of being "baptized into our Church." Such phraseology never once occurs, in any form, throughout the New Testament. Men, women, and households are spoken of as baptized "into Christ," "into His death," "into His name," but never once into His church, least of all "our church."

Nor is anyone said to have been "made a child of God" by his Baptism. In the case of children no religious rite can make them dearer to God, nearer to their Lord, more cared for by the Holy Spirit than each one is already; Divine Grace does not *delay* for Baptism. The nearest passage to this assertion is that *most* difficult one, Gal. iii. 27; but true exegesis shows it to mean, we are by baptism *bound* to put on Christ in

His relation and excellencies ; the *actual* fellowship in these depends ~~on~~ the response of a good conscience issuing in faith. Children *continue* in the Grace which warranted their Baptism until they *refuse* Christian nurture : dying before they refuse, they are at once with their Lord in Paradise. No sin disannuls the obligations laid by God, and registered for our good before Him, when we are baptized : that of apostacy is fearfully aggravated by them. Heb. vi. 4, 6 ; x. 29.

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