

SAMUEL BAIRD

A BIBLE
HISTORY OF
BAPTISM

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“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” – Matt. iii, 17.

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.” – Acts ii, 16, 17.

PREFACE

Not only does the ordinance of baptism hold a position of pre-eminent honor, as being the door of entrance to all the privileges of the visible church, but it has been distinguished with a place of paramount importance and conspicuity in the transactions of the two grandest occasions in the history of that church, – in sealing the covenant at Sinai, by which Israel became the church of God, and the grace of Pentecost, by which the doors of that church were thrown open to the world. Proportionally interesting and significant is the ordinance, in itself, as symbolizing the most lofty, attractive and precious conceptions of the gospel, and unfolding a history of the plan of God in proportions of unspeakable interest, grandeur and glory. And yet, heretofore, the discussion of the subject has been little more than a disputation, alike uninteresting, inconclusive and unprofitable, concerning the word *baptizo*.

The present treatise is an attempt to lift the subject out of the low rut in which it has thus traversed, and to render its investigation the means of enlightening the minds and filling the hearts of God's people with those conceptions, at once exalted and profound, and those high hopes and bright anticipations of the future which the ordinance was designed and so happily fitted to induce and stimulate.

Eighteen years ago, – in a catechetical treatise on “The Church

of God, its Constitution and Order,” from the press of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, – the author enunciated the essential principles which are developed in this volume. In 1870, they were further illustrated in a tract on “The Bible History of Baptism,” which was issued by the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, in Richmond, Va. The reception accorded to these treatises has encouraged me to undertake the more elaborate disquisitions of the present work. The questions are sometimes such as require a critical study of the inspired originals of the holy Scriptures; and occasional illustrations are drawn from classic and other kindred sources. It has been my study so to conduct these investigations that while they should not be unworthy the attention of scholars, they may be intelligible to readers who are conversant with no other than our common English tongue, the richest and noblest ever spoken by man.

The circumstances and manner of the introduction of the rite of immersion into the post-apostolic church presented a rich and inviting field of further investigation. But the volume has already exceeded the intended limit; the Biblical question is in itself complete, and its authority is conclusive. To it, therefore, the present inquiry is confined.

The fruit of much and assiduous investigation and thoughtful study is now reverently dedicated to the glory of the baptizing office of the Lord Jesus. May he speedily arise and display it in new and transcendent energy; pouring upon his blood-bought church the Spirit of grace and consecration, of knowledge and

aggressive zeal, of unity and power; baptizing the nations with his Spirit, and filling the world with the joy of his salvation and the light of his glory.

Covington, Ky., Feb. 8, 1882.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the ritual ordinances of God's appointment is full of painful interest. Passing any reference to the times preceding the transactions of Sinai, – the institutions then given to Israel constituted a system of transparent, significance, perfect in the congruous symmetry and simplicity of the parts and comprehensive fullness of the whole, as setting forth the whole doctrine of God concerning man's sin and salvation. Designed not only for the instruction of Israel, but for a light to the darkness of the surrounding Gentile world, its truths were embodied in symbols which spake to every people of every tongue in their own language. Copied in imperfect and perverted forms into the rites of Gentile idolatry, – although distorted, veiled and dislocated from their normal relations, they shed gleams of twilight into the gloom of spiritual darkness, and prepared the world for the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness, when he rose upon the nations. To multitudes of Israel, those ordinances were efficient means of eminent grace. With gladness, they saw therein, – as through a glass, darkly, it may be, but surely, – adumbrations of the salvation, grace and glory of the Messiah's kingdom. And, if the fact be considered that at one of the darkest crises in Israel's history, when the prophet cried, – "I, even I am left alone," – God could assure him, – "Yet have I left seven thousand," – we may possibly find occasion to revise our preconceptions concerning

the history of the gospel in Israel. Still, undoubtedly there were multitudes in every generation of that people to whom the gospel preached in the ordinances brought no profit, for lack of faith. In their earlier history, indifference and neglect, and in the later, a self-righteous zeal for the mere outward rites and forms, were equally fatal. The splendor of the ritual, and the superfluous variety and frequency of the observances, were a poor substitute for faith toward God, and rectitude of heart and life. The result was that when Christ came, who was the end of all the rites and ordinances of the law, those who were the most strict and zealous in their observance were his betrayers and murderers.

When the Lord Jesus ascended the heavens, assumed the throne, and sent forth the gospel to the Gentiles, it was accompanied by two simple ordinances, which were eliminated out of those of the Levitical ritual, by the omission of the element of sacrifice. In them was symbolized and set forth the whole riches of that salvation which was represented in the more cumbrous forms of the Levitical system. By the supper, was signified the mystery of his atoning sufferings, and of the nourishment of his people by faith therein. By baptism, was shown forth the glory of his exaltation, and the sovereignty and power with which he sheds from his throne the blessings of his grace. But very soon, these ordinances, so beautiful and instructive in their simplicity, were corrupted through the misconceptions and ignorance of the teachers of the church. The Mosaic ritual, instead of being recognized, as Paul describes it, as

a pattern or similitude of the things in the heavens, was regarded as a type of the New Testament church and of the ordinances therein administered. This one error became the inevitable cause of corruption and apostasy. Respecting the impending defection, Paul assured the Thessalonians, that the mystery of iniquity was already at work; and forewarned the elders of Ephesus of the coming of grievous wolves to rend the flock, and of apostasies among themselves, through the lust of an unhallowed ambition.

We have not the means, from the scanty and corrupted records which remain, of the age immediately following the apostles, of tracing the process of defection. But when, at length, the church emerges into the light of history, it is found to have realized a fatal transformation. The pastors and elders of the apostolic churches, from being simple preachers of the word, have become priests ministering at the altar, and offering better sacrifices than those made by the Aaronic line. For, while the latter offered mere animals, and the worshippers fed upon mere carnal food, the former, in the sacrament of the supper, the supposed antitype of those offerings, were believed to offer the body and blood of the Lord Jesus, and the people, in those elements, imagined themselves to receive and feed upon that very body and blood. So, too, while the "type baptisms" of the ancient ritual accomplished a mere purifying of the flesh, the baptism of water by the hands of the Christian ministry was regarded as the antitype of these, and considered effectual for accomplishing a spiritual regeneration, a renewing of the heart of the recipient.

The same error which thus corrupted the doctrine of the sacraments, was equally efficient in changing their forms. As they were held to be the antitypes of the Old Testament rites, it was sought to develop in them features to correspond with all the details of those rites, and to give them a dignity, a pomp and ceremonial, proportioned to their relations as fulfilling the things set forth in the splendid ritual of Moses and David. The rite of baptism, particularly, was corrupted by alterations and additions which left scarcely any thing of the primitive institution, save the name. The Levitical purifyings were especially observed in connection with the annual feasts at Jerusalem. In like manner, the administration of baptism was discouraged, except in connection with two of those feasts, – the passover, and the feast of weeks, or of firstfruits, – transferred into the Christian church, under the names of Easter, and Pentecost, or Whitsunday; the latter being named from the white garments in which the newly baptized were robed. The administration was connected with an elaborate system of attendant observances. First, was a course of fastings, genuflections, and prayers, and the imposition of hands upon the candidate. Then, he was divested of all but a single under garment, and facing the west, the realm of darkness, was required, with defiant gesture of the hand, to renounce Satan and all his works. This was followed by an exorcism, the minister breathing upon the candidate, for expelling Satan, and imparting the Holy Spirit; then the making upon him of the sign of the cross; anointing him with oil, once

before and once after the baptism; the administration of salt, milk and honey, and three immersions, one at the name of each person of the Trinity. Such was the connection in which baptism by immersion first appears. For its reception, the candidate, of whatever sex, was invariably divested of all clothing, and, after it, was robed in a white garment, emblematic of the spotless purity now attained. The rite of baptism by bare sprinkling, however, still survived. And the question is entitled to a critical attention which it has not yet received, whether, always or generally, the more elaborate rite consisted in a *submersion* of the candidate. Against this supposition, is the practice of the Abyssinian, Greek, Nestorian and other churches of the east. In them, the candidate, in preparation for the rite, is placed, or we may say, immersed, naked, in a font of water, the quantity of which neither suffices, nor is intended, to cover him. The administrator then performs the baptism, while pronouncing the formula, by thrice pouring water on the candidate, once at the mention of each name of the blessed Godhead.¹ To the same effect, is the evidence of numerous remains of Christian art, which have been transmitted to us from the early ages. Among these are several representations of the baptism of the Lord Jesus by John; one, of that of Constantine and his wife, by Eusebius;

¹ My authorities are "A voyage to Abyssinia, and travels in the interior of that country, executed under the orders of the British government, in the years 1809 and 1810, etc., by Henry Salt, Esq., F. R. S., etc., London, 1814;" and the personal testimonies of several of our missionaries to the east, who have related to me what they saw.

and others. The baptism of Constantine precisely corresponds with the description above given. The emperor is seated naked in a vessel, which if full would not reach to his waist; and the bishop is in the act of performing the baptism by pouring water upon them. In the representations of the baptism of Jesus, he sometimes appears waist-deep in the Jordan, and sometimes on the land. But in all cases, the rite is performed by the baptist pouring water on his head out of a cup or shell. Such is, in fact, the invariable mode represented in these remains of ancient art.

In this connection the analogy of the forms of religious purifying prevalent throughout the east is worthy of special notice. The Brahmin, before taking his morning's meal, repairs to the Ganges, carrying with him a brazen vessel. By hundreds, or by thousands, they enter the stream, and while some take up the water in their vessels, and pour it over their persons, others plunge beneath the stream, for the purging away of their sins. Then filling the vessels, they repair to the temple, and pour the water upon the idol, or as a libation, before it. The Parsee, worshiper of the sun, goes, in the morning, to river or sea, and entering until the waves are waist high, with his face toward the east, awaits the rising of the sun, when, using his joined hands as a dipper, he dashes water over his person, and makes obeisance to his god. On the other hand, the Mohammedan, deriving his usage from the earlier Pharisaic ritual, repairs to the mosque, and from the tank in front, without entering it, takes up water in his hands with which to bathe face, feet and hands, before presenting

his prayers.

By the corruptions in the Christian church, before exemplified, the key of knowledge was taken away from the people. The instructive meaning of the sacraments was obscured and obliterated, by the idea of their intrinsic efficacy for renewing the heart and atoning for and purging sin. The preaching of the word was disparaged and ultimately set aside; the preachers having become propitiating priests, working regeneration by the baptismal rite, and making atonement by the sacrifice of the mass. The corruption and tyranny of the clergy of the middle ages, and the ignorance, slavery and spiritual darkness which for centuries brooded over the people, were the inevitable results.

The reformation came, through the recovery by Luther of the golden doctrine of justification by faith, which had so long been buried and lost under the accumulated mass of ritualistic error. But even Luther was unable to shake off the fetters of superstition and falsehood in which he had been cradled, and to enjoy the full liberty of the doctrine which he gave to the awakened church. In the dogma of consubstantiation, he transmitted to his followers the very error which had corrupted the church for more than a thousand years. And the result in the churches of his confession has added another to the already abundant evidence of the ever active and irreconcilable antagonism which exists between the theory of sacramental grace, and the doctrine, – criterion of a standing or falling church, – of justification by free grace through

faith.

Our space does not admit of a critical tracing of the history of the sacramental question in the churches of the reformation. On the one hand, ritualists of every grade, misled by the erring primitive church, and attributing to the sacraments a saving virtue intrinsic in them, render indeed high but mistaken honor to the sacred rites; but fail to enjoy them in their true intent and office, or to view and honor them in their proper character. On the other hand, our immersionist brethren, misguided respecting the form of baptism, by the same erring example, and thus lost to the true and comprehensive meaning of the ordinance, have failed to apprehend the instruction which it was designed to impart, and to enjoy the abundant edifying which it was adapted to minister; and, instead, have found it a potent agent of separation, and an efficient temptation to the indulgence of a disproportionate zeal on behalf of mere outward rites and forms.

Nor do those who have escaped these errors always seem to appreciate the sacraments, in their true design and character, as ever active and efficient witnesses, testifying to the gospel, through symbols as intelligible and impressive as the most eloquent speech. The beauty and rich significance of the supper have, indeed, been in a measure apprehended, and made available in some just proportion, to the instruction and edifying of God's people. But baptism has not held the place, in the ministrations of the sanctuary and the mind of the church, which is due to its office and design, to the richness of meaning of its

forms, and to the sublime conceptions and the lofty aspirations and hopes which it is so wonderfully adapted to create and cherish. One efficient cause of this, undoubtedly, is, the reaction induced by the aggressive zeal of immersionists, and the exercise of a false charity toward their erroneous sentiments; as though the charity of the gospel, as toward our brethren, consisted in an acceptance of their errors as equivalents to the truths of God. While they have justly and irrefragably maintained that nothing can be Christian baptism which has not at once the form and the meaning ordained by Christ, we have been weakly disposed to imagine ourselves patterns of charity, in admitting the validity of immersion, while denying it to be the form or to have the meaning which Christ ordained. As if such an ordinance, from the great Head of the Church, could have in it any thing indifferent, or subject to our discretion, whether in doctrine or mode! The immediate and inevitable result is, a low estimate of the ordinance itself; indifference alike to its form and meaning, and to the place it was designed to fill, and the offices which it was to perform, in the economy of grace. As a mere door of entrance into the fold of the church, it is administered and received; with too little regard to its beautiful and comprehensive symbolism; and, once performed, it is almost lost sight of in the instructions of the pulpit, and meditations of the people. Should this representation suggest a doubt, let the reader reflect how often, in the ordinary ministrations of the sanctuary, he has heard the significance of baptism dwelt upon,

or even alluded to, for illustrating the great truths of the gospel, on any occasion except that of the administration of the rite; and how seldom, even then, the richness of its symbolic import is unfolded, – its relations to Christ's exaltation and throne, and to all the functions of his scepter; the meaning of the element of water, and of the mode of sprinkling; and the office of the ordinance, as a symbol of the Spirit's renewing grace, and a prophecy and seal to the doctrine of the resurrection. As the initial seal of the covenant, it is discussed and insisted upon. But of these, its intrinsic and most interesting characteristics, but little is heard. No wonder, therefore, that the privilege of its reception is so little appreciated, and its appropriation by parents on behalf of their children, so often neglected.

The recent researches of Drs. Conant and Dale have exhausted the philological argument as concerning *baptizo*. The former, representing the American (Baptist) Bible Union, and the latter, from the opposite standpoint, have come to conclusions which, to all the practical purposes of the discussion, are identical and final. Essentially, they agree (1) that *baptizo* never means, to dip, that is, to put into the water and take out again; but, primarily, to put into or under the water, – to bring into a state of mersion, or intusposition; (2) that it also means to bring into a new state or condition, by the exercise of a pervasive control; as one who is intoxicated is said to be baptized with wine. The former of these meanings is all that remains to the Baptist argument from the word. The latter is all that is desired by those who repudiate

immersion. The philological discussion being thus brought to a practical termination, the occasion seems opportune for inviting attention to the real issues involved in the question respecting the form of the ordinance; and to the various and abundant testimonies of the Scriptures, as to its origin and office, its mode and meaning, its history and associations.

In the same line of investigation, it is the expectation of the writer, should time and opportunity concur, to offer to the Christian public, at some future day, a treatise, similar in plan to that now presented, on the ordinances and church of God, historically traced from the apostasy, and the renewal of the covenant in Eden, to the close of the sacred volume.

Book I.

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

Part I.

BAPTISM AT SINAI

Section I. — *Baptism* *Originated in the Old Testament*

At the time of Christ's coming, baptism was a rite already familiar to the Jews. The evangelists testify of them that, "when they come from the market, *except they baptize (ean mē baptisōntai)* they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the *baptisms (baptismous)* of cups and pots and brazen vessels and tables." – Mark vii, 3, 4. On account of this rule of tradition, a Pharisee at whose table Jesus was a guest "marveled that he had not first *baptized (ebaptisthē)* before dinner." – Luke xi, 38. Hence, when John came, a priest, baptizing, there was no question raised as to the origin, nature, form, or divine authority of the ordinance which he administered. The Pharisees, in their challenge of

him, confine themselves to the single demand, by what authority he ventured to require Israel to come to his baptism, since he confessed that he was neither Christ nor Elias nor that prophet. (John i, 25.) Their familiarity with the rite forbade any question concerning it. Had we no further light on the subject, we might suppose that this ordinance had no better source than the unauthorized inventions of Jewish tradition. But the Apostle Paul,² an Hebrew of the Hebrews, taught at the feet of Gamaliel, and versed in all questions of the law, excludes such an idea. He declares that in the first tabernacle “were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks and (*diaphorois baptismois*) *divers baptisms*— carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation.” – Heb. ix, 9, 10. The conjunction “and” (“*divers baptisms and carnal ordinances*”) is wanting in the best Greek manuscripts; is rejected by the critical editors, and is undoubtedly spurious. The phrase “carnal ordinances” is not an additional item in the enumeration, but a comprehensive description of “the meats and drinks and divers baptisms” of the law. Paul thus speaks of them by way of contrast with the spiritual grace and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. A critical examination of this passage will be made hereafter. For the present, we note two points as attested by the apostle:

² I assume what I believe to be demonstrable, that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

1. Among the Levitical ordinances there were not *one* but divers baptisms.

2. These were not merely allowable rites, but were “imposed” on Israel as part of the institutions ordained of God at Sinai.

It may be proper to add that they were baptisms of persons, and not of things. They were rites which were designed to purify the flesh of the worshiper. (vs. 9, 13, 14.)

These baptisms were, therefore, well known to Israel, from the days of Moses. This explains the fact that, in the New Testament, we find no instruction as to the form of the ordinance. It was an ancient rite, described in the books of Moses and familiar to the Jews when Christ came. No description, therefore, was requisite. We are then to look to the Old Testament to ascertain the form and manner of baptism.

Section II. —*No Immersions in the Old Testament*

Says Dr. Carson: “We deny that the phrase ‘divers baptisms’ includes the *sprinklings*. The phrase alludes to the *immersion* of the different things that by the law were to be *immersed*.”³ Had this learned writer pointed out the things that were to be immersed, and the places in the law where this was required, it would have saved us some trouble. In default of such information, our first inquiry in turning to the Old Testament will be for

³ “Carson on Baptism” (published by C. C. P. Crosby: New York, 1832), p. 117.

that form of observance. We take up the books of Moses, and examine his instructions as to all the prominent institutions of divine service. But among these we find no immersion of the person. We enter into minuter detail, and study every rule and prescription of the entire system as enjoined on priests, Levites, and people, respectively. But still there is no trace of an ordinance for the immersion of the person or any part of it. We extend our field of inquiry, and search the entire volume of the Old Testament. But the result remains the same. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Malachi, there is not to be found a record nor an intimation of such an ordinance imposed on Israel or observed by them at any time. Not only is this true as to baptismal immersion performed by an official administrator upon a recipient subject. It is equally true as to any conceivable form or mode of immersion, self-performed or administered. There is no trace of it. But here is Paul's testimony that there were "divers baptisms imposed." By *baptisms*, then, Paul certainly did not mean immersions.

The impregnable position thus reached is further fortified by the fact that, in all the variety and exuberance of figurative language used in the Bible to illustrate the method of God's grace, no recourse is ever had to the figure of immersion. All agree that the sacraments are significant ordinances. If, then, the significance of baptism at all depends on the immersion of the person in water, we would justly expect to find frequent use of the figure of immersion, as representing the spiritual realities of

which baptism is the symbol. But we search the Scriptures in vain for that figure so employed. It never once occurs.

Section III. —*The Old Testament Sacraments*

As there are no immersions in the Old Testament, we must look for the divers baptisms under some other form. Assuming that in this rite there must be a sacramental use of water, we will first examine the ancient sacraments. On a careful analysis of the ordinances comprehended in the Levitical system, we find among them four which strictly conform to the definition of a sacrament, and which are the only sacraments described or referred to in the Old Testament.

1. *Sacrifice.*— The first of these in origin and prominence was sacrifice. Originating in Eden, and incorporated in the Levitical system, it had all the characteristics of a sacrament. In it the life blood of clean animals was shed and sprinkled, and their bodies burned upon the altar. Thus were represented the shedding of Christ's blood, and his offering of atonement to the justice of God. But here is no water. It is not the baptism for which we seek.

2. *Circumcision.*— The second of the Old Testament sacraments was circumcision, whereby God sealed to Abraham and his seed the covenant of blessings to them and all nations through the blood of the promised Seed. Here, again, no one will pretend to identify the ordinance with the baptisms of Paul.

3. *The Passover.*— The third of the Old Testament sacraments,

the first of the Levitical dispensation, was the feast of the passover. In it, the paschal lamb was slain, its blood sprinkled on the lintels and door posts of the houses, and the flesh roasted and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. At Sinai, this ordinance was modified by requiring the feast to be observed at the sanctuary, the blood being sprinkled on the altar, and the fat burned thereon. And, to the other elements appointed in Egypt, the general provisions of the Mosaic law added wine. All peace offerings, free will offerings, and offerings at the solemn feasts, of which the passover was one, were to be accompanied with wine, and were eaten by the offerers, except certain parts, that were burned on the altar. (See Num. xv, 5, 7, 10; xxviii, 7, 14.) This ordinance, eliminated of its sacrificial elements, is perpetuated in the Lord's supper. In it was no water. It was not the rite for which we seek.

4. *Baptism.*— There remains but one more of the Mosaic sacraments. It was instituted at Sinai. In it, water was essential, and by it was symbolized the renewing agency of the Holy Spirit. It was “a purification for sin,” an initiatory ordinance, by which remission of sins and admission to the benefits of the covenant were signified and sealed to the faith of the recipients. It occupied, under the Old Testament economy, the very position, and had the significance, which belong to Christian baptism under the New. Moreover, it appears under several modifications, and is thus conformed to Paul's designation of “*divers baptisms,*” whilst these, in their circumstantial variations,

were essentially one and the same ordinance.

Section IV. —*The Baptism of Israel at Sinai*

The occasion of the first recorded administration of this rite was the reception of Israel into covenant with God at Sinai. For more than two hundred years they had dwelt in Egypt, and for a large part of the time had been bondmen there. The history of their sojourn in the wilderness shows that not only was their manhood debased by the bondage, but their souls had been corrupted by the idolatries of the Egyptians (Josh. xxiv, 14; Ezek. xx, 7), and they had forgotten the covenant and forsaken the God of their fathers. They were apostate, and, in Scriptural language, unclean.

But now the fullness of time had come, when the promises made to the fathers must be fulfilled. Leaving the nations to walk after their own ways, God was about to erect to himself a visible throne and kingdom among men, to be a witness for him against the apostasy of the race. He was about to arouse Israel from her debasement and slavery, to establish with her his covenant, and to organize and ordain her his peculiar people – his Church.

Proportioned to the importance of such an occasion was the grandeur of the scene and the gravity of the transactions. Of them we have two accounts, one from the pen of Moses (Ex. xx-xxiv), and the other from the Apostle Paul, in exposition of his statement as to the divers baptisms. (Heb. ix, 18-20.) As to

these accounts, two or three points of explanation are necessary. (1) The two words, “covenant” and “testament,” represent but one in the originals in these places, of which “covenant” is the literal meaning. (2) Paul mentions *water* (Heb. ix, 19), of which Moses does not speak. The fact is significant, as the apostle is in the act of illustrating the “divers baptisms,” of which he had just before spoken. (3) The word “oxen,” in our translation (Ex. xxiv, 5), should be “bulls.” Oxen were not lawful for sacrifice. Yearling animals seem to have been preferred. Says Micah, “Shall I come before the Lord with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old?” – Micah vi, 6. Hence Paul indifferently calls them bulls and calves. The goats of which he speaks were no doubt among the burnt-offerings of Moses’s narrative. Both “small and great cattle” seem to have been offered on all great national solemnities.

The redeemed tribes came to Sinai in the third month after the exodus. Moses was called up into the mount and commanded to propose to them the covenant of God. It was in these terms: “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” – Ex. xix, 3-6. This proposal the people, with one voice, accepted. God then commanded Moses: “Sanctify the people to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.” –

Vs. 10, 11. On the third day, in the morning, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon the top of the mount; and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up.

In the midst of this tremendous scene, so well calculated to fill the people with awe, and to deter them from the thought of a profane approach, Moses was nevertheless charged to go down and warn the people, and set bounds around the mountain, lest they should break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. After such means, used to impress Israel with a profound sense of God's majesty and their infinite estrangement from him, his voice was heard, uttering in their ears the Ten Commandments, prefaced with the announcement of himself as their God and Redeemer. (Compare Deut. iv, 7-13.) At the entreaty of the people, the terribleness of God's audible voice was withdrawn, and Moses was sent to tell them the words of the Lord and his judgments. The people again unanimously declared, "All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do." – Ex. xxiv, 3.

In this sublime transaction we have all the scenes and

circumstances of a mighty revival of true religion. It is a vast camp-meeting, in which God himself is the preacher, speaking in men's ears with an audible voice from the top of Sinai, and alternately proclaiming the law of righteousness and the gospel of grace, calling Israel from their idolatries and sins to return unto him, and offering himself as not only the God of their fathers, but their own Deliverer already from the Egyptian bondage, and ready to be their God and portion – to give them at once the earthly Canaan, and to make it a pledge of their ultimate endowment with the heavenly. The people had professed with one accord to turn to God, and pledged themselves, emphatically and repeatedly, to take him as their God, to walk in his statutes and do his will, to be his people.

It is true that, to many, the gospel then preached was of no profit, for lack of faith; whose carcasses therefore fell in the wilderness. (Heb. iii, 17-19; iv, 2.) But it is equally true that the vast majority of the assembly at Sinai were children and generous youth, who had not yet been besotted by the Egyptian bondage. To them that day, which was known in their after history as “the day of the assembly” (Deut. x, 4; xviii, 16), was the beginning of days. Its sublime scenes became in them the spring of a living faith. With honest hearts they laid hold of the covenant, and took the God of the patriarchs for their God. Soon after, the promise of Canaan, forfeited by their rebellious fathers, was transferred to them. (Num. xiv, 28-34.) Trained and disciplined by the forty years' wandering, it was they who became, through faith, the

irresistible host of God, the heroic conquerors and possessors of the land of promise. Centuries afterward, God testified of them that they pleased him: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase." – Jer. ii, 2, 3. Until the day of Pentecost, no day so memorable, no work of grace so mighty, is recorded in the history of God's dealings with men as that of the assembly at Sinai.

And as on the day of Pentecost the converts were baptized upon their profession of faith, so was it now. Moses appointed the next day for a solemn ratifying of the transaction. He wrote in a book the words of the Lord's covenant, the Ten Commandments; and in the morning, at the foot of the mount, built an altar of twelve stones, according to the twelve tribes. On it young men designated by him offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of young bulls. Moses took half the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Half of it he kept in basins. He then read the covenant from the book, in the audience of all the people, who again accepted it, saying, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Moses thereupon took the blood that was in the basins, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." – Ex. xxiv, 8, compared with Heb. ix, 19, 20.

In the morning Moses had already, by divine command,

assembled Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And no sooner was the covenant finally accepted and sealed with the baptismal rite, than these all went up into the mount, and there celebrated the feast of the covenant. "They saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel, he laid not his hand. Also, they saw the God of Israel, and did eat and drink." – Ex. xxiv, 1, 9-11. So intimate, privileged, and spiritual was the relation which the covenant established between Israel and God.

Thus was closed this sublime transaction, ever memorable in the history of man and of the church of Christ, in which the invisible God condescended to clothe himself in the majesty of visible glory, to hold audible converse with men, to enter into the bonds of a public and perpetual covenant with them, and to erect them into a kingdom, on the throne of which his presence was revealed in the Shechinah of glory.

Such were the occasion and manner of the first institution and observance of the sacrament of baptism. In its attendant scenes and circumstances, the most august of all God's displays of his majesty and grace to man; and in its occasion and nature, paramount in importance, and lying at the foundation of the entire administration of grace through Christ. It was the establishing of the visible church.

Section V. —*The Blood of Sprinkling*

In all the Sinai transactions, Moses stood as the pre-eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the rites administered by him were figures of the heavenly realities of Christ's sacrifice and salvation. This is fully certified by Paul, throughout the epistle to the Hebrews, and especially in the illustration which he gives of his assertion concerning the divers baptisms imposed on Israel. See Heb. ix, 9-14, 19-28. In these places, it distinctly appears that the blood of the Sinai baptism was typical of the atonement of Christ. Not only in this, but in all the Levitical baptisms, as will hereafter appear, blood was necessary to the rite. In fact, it was an essential element in each of the Old Testament sacraments. The one idea of sacrifice was the blood of atonement. The same idea appeared in circumcision, revealing atonement by the blood of the seed of Abraham. In the passover the blood of sprinkling was the most conspicuous feature; and in the Sinai baptism blood and water were the essential elements.

Peter states the Old Testament prophets to have "inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." — 1 Pet. i, 10, 11. Of the time and manner they were left in ignorance. But the blood, in all their sacraments, was a lucid symbol, pointing them forward to the sufferings of Christ as the

essential and alone argument of the favor and grace of God. In it, and in the rites associated with it, they saw, dimly it may be, but surely, the blessed pledge that in the fullness of time “the Messenger of the covenant” would appear (Mal. iii, 2), magnify the law and make it honorable (Isa. xlii, 21), by his knowledge, justify many, bearing their iniquities (Isa. liii, 11), and sprinkle the mercy-seat in heaven, once for all, with his own precious and effectual blood – the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Heb. ix, 24-26; xiii, 20; 1 Pet. i, 11.)

Section VI. —*The Living Water*

In the Sinai baptism, as at first administered to all Israel, and in all its subsequent forms, living or running water was an essential element. This everywhere, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, in his office as the agent by whom the virtue of Christ’s blood is conveyed to men, and spiritual life bestowed. In the figurative language of the Scriptures, the sea, or great body of salt or dead water, represents the dead mass of fallen and depraved humanity. (Dan. vii, 2, 3; Isa. lvii, 20; Rev. xiii, 1; xvii, 15.) Hence, of the new heavens and new earth which are revealed as the inheritance of God’s people, it is said, “And there shall be no more sea.” – Rev. xxi, 1.

The particular source of this figure seems to have been that accursed sea of Sodom, which was more impressively familiar to

Israel than any other body of salt water, and which has acquired in modern times the appropriate name of the Dead Sea – a name expressive of the fact that its waters destroy alike vegetation on its banks and animal life in its bosom. Its peculiar and instructive position in the figurative system of the Scriptures appears in the prophecy of Ezekiel (xlvii, 8, 9-11), where the river of living water from the temple is described as flowing eastward to the sea; and being brought forth into the sea, the salt waters are healed, so that “there shall be abundance of fish.”

Contrasted with this figure of sea water is that of living water, that is, the fresh water of rain and of fountains and streams. It is the ordinary symbol of the Holy Spirit. (John vii, 37-39.) The reason is, that, as this water is the cause of life and growth to the creation, animal and vegetable, so, the Spirit is the alone source of spiritual life and growth. The primeval type of that blessed Agent was the river that watered the Garden of Eden, and thence flowing, was parted into four streams to water the earth. This river was a fitting symbol of the Holy Spirit, “which proceedeth from the Father,” the “pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (John xv, 26; Rev. xxii, 1), not only in its life-giving virtue, but in its abundance and diffusion. But the fall cut man off from its abundant and perennial stream, and thenceforth the figure, as traceable through the Scriptures, ever looks forward to that promised time when the ruin of the fall will be repaired, and the gates of Paradise thrown open again. In the last chapters of

the Revelation, that day is revealed in a vision of glory. There is no more sea; but the river of life pours its exhaustless crystal waters through the restored Eden of God. But the garden is no longer the retired home of one human pair, but is built up, a great city, with walls of gems and streets of gold and gates of pearl and the light of the glory of God. And the nations of them that are saved do walk in the light of it. But still it is identified as the same of old, by the flowing river and the tree of life in the midst on its banks. (Rev. ii, 7; xxii, 1, 2; and compare Psalms xlvi, 4; xxiii, 2; John iv, 10, 14; vii, 38, 39; Zech. xiv. 8.) In Ezekiel (xlvii, 1-12) there appears a vision of this river as a prophecy of God's grace in store for the last times for Israel and the world. In it, the attention of the prophet and of the reader is called distinctly to several points, all of which bear directly on our present inquiry:

1. The source of the waters. In the Revelation, it is described as proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In Ezekiel the same idea is presented under the figure of the temple, God's dwelling-place. The waters issue out from under the threshold of the house "at the south side of the altar" – the altar where the sprinkled blood and burning sacrifices testified to the Person by whom, and the price at which, the Spirit is sent. (Compare John vii, 39; xvi, 7; Acts ii, 33.)

2. The exhaustless and increasing flow of the waters is shown to the prophet, who, at a thousand cubits from their source, is led through them, – a stream ankle deep. A thousand cubits farther, he passed through, and they had risen to his knees. Again,

a thousand cubits, and the waters were to his loins; and at a thousand cubits more it was a river that he could not pass over. "And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this?"

3. The river was a fountain of life. On its banks were "very many trees," "all trees for meat," with fadeless leaf and exhaustless fruit, "the fruit thereof for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." "And there shall be a very great multitude of fish" in the Dead Sea, "because these waters shall come thither." For "it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come shall live. Every thing shall live, whither the river cometh."

4. By these living waters, the Dead Sea of depraved humanity shall be healed. "Now this sea of Sodom," says Thompson, "is so intolerably bitter, that, although the Jordan, the Arnon, and many other streams have been pouring into it their vast contributions of sweet water for thousands of years, it continues as nauseous and deadly as ever. Nothing lives in it; neither fish nor reptiles nor even animalculæ can abide its desperate malignity. But these waters from the sanctuary heal it. The whole world affords no other type of human apostasy so appropriate, so significant. Think of it! There it lies in its sulphurous sepulcher, thirteen hundred feet below the ocean, steaming up like a huge caldron of smouldering bitumen and brimstone! Neither rain from heaven nor mountain torrents nor Jordan's flood, nor all combined can change its character of utter death. Fit symbol of that great dead

sea of depravity and corruption which nothing human can heal!”⁴ But the pure waters of the river of life will yet pour into this sea of death a tide of grace by which “the waters shall be healed.” – Ezek. xxvii, 8.

In the prophecy of Joel (iii, 18,) there is another allusion to these waters. Again, in Zechariah a modified form of the same vision appears. “It shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former” (the Eastern or Dead) “sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea” (the Mediterranean). “In summer and winter shall it be;” not a mere winter torrent, as are most of the streams of Palestine, but an unfailing river. (Zech. xiv, 8.)

Such is the type of the Spirit, as his graces flowed in Eden, and shall be given to the world, in the times of restitution. But, for the present times, the symbols of rain and fountains of springing water are used in the Scriptures as the appropriate types of the now limited and unequal measure and distribution of the Spirit. The manner and effects of his agency are set forth under three forms, each having its own significance:

1. Inasmuch as the rains of heaven are the great source of life and refreshment to the earth and vegetation, the coming of the Spirit and his efficiency as a life-giving and sanctifying power sent down from heaven are expressed by water, shed down, poured, or sprinkled, as the rain descends. Says God to Israel: “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry

⁴ “The Land and the Book.” Vol. II, pp. 531, 534.

ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring.” – Isa. xlv, 3. The Psalmist says of the graces of the Spirit to be bestowed by Messiah, “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass” (the stubble, after mowing) “as showers that water the earth.” – Psalm lxxii, 6. Of this we shall see more hereafter.

2. The act of faith by which the believer seeks and receives more and more of the indwelling Spirit is symbolized by thirsting and drinking of living water. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” – Isa. lv, 1. “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink... This he spake of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive.” – John vii, 37-39. “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” – Rev. xxii, 17. The intimate relation which this figure sustains, responsive to the one preceding, is illustrated by the expression wherein God describes the land of promise: “A land of hills and valleys, and *drinketh* water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for.” – Deut. xi, 11, 12. With this, compare the language of Paul: “The earth which *drinketh* in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing of God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you.” – Heb. vi, 7-9. The figure is further illustrated in the sublime description given by Ezekiel of the destruction of Assyria, in which he speaks of “the trees of

Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that *drink water*,” and so grow and flourish. (Ezek. xxxi, 16.)

3. The duty of the penitent to yield himself with diligent obedience to the sanctifying power and grace of the Holy Spirit, to put away sin and follow after holiness, is enjoined under the figure of washing himself with water. “Wash ye; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.” – Isa. i, 16, 17. “O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.” – Jer. iv, 14. So, James cries, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” – Jas. iv, 8. In the rite of self-washing, to which these last passages refer, the pure water still symbolized the Holy Spirit given by Jesus Christ; whilst the washing expressed the privilege and duty of God’s people conforming their lives to the law of holiness, and exercising the graces which the Spirit gives.

Part II.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH

Section VII. —*The Abrahamic Covenant*

The interest attaching to the Sinai baptism is greatly enhanced by its immediate and intimate relation to us. The covenant then sealed is the fundamental and perpetual charter of the visible church. The transaction by which it was established was the inauguration of that church. It was the espousal of the bride of Christ, whose betrothal took place in the covenant with Abraham. So it is expressly and repeatedly stated by the Spirit of God in the prophets. (See Jer. ii, 1, 2; Ezek. xvi, 3-14; xxiii; Hos. ii, 2, 15, 16.) It is true that this is controverted. It is asserted that the relations established by the covenants between God and Israel were secular and political, not spiritual; that the blessings therein secured were temporal; that they conveyed nothing but a guarantee that Israel should become a numerous and powerful nation, that God would be their political king, the Head of their commonwealth, and that the land of Palestine should be their possession and home. How utterly at variance with the teachings of God's Word are these assertions a brief analysis of the record will prove.

The covenant of Sinai was the culmination of a series of

transactions which began with the calling of Abram from Ur of the Chaldees. "The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." – Gen. xii, 1-3. Respecting this record, the following points are made clear in the New Testament: (1) That under the type of Canaan, "the land that I will show thee," heaven was the ultimate inheritance offered to Abram; and that it was so understood by him and the patriarchs. (Gal. iv, 26; Heb. xi, 10, 14-16.) (2) That the blessings promised through him to all the families of the earth were the atonement and salvation of Jesus Christ; and that this also was so understood by Abram. (Gen. xvii, 7; Gal. iii, 16, John viii, 56.) Thus, in his call from Chaldea, and the promises annexed to it, God "preached before the gospel unto Abraham." – Gal. iii, 8. So far, certainly, the transaction is eminently spiritual.

About ten years after the coming of Abram into the land of Canaan, the promises were confirmed to him by being incorporated into covenant form, and ratified by a seal. Respecting this first covenant, the record of which is contained in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, the following are the essential points:

1. The interview was opened by the Lord with an assurance so

spiritual and large as to be exhaustive of every thing that heaven can bestow. "The Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Whatever else was promised or given, after an assurance thus rich and comprehensive of time and eternity, must evidently be interpreted in a sense subordinate to it. No minor particulars can ever exhaust or limit the treasury thus opened. Henceforth God himself belongs to the patriarch.

2. An innumerable seed was assured to him, as heirs with him of the promises; and he is told that not to him but to his seed should the earthly Canaan be given. (Vs. 5, 18; and compare xvii, 7, 8.)

3. Abram's faith was the condition of the covenant. "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." – Vs. 6.

4. The promises thus made and accepted were confirmed by a sacrifice appointed of God, and his acceptance of it was manifested by the sign of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, passing between the pieces. (Vs. 8, 9, 17, 18.)

5. It was an express provision of the covenant thus ratified that, so far as it concerned the seed of Abram, its realization was to be held in abeyance four hundred years. (Vs. 13-16.) It was the betrothal, of which the marriage consummation could only take place when the long-suffering of God toward the nations was exhausted and the iniquity of the Amorites was full.

About fifteen years afterward God was pleased to appear

again to the patriarch, to renew the covenant, and to confirm it with a new seal. (Gen. xvii, 1-21.) Of this edition of the covenant the principal provisions were: (1) That he should be a father of many nations. (2) That Canaan should be, to him and his seed, an everlasting possession. (3) That God would be a God to him and to his seed after him. By the first of these promises, as Paul assures us, Abraham was made the heir of the world, and the father of all believers; of the gospel day, as well as before it; of the Gentile nations, as well as of Israel. (Rom. iv, 11-18; Gal. iii, 7-9, 14.) Hence the name given him of God, in confirmation of this promise (Gen. xvii, 5), Abraham, "Father of a multitude," Father of the church of Christ. But the central fact of this transaction remains. The covenant was epitomized in one brief word: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, *to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.*" – v. 7.

1. The covenant thus set forth is "an everlasting covenant;" no lapse of time can alter or abrogate its terms.

2. By it the Godhead assumed toward Abraham and his seed relations peculiar, exclusive, and of boundless grace. God, even the infinite and almighty God, can do no more than to give himself. Christian can conceive no more, and the most blessed of all heaven's ransomed host will know and enjoy no more than this, which was first assured to Abram, in those words, "Fear not; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;" and is now concentrated into that one word, "*Thy God.*" What can there be,

not spiritual, in a covenant thus summed? And what spiritual gift or blessing is not comprehended in it? But this is not all. Whilst Paul testifies that all who believe are the seed of Abraham, and heirs with him of the promises, he also declares that Christ was the seed to whom distinctively and on behalf of his people they were addressed: "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many, but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ." – Gal. iii, 16. It thus appears that the promises in question were addressed immediately to the Lord Jesus, and they indicate all the intimacy and grace of his relation to the Father, – the relation which he claimed, when, from the cross, he appealed to the Father by that title: "*My God! my God!* why hast thou forsaken me?" It follows, that the title of others to this promise is mediate only: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." – Ib. 27-29.

It was with a view to this relation of the covenant to the Lord Jesus, that circumcision was appointed as a seal of it. In that rite was signified satisfaction to justice through the blood of the promised Seed, and the crucifying of our old man with him, to the putting off and destroying of the body of the flesh. (Deut. x, 16; Jer. iv, 4; Rom. vi, 6; Col. ii, 11, 12.)

Upon occasion of the offering of Isaac, the covenant was again confirmed to Abraham in promises which do not mention Canaan, but are summed in the intensive assurances: "In blessing

I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” – Gen. xxii, 16-18. What seed it was to whom these promises were made, we have seen before. The assurance to him of triumph over his enemies renews the pledge made to Eve, through the curse upon the serpent, “Her seed shall bruise thy head.” – Gen. iii, 15. Of the same thing, the Spirit in Isaiah says: “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” – Isa. liii, 12. Of it, Paul says: “He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” – 1 Cor. xv, 25.

The covenant thus interpreted, was confirmed to Abraham with an oath (v. 16), of which Paul says: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.” – Heb. vi, 17-20. Here, again, it appears that the covenant with Abraham comprehended in its terms the very

highest hopes which Christ's blood has purchased, – which he, in heaven, as his people's forerunner, now possesses, and which with him they shall finally share; and that the oath by which it was confirmed contemplated these very things, and was designed to perfect the faith and confidence of his people, in the gospel day, as well as of the patriarchs and saints of old.

It is thus manifest that while the Abrahamic covenant did undoubtedly convey to Abraham and his seed after the flesh many and precious temporal blessings, it was at the same time an embodiment of the very terms of the covenant between God and his Christ; that its provisions of grace to man are bestowed wholly in Christ; and that it is, therefore, exclusive and everlasting. There can be no reconciliation between God and man, but upon the terms of this covenant. There can, therefore, be no people of God, no true church of Christ, but of those who accept and are embraced in, and built upon, that alone foundation, “the everlasting covenant” made with Abraham.

Section VIII. — *The Conditions of the Sinai Covenant*

At length, the four hundred years were past. The probation of the apostate nations was finished. The iniquity of the Amorites was full. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, and sent Moses into Egypt, saying to him: “I am Jehovah. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God

Almighty; but by my name, Jehovah, was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments; and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” – Ex. vi, 2-8. In this initial communication we have the key to the Sinai covenant, and to all God’s subsequent dealings with Israel. In it three things are specially observable. (1.) The Abrahamic covenant is designated, “my covenant,” in accordance with what we have already seen as to the nature of that covenant, as exclusive and everlasting. (2.) Its scope is stated in those all-embracing terms, “I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God.” (3.) The possession of the earthly Canaan is specified as a minor particular, under this comprehensive pledge.

With all this the Sinai covenant was in accord. Its conditional terms we have seen, as propounded through Moses. “Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:

Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, *if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.*" – Ex. xix, 3-5. The "voice" which they were to obey they heard on the next day, when God spake to them the words of the law, from the midst of the smoke and flame. Of it Moses afterward reminded the people: "Ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." – Deut. iv, 11-13. Very great emphasis attaches to the Ten Commandments, in their relation as thus the fundamental law of the covenant. The first overture having been addressed to Israel, in the terms, "If ye will obey my voice," and by them accepted, the next day that voice was heard uttering those commandments. Again the people are called upon, and again respond in pledge of obedience. Moses then wrote in "the book of the covenant" all these words of the Lord, and read them in the audience of the people. And it was not till again they promised obedience to the terms thus set before them that the covenant was ratified, as we have seen. The Ten Commandments were then, by the finger of God, engraved on the two tables of stone, which were thence known as "the tables of the covenant." These were placed

in “the ark of the covenant,” which was in the holy of holies, in “the tabernacle of the covenant.” Both of these derived their names and significance from these tables, which were the very center of the whole system of religion and worship connected with the tabernacle. The lid of the ark which covered these tables was the golden mercy-seat, with its cherubim of gold, between which stood the pillar of glory, the Shechinah, overshadowing the mercy-seat. It thus typified God’s throne of grace immovably based upon the firm foundation of his eternal law – mercy to man only possible on condition of satisfaction to that law. Therefore, when remembrance of sins was made every year (Heb. x, 3), it was by the sprinkling of blood upon the mercy-seat and the ark of the covenant. (Ib. ix, 7.) A proper regard to the fact that the moral law was thus the fundamental condition of the covenant, while the ritual law was no part of it, but a later system of testimony, would have prevented much perplexing and erroneous speculation on the subject.

But the covenant had a second condition, “If ye will *keep my covenant.*” This second clause is implied in the first. But it is none the less important and significant, as being a categorical statement of the nature of the obedience required. We have already pointed out the fact that by “*my covenant*” was meant the covenant with Abraham, so interpreted by God himself in his first communication to Israel in Egypt. The covenant thus defined had but one condition and two promises. The promises were, to bring them out of the bondage of Egypt and give them

the land of Canaan, and to be to them a God. The condition was, that Israel, in turn, would surrender themselves to be for a people to God. (Ex. vi, 7.) This condition is the only thing that can be meant by the phrase, “If ye will *keep* my covenant.” It was the only duty laid upon them by that covenant. We thus find the two fundamental conditions of the Sinai covenant to have been in the terms, “If ye will obey my voice indeed” – the voice that spake in the Ten Commandments – and, “If ye will keep my covenant,” to be a willing people unto me, and cleave to me as your God. Such was the foundation-stone on which the church was built.

Section IX. — *The Promises of the Sinai Covenant*

As were the conditions of the covenant, so were its promises altogether and eminently spiritual.

1. “Ye shall be unto me a peculiar treasure above all people; for all the earth is mine.” A treasure is a property, valuable, highly prized, and cherished. It is riches to the owner; his enjoyments largely depend thereon; and over it he therefore exercises a watchful guardianship. Such was the relation which, by the covenant, God conferred on Israel. The expression is strengthened by the qualifying adjective, “peculiar,” which means, special and exclusive. “My own special treasure.” What was thus implied may be gathered from a single Scripture. Says the Lord, by Malachi: “Then they that feared the Lord spake

often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels” (“my peculiar treasures.” The word in the original is the same), “and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” – Mal. iii. 16-18. By this clause, Israel became the object of God’s assiduous watchfulness and constant care as his own peculiar treasure of price.

2. The parenthetic clause, “For all the earth is mine,” is of singular interest. The covenant with Abraham conveyed the assurance that in him should “all the families of the earth be blessed.” The clause inserted in the Sinai overture was a reminder to Israel of that fact, to certify them and the world that the purpose concerning the latter was unchanged, that the peculiar relation now assumed toward Israel was not incongruous to it; that, on the contrary, whilst Israel was first, it was not alone in the obligations and promises of the covenant. “All the earth is mine;” and the claim which, in such a transaction, God thus makes he will surely vindicate, in his own good time, by taking his own to himself, bringing them, also, within the pale of his covenant, and gathering from them a revenue of praise and glory.

3. “A kingdom of priests.” Israel’s acceptance of the first condition of the covenant, “If ye will obey my voice,” erected

them into a kingdom, of which God was the alone sovereign, – the kingdom of God. This promise defines the character and function of that kingdom, – “a kingdom of priests;” or, rather, “a priest-kingdom.” Israel was thus ordained to the exalted office of intercessory mediation for the world, and of testimony to it on God’s behalf. Had ten righteous men been found in the cities of the plain, they would have been spared, for the sake of those ten. (Gen. xviii, 32.) The angels of destruction could do nothing to Sodom until Lot departed out of it. (Ib. xix, 22.) Had one righteous man been found in Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah, the city would have been spared for the sake of that one. (Jer. v, 1.) Aaron the priest, with his golden censer – a type of the prayers of the saints (Rev. v, 8; viii, 3) – standing between the living and the dead, stayed the plague in the camp of Israel. (Num. xvi, 46-48.) So, Israel itself was now ordained a mediating priest, to stand for the time then present, between the living and the dead of the nations, in the ordinances at the sanctuary, uplifting a censer of intercession which stayed the sword of justice that was ready to destroy them; and appointed to become at length the agent of the world’s salvation, through atonement made by one of their nation, and the gospel sent forth from Jerusalem to all the world, by the preaching of Israel’s sons. Thus was it a priest-kingdom, set apart and sanctified of God, to be for salvation to all the ends of the earth.

This priestly consecration of Israel, moreover, constituted her a witness on behalf of God among the nations. It was the lighting

of a lamp to shine amid the darkness of the world. The office to which she was thus ordained was not yet aggressive; for the times of the Gentiles were not come. Yet was hers none the less a public and active testimony, which, if they would, the Gentiles could hear, a gospel light which did, in fact, penetrate far into the darkness, and prepared the nations for the coming of Christ and the gospel day. For the time being, it was the office of Israel to cherish the light, by keeping the oracles and maintaining the ordinances of God's worship, and transmitting them to their children, until the fullness of time.

4. "A holy nation." The word "holy" primarily designates the completeness and symmetry of the moral perfections of God. From hence, it is transferred to those attributes in the intelligent creatures which are in the likeness of God's holiness. And, as the distinguishing characteristic of holiness in a creature is surrender and consecration to God, the word is used to designate all such things as are his by peculiar dedication to his service. Thus, the altar, the tabernacle, and all the vessels and things pertaining thereto, were holy. So the tithe of the land, of the flocks, and of the herds, was holy; and the firstborn of men and of beasts. (Lev. xxvii, 30, 32; Luke ii, 23.) In this sense of accepted consecration, and of appropriation to himself, God here puts upon Israel the designation of "a holy nation." Henceforth, they were so named, and the obligation implied therein constantly insisted upon, as demanding from them real separation to God, and holiness of heart and life. Says the Lord: "Ye shall be holy men unto me,

neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field.” – Ex. xxii, 31. Moses exhorts them to abhor and destroy the idols of the land, “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth... Thou shalt, therefore, keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command thee this day to do them.” – Deut. vii, 6-11. From this article of the covenant, the New Testament designation of the members of the visible church is derived. Says Peter, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a *holy nation*, a peculiar people.” – 1 Peter, ii, 9. Hence, the name of “saints,” or, “holy ones,” which, familiar in the Psalms, is constantly used in the epistles, as the distinctive title of the members of the New Testament Church.

Thus it appears that in all the provisions of the covenant earthly and temporal blessings are not once alluded to. That clause of the Abrahamic covenant which concerned the possession of Canaan was, indeed, referred to at Sinai, and Israel was assured of its fulfillment. (Ex. xxiii, 23.) But it was then, and ever after, spoken of and treated as already and finally settled by the promise made to Abraham. (Ex. vi, 3-8; Deut. vii, 7-9; ix, 5, 6; Psalm cv, 8-11.) Moreover, the bestowal of Canaan was in no sense a secular transaction. Not only as a type of the better country was it designed and calculated to awaken and stimulate heavenly aspirations. (Heb. xi, 8-16.) But, like the fastnesses of the Alps, for centuries the retreat and home of the gospel

among the martyr Waldenses, Canaan, planted in the very center of the old world-empires, and upon the mid line of march of the world's great history, was chosen and prepared of God as a fortress of security entrenched for Israel's protection, in the midst of the apostate and hostile nations, while tending and nourishing the beacon fire of gospel light which glowed on Mount Zion, and shed its beams afar into the gloom of thick darkness which enshrouded the world. As such, it was assured to Abraham's seed by the covenant with him and the seal set in their flesh.

Section X. —*The Visible Church was thus established*

The Sinai covenant gave origin to the visible church of God. By the visible church, I mean that society among men which God has called and taken into covenant and communion with himself, and ordained to be his witness to the world. Two points are essentially involved in the definition. The first is the relation to God established by the terms — “I will take you to me for a people; and I will be to you a God.” The second is the office to which the church is thus called and ordained, to be God's witness, testifying on his behalf against the world's apostasy. Such is Peter's declaration, quoting the terms of the Sinai covenant, and applying them to the New Testament church: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; *that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you*

out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but *are now the people of God.*” – 1 Peter ii, 9, 10. This privilege of communion, and this office of testimony were implied and involved in the whole covenant, and all its terms; but especially indicated by that expression, “Ye shall be *unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.*” It is the privilege of priests to draw nigh to God, and their office to testify on God’s behalf to men.

The manner and meaning of the designation by which, throughout the Greek Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New, the body thus constituted is known as the *ekklēsia*, the church, is worthy of special notice in this connection. The fact of God having met with Israel at Sinai, and communed with them in an audible voice, is referred to by Moses and emphasized as being a signal demonstration of relations established of extraordinary intimacy. “What nation is there so great, which hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God in all things that we call upon him for?.. Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart, all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons and thy sons’ sons, specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children... And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the

voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.” – Deut. iv, 7-13. Again, he says: “Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such a thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou, hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord thy God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.” – Ib. iv, 32-35.

The presence of God with Israel, thus impressively manifested, was not casual or transient. The fires and the terrors of Sinai were indeed withdrawn. But the tabernacle of testimony was erected, and the shechinah there revealed for the express purpose of being a testimony to Israel that God was with them dwelling in their midst. Of the services to be there established, he directed Moses that there should be “a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak there unto thee. And there will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle” (or rather, as the margin, “Israel”) “shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will dwell among the children of

Israel, and will be their God.” – Ex. xxix, 42-46.

Thus the gathering of Israel at Sinai was not a mere congregation or assembling of the people to each other, but a meeting with God; and this fact is very remarkably indicated in the Septuagint Greek. In the description of the Sinai scene, given in Deut. iv, in that version, the tenth verse stands thus: “The day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb (*tē hēmera tēs ekklēsiās*), *in the day of the assembly*, when the Lord said to me (*Ekklēsiason pros me*), *Assemble to me the people.*” Previous to that occasion the word *ekklēsia* is not found in the Greek Scriptures. That day was, by Moses, habitually designated “the day of the *ekklēsia*– the assembly” (Deut. ix, 10; x, 4; xviii, 16), and the reason of the designation is thus, by the Greek translators, stamped upon the face of that version. It was so called because the people on that day met with God, in compliance with the command (*Ekklēsiason*), “*Assemble to me the people.*” In accordance with the special meaning to which the word was thus appropriated it is used throughout the Scriptures. In the Old Testament and Apocrypha it occurs nearly one hundred times, and a careful examination fails to discover an instance in which it is used otherwise than to designate Israel in their sacred character as the covenant people of God. In that sense it passed into the New Testament. In one place it is exceptionally used by the town clerk of the Greek city of Ephesus, and by Luke, after him, in its classic meaning, to designate an assembly of the freemen of the city. (Acts xix, 39, 41.) But everywhere else it is employed

in the same sense as in the Septuagint. It is thus applied (1) to Israel in the wilderness (Acts vii, 38), and at the temple (Heb. ii, 12); (2) to the religious assemblies of the Jews during the time of Christ's ministry (Matt. xviii, 17), and ever afterwards, in the Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, to the New Testament Church. According, therefore, to the uniform usage of the Scriptures, the word is appropriated to designate an assembly with God, and, in a secondary sense, the people as related to such an assembly. Such is the designation given to Israel as the people of God by covenant and fellowship, among whom he held the communion of mutual converse, he with them in the words of his testimony and the communications of his grace, and they with him in all things in which they called upon him. (Deut. iv, 7. Compare Matt. xviii, 20; Acts x, 33.) In the assembly of Israel, the church of the apostles finds an origin in no wise unworthy her own lofty character and office. Happy she when with conscious experience she can take to herself the glad words of Israel's song, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early... The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." – Psalm xlvi, 4-7.

The following were the essential features of the constitution of the church thus erected:

1. Its fundamental charter was the covenant, embracing the ten commandments, in the reciprocal terms which have been

considered in the preceding chapter.

2. The persons with whom these terms were made, and who were comprehended in the society thereupon erected, were all those, whether of Israel or the Gentiles, together with their households, who made credible profession of accepting the covenant, and were thereupon sealed with its baptismal seal. To this point we shall presently return.

3. The radical principle of organization was that of parental headship and family unity. The family is the divine original of all human society, as the parental office is of all human authority. Upon this basis was founded the Abrahamic covenant, and upon it was erected the system of government for Israel. It was administered by the fathers of families, of houses, and of tribes; the first-born son succeeding to his father as head of his house, under the designation of elder. This system was recognized in the first commission of Moses from God, and the elders, or heads of houses, were united with him in his mission to Pharaoh. (Ex. iii, 16, 18; iv, 29.) To them was committed the ordering of the passover on the night of the exodus. (Ib. xii, 21.) At Sinai, before the giving of the covenant, the system was perfected in its details, at the suggestion of Jethro, with the sanction of God. (Ex. xviii, 12-24.) Immediately upon the sealing of the covenant seventy of the elders, who had been previously assembled by the command of God, went up, as already stated, with Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, into the mount, and there celebrated on Israel's behalf the feast of the covenant.

“They saw the God of Israel, and did eat and drink.” – Ex. xxiv, 1, 9-11. Afterward, when the covenant was renewed in the plains of Moab, the relation of the elders thereto, in their official capacity, was expressly stated. “Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives.” – Deut. xxix, 10.

Such were the essential features of the constitution of the church, as ordained at Sinai. To her, thus organized, were given ordinances of testimony, concerning which a few points only are here necessary. Since she was appointed simply to maintain, in her position in the midst of the nations, the lamp of gospel truth ever shining, until the set time should come for sending it forth through the world, the ordinances of testimony which were intrusted to her were adapted expressly to this office. They were: (1.) The oracles of God, his written word, from time to time imparted through Moses and other holy men, who spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. iii, 2; 2 Pet. i, 21.) (2.) The holy convocations of the Sabbath days. (Lev. xxiii, 3; 1 Kings iv, 23; Acts xv, 21.) (3.) The priesthood and ritual service. (4.) The sanctuary worship and festivals. (5.) Public professions of faith, occasional and stated. (Deut. xxvi.) (6.) Poetic recitations and psalmody. (Ex. xv, 1-21; Deut. xxxi, xxxii; the book of Psalms.)

It was with a special view to the witnessing office of the church of Israel that the ritual system was constructed. The covenant and the ritual were testimonies to the better covenant and the

heavenly realities which belong to it. It is with this view that the word “testimony” is so much used in designating them. Thus the Ten Commandments, the fundamental law of the covenant, were frequently designated “the testimony.” (Ex. xxv, 21.) The tables on which they were written were, in like manner, “the tables of the testimony.” They were kept in “the ark of the testimony,” which was in “the tabernacle of the testimony.” In the same way the whole system of ordinances and laws given to Israel is designated “the testimonies of God.” Of them, and the office of the church concerning them, the Psalmist says: “He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them: even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments.” – Psalm lxxviii, 5-7.

Respecting the ritual system, there are two propositions which are believed to be demonstrable, but are here presented without argument. The *first* is, that these rites were not dark forms, veiling rather than disclosing a new revelation; but were inscriptions in luminous characters, setting forth the doctrines of a faith well understood by the patriarchs and fathers from the beginning, and from them transmitted and known to Israel. *Second*. The ritual forms in which the gospel was clothed in the Levitical system were far more suitable for the purposes of

popular instruction and world-wide dissemination than would have been any conceivable exposition of it in writing. The art of writing was in its infancy. A written gospel would have been, even to Israel, a sealed book; how much more to all other people! The history and laws were put in writing and kept at the sanctuary for the direction of the priests and magistrates in the performance of their duties, the administration of justice, and the instruction of Israel. But the gospel, for the people, was clothed in forms which required no interpreter, which meant the same in every language under heaven, and which were calculated, by their appeals to the imagination through the eye and the senses, to stamp themselves indelibly upon the memory and the affections. Thus were they eminently adapted to arrest the attention and impress the minds of strangers, and of the young, for whom especially they were designed. (Ex. xii, 26; xiii, 14; Deut. vi, 20; Josh. iv, 6, 21; 1 Kings viii, 41, 42.)

The fact is of an importance which entitles it to distinct and emphatic mention, that the Aaronic priesthood and the ritual law were no part of the constitution of the church, as it was established by the covenant. They were not in existence when the covenant was made, but were ordinances afterward given to the church, as already existent and organized. They were bestowed as means of fulfilling her witnessing office, means adapted to the times and circumstances of Israel, but subject to be modified, as they were in the temple system, or to be wholly suspended or set aside, without impairing the constitution of the church or the

completeness and efficiency of its organization. Not only thus did the covenant precede the ritual law and the priesthood, but when, forty years afterward, the covenant was renewed, and the parties to it were enumerated in detail, the priests were altogether ignored. (Deut. xxix, 10-12.) They were in no wise essential to it.

Section XI. —*The Terms of Membership in the Church of Israel*

With some slight circumstantial differences, having reference to the difference in the office of the church under the two dispensations, the conditions of membership were essentially the same as propounded at Sinai and as prescribed under the gospel. While the spiritual blessings of the covenant were from the beginning conditioned upon true faith and loving obedience, the privilege of membership in the visible church was at Sinai bestowed upon those, with their households, who made credible profession of these graces, and upon them only. On “the day of the assembly,” all the people professed to take God for their God, and to devote themselves to him as his believing and obedient people. And as on the days of Pentecost, so on this occasion, the profession was accepted, and their admission was sealed with baptism; although doubtless, in both cases, there were false professors included with the true. With certain exceptions, ordained for special reasons (Deut. xxiii, 1-8), the conditions of membership were the same for the Gentile world as for Israel.

The law was explicit and most emphatic on this point. “One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.” – Num. xv, 14-16, and 29; and see ix, 14; xix, 10; Ex. xii, 43-49; Deut. xxxi, 12; Josh. viii, 33, etc.

For eliminating unworthy members, the means provided in the Sinai ordinances were as abundant as those now enjoyed by the church, and would seem to have been as well adapted to the effectual securing of the end proposed. They come under three heads. (1.) Certain offenses were visited with the penalty of death or of utter separation from the communion of Israel. (Ex. xxxi, 14; Num. ix, 13, etc.) (2.) The expenses incident to a faithful performance of the duties required of members of the church of Israel were large and continual. Firstfruits, firstlings, and tithes, trespass offerings, sin offerings, freewill offerings, and other oblations, made up an aggregate which can not have fallen short of one-fifth of all the income of Israel, and probably went far beyond that amount. The law provided none but moral means for enforcing these requirements; and numerous facts in the history of Israel show that by many they were entirely neglected. (Neh. xiii, 10-13; Mal. iii, 8-10.) Those who thus withheld what belonged to the Lord were self-excluded from the fellowship of the covenant society, and were “cut off from the congregation

(*ekklesiā* from *the church*) of the Lord.” (3.) The irksome and humiliating nature of the regulations concerning uncleanness and purifying were very efficient means of separating between the believing and the profane. As we shall presently see, occasions of uncleanness were of almost daily occurrence, in every house. These required a conscientious watchfulness and assiduity, in guarding against defilement, and in using the appointed rites of purifying, which often involved the interruption and expense of journeys to the sanctuary and offerings there.

The communion of the church of Israel thus consisted of those only, with their families, who added to the obligations of a public profession of faith, a fidelity to all the requirements of the law, its moral precepts, its ritual observances, its tithes and offerings, its rites of purifying and its annual feasts. In a word, the account given of Zacharias and Elizabeth describes the character required, in order to fellowship in the church of Israel: “Righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” – Luke i, 6. Such, and such only, were the *clean*, to whom the privileges of Israel’s communion belonged. To them they were certified by the seal of baptism.

Section XII. — *Circumcision and Baptism*

It is commonly assumed that baptism has come into the place and office of circumcision. This I conceive to be a mistaken view,

which involves the whole subject in confusion. Circumcision is the distinctive and peculiar seal of the Abrahamic covenant. While it is true, that in that covenant, as relating to the terms of salvation, all believers were accounted as seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promises, it is equally true that, by its terms, peculiar blessings unspeakably great were assured to the seed of the patriarch after the flesh. Not only was Christ to come of his flesh; not only was the church to be for fifteen centuries constituted of his offspring, but Paul moreover testifies, that richer blessings than they have ever yet enjoyed are to be bestowed on Israel and on the Gentiles through Israel, in the coming future: "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?.. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" – Rom. xi, 12, 15. This the apostle, futhermore, puts upon the ground that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." – Ib. 29. It was with a view to this relation of the covenant to Abraham's natural seed, that circumcision was appointed as its seal. Said God: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, *in their generations*, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." – Gen. xvii, 7. Hence, by circumcision, the token of the covenant was set in the flesh of the males, through whom the descent is counted. So long, therefore, as the church was, for the divine purposes, restricted to the family of Israel, the rite of circumcision was necessary as

a prerequisite condition of admission to its privileges, because it was the seal of incorporation by birth or adoption into that family. But this did not constitute admission into the church. The Sinai covenant had its own baptismal seal. The church consisted, not of Israel, the circumcised; but only of the *clean* of Israel. Of this, baptism was the token and seal. It hence resulted that when the restriction was removed, and the gospel was given to the Gentiles, emancipated from the yoke of circumcision, baptism remained unchanged in place or office, the original and only seal of actual admission to the fellowship and privileges of the church of God. Of all this we shall see more hereafter.

Part III.

ADMINISTERED

BAPTISMS=SPRINKLINGS

Section XIII. —*Unclean Seven Days*

In the laws of Moses there were two grades of uncleanness defined – uncleanness of seven days, and uncleanness till the even. The former was a symbol of that essential corruption which is in us by nature, to which are essential the redeeming blood of Christ and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, without which no man can see God in peace. Uncleanness till the even symbolized those casual defilements to which God's renewed people are liable by contact with the evil of the world. The ritual, concerning the uncleanness of seven days, was designed to signalize the light in which man's apostate nature, and the depravity and sin thence resulting, appear in the sight of a God of ineffable holiness. To this conception the word *unclean* was designed to give expression, the intense meaning of which is liable to escape the casual reader of the Scriptures. It signified, not the mere external soiling of the living person, but death, corruption, and rottenness within the heart, the fermenting source of pollution poured forth in the outward life. To impress us with a just sense

of the exceeding evil of this thing the Spirit employs every variety of figure expressive of deformity and loathsomeness. In the primitive faith, of which the book of Job is a record, it is characterized in language which is a key-note to all the Scriptures on the subject. "Behold he putteth no trust in his saints" (his holy angels); "yea, the heavens are not pure in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water." – Job xv, 15, 16. Says the Psalmist, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy." – Psa. xiv, 3. Here the word "filthy" is in the margin rendered "stinking." It is the same in the original as in the above place in Job, and means the offensiveness of putrefaction. David, in his penitential Psalm, indicates his sense of this radical evil of his nature. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and *cleanse* me from my sin... Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold thou desirest truth in the *inward parts*: and in the *hidden part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be *clean*; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a *clean heart*, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." – Psa. li, 2-10. Isaiah and other sacred writers represent the same evil by the figures of the vomit and filthiness of a drunken debauch, and by every kind of abominable and loathsome thing. (Isa. xxviii, 8; Prov. xxx, 12.) By the designation, unclean, the moral deformity and offensiveness of Satan and the "unclean spirits," his angels,

are described. And in the accounts of the riches of grace and glory in store for the church, the crowning feature is the exclusion of the unclean. “A highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.” – Isa. xxxv, 8. The church is called upon for this cause to exult: “Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.” – Ib. lii, 1. And again, John, in the vision of the glory of the new Jerusalem, which crowns and closes his revelation, says of her: “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth” (literally, “any thing unclean”), “neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” – Rev. xxi, 27.

For the purpose of inducing a profound sense of this evil and loathsomeness of sin, as working in the heart, the ordinances respecting the uncleanness of seven days were appointed, each having its own lesson.

1. The birth of a child was the actual propagation, from the parents, of part in the uncleanness of the apostate nature. It was, therefore, attended with natural phenomena, and marked by ritual ordinances which characterized it, and every function connected with it, as unclean and defiling. Emphasis was thus given to the challenge, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” – Job xiv, 4.

2. Running issues of all kinds were appropriated as symbols

of the corruption of man's nature, festering within, and breaking forth in putrescent streams of depravity and sin in the active life. (Ezek. xvi, 6, 9.)

3. Death is "the wages of sin" (Rom. vi, 23), and physical death is a terrible emblem of its loathsome and accursed nature. And as sin and the curse are diffused to Adam's seed by the very contagion of nature, this, their symbol, was ritually endowed with the same contagious character. He that touched the dead was reckoned no longer among the living but the dead. He was, therefore, cast out from the camp, from his family, the sanctuary, and the privileges of the covenant. To them all he was dead. He was unclean.

Thus, as the loving and bereaved stood by the couch of death, gazed upon the face and form once blooming in health and beauty, and beheld the sightless and sunken eyes, the ghastly features and cadaverous hue – pledges of corruption begun – while the very air of the chamber seemed to breathe the cry, "Unclean!" as they realized the instinctive recoil which love itself must feel from the very touch of the departed, and felt as Abraham, concerning the beloved Sarah, the constraint to "bury his dead out of his sight," – as, in all this, they knew that these last offices even must be fulfilled at the expense of defilement and exclusion from the privileges of God's earthly courts and the society of his people, for seven days, they and all Israel received a lesson of divine instruction as to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the wages of which is death, its loathsomeness in God's sight, its

contagious diffusion and power, and its curse, to which human speech or angel eloquence could have added nothing.

4. No less impressive were the ordinances concerning leprosy. The name designated a class of diseases, some of which would appear to have been altogether miraculous in their origin, and peculiar in their symptoms, while others were attributable to natural causes. The disease was peculiar for the shocking and loathsome appearance of its victim, its poisoning the blood and pervading the whole body, and its incurable and inevitably deadly nature. It was, therefore, employed by God as, at once, an extraordinary punishment of sin, and a most fitting symbol of it, as seated in the heart and nature of man, and pervading and corrupting his whole being. (Num. xii, 10; 2 Kings v, 27; 2 Chr. xxvi, 20.) The leper was accounted as one dead (Num. xii, 12), and, therefore, excluded from his family, from the congregation and ordinances at the sanctuary, and from the very camp of Israel, where the living God walked. (Num. v, 2; xii, 14.) Thus, outcast from the abodes of men and the house of God, “the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean! Unclean! All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall be his habitation.” – Lev. xiii, 45, 46. How dreadful the figure thus presented to the senses of Israel, of the loathsomeness of sin in God’s sight, and of its ruinous effects upon the sinner! The person offensive with scabs and sores, the

rent garments, the uncovered head, the wailing cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" while the exclusion from the house of God, and from the abodes of men, and the covered lip, proclaimed to Israel that the spiritual leper, yet in his sins, brings danger to his fellow-men with his very presence, and is an offense and loathing to God, before the eyes of whose purity he may not venture to come, save through the cleansing blood and Spirit of Christ. Hence, the cry of Isaiah, when he beheld the glory of the Lord: "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And hence, the coal of fire from off the altar of atonement, and the seraph's assurance, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." – Isa. vi, 5-7.

Thus, every way, under the idea of indwelling defilement, was sin and its source in man's corrupted nature held up to Israel as loathsome in itself, propagated to the race and infecting all, defiling in its contact, deadly in its indwelling power, and abhorrent to the eyes of God.

Four circumstances in the ritual on these defilements are peculiar and characteristic:

1. The first of these exhibits a broad and fundamental contrast between these defilements and those which continued only till the even. The latter, as already intimated, presented the conception of an outward soiling of the living person. But the uncleanness of seven days exhibited the idea, not of

surface defilement of the living, but of the loathsomeness and pollution of the dead and decaying carcass, pouring out its own corruption, and infecting all around with its unclean and abhorrent presence, – a pollution which no extrinsic or surface washing can ever cleanse.

2. The defilement was for seven days. God's work of creation ended in the rest of the seventh day. That day was hence appropriated as a type of the final rest of Christ and his people upon the completed work of redemption. Hence, the argument of Paul: "For he spake of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." – Heb. iv, 4-9. "A rest:" literally, as in the margin, "a keeping of a Sabbath," or, "a Sabbatism." But the Sabbath thus reserved for God's people, coincides with "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Hence, a seven days' uncleanness was typical of such a corruption of nature as is essential and, therefore, persistent to the end; and the exclusion of the defiled from the camp and the sanctuary signified the sentence of the judgment of the last day, when those whose natures are unrenewed, and whose sins are unpurged will be excluded from the Sabbath of redemption and from the new Jerusalem, and remain finally under the woe of the second death: "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still... For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." – Rev. xxii, 11, 15.

3. The defilement was contagious. If the unclean for seven days touched a clean person, the latter was thereby defiled until the even. For, such is the inveteracy of this native corruption of the race that God's people are liable to defilement from every intercourse and contact with the world, – a defilement, however, which they will leave behind them when the day of earthly life is ended. Therefore, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." – 2 Cor. vi, 17.

4. This seven days' uncleanness could not be purified without sacrificial rites, and water sprinkled by the hand of one that was clean. For nothing but the atoning merits of Christ's one offering, and the Spirit of life which he sheds down upon his people, can enter and cleanse our defiled nature, and fit us for admission to the presence of God, or for part in the New Jerusalem. All this will more fully appear as we proceed to notice the rites of purifying appointed for the several kinds of this uncleanness, respectively.

Section XIV. — *The Baptism of a healed Leper*

The rites appointed for the purifying of a healed leper come under two heads, – those administered by the priest, and those performed by the person himself. When a leper was healed, he was first inspected by the priest, who went forth to him to

ascertain that the healing was real, and the disease eradicated. This being ascertained, the priest took two clean birds, and had one of them killed and its blood caught in an earthen vessel, with running water. He then took the remaining bird, alive, with cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, and dipped all together in the blood and water; “and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.” – Lev. xiv, 7.

The rite which thus ended by the official decree of the priest, “*He is clean,*” completed the purification, properly so called. The man is now clean. The remaining ordinances were expressive of duties and privileges proper to one who is cleansed and restored to the commonwealth of Israel, and the communion of God’s house. First of these he was required to “wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean.” – Ib., vs. 8. He was now admitted to the camp, but must not yet enter his own tent, nor come to the tabernacle for seven days. On the seventh day he was again required to shave off all his hair, wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh; and “he shall be clean.” – Vs. 9.

Now, on the eighth day, he came to the sanctuary, bringing a sacrifice of a trespass offering, a sin offering, and a burnt offering. The rites attendant upon these offerings completed the ceremonial. Thenceforth, the leper resumed all the privileges of a son of Israel, in his family, in the the congregation, and at the sanctuary.

The general signification of these ordinances is evident. The priest, by whom alone the cleansing rites could be administered, was the official representative of our great high-priest, Christ Jesus. The two birds were with the priest a complex type of him who offered himself without spot to God, who was dead and is alive for evermore, and by the merits of whose blood and the power of whose Spirit remission of sins and the new life of holiness are given to men. The first self-washing symbolized the duty of the redeemed to turn from their old ways and walk in holiness. The continued exclusion, for seven days, from his house and the sanctuary was a testimony that for the present we are pilgrims and strangers, and that only at the end of earth's trials and purgations can we enter our "house which is from heaven." The seventh day's washing indicated the final putting off of all evil in the resurrection; and the offerings of the eighth represented the way whereby, in the regeneration, God's redeemed people shall have access to his presence and communion with him, through the blood of Jesus.

We are now able to understand why the cleansing of the healed leper was thus separately ordered, and not included in the provision which we shall presently see was made, in common, for all other cases of seven days' uncleanness. The extraordinary and frequently supernatural character of both the disorder and its cure rendered it proper and necessary to take it out of the category of ordinary uncleannesses, and place it under the immediate jurisdiction of the priests. This was necessary, alike,

in order to a judicial determination at first as to the existence of the leprosy, and afterward as to the cure. And the priestly administration of the rites of cleansing was equally important, as constituting an official and authoritative proclamation of the healing and restoration of the leper.

Section XV. —*Baptism of those defiled by the Dead*

The purification of the leper must have been of rare occurrence. All the facts and indications of the Scriptures tend to the conclusion that, except by miraculous agency, the disease was incurable. The baptism of Israel at Sinai was extraordinary in its nature and circumstances, and could not have been repeated except in circumstances equally remarkable, such as that when, in the plains of Moab, the covenant was renewed with the new generation, which had risen up to take the place of those who perished in the wilderness. (Deut. xxix, 1.) But of that transaction the particulars are not recorded. In the water of separation, provision was made for an ordinary rite, essentially the same, in its nature, mode, and meaning, as the Sinai baptism; and so ordered as to serve as a continual memorial and repetition of it, and reiteration of the promises and instructions therein embodied. This rite was appointed for the cleansing of defilements of daily occurrence, and was maintained through all the after history of Israel, until the time of Christ, and the

destruction of Jerusalem. It was known to the Jews by the name of *baptism*.

In preparation for this rite, a red heifer without blemish was chosen by the priest, and slain without the camp, whence the priest sprinkled the blood toward the door of the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. The entire heifer was then burned, while the priest cast cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet into the burning. The ashes were gathered and laid up in a clean place, without the camp. (Num. xix, 2-10.) They were to be “kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation.” – Ib. 9. By the phrase, “water of separation,” is not meant a water to cause separation, but a remedy for it. They were, as Zechariah expresses it, “*for sin and for uncleanness.*” – Zech. xiii, 1.

The primary case for which they were provided was that of defilement by the dead. (Num. xix, 17, 18.) Whoever touched a dead body or bone of a man, or a grave, was defiled thereby, as was the tent or house where the body lay, and the furniture and utensils that were in it. For the purifying of these, some of the ashes of the heifer were mingled, in an earthen vessel, with running water. A clean person then took a bush of hyssop, and, dipping it into the water, sprinkled it on the persons or things to be cleansed. This was done on the third day, and repeated on the seventh. “And on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.” – Num. xix, 2-19. Thus, as in the

case of the leper, the rites for defilement by the dead were divided into two categories, – those administered by the priest or a clean person acting officially, and those performed by the subject himself. The importance of the distinction thus made between rites administered and those self-performed is worthy of repeated and emphatic notice. The former symbolized Christ's and the Spirit's agency; the latter, the active personal obedience and holiness of the believer's life.

It appears from the rabbins that, at least during the later period of Jewish history, the purifying of persons was, whenever practicable, performed at Jerusalem, by the hand of a priest, and with water drawn from the pool of Siloam, which flowed from the foot of the temple mount. For the purifying of houses and other things, the ashes were sent throughout the land, and the rites performed where the uncleanness was contracted.

Section XVI. —*Purifying from Issues*

The remaining forms of major uncleanness are those of childbirth, and of issues. (Lev. xii, 2; xv, 13, 19, 20, 25.) The places here referred to in the book of Leviticus contain the only directions as to purifying which specify these cases. Were our attention confined to those chapters, we might imagine that for these defilements there were no purifyings required, except in one single case, a self-washing for men healed of issues. But there are several things which suggest the propriety of looking farther

before accepting that conclusion.

1. The instructions given in these places, if taken by themselves are incongruous. Thus, a man cured of an issue was directed to “number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and he shall be clean.” But of a woman it is said: “She shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.” – Lev. xv, 13, 28. In neither of the cases of female defilement is there mention made of any purifying rites whatever, although the seven days of purifying are specified in each of them. And yet if any one had but touched the bed, or the seat of a woman so defiled, he must “wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh, and be unclean until the even.” – Vs. 19-23. I do not here account as rites of purifying the offerings which in each case the parties, after being cleansed, were required to make at the sanctuary. In those offerings they claimed and exercised the privilege of communion at his table with the God of Israel – the highest privilege of the clean. Admission to it was, therefore, a formal and conclusive attestation to them as already clean.

2. The manifest analogy between these defilements, and those arising from leprosy and contact with the dead, indicates the necessity of analogous rites of purifying for them all. The intimacy of relation between their several meanings we have seen. It is attested by the whole tenor of Scripture. The same period of seven days marked them all – a period emphasized, even where the uncleanness was prolonged to thirty-three and

sixty-six days. (Lev. xii, 2, 4, 5.) They all were included in one decree of exclusion from the camp, except for manifest reasons – women in childbed. (Num. v, 2.) At the end of the seven days of purifying, when they were clean, offerings were to be made at the sanctuary by the leper, the Nazarite defiled by the dead, and all the others, except those purged from the ordinary defilement by the dead. And the offerings were in each case essentially the same. The leper, if able, brought three lambs, one for a trespass-offering, the second for a sin-offering, and the third for a burnt-offering. If he was poor, he brought one lamb for a trespass-offering, and two young turtles or pigeons, one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. This offering of a lamb and two turtles was the same that was required of a Nazarite, defiled by the dead, after his cleansing. (Num. vi, 10, 12.) The two turtles, or pigeons, were alone required of those defiled by childbirth, or by issues, one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. Thus, the only difference in these observances was the trespass-offering which was, for evident reasons, required of the Nazarite and the leper, and of them only. The Nazarite, although by an involuntary act, had trespassed in profaning the head of his consecration. (Num. vi, 9.) As to the leper, his disease seems usually, if not always, to have been a special divine retribution for some specific and aggravated offense, for which, therefore, upon his cleansing, a trespass-offering was required. (Num. xii, 10; 2 Kings v, 27; 2 Chron. xxvi, 19.)

3. The supposition that these defilements all did not call for rites of purifying essentially the same in each case, would involve incongruity and contradiction in the testimonies uttered by them severally. That they all were typical of human depravity in its different aspects can not be questioned by any one who will candidly study the Scriptures, and especially the Levitical and prophetic books on the subject. But, upon the supposition in question, their several representations as to the remedy are irreconcilable. For leprosy, and those defiled with the dead, the rites of purifying declare that there is cleansing for man's moral defilement nowhere but in the blood and Spirit of Christ. But the rites for cleansing a man defiled with an issue would proclaim our own works and righteousness all-sufficient; whilst the silence of the law as to any rites whatever for women, in any form of issue, would declare no cleansing necessary, but that time and death would purify all. Thus, three several testimonies, each contradictory to the others, are incorporated in the ordinances, if complete in those chapters.

The key to these difficulties is found in the general character and intent of the law concerning the water of separation. That law was the latest that was given on the subject of purifyings, and is, therefore, not expressly referred to in the earlier regulations which have been under examination, although the divine Lawgiver intended the later statute to fill up and supplement those which had gone before. Of this there is a very plain indication in the ordinances respecting the Nazarite. "If

any man die suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day shall he shave it.” – Num. vi, 9. Here the defiling effect of contact with the dead is not declared, but assumed; although the law to that purpose was not yet given. It is left to the subsequent ordinance (Num. xix) to prescribe the rites of cleansing, which are here, as in the rules concerning issued, alluded to, but not stated.

Those rites might seem to relate only to the case of defilement by the dead. But among the directions as to them, there is one which is unequivocal and comprehensive. “The man that shall be unclean and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the water of separation hath not been sprinkled on him. He is unclean.” – Num. xix, 20. Here is no limitation nor exception of any kind. “The man that is unclean;” unclean, from whatever cause. Of all such, we are here certified that no lapse of time will bring cleansing. He must be purified before he can be clean. Till that is accomplished, his presence is a profanation of the sanctuary. It is, moreover, here declared that the one only mode of cleansing for all such was the water of separation, sprinkled according to the law. That this is a true interpretation, is confirmed by the testimony of Philo, of Alexandria, a Jewish writer of the highest reputation, contemporary with the apostles. Giving an account of the Levitical law, he distinguishes between defilements of the soul

and of the body; by the latter meaning, ritual defilements. Of them, he says, in unrestricted terms, that the water of separation was appointed for purifying from those things by which a body is ritually defiled.⁵

We shall presently see one notable example of this comprehensive interpretation of the law, in the case of the daughters of Midian. Their need of the rites of purifying did not arise out of any of the categories specified in the laws which we have examined. They were unclean, because they were idolatrous Gentiles (Compare Acts xv, 9); and were purified with the water of separation, because that was the general provision made for the unclean. This is further illustrated in the fact that all the spoil taken at the same time was also purified with this same water of separation. (Num. xxxi, 19-24.)

A fact remains, which is conclusive of the present point. It is the remarkable name by which the purifying elements are designated. "It shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of (*nidda*) separation." This word, *nidda*, occurs in the Old Testament twenty-three times. Its radical idea is exclusion, banishment. Hence, the name of the land to which Cain was driven. "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod," that is, "the land of banishment." – Gen. iv, 16. Under this general idea of exclusion, the particular form, *nidda*, is appropriated to the separating or putting away of a wife from her husband, and to the uncleannesses which

⁵ Below p. [175](#).

gave occasion to such separation. And inasmuch as God is the husband of his church, the same word is used to designate those apostasies and sins which separate her from his favor and communion. (Lam. i, 17; Ezek. xxxvi, 17, etc.) In the two chapters in Leviticus, which present the law respecting defilement by childbirth and by issues (Lev. xii and xv), the word occurs no less than eleven times. Those who were thus defiled were, *nidda*, “put apart,” “separated.” Six times, in the directions as to the ashes of the red heifer, the water is called “a water of *nidda*.” – Num. xix, 9, 13, 20, 21, 21; xxxi, 23. Once, again, the word is used in the same way by the prophet Zechariah. (Zech. xiii, 1.) “A fountain for sin and for *nidda*.” Elsewhere it always has distinct reference, literal or figurative, to the causes of separation here indicated; whilst it is worthy of special mention, that it never designates defilement by the dead.

The conclusion implied in these facts becomes a demonstration when we observe that in the figurative language of the prophets, the defilement of *nidda* is expressly referred to as requiring the sprinkled water of purifying. In Ezekiel (xvi, 1-14) God’s gracious dealings with Israel at the beginning are described under the figure of the marriage tie. “I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.” – vs. 8, 9. “I thoroughly washed away.” The verb in the original is *shātaph*, which will be critically examined in another place. It

signifies such action as of a dashing rain. In another place (Ezek. xxxvi, 17-26), the Lord, under the same figure, describes the subsequent transgressions of Israel: "Their way was before me as *nidda*." – v. 17. Because of this, God declares that he scattered them among the nations. But, says the Lord, "I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." – vs. 24-26.

So, says the Spirit by Zechariah: "In that day there shall be a fountain (a flowing spring) opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for *nidda*." – Zech. xiii, 1. *Nidda*, then, signified a defilement for which that fountain was necessary; and to imagine the ritual uncleanness of *nidda* to have been healed without ritual water of purifying, would be to suppose the ordinance to contradict the doctrine of the prophets.

From these passages it appears: (1.) That the defilement of *nidda* was a figure representing the sins and apostasies of Israel, viewed as God's covenant people, his married wife. (2.) That the sprinkling of water is the ordinance divinely chosen to represent the mode of the Spirit's agency in cleansing from these offenses. (3.) That this defilement and the water of *nidda* were so intimately associated with each other in the usage of Israel as to serve the prophets for a familiar illustration of the gracious purposes of God, indicated in the texts. If the figure of speech

used by the prophet is the proper one for illustrating his doctrine in words, the water of *nidda* sprinkled on the unclean was the appropriate form by which to express it in ritual action. When, therefore, in the light of these facts, we read the law that the ashes of the heifer “shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of *nidda*,” the conclusion is irresistible, that those defiled with *nidda* were to be purified with that water. And when to this we add the further declaration concerning “the man that is unclean,” and is not sprinkled with it, and see it illustrated by the case of the Midianite children, the further conclusion is equally evident that, except the peculiar case of the leper, the water of separation was designed for all classes of seven days’ defilement. To all others who were in a state of ritual separation from the communion of Israel, it was essential in order to being restored.

Section XVII. — *The Baptism of Proselytes*

Maimonides was a learned Spanish Jew of the twelfth century. He wrote large commentaries upon the institutions and laws of Israel. Concerning the reception of proselytes, he is quoted as saying: “Circumcision, baptism, and a free-will offering, were required of any Gentile who desired to enter into the covenant, to take refuge under the wings of the divine majesty, and assume the yoke of the law; but if it was a woman, baptism and an offering were required, as we read, ‘One law and one manner

shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.’ – Num. xv, 16. But what was the law ‘for you’? The covenant was confirmed by circumcision and baptism and free-will offerings. So was it confirmed with the stranger, with these three. But now, that no oblations are made [the temple being destroyed], circumcision and baptism are required. But after the temple shall have been restored, then also it will be necessary that an offering be made. A stranger who is circumcised and not baptized, or baptized and not circumcised, is not called a proselyte till both are performed.”⁶ Various similar statements are frequently quoted from the same writer, and from the Talmud. Respecting them the following points are to be noticed:

1. The Hebrew word which is used by Maimonides and the Talmudic writers, and is here translated, to baptize, is *tābal*, a word which in the books of Moses is never used to designate rites of purifying of any kind.

2. The *tābalings*, or Talmudic baptisms, were self-performed, and not the act of an official administrator. The reception of the person must be sanctioned by the consistory or eldership of a synagogue, and attested by the presence of three witnesses. But it was performed by the person’s own act. Being disrobed, and standing in the water, he was instructed by a scribe in certain precepts of the law. Having heard these, he plunged himself under the water; and as he came up again, “Behold he is an Israelite in all things.” If it was a woman, she was attended by

⁶ Maimonides, Issure Biah, Perek 13, in Lightfoot, Harmonia Evang. in Joan i, 25.

women, while the scribes stood apart and read the precepts: "And as she plungeth herself, they turn away their faces, and go out, when she comes out of the water."⁷ It is perfectly evident that the rite thus described is wholly foreign to any thing to be found in the Mosaic law, and that it belonged to the category of self-washings, and not to that of the sacrament, in which an official administrator was essential to the validity of the rite.

3. This baptism is an invention of the scribes, of post Biblical origin. Our sources of information are (1) the Scriptures and Apocrypha; (2) the writings of Philo and Josephus, authors, the former of whom was contemporary with Christ, and the latter with the destruction of Jerusalem, both of whom wrote largely of the institutions and history of the Jews; (3) the Targums of Onkelos and of Jonathan; (4) the Mishna; (5) the Gemaras.

The Targums are Aramaic versions of the Old Testament. The Jews, at the return from the Babylonish captivity, had lost the knowledge of the Hebrew language. It was, therefore, necessary that the public reading of the Scriptures should be accompanied with a translation into the Aramaic dialect, which they now used. (Neh. viii, 2-8.) The translations thus given were, no doubt, at first extemporaneous and somewhat variable. But they gradually assumed fixed forms, more or less accurate, as they received the impress of different schools of interpreters. At first transmitted orally, they were at length committed to writing, the Targum of Onkelos soon after the end of the second century, and that of

⁷ Maimonides, as above, in Lightfoot, on John iii, 23.

Jonathan a century later. The former, as a rule, keeps closely to the text. The Targum of Jonathan indulges more in paraphrase. The Mishna is the text of the Oral law, the traditions of the scribes. It was reduced to writing by Rabbi Judah Hakkadosh, about the end of the first century, and is believed to be a faithful exhibit of the traditions of the Jews, as they stood at that time. The two Gemaras, with the Mishna, constitute the Talmud. They are collections of interpretations and commentaries on the Mishna, or oral law, by the most eminent scribes. The Jerusalem or Palestinian Gemara was compiled in the third and fourth centuries, and that of Babylonia one or two centuries later. The former represents the great rabbinic seminary at Tiberias, in Galilee; the latter that of Sora, on the Euphrates.⁸

From these sources of information, the indications are conclusive that Talmudic baptism came into use after the destruction of Jerusalem. We have seen already part of the evidence, which will be more fully developed in the following pages, that no such rite was ordained in the law, observed by Israel, or recognized in the Scriptures. The Apocrypha are equally silent on the subject. The writings of Philo and Josephus ignore such a rite; as do the Targums and Mishna. In the latter, the word, *tābal*, which is commonly translated, to dip, is used constantly to designate the self-washings of the law, which, as

⁸ According to Etheridge, the final revision of the Babylonian Gemara was completed by Rabbi Jose, president of the rabbinic seminary at Pumbaditha, on the Euphrates, in the year 499 or 500. —*Jerusalem and Tiberias*, pp. 174-176.

will presently appear, can not have been immersions. In fact, there is sufficient evidence that this word, in addition to its modal sense, was also used to express a washing or cleansing, irrespective of the manner. That it was so employed to describe the cleansing of Naaman, will hereafter appear. It is not until we come to the Gemara of Babylonia, dating at the close of the fifth century, long after the destruction of Jerusalem and cessation of the temple service, that we meet with any distinct account of proselyte immersion. After that it is found everywhere.

4. Whilst it is thus evident that the baptisms of the Talmud are wholly without divine warrant, they are nevertheless valuable as constituting an authentic rabbinic tradition that a purifying with water was requisite in the reception of proselytes. A key to the truth on this subject presents itself in a statement found in the Mishna. "As to a proselyte who becomes a proselyte on the eve of the passover" (that is the evening before the day of the passover), "the school of Shammai say, Let him receive the ritual bath" (*tābal*), "and let him eat the passover in the evening; but the disciples of Hillel say, He that separates himself from his uncircumcision is like one who separates himself from a sepulcher."⁹ It thus appears that between the two schools of Jewish scribes there was a division on this subject. The one party taught that the uncleanness of the Gentiles was of such a nature as to require seven days of purifying with the water of *nidda*, according to the law for one defiled by the dead. The others held

⁹ Tract Pesachim, cap. viii, § 8.

them subject to that minor uncleanness which ceased with the close of the day, upon the performance of the prescribed self-washing. We shall presently see that the former were correct, according to the explicit testimony of the Scriptures. But here we have a clue to the later history of Jewish practice on the subject. Upon the destruction of Jerusalem and the termination of the sacrificial services there, the rites for purifying with the water of *nidda* were of necessity pretermitted, as the ashes of the heifer were no longer obtainable. The rabbins were, therefore, induced to substitute the self-washing which the looser school of scribes had already espoused. At what precise time the self-washings of the law became the self-immersions of the Gemaras does not appear. But at the beginning of the Christian era, causes had been already for centuries at work which were abundantly sufficient to account for the change. From the times of the captivities, the vast multitude of Hebrews who never returned, dwelling in Babylonia and the farther east, had been exposed to the influences arising from the religions of the lands of their dispersion, as embodied in the Zend Avesta and the Shasters, the teachings of Zoroaster and of the Brahmins, and from the related manners and customs and religious rites which have their native seats upon the banks of the Indus and the Ganges. The profoundness of the operation of these influences is seen in the pantheism of the Kabala, traceable as it is to the kindred doctrines of the Zend Avesta and the Vedas.¹⁰ How conspicuous the place held by self-immersion

¹⁰ This is clearly shown by Etheridge, in "Jerusalem and Tiberias." Pp. 339 et seq.

in the religious customs of the people of the East, from the earliest ages, every one knows. The Hebrews dwelling among them were not restricted by the law to any defined mode of self-washing in fulfilling its requirements. It was, therefore, natural and inevitable for them to adopt the mode which was daily practiced before their eyes. The relations between the Jews of “the Dispersion,” and those of Palestine, were of the most intimate kind, sustained through attendance upon the annual feasts at Jerusalem (Acts ii, 9), and afterwards by continual correspondence and travel, and by the intercourse of the school at Tiberias with those of Sora and Pumbaditha. If to these facts be added the tendency by which the rabbins would seek to compensate for the absence of the water of *nidda*, by expanding and magnifying the self-washings which were still practicable, there remains no ground of surprise or perplexity in finding self-immersion installed among the imperative observances set forth in the Gemaras. Of the disposition to supply the place of the now impracticable rites by the enlargement of others, the Talmud affords more than one example.

I have said that the Scriptural mode of purifying for proselytes was by sprinkling with the water of *nidda*. Of its use there is a conspicuous example. On account of their licentious wiles against Israel, Midian was doomed to destruction. In the campaign which followed, none were spared, except the female children. These were reserved for bond servants. (Num. xxxi,

The same thing is largely illustrated in Blavatsky's “Isis Revealed.”

18; and compare Lev. xxv, 44-46; and Deut. xxi, 10-14.) But, from the days of Abraham, all bond servants had been by divine authority and command endowed with an equal right and share with their masters in God's favor and covenant. And as Israel itself had been purified from the defilements and idolatries of Egypt, and ordained as the peculiar people of God by the baptism of blood and water at Sinai, so these children of licentious Midian, spared from the destruction incurred by their parents, and about to be joined with Israel as God's people, must be cleansed and admitted in the same manner.

During the expedition, many of the army had become defiled by contact with the slain, and were therefore to be cleansed with the water of separation, according to the law. Moses, therefore, issued orders to the men of the army: "Do ye abide without the camp seven days; whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, *purify* both yourselves and your *captives* on the third day, and on the seventh day." In these directions as to the third and seventh days, we recognize the exact requirements of the law, with respect to the water of separation for the purification of sin. But the narrative is still more specific. "Eleazer the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses. Only the gold and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless, it shall be purified with *the water of separation*,

and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.” – Num. xxxi, 19-24. “The water of separation,” here, is, in the original, “the water of *nidda*,” – the water, that is, in which were mingled the ashes of the red heifer. With this, therefore, it was that these daughters of Midian were baptized and cleansed. There were thirty-two thousand of these captives, thus rescued from the destruction incurred by the licentiousness and crimes of their own people, purged from their uncleanness, engrafted into the family of Abraham, and endowed with the blessings of the covenant. All were “women children” (Num. xxxi, 18); and, undoubtedly, many were mere babes; the first recorded example of distinctive infant baptism.

Section XVIII. — *The Baptism of Infants*

We have seen that in the Abrahamic covenant, – the betrothal of the church, – the infant sons were expressly included on equal terms with their fathers; and that in the Sinai espousal the infants of both sexes were joined with their parents in the bonds of the covenant, and in the reception of its baptismal seal. We have seen the young daughters of Midian purified and admitted to the covenant and church of Israel by the same sacrament. By these unquestionable facts, the principle of infant membership in the church, and the mode of its certification by baptism, are

both alike clearly established. The Scriptures contain conclusive evidence that the children of after generations of Israel were received to the covenant and the church in like manner, by baptism with the water of separation.

1. The law of God was explicit that “one ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations; as ye are so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.” – Num. xv, 14-16. From this law, it results as a necessary conclusion, that inasmuch as the Midianite children were baptized, the same must have been the rule for the infants of Israel.

2. Circumcision was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, but not of that of Sinai. So long as the church was confined to the family of Israel after the flesh, this rite, as being the proof and seal of membership in that family was essential as a condition precedent to the enjoyment of the privileges of the church; but did not, of itself, seal or convey a right to them. Otherwise, every circumcised person would have been entitled to those privileges; whereas they were reserved exclusively for the clean.

3. While such was the case, it was a fundamental article of the faith from the beginning, that men are all natively unclean. Job, Eliphaz, and Bildad, each severally states it as an unquestionable proposition that man born of woman must be so. (Job xiv, 4; xv, 14; xxv, 4.) David cries: “Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in

sin did my mother conceive me... Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” – Psalm li, 5-7. He not only recognizes the radical nature of his moral corruption as born in him, but indicates the remedy under the very figure of sprinkling with the water of *nidda*, to which the hyssop refers. The Lord Jesus, speaking at a time when the Old Testament ordinances and system were still in full force, testifies, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” – John iii, 6, 7.

4. To signalize this native corruption of man and the remedy, the ordinances concerning the defilement of *nidda* and its cleansing were appointed. In them the new born infant was regarded as the product of overflowing corruption, and as a fountain of defilement to the mother, who thus became unclean, until purified with the water of separation.

5. The child was identified with the mother in this uncleanness (1) as being its cause in her; (2) as being subject to her touch, which was defiling to the clean; and (3) as being bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, born of her body.

6. In accordance with the doctrine of man’s native defilement, above illustrated, it was characteristic of the law that it recognized none as clean, unless purged by water of sprinkling. The infants at Sinai were so purified and admitted to the covenant, as well as their parents. So it was with the daughters of Midian; and no other principle was known to the law, – no

other practice tolerated by it. “The man” (the person) “that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.” – Num. xix, 20.

7. It is a very remarkable fact, that while we have in the Scriptures but one single example specifically mentioned of the purifying of an infant from this ritual defilement of birth, that example occurs in the person of Him respecting whom the angel said to Mary, “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” – Luke i, 35. In the same gospel in which is this record, we read, respecting Mary, in the common version, that “when the days of *her* purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.” – Ib. ii, 22. But it is agreed by critical editors that this is a corrupted reading, which is wholly without authority from any respectable manuscript. Instead of “the days (*autēs*) of *her* purification,” it should read (*autōn*), “the days of *their* purification;” that is, of both mother and child. Beside all the other authorities, the three oldest manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus, unite in this reading. How the mothers were purified, we have seen; and, from these facts, we know the children to have shared with them in the baptism.

Section XIX. —*The Baptism of the Levites*

The case of the Levites, in their cleansing and consecration, was peculiar. They had already enjoyed with the rest of the congregation the purifying rites and sprinkled seal of the Sinai covenant; and were thus, in the ordinary sense of the Mosaic ritual, clean, and competent to the enjoyment of the ordinances and privileges of Israel. But when they were set apart to a special nearness to God, in the service of the sanctuary, they were required to undergo additional ceremonies of purifying. Moses was instructed to “take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them. Sprinkle water of purifying upon them; and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.” They were then to bring two bullocks; “and the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks, and thou shalt offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the Lord. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine.” — Num. viii, 6-14.

Section XX. —*These all were one Baptism*

The baptism of the Levites was official and peculiar. Its analogies to the other examples will readily occur to the reader, as we proceed. As to them, there is a common identity in all essential points, in form, meaning, and office. The design of the first administration at Sinai, and of all the attendant circumstances, was to impress Israel with a profound and abiding sense of the evil of sin, and of their own utter vileness and ruin as sinners in the presence of a God of infinite power, majesty, and holiness; and to illustrate to them the manner in which grace and salvation are given. In accepting that baptism, Israel professed to submit themselves to his sovereignty and accept him in the offices of his grace, as symbolized in the baptismal rites. On God's behalf, the transaction was an acceptance and acknowledgment of them as his covenant people. The laws of defilement and the rites of purifying were continual reminders and re-enactings of the Sinai transaction, and for the same essential purpose, — the restoring to the fellowship of the covenant of those who came under its forfeiture. In each several case, sacrificial elements — blood or ashes — were applied by sprinkling. In each, those elements were mingled with running water, and the instrument for sprinkling was a bush of hyssop, and in each, scarlet and cedar were used.

The meaning of the scarlet, cedar, and hyssop is unexplained

in the Scriptures. Expositors have wandered in conjectures, leading to no satisfactory conclusions. One result of their use is manifest. To us, devoid of meaning, they more distinctly mark the essential identity of the rites, in which they occupy the same place, and perform the same office. This may have been one design of their use.

The essential identity of these rites is altogether consistent with the minute variations in their forms. These had respect to the diversity of circumstances under which they were administered. The inferior dignity of a single person, a leper, as compared with the whole people, explains the acceptance of lambs or birds for his offerings, while bulls and goats were sacrificed for the nation. In the case of ordinary uncleannesses, the circumstances rendered special provision necessary. Sacrifice was lawful only at the sanctuary, which was the figure of the one holy place and altar where Christ ministers in heaven. But death and other causes of uncleanness were occurring everywhere. The ashes of the red heifer were, therefore, provided. They presented sacrificial elements in a form incorruptible and convenient for transportation. They were a most fitting representation of the "incorruptible blood of Christ." And, as the proper place of the priests was at the sanctuary, and their presence could not be expected on every occasion of uncleanness elsewhere, it was appointed that any clean person might perform the sprinkling. This was, in fact, a mere ministerial sequel to the sacrificial rites, performed by the priest, at the burning of the red heifer.

The probability of the circumstances, and intimations from the rabbins, lead to the conclusion that, as the priests multiplied and were released from the necessity of constant attendance at the sanctuary, they were commonly called to sprinkle the water of purifying. In fact, the Talmud indicates that in the later times the administration, when practicable, took place at Jerusalem, by the hands of the priests, with water from the pool of Siloam, which, flowing from beneath the temple, was recognized as a type of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

The minute variations traceable in these rites only make it the more clear that essentially, in form, meaning, and office, they were one baptism.

Section XXI. — *This Symbol was derived from the Rain*

We have seen, in the prophecy of Isaiah, the source whence the figure of sprinkling or pouring is derived. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.” – Isa. xlv, 3, 4. It is the descent of the rain from heaven, penetrating the earth, and converting its deadness into life, abundance, and beauty.

¹¹ Compare Ezek. xlvii, 2; John ix, 7. “Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent.”

Herein the rites in question stand in beautiful contrast with the self-washings of the law. The latter accomplished a surface cleansing, by a process which neither could, nor was designed to penetrate the substance, or to affect its essential state or nature. They indicated to God's people the duty of conforming the external life to the grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. But the rite of sprinkling represented the rain of God, sent down from heaven, penetrating the soil, pervading and saturating it, converting its hard, dead, and sterile clods into softness, life, and fertility, and causing the plants and fruits of the earth to spring forth, saturated with the same moisture, and thus possessed and pervaded with the same spirit of life. Thus was typified the work of the Spirit, entering, pervading, and softening the stony heart, converting all its powers and faculties as instruments of holiness to God, and causing the plants of righteousness to spring up and grow in the life and conduct.

The two words, *sprinkle*, and *pour*, are used throughout the Scriptures with reference to the same figure of rain, the only apparent difference being that the word, *pour*, expresses the idea of abundance. No phenomenon of nature is of greater manifest importance, or more pervasive and vital in its influences than the rain of heaven, and none more suitable to illustrate the method of grace. The land from which the rains are withheld is without fruit, or beauty, or attraction. It is given over to barrenness, death, and cursing; and, in the language of the Scriptures, is accounted unclean, as being shut out from the favor of God, whose favor is

life. Hence, the word of God, to the prophet, concerning Israel: “Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not *cleansed*, nor *rained upon*, in the day of indignation.” – Ezek. xxii, 24. Similar is the significance of our Savior’s words: “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places” (*anhudrōn topōn*, “waterless places”), places congenial to him because unblessed with the Spirit’s presence. (Matt. xii, 43; Luke xi, 24.)

Illustrations from the Scriptures might be multiplied, showing this origin of the form of baptism. Isaiah says of the blessings to be bestowed on Israel in the latter days, that the times of desolation shall continue “until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.” – Isa. xxxii, 15. In another place he cries, “Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.” – Isa. xlv, 8. Hosea says of him: “His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” – Hosea vi, 3. And again, “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” – Ib. x, 12.

The whole conception thus unfolded is assailed and repudiated by writers who assume that physical phenomena can not be used to set forth spiritual realities. Dr. Carson insists that “Baptism

can not be either pouring or dipping, for the sake of representing the manner of the conveyance of the Holy Spirit, for there is no such likeness. Pouring of the Spirit is a phrase which is itself a figure, and not a reality to be represented by a figure.”¹² The learned doctor has confounded himself with his own subtlety. On the day of Pentecost, there was a blessed “reality” of some kind experienced by the apostles and converts. There is no absurdity, such as he imagines, in the supposition that the pouring or sprinkling of water may be an appropriate physical representation and symbol of that spiritual reality, and that words descriptive of that symbol may be appropriate for the verbal designation of the thing signified. If the assertion of Dr. Carson is to be accepted, it is fatal not to baptism only but to the other sacrament also. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” – John vi, 53. Shall we be told that this language of our Savior “is itself a figure, and not a reality to be represented by a figure.” Then, we may not eat the bread and drink the wine, to represent this very thing, the feeding of the soul, by faith, on Christ. To do so is absurd if Dr. Carson’s position is sound. It is true that a figure of speech *of* a figure of speech, would be nonsense. But it is equally true that it is the beauty of a metaphor, – the figure in question, – to be susceptible of physical representation. Nor is there any absurdity in the supposition that a spiritual act may be represented by two co-ordinate figures, – the one a figure of physical action, and the

¹² Carson on Baptism, p. 167.

other a figure of speech, descriptive of that action.

Besides, the assertion that “baptism can not be either by pouring or dipping for the sake of representing the manner of the conveyance of the Holy Spirit; for there is no such likeness,” is not merely an assumption of knowledge concerning the invisible things of God which no mortal can possess. But, if the language is to be understood in any sense pertinent to the purpose of Dr. Carson, it is a plain contradiction of the testimony of God himself on the subject. True, there is no *physical* outpouring predicable of God the Spirit. It is as true of the Doctor’s own word; – there is no physical “conveyance of the Holy Spirit.” Does it, therefore, follow that there is *no* conveyance, *no* outpouring? He might with as good reason quibble as to the exaltation of Christ, because height and depth are mere relative terms, which change their direction, at every moment of the earth’s motion on its axis and its orbit. His objection equally applies to the entire ritual of the Scriptures, robs it of all spiritual meaning and renders the whole utterly inane and worthless. And yet, if Paul’s testimony be true, the tabernacle and all the vessels of ministry were “patterns of things in the heavens.” – Heb. ix, 23. Are those heavenly things not spiritual? Jesus himself was “the Lamb of God,” the forerunner, John, being witness. Is there any incongruity between this language, and the fact that the sacrificial lambs of the ritual law meant the same thing? If Dr. Carson is right, all this is absurd. Or, is there no spiritual truth involved in these figures? Either the physical analogies to which

the Word of God constantly appeals, in figures of speech and similitudes, and upon which the whole ritual system is built, do so correspond with the spiritual realities as to assist us to true conceptions of them, however inadequate, – either the Scriptural figures, forms, and rites were selected because best adapted to convey and illustrate the spiritual ideas designed, or we are mocked by a semblance of revelation which reveals nothing. The assertion cuts us off from all knowledge of the spiritual world. Nay, it leaves us ignorant of the very existence of angel or spirit. For, what is spirit, but the *spiritus* or breath of man, the air or wind? How, then, upon the theory in question, can the word acquire or convey any idea of immaterial things? Until the portentous position of Dr. Carson shall have been established by something more conclusive than mere assertion, the contrary will stand as the truth of God. Moreover, the assertion, even if admitted, does not affect in the slightest degree, the argument against which it is directed. The fact still remains, conspicuous and unanswerable, – that, whatever be the reason, sprinkling and pouring are, in the Scriptures, constantly used, both in ritual forms, and in figures of speech, to signify the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, by the Mediator, from his throne on high.

Section XXII. — *This Ordinance meant, Life to the Dead*

The manner of these rites, and the style of the Scriptures in

connection with them are based upon the fundamental fact of man's spiritual condition as by nature dead, by reason of the apostasy and the curse, – “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. ii, 1, 5); “being alienated from the life of God” (Ib. iv, 18), so that they are incapable of exercising any of the activities of true spiritual life unto God, and are, therefore, outcast as were the leper and the unclean, from the camp and society of the clean; being “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.” – Ib. ii, 12. In short, the death which by sin, through one man, entered the world was the death of the soul. With reference to it, Jesus says, – “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” – John xi, 25, 26. But inasmuch as a dead soul can not sustain life in the body, the latter too died with the soul, in the day of its death. For a little time, through the mercy of God, in order to salvation (2 Peter iii, 15), an expiring struggle is maintained; but it is with bodies ever stooping to the grave and irresistibly drawn downward into its yawning gulf. It is in view of these facts that Paul describes the old man, the carnal or inherited nature, as “the body of this death,” or “this dead body;” and its works as “dead works” (Heb. vi, 1; ix, 14) which he represents to be “all manner of concupiscence,” or evil desires, and consequent evil deeds. (Rom. vii, 8-24.) Hence, the seven days' uncleanness, signifying the deadness of the soul, and the offensiveness of its works. Coincident in meaning was the defilement of things by

the contagion of death. For man's sake, the ground itself is cursed (Gen. iii, 17), and every product of the earth and every possession of man upon it is involved in the curse, and until delivered from it, is unsanctified to man's use. Hence, the house, the bed, the furniture and utensils, were defiled by the presence of the dead and unfitted for the use of the clean, the living.

Such were the conceptions with reference to which the rites of Levitical baptism were ordained. They were designed to answer the question: How can these dead be made alive, this defilement be cleansed, and the curse lifted from man and the earth? They announced life to the dead, and the healing of their corruption. They proclaimed Christ's atonement made to redeem us from the curse, and his Spirit given to implant in us new life and purge us from dead works to serve the living God. As the descending rain not only penetrates the soil and instils life into the clods and hardness, but washes and purges the surface, and gives freshness and beauty to the scenes of nature, cleansing the face of the impenetrable and barren rock, – so the Spirit sent down not only penetrates the heart and creates new life there, but pervades the outward life and conduct and purifies the whole. Thus, in the one figure of the sprinkling or pouring of rain, are identified the two ideas of new life and cleansing; and hence, thus taught, the cry of the psalmist, in which he identifies both with the sprinkled baptism. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a

clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” – Ps. li, 2-10. The same relation is recognized by Paul, who ascribes our salvation to “the *washing* of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed* on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior.” – Tit. iii, 5, 6.

In the promise of life signified in this baptism, two things were included under the one essential conception. These were, renewing to the soul, and resurrection to the body. These are as inseparably related to each other as are the death of the soul and of the body; and that, because of the essential relation between those two parts, as identified in the one person. Christ gave himself, body and soul, for us, to satisfy justice; and bought us unto himself in our whole being, body and soul. If the Spirit of life be given us, it is given both to renew our dead souls and to make our bodies his temples. And, says Paul, “If the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you.” – Rom. viii, 11.

That this doctrine of the new life was the meaning of the baptismal rite, appears from many Scriptures. We have just seen the significant language of the psalmist. By Ezekiel, the Lord says to Israel: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will

put my Spirit within you.” – Ezek. xxxvi, 25-27.

This view of the work of the Holy Spirit is exhibited very clearly in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones, and the promises therewith addressed to Israel respecting the latter days. “Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live.” – Ezek. xxxvii, 12-15.

In the same sense Paul interprets the Levitical baptisms. Having designated the ordinances of which they formed a part as figures of the heavenly things, he says: “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.” – Heb. ix, 13, 14. Here he contrasts the dead works of the unregenerate with the living works of those who, as they are alive unto God, serve in newness of life him who, being the living God, “is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” – Matt. xxii, 32. Of this he recognizes the sprinklings to be a figure.

The doctrine thus involved in the water of purifying sheds a beautiful light on one of the most interesting facts in the life of our Savior. Upon the death of Lazarus, Jesus so timed his coming as to reach Bethany on the fourth day. On the previous day, or,

more probably, on that very same day, the sisters and household of Lazarus had been baptized with the water of purification. And now, as He stands by the sepulcher, the resurrection, in its highest sense, as including both soul and body, and rendering both superior to death, is the theme of his discourse. "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection, at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." – John xi, 23-26.

Section XXIII. — *The Gospel in the Water of Separation*

Much of the spiritual significance of these rites has already appeared. But in order to an adequate appreciation, they should be viewed in connection.

1. The red heifer was a sin-offering. This is denied by some, who would draw a fine distinction. Says Bishop Patrick: "Though this was not a sacrifice, it had something of that nature in it, and may be called a *piaculum*, an expiatory thing, though nothing was called *korban*, a sacrifice, but what was offered at the altar." But, (1.) *korban* does not mean a sacrifice, but a gift, a dedicated thing; and is used, not only to designate sacrifices and offerings at the altar, but even the wagons and oxen which the princes gave for transporting the tabernacle and its furniture. (Num. vii, 3.)

(2.) The blood of the heifer was sprinkled by the priest toward the door of the sanctuary. It was thus brought into a relation to the altar and the mercy-seat, typically as manifest and close as though it had been actually sprinkled on the altar. (3.) The law itself expressly declares it to be a sin-offering. "It is a purification for sin," – Num. xix, 9. The original, here, is the same that is in other places literally translated, "It is a sin-offering." – Lev. iv, 24; v, 9, 11, 12. In this, its character as a sin-offering, lay the meaning of the rite as a purification. It represented atonement for sin, at the price of blood, – the blood of Christ. Hence its use in purifying those uncleannesses which typified moral corruption in its forms of intensest malignity and deadliness. Hence the appeal to this meaning of the rite which the psalmist makes, in his penitence and sorrow for his crimes. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities." – Ps. li, 5, 7, 9. The Targum thus paraphrases this place: "Thou wilt sprinkle me, as the priest which sprinkleth the unclean with the purifying waters, with hyssop, with the ashes of an heifer, and I shall be clean." The same conception is apparent in God's language of grace to Israel, and to the nations. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." And, "So shall he sprinkle many nations." In a word, in every instance in which this rite is appointed, or figuratively alluded to, it will be found to indicate

a typical impeachment of sin; and the design and effect of its use was the removal of that impeachment, the cleansing of the subject. It was *baptism unto the remission of sins*.

2. The heifer was offered without the camp. In the detailed ritual of the tabernacle and temple service, the holy of holies, the holy place, and the surrounding court, typified, respectively, God's heavenly presence chamber, the church, and the world. In a wider scheme, the whole sanctuary was representative of God's house, whilst the camp and afterward the city of Jerusalem were the figure of the church, and the outside region stood for the world at large. Hence, the unclean were excluded from the camp and the city. (Compare Rev. xxi, 27; xxii, 14, 15.) And hence, the red heifer was offered without the camp, to signify the reproach of Christ, who suffered without the gate, excommunicate and accursed. (Heb. xiii, 11-13.) The blood of the heifer, sprinkled from without toward the sanctuary, intimated in a very affecting manner, the distance to which Christ came from yonder sanctuary in the heavens, to shed his blood, and therewith to sprinkle the throne of justice on high.

3. Blood only was sprinkled toward the sanctuary, whilst it was water mingled with the blood or ashes, that was sprinkled on the unclean. For, his own unmingled blood, offered by Christ himself before the throne on high, and that alone, makes satisfaction to justice for sin. But the Holy Spirit is the sole channel and agent through whom Christ bestows on his people, or they can in any wise acquire, the virtue of that blood in justifying grace and

holiness. Water, therefore, was the vehicle for communicating to Israel the blood of sprinkling.

4. The blood was sprinkled seven times, to show the complete and exhaustive efficacy of the sufferings of Christ to satisfy justice, sanctify the soul, and make an end of sin forever.

5. He that touched the dead was defiled seven days. This tactual defilement typified not only the guilt and depravity which *we* derive from Adam, but, especially, the contagion of man's guilt which came on the Lord Jesus, by becoming the Son of man, born in our nature. Though he knew no sin, yet was he laden with our curse. He signified this very thing, when in the days of his flesh, he defiled himself by touching the lepers and the dead, that he might restore them to soundness and life, at the price of his own life; – “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.” – Matt. viii, 17. The same thing was set forth by the fact that the priest that sprinkled the heifer's blood, each assistant at the burning and gathering of the ashes, and he that sprinkled the water of separation, all became thereby unclean until the even. They, together, represented the Lord Jesus, in the exercise of his mediatorial office, which involved his taking his people's curse upon him, to free them. The seven days of this defilement have been already explained, as typical of our native condition of depravity and guilt, which, if not purged, involves continuance and condemnation in the seventh, the last day, when the sentence will be uttered, “He that is filthy let him be filthy

still.” – Rev. xxii, 11.

6. The ashes of the heifer were as familiar to the religious life of Israel as was the blood of sacrifice. But the significance of the blood is so much more familiar to us, that a pause is here proper, to call attention to the wonderful propriety and instructiveness of the ashes. In the blood we see the penalty of sin paid, and justice satisfied. But it is satisfied at the price of life, and leaves death in possession. But, in the ashes, Israel saw the sacrifice come forth from the exhausted fires of justice, unconsumed and unconsumable. On them, the fire could no more take hold; but, mingled with the living water, they represented Christ – the law satisfied and the curse exhausted in his blood – coming forth by the Spirit, from the expiring flames, robed in life and immortality. “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” – Acts ii, 24.

7. The ashes were mingled with running water. Prior to the baptism of Israel at Sinai, we hear of no sacramental rite setting forth the office and work of the Holy Spirit. But the living water, then ordained in the divers baptisms of the Mosaic system, became thenceforward the standing representation and type of the Third Person of the Godhead, as the Spirit of life, shed down from heaven by the Mediator.

8. The sacrificial elements and water were *sprinkled* on the unclean. Two ideas were thus symbolized; the *bestowment* by Christ from his throne of the virtues of his blood and Spirit;

and, their effectual influence upon the heart and conscience of him to whom they are given. As the rain descends from heaven, penetrates the soil, and makes it fruitful, so Christ's Spirit shed down from him takes possession of the inmost heart, purges it from the guilt of past sins, and produces newness of life and the fruits of holiness. With reference to the mode thus employed, and its symbolical relation to Christ's administration of grace, the fact is worthy of special emphasis, that in every rite or figure by which was represented the exercise by Christ of his office as administrator in the Father's kingdom, the mode is affusion, whether it be blood, water, or oil, expressive of grace bestowed on the people of God, or indignation and fire poured down upon his enemies.

9. The water of separation was to be sprinkled on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh. "And if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean;" for, Jesus who died under our curse, rose again the third day. And "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." – Rom. vi, 3-5. If we do not participate in the resurrection of Christ on the third day, by rising from the death of sin to the life of holiness, we can have no part in the resurrection

and life of glory. So, Paul testifies to the Ephesians, that the same mighty power which raised Christ from the dead and set him far above in the heavenly places, is at work in all his people, and by it they who were dead in sins are quickened together with him, and made to sit with him in the heavenly places. (Eph. i, 20; ii, 6.) Hence, Paul's earnest desire and labor for himself, – "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, . . . if by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." – Phil. iii, 10, 11. "Might know the power of his resurrection," – by realizing within, the steady vigor of the new life in Christ Jesus, working holiness and grace.

Of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Paul says, that "he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." – 1 Cor. xv, 4. But where, in the Scriptures, is the third day thus specified? The Lord Jesus makes a similar statement, which goes far to answer the question. "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in *the law of Moses*, and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is *written*, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead *the third day*." – Luke xxiv, 44-46. In another place, there is a remarkable allusion to the same thing. When Jesus, in response to the Jews demanding a sign, said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up," the disciples did not understand. But "when he was risen from the dead, they remembered that

he had said this unto them; and they believed *the Scripture*, and the word that Jesus had said.” – John ii, 18-22. It would thus appear that the resurrection on the third day was *written* in the Scriptures, and the reference to the law of Moses, and statement as to the opening of the understanding of the apostles, as though the matter were not patent on the face of the record, both lead us to look in that direction for the prophetic anticipation of the third as the resurrection day. The other Scriptures will be searched in vain for any thing to fulfill the requirements of these statements of Christ and of Paul. The law concerning the sprinkling of the water of separation contains the only intimation on the subject; and the allusions above cited appear undoubtedly to have had this typical prophecy in view.

In the design of this ordinance, as a prophecy of the resurrection, we have the reason of its peculiar relation to that particular form of defilement which arose from contact with the dead. Although designed as has been seen for the cleansing of other defilements, also, it was ordained in immediate connection with this particular uncleanness, because that is the connection in which this distinctive meaning shines forth most clearly.

10. He that was purified with the water of separation was required to follow it with an act of self-ablution. “On the seventh day, he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.” – Num. xix, 19. It has been asserted that this rule was meant for the administrator of the rite. But the exposition afterward given by Eleazar, the priest

(Num. xxxi, 21-24), shows this to be a mistake. The propriety and beauty of the requirement, in the connection, are apparent. It was a perpetual monition to Israel that those who have been redeemed with precious blood, and raised up to new life by the Holy Spirit, should walk worthy of their calling, and keep themselves from the evil that is in the world, in the blessed assurance of being freed from all corruption and evil, and made partakers in the perfection of holiness and life, on the great Sabbath day of redemption.

This thought was more fully developed in the rites concerning the leper. Immediately upon his baptism, he was required to shave his hair, wash his garments and bathe his flesh. The hair and the defilement adhering to the garments and flesh were evident types of the outgrowth and fruits of his leprous life. Of the shaving and cleansing thus appointed, Paul may give the interpretation – “That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” – Eph. iv, 22. After this, the meaning of the like shaving and washing on the seventh day is apparent. It sets forth the final and complete putting off of the old carnal nature, in the resurrection of life, when our bodies themselves also shall be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body, and be reunited to our souls, perfected in holiness.

11. The defilement from the dead, and the purifying use of the water of separation were not only incident to persons; but the tent or house where the dead lay, and every thing that was in it,

became defiled, and must be cleansed by the water of separation, sprinkled on the third day, and on the seventh. (Num. xix, 14, 18; xxxi, 20, 22, 23.) Thus were Israel taught that the curse of sin is on the earth, also, and all that is in it, as well as on man; that, only as sanctified to him through the atonement of Christ, can the productions and possessions of the earth be blessed, and that in the regeneration, the earth and the creatures themselves, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and “*Holiness to the Lord,*” be written on the very bells of the horses. (Zech. xiv, 20.) “For,” saith the Lord, “behold I create new heavens and a new earth.” — Isa. lxv, 17.

Thus, all the great truths of the Gospel, were set forth and symbolized in this ordinance, the last, the consummate and crowning sacrament of the Old Testament.

Section XXIV. — *These were the Divers Baptisms*

That the sprinkled purifyings were the theme of Paul’s argument is evident:

1. He distributes the whole ritual system under two categories. His statement (Heb. ix, 8, 9), literally translated, is, that “the first tabernacle,” erected by Moses, was “(*parabolē eis ton kairon enestēkota*), an illustrative similitude, unto the present time (*kath*

hen¹³) in accordance with which (similitude), both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which, as to the conscience, can not perfect the worshipers; depending only on meats and drinks and divers baptisms, – righteousnesses of the flesh, imposed until the time of reformation.” The word (*dikaiomata*) “righteousnesses” (from *dikaios*, righteous), is repeatedly so translated in our English version (Rom. ii, 26; v, 18; viii, 4), although in some other places beside the text it is rendered, – “ordinances.” – Luke i, 6; Heb. ix, 1, 10. The latter rendering, however, fails to develop the true idea of the word, which is, – ordinances imposed, *in order to the attaining of righteousness by obedience*. So it should be in the first verse of this chapter. “Then, verily, the first covenant had also righteousnesses of worship,” (ritual righteousnesses), “and an earthly holy place.” By the phrase, “righteousnesses of the flesh,” the writer indicates the contrast between the outward ritual righteousnesses of the law, – its circumcision of the flesh, its offerings of bulls and goats, and its washings and sprinklings with material elements, – and “the circumcision of the heart;” “the offering of Jesus Christ,” and “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The ritual observances fulfilled the law of carnal commandments, and were thus righteousnesses of the flesh, and figures of the true, the righteousness of Christ.

Paul distributes these observances into the two categories of offerings and purifyings. The law required each sacrifice to be

¹³ This reading is attested by codices Bezae, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and is fully sustained by the internal evidence.

accompanied with a meat offering made of fine flour mingled with oil, and a drink offering of wine. For the altar was God's table, where he as a Father fed and communed with his children. It must, therefore, be furnished with all the provisions of a table. (Num. xv, 3-5, 7, etc.) Thus, the offerings upon the altar were all comprehended under the two heads of meats (*brōmasi*, solid food), and drinks, – nourishments for *the body*. Paul's other category is, the divers baptisms. These, of necessity, are the purifying rites of the Levitical system. For, he describes the whole system as including “*only* meats and drinks and divers baptisms;” whereas all were actually comprehended under the two heads of offerings, which symbolized atonement made, and purifyings, representing its application, to the purging of sins. That it is of the purifyings that he now speaks, is evident not only from the meaning of baptism, itself, but from the whole tenor of his argument, which is directed exclusively to the two points just indicated, atonement made, and purification accomplished.

2. The baptisms of which the apostle speaks were purifyings of persons and not of things. They were righteousnesses of the flesh, upon which men in vain relied for the purging of their consciences, (vs. 9, 14.)

3. There were but two ordinances to which Paul can possibly refer. Except the sprinklings, and the self-performed washings, there was no rite in the Levitical system in which water was used, or to which the name of baptism is, or can be, attributed, with any pretense of reason or probability.

4. The self-washings will be examined presently. As compared with the sprinklings, they were of minor importance. Separately used only for superficial defilements, they purged no essential corruption. They were without sacrifice, administrator, or sacramental meaning. They symbolized no work of Christ, signified no bestowal of grace, and sealed no blessing of the covenant. In all this, they stood in eminent contrast with the sprinkled rites. To suppose that Paul, in a discussion which has respect to the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood and Spirit, and the Levitical types of it, should refer to the minor rite of self-washing, which did *not* symbolize those things, and by an exclusive "*only*" reject from place or consideration the sprinklings which did, is absurd; as it is, moreover, to suppose that, in such an argument, the latter would not, of necessity, have a paramount place and consideration.

5. This conclusion is fully confirmed upon a critical examination of the connection of Paul's argument. The "meats and drinks and divers baptisms" he characterizes as "righteousnesses of the flesh," in confirmation of the assertion just made, that they could not "perfect," or purify the conscience of the worshiper. He then, immediately, presents in contrast the atonement of Christ. "They," says he, "depended only on meats and drinks and divers baptisms, righteousnesses of the flesh imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ being come, ... neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained

eternal redemption for us. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience.*” Thus, in immediate exposition of his statement as to divers baptisms, the apostle specifies the two most conspicuous forms of the sprinklings of Sinai, that of the whole people, upon the making of the covenant, and that administered with the water of separation – the one being the original of the ordinance, and the other its ordinary and perpetuated form. For, that there may be no mistake as to his reference, in speaking of the blood of bulls and of goats, he proceeds, a little farther on to describe particularly its use in the Sinai baptism: “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (the covenant), which God hath enjoined unto you.” – Vs. 19, 20. As we examine Paul’s argument throughout the chapter, we find his attention directed, from first to last, to the sprinklings of the law alone, while the self-washings are not once named nor alluded to. This, afterwards, very signally appears in that magnificent contrast of Sinai and Sion, in which he sums up the whole argument of the epistle. The crowning feature in the attractions of Sion is “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” – Heb. xii, 24. In the presence of it the self-washings are not counted worthy to be named.

6. The manner in which, in the next chapter, self-washing is at length introduced is a singular confirmation of the view here taken. So long as the writer is occupied in the argument as to Christ's work of expiation, he makes no allusion to the self-washings. But when he proceeds to urge upon his readers the practical plea which his argument suggests, he does it by referring to the two rites, in the relation to each other which we have indicated. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, ... and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our own bodies washed with pure water." – Heb. x, 19-22. To an unclean person, desiring to claim the privileges of the sanctuary, the requirement of the law was, Let him be sprinkled on the third day and on the seventh, to set forth Christ's and the Spirit's grace; and then, let him wash himself, in token of the maintaining of personal holiness. From the rites which he has been discussing, Paul's exhortation takes form, and in them finds interpretation.

The conclusion is evident. Had Paul meant by the phrase in question to designate the self-washings, they were by affusion, and it would follow that that is the mode of baptism. But that his reference was distinctively and emphatically to the sprinkled rites is beyond candid contradiction. We, therefore, plant ourselves upon this impregnable position, and challenge assault. *For fifteen hundred years of the church's history, baptism was uniformly*

administered by sprinkling. It was so administered down to the time of Christ. It was so administered in the time of Paul. The word does *not* then mean to dip or to immerse; for, Paul being witness, the rite was not so performed. Had we no further evidence, this should be conclusive.

Part IV.

THE RITUAL SELF-WASHINGS

Section XXV. — *Unclean until the Even*

The clean, that is those who had been purified by sprinkling, were liable to contract certain minor defilements, which were characterized by continuing until the even. Of these there were two classes. First, were those which resulted from participation in expiatory rites. Among the most conspicuous examples of this class were the uncleanness of the priests and assistants by whom the red heifer was sacrificed, the ashes collected and the water of separation sprinkled on the unclean. These all were, by participation in those rites, rendered unclean until the even, and were required to wash their clothes, and bathe their flesh, in order to their cleansing. (Num. xix, 7, 8, 10, 21.) The meaning of this is evident. The red heifer was a sacrifice of expiation, “a purification for sin.” – Ib. 9. In it, the priests and assistants and he that sprinkled the ashes, with the heifer itself, together, constituted a complex type of the Lord Jesus, offering himself a sacrifice to justice, sprinkling the altar in heaven with his own blood, and applying it with his Spirit to his people for the purifying of their uncleanness. The defilements for which the ashes of the heifer were provided were typical of our native

depravity and death in sin and the curse. From these, Christ freed his people, by being himself made a curse for them (Gal. iii, 13), dying in their stead, that they might live. To represent this the priests, assistants, and administrator of the water of separation, became defiled, by participation in the cleansing rites. The same explanation applies to the defilement which the high priest and others incurred by participation in the observances of the day of atonement. (Lev. xvi, 24, 26.)

The curse under which the Lord Jesus came exhausted itself on his natural life, and expired as he rose from the dead. Of the period during which he bore its burden, and fulfilled his atoning work, he himself says: "I must work the works of him that sent me, *while it is day*; the night cometh, when no man can work." – John ix, 4. And on the night of the betrayal he said to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." – Ib. xvii, 4. It thus appears that a day is a symbol of the period of man's natural life, the period during which the Lord Jesus was under the curse. Hence the typical uncleanness of the priests and assistants was limited to the even of the day on which it was incurred. It was removed by self-washing; for it was by his own power and Spirit that Christ threw off the curse and rose from the dead. (Rom. viii, 2, 11; John x, 17, 18.)

2. The other class of uncleannesses until the even arose from the more or less intimate contact of the clean with persons or things that were unclean in the higher degree; or from other causes essentially similar in meaning. Defilements resulting

from expiatory rites symbolized the putative guilt incurred by the Lord Jesus, in making atonement for us; while he ever remained, in himself, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” – Heb. vii, 26. But the forms of uncleanness now under examination resulted from contact with things that were typical of the debasement, corruption, and depravity of the world. The uncleanness hence arising signified the spiritual defilement to which God’s people are liable from contact with evil. Hence, the grades of defilement, consequent upon the closeness and fellowship of the contact, and the nature of the uncleanness with which it took place. These were designed to teach the lesson with which James crowns his definition of pure religion and undefiled. “*To keep himself* unspotted from the world.” – James i, 27. The same idea is presented by the beloved John. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God *keepeth himself*, and that wicked one” (that “unclean spirit,” the representative and source of all moral evil) “toucheth him not” (to defile him, as would the touch of the leper or the unclean). “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” Literally, – “lieth in that wicked one,” – in his bosom, and the defilement of his contact and communion. (1 John v, 18, 19.) And, again, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself*, even as he is pure.” – 1 John iii, 2, 3.

From many such Scriptures, the meaning of these uncleannesses and of the self-washings is easily gathered. The defilements which they symbolized are not of a radical nature, but extrinsic and superficial. They represented those spiritual defilements, – those soilings of heart and conscience to which God’s people are subject through contact and intercourse with an ungodly world. It is postulated only of those whose hearts have already been quickened and sanctified by the blood and Spirit of Christ, “once for all” (Heb. x, 10); and who are “the habitation of God through the Spirit.” They do not require a new atonement and renewing of the Spirit, but the exercise of the graces of that Spirit which is already in them. For their cleansing, therefore, no new sacrificial rites nor official administrator were appointed; but they were required to wash *themselves*. This did not prohibit the employment of any customary assistance in the washing; as, for example, that of a servant pouring water on the hands. But such assistance, if employed, was merely ministerial, and not official. The washing, however performed, was the duty and act of the subject of it, and therein lay its significance. Its language was that of the apostle; “Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” – 2 Cor. vii, 1.

The termination of the defilement, upon the performance of the appointed self-washing, with the going down of the sun, certified the deliverance of God’s people from sin and

corruption, with the end of this present life, in the coming rest of the believer's grave, awaiting the seventh day of resurrection and glory.

Section XXVI. —*Gradation of the Self-washings*

There was a noticeable gradation in the self-washings.

1. First was the washing of the hands, alone. This was required of the magistrates expiating a concealed murder. (Deut. xxi, 6.) It is also indicated in Leviticus xv, 11. It will be further examined hereafter. The figure of washing the hands, as expressive of innocence and purity, occurs repeatedly in the Scriptures; and as the hands are the ordinary instruments of the actions and labors of life, the meaning of the figure is very manifest. Says Job, in his complaint to God, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." — Job ix, 30, 31. That is, "Though I give the utmost heed to conform my whole life and conduct to the requirements of thy holiness, yet, in the severity and penetration of thy judgment, thou wilt discover and reveal me to myself as utterly unclean." The psalmist has recourse to the same figure, in a happier spirit. "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord; that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." — Ps. xxvi, 6, 7.

2. Next in the order of these observances was the ordinance requiring the priests to wash their hands and feet in preparation for the duties of their ministry at the sanctuary. This will be discussed hereafter.

3. In certain milder forms of uncleanness till the even, the person was required to wash his clothes, merely. This rule applied to such as he that ate or slept in a house shut up on suspicion of leprosy (Lev. xiv, 47); and he that carried an unclean carcase, or ate unclean flesh. (Lev. xi, 25, 28, 40.) From the time when our first parents, in the conscious nakedness of guilt, made themselves aprons of fig-leaves, which the Lord replaced with coats of skins, the garments had a recognized significance, which is traceable long before the giving of the law; and, running through all the Scriptures, gives form to the imagery of the last book of all. When Jacob, on his return from Chaldea, was required by God to go to Bethel and erect an altar, he called on his household and followers to be clean and change their garments (Gen. xxxv, 2); that is, to put off their soiled garments and put on clean. So, at Sinai, in preparation for its transactions, Moses was directed to “sanctify the people to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes.” – Ex. xix, 10, 14.

A few other Scriptures will develop the meaning of this symbol. In the vision of Zechariah: “He showed me Joshua the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath

chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua, was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake to those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” – Zech. iii, 1-4. “Others save with fear,” says Jude, “pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” – Jude 23. With this compare the definition of “pure religion and undefiled,” – “to keep himself unspotted from the world.” – Jas. i, 27. “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.” – Rev. iii, 4. In his visions, John saw the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and a great multitude out of every nation, “clothed with white robes.” And the angel told him, “These are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” – Ib. vi, 11; vii, 9, 14. “Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” – Ib. xvi, 15. To the bride, the Lamb’s wife, it “was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” – Ib. xix, 8. Literally, “is the righteousnesses of the saints.”

From these Scriptures, it is evident: that clean or white garments primarily and essentially mean, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which his people are robed, so that the

shame of their spiritual nakedness may not appear (Rev. iii, 18; vii, 14; Phil, iii, 8, 9); that keeping them clean, or unspotted, means, the maintaining of that watchful holiness of heart and life which is becoming those who have been bought and robed as are Christ's people; and that washing the garments signifies recourse to the blood and Spirit of Christ, as the only and effectual means of making and keeping them free from defilement.

4. In certain cases, the unclean until the even were required to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh. The characteristic examples of this observance, are those who had carried or touched any thing on which one defiled with an issue had sat or lain. (Lev. xv, 5, 6, etc.) A careful examination of this class, in comparison with the preceding, proves them to be essentially one in meaning, the difference being mainly if not entirely in degree. The defilement in the present case was aggravated by the fact that its cause was symbolical of man's depravity, breaking out in active corruption and transgression. On the other hand, the unclean animals, from which the milder form of this uncleanness was contracted represented the evil of man's nature, simply as native and indwelling, without the active element of outbreking depravity and wickedness. Hence, the difference, in requiring the washing of both the flesh and the garments, was designed to give emphasis to the admonition conveyed; and to teach the additional lesson, that whilst all contact with the ungodly and the world is dangerous to the purity of Christian character, and renders necessary a continual recourse to the sanctifying power

and grace of the Holy Spirit; especially is this requisite in case of intimate relations with it, in its active forms of ungodliness and corruption, dissipation and riot.

5. The only other class, to be enumerated under this head, consists of those who, in addition to other rites of purifying, were required to shave off their hair. Such were lepers, in their cleansing (Lev. xiv, 8, 9); the Levites, upon their consecration (Num. viii, 7); a Nazarite, defiled, before the completion of his vow (Num. vi, 9); and a captive woman, chosen as a bride (Deut. xxi, 12). With these may be compared the Nazarite, at the completion of his vow, although this did not belong to the category of purifying. The Scriptures contain no formal explanation of this requirement. But the nature and circumstances of the cases as compared with each other, and the general principles of typical analogy, indicate the interpretation. The hair of the leper, for example, was the product and outgrowth of his leprous state, and must therefore be put off and repudiated, with his entrance on the the new life of the clean. The same principle applies to all the other cases, except that of the Nazarite, upon the completion of his vow. His hair was the product of the time during which, by the consecration of his vow, all belonged to God. It could not, therefore, be retained, but was shaved off and offered upon the altar, as holy. (Num. vi, 18.) In the other cases, it was cast away as unclean. Thus, as in all the preceding regulations, the same lesson is repeated, which is so needful, and to our stupidity, so hard to learn; – the lesson of

putting off the old man and putting on the new.

Section XXVII. —*Mode implied in the Meaning of the Rite*

The instructiveness and utility of types and symbols consist in an appreciable analogy between them and the spiritual things which they are appointed to symbolize. In the case of the Old Testament self-washings, I suppose it has never entered the imagination of any one that they were types of the burial of the Lord Jesus. Of such an interpretation there is not a trace anywhere in the Scriptures. On the contrary, such meaning is there attributed to them that, in order to a sustained analogy, the subject of the rite should, by a voluntary and active exercise of his own powers take and apply the water to his members and person, for their cleansing. In this respect, they stand in emphatic contrast with the sprinkled water of purifying. That was designed to concentrate the attention of Israel upon the active agency of the Mediator, in bestowing the baptism of his blood and Spirit, for the renewing and quickening of dead souls. In it, therefore, the subject was the passive recipient of rites dispensed by the hands of another. But the activity of the Christian life and warfare were symbolized by the self-washings. Christ's grace is given his people, not to sanction supineness and indolence; but to stimulate to activity in the pursuit of holiness. As the Spirit is now to them an opened fountain, they are to have recourse to it,

to seek and obtain, day by day, more grace, for the purging of the flesh, for overcoming the world, for bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, for fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life.

This, which comprehends the whole matter of practical religion is urged in the Scriptures, not only by direct and continual admonitions, but in the use of every variety of figures and illustrations. It was the lesson taught, under the figure of self-washing. Pure water is alike adapted to quicken the soil, to quench the thirst, and to cleanse the garments and the person. But, as the water of life will not quench the thirst of the soul, unless we *come* and *drink*, neither will it purge away the defilements of evil, unless we take it and apply it, with diligence and labor. “Wash ye! make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” – Isa. i, 16, 17. The Spirit thus clearly indicates that self-washing signified an intense and life-pervasive activity, – an activity applied, in detail, to each particular relation and duty, so as to purge out every principle of evil, and conform every act to the law of holiness. To correspond with this meaning of the rite, its form should be such as to call forth the active energies of the subject, by the application of the water to the appointed parts and members of the person in detail; and by such successive manipulation as is proper to secure a thorough cleansing. The ordinary mode of washing, among

Israel, as we shall presently see, perfectly met these requirements; whilst immersion would have been wholly inadequate, not to say directly contradictory to them, since it indicates a mere passive recipiency, and not an active appropriation and use of the means of cleansing.

Section XXVIII. — *The Words used to designate the Washings*

The discriminating use of words on this subject, in the original Scriptures is very noticeable, and is susceptible of being brought within the comprehension of any intelligent reader of the English version. There are three which are worthy of special notice.

1. *Shātaph* means, to overflow, or rush over, as a swollen torrent or a beating rain. Thus, — “Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters *overflowing*,” shall beat down the crown of pride. (Isa. xxviii, 2.) Again, — “Say unto them which daub with untempered mortar that it shall fall; there shall be an *overflowing* shower,” beating it down. (Ezek. xiii, 11-14.) From this, the radical meaning of the word, is derived its use to signify the act of washing or rinsing, by means of water dashed or flowed over the object. It is employed in application to vessels of wood and of brass (Lev. vi, 28; xv, 12), and to the hands of the unclean. (Ib. xv, 11.) In all these places it is translated, to rinse.

2. *Kābas*. The radical meaning of this verb is, to tread, to

trample. The participle from it is used to designate the craft of the fuller, who fulled his goods by treading them with the feet. Hence its use to signify the thorough cleansing and whitening of clothing and stuffs. The word occurs in the Old Testament forty-six times, with this uniform meaning. It is used whenever the ritual washing of clothes is spoken of. From it a very striking figure is derived, which appears twice, to indicate the most thorough self-cleansing, under the idea of a garment scoured, with "nitre and much soap" (Jer. ii, 22; iv, 14), and twice, to indicate a like thorough cleansing wrought by the Holy Spirit. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psa. li, 2, 7), white, as a garment is made by the fuller's art. (Mark ix, 3.) These passages indicate the essential idea of the word. It is expressive of a scouring, or washing, which searches the very texture of the fabric. It is, however, worthy of notice that in the Targum of Onkelos, on Numbers xix, 19, it is rendered, "to sprinkle." "The clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean, on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall be clean; and he shall sprinkle his raiment, and wash with water, and at even he shall be clean." This rendering is very noteworthy, as it indicates the manner in which the law was understood on this point. In fact, as we have already seen, sprinkling signified the most thorough cleansing.

Rāhatz. While *kābas* indicates a purifying of the substance,

rāhatz signifies a washing of the surface. This is the word which is invariably used to express the ritual self-washings or bathings of the hands, the feet, and the person. It is sometimes assumed that, like the English, to wash, *rāhatz* is strictly generic in its meaning – that it signifies to cleanse with, or in, water, without any regard to mode. This is an error, as a single fact shows. It is never used for the cleansing of skins, clothes, or garments. Nor is this an accidental omission. Such washings are mentioned nearly fifty times, and in nineteen places they are brought into connection with the bathing of the person. But in no one place is the word in question used either generically, as comprehensive of both the person and garments, or specifically for the latter. In every place where the two processes come in the same connection, the language is accurately discriminated. The directions are, to *wash*, or scour (*kābas*), the clothes, and to *bathe* (*rāhatz*) the flesh. This word occurs over seventy times. In five or six places, it applies to the washing of sacrificial flesh, before it was placed on the altar. (Lev. i, 9, 13, etc.) In every other instance it refers to the human person. It expresses cleansing with water actively applied to the surface. Thus, when Joseph “*washed* his face,” to obliterate the traces of tears (Gen. xliii, 31), and when the Beloved is described, “His eyes, as the eyes of doves by the rivers [rivulets] of waters, *washed* with milk and fitly set” (Cant. v, 12), the reference is clearly to the familiar mode of washing the face with water applied. When the Lord, by Isaiah, speaks of the time when he “shall have *washed away* the filth of the

daughters of Zion” (Isa. iv, 4), and when the Preacher describes “a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not *washed from their filthiness*” (Prov. xxx, 12), the idea presented is the same – that of water actively applied to the surface, so as to detach and carry off the dirt. In another place this definition is even more imperatively indicated. “Then (*rāhatz*) washed I thee with water; yea (*shātaph*), I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.” – Ezek. xvi, 9. Here three things unite to determine the meaning of *rāhatz*. 1. It is explained by *shātaph*, the signification of which we have seen. 2. The defilement from which the washing is promised, is that of *nidda*, for which expressly the sprinkled “water of *nidda*” was appointed and named. 3. The construction is precisely the same in the two clauses of the verse, “I washed thee *with* water,” and “I anointed thee *with* oil.” Of the mode of the latter there can be no question. In both clauses the element named is the *instrument* of the action specified. The ideas of washing and of immersion are not merely different, but sharply contrasted with each other. Where there is an immersion, there may also be a washing. But it must be by additional action. *Rāhatz* expresses the latter. It neither expresses nor implies the former.

Section XXIX. — *The Mode of Domestic Ablution*

The customs of Israel as to personal ablution would, it is

evident, decide the manner of these self-washings, in the absence of explicit directions. The indications in their history are very decisive on this point.

1. The patriarchs were keepers of cattle, dwelling in tents. The circumstances of such a mode of life forbid the supposition that they were accustomed to the use of the immersion bath. The possession, the transportation, and the use of the requisite vessels, are wholly foreign to that mode of life.

2. Facts in the history of the patriarchs confirm the correctness of the inference thus indicated. Although in later ages, after Palestine had been pierced with wells, water was abundant for all the uses incident to the mode of life of the people, the contrary was true, in earlier times. Surface streams are of rare occurrence. The substratum is a cavernous limestone, into the cavities of which the rains quickly percolate. Hagar and Ishmael were in danger of perishing of thirst, when sent away by Abraham. (Gen. xxi, 15.) Abraham and Isaac relied on digging for water; and the scarcity and value of the element were indicated by the violence with which the other inhabitants of the country seized wells digged by each of those patriarchs. (Gen. xxi, 25; xxvi, 19-22.) These were usually deep, and all the water used for personal washings, as well as for drinking and for culinary uses, must be laboriously drawn and carried by the maidens of the camp. We can thus see the bearing of the phraseology of Abraham in tendering his hospitality. "Let a *little water*, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet." – Gen. xviii, 4.

3. We may safely conclude that Jacob and his family did not take with them into Egypt the habit of bathing by immersion. But may they not have acquired it in the land of their bondage? It happens that we have very interesting evidence as to the custom of the Egyptians on this subject. Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, in his splendid work on “The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,” gives an engraved copy of the only pictorial illustration on this subject found by him among the abundant remains of Egyptian art. It is taken from a tomb in Thebes. In it, a lady is represented with four attendants. One removes the jewelry and clothes which she has put off; another pours water from a vase over her head: the third rubs her arms and body with open hands; and a fourth, seated near her, holds a flower to her nose, and supports her, as she sits. “The same subject,” says Wilkinson, “is treated nearly in the same manner on some of the Greek vases, the water being poured over the bather, who kneels or is seated on the ground.”¹⁴ The Greeks were colonists from Egypt, with which country their relations were always intimate. And the fact, which will hereafter appear, that this was the only mode of domestic or in-door bathing, in use among them, is very significant, as to the customs of Egypt on the point.

4. It is hardly necessary to insist on the utter impossibility of the Hebrew bondmen having acquired in Egypt more luxurious habits than those of their Egyptian taskmasters, – habits, too, requiring much more expensive appliances, such as would be

¹⁴ Wilkinson, vol. iii, p. 388; Abridged edition, ii, 349.

necessary for immersion-bathing. And, when they left Egypt, “their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders” (Ex. xii, 34), the supposition that they had with them a sufficient supply of bath tubs to serve for the continual immersions which, upon the Baptist theory, the Levitical law demanded, does not need to be controverted. In fact, the customary mode of washing, among Israel, as traceable in all their history, was precisely that which we have seen in use among the patriarchs and the Egyptians. It was, with water poured on, and the necessary rubbing by the bather himself, or by an attendant. This custom was universal in Israel, and throughout the east, from the earliest ages. At first, the only utensil used was a pitcher or jar, out of which the water was poured. A case before referred to in the history of Abraham illustrates the circumstances and manner of this usage. As he sat in his tent door, in the heat of the day, he saw three men approach. He ran to salute them, and said, “Let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.” – Gen. xviii, 1-4. The washing was done in the open air, and the earth received the flowing water. In the same region, the Dead Sea expedition found the same custom among the tent-dwelling Arabs. On one occasion, “having as usual submitted to be stared at and their arms handed about and inspected, as if they were on muster, water was brought and poured upon their hands, from a very equivocal water jar; after which followed the repast.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Lynch’s Dead Sea Expedition, p. 206.

So long as the simplicity of tent life was maintained, this was all-sufficient. But, afterward, the convenience of a bowl or basin was added, which was so placed as to catch the water, as it flowed off, in washing, thus preventing the wetting of the floor. The water, once used, was not applied a second time, but rejected, as being defiled. The examples of Bathsheba and Susanna indicate that, in bathing the person, even in the later times, the primitive custom still so far survived that resort was sometimes had to a retired place outside the house; no doubt because of the inconvenience of flooding the floor with the water, as it was poured over the person. "The History of Susanna," (one of the Apocryphal books), dates as far back as two centuries before Christ. The heroine is described as an eminently modest and virtuous woman. Her husband, Joachim, "was a rich man, and had a fair garden adjoining his house." His house was a place of resort to the Jews, and the magistrates commonly sat there, to exercise their office. It was Susanna's custom to walk in the garden at noon, after the people had left the house. Two of the elders are described as plotting against her. "And it fell out, as they watched a fit time, she went in as before with two maids only, and she was desirous to wash herself in the garden; for it was hot. And there was nobody there save the two elders, that had hid themselves and watched her. Then she said to her maids, Bring me oil and washing balls, and shut the garden doors, that I may wash. And they did as she had bade them, and shut the garden doors, and went out themselves at private doors, to fetch the

things that she had commanded them.” Her purpose is prevented by the appearance of the two elders, from whose false accusation she is in the sequel rescued by the famous “judgment of Daniel.” The same custom is illustrated by the case of Pharaoh’s daughter at the finding of Moses, and by the Egyptian picture, from Wilkinson. A signal proof of the prevalence of the custom of washing with water poured on by an attendant, presents itself, in the fact that the designation of a body servant, or personal attendant, was derived from it. Elisha the prophet had been the minister or attendant of Elijah, before the translation of the latter. Of this relation, king Jehoshaphat was informed by the statement that it was he “which poured water on the hands of Elijah.” – 2 Kings iii, 11.

The circumstances render it certain that this was the form of washing in the expiation of a concealed murder. The elders of the nearest city were required to take an unbroken heifer down into a rough and uncultivated valley or gorge, and there, in the presence of the priests, strike off its head, wash their hands over the carcass, and call God to witness their innocence in the matter. Thus, the water flowing from their hands upon the carcass, transferred to it and the barren spot where it lay the putative guilt of the crime. (Deut. xxi, 3-9.)

From this ordinance, the form seems to have become a familiar mode of protesting innocence of crime, and is memorable for that occasion when Pilate “took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the

blood of this just person: see ye to it.” – Matt. xxvii, 24. Two primitive representations of this scene, in sculptured relief, have been found in the catacombs at Rome. They date from the first centuries of the Christian era. In them the wife of Pilate appears in the background, with averted face. An attendant holds a vase or pitcher in one hand, and in the other a bowl: while Pilate sits rubbing his hands. The position of the bowl shows it to be empty. “The mode of washing implied in the empty bowl is characteristic. In the east, the water is still poured from the vase over the hands, and caught in the bowl, so that it should not pass over them twice.”¹⁶

The manner of washing the feet is illustrated by a fact in the life of our Savior. At dinner, in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, a woman that was a sinner “brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet, behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” – Luke vii, 37, 38, 44. But how was it possible for the woman, coming behind him at table, to get access to his feet: which, according to our custom, would be concealed under the table? The ordinary mode of sitting, in the east, then as now, was, on the ground or floor, squat, cross-legged, or reclining. Chairs were not in common use, but were reserved for purposes of state, and used almost exclusively by dignitaries. In later times a bench or

¹⁶ Maitland’s “Church of the Catacombs,” p. 261. Also, Withrow’s “Catacombs,” p. 333.

settee was introduced, which was without a back. Whether on it or the floor, the usual position, in eating was the same. The guests reclined on the left elbow, leaving the right hand free. The person next on the right thus leaned toward or against the breast of him who was at the head. (John xiii, 23.) The feet were drawn up behind. Persons who wore sandals, always, on entering a house, left them at the door. These were not ordinarily worn by the common people, but only upon occasions of special travel; and our Savior, therefore, forbade his disciples to take time to provide them, in the haste of the mission on which he first sent them to preach. (Matt. x, 10; Luke x, 4.) They poorly protected the feet from the soiling and roughness of the way.¹⁷

¹⁷ “Several of them [Arabs of the Jordan] wore sandals, a rude invention to protect the feet. It was a thick piece of hide, confined by a thong passing under the sole at the hollow of the foot, around the heel, and between the great toe and the one which adjoins it.” – Lynch’s “Dead Sea Expedition,” p. 282. These thongs were the “latchets” of Mark i, 7.

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