

poet has said of the glow of sunset, "O my friends, are not these the gates of glory, wide open for departed spirits, that they may sail in on wings into the heart of eternal life?"¹

I would rather apply the same figure to the daily experience of the Christian, and say that just as the light of the setting sun bathes even the meanest houses on the other side of yon river in a stream of glory, so this spiritual light elevates and enriches the inner consciousness of the poorest and least prosperous of Christ's disciples. It is not to the other world alone that those beautiful words of Psalm xxxvi. refer :

"For with Thee is the fountain of life ;
In Thy light do we see light."

Nor is it only of the new heavens and the new earth that the oracle was spoken, "Behold, I make all things new." Yes ; the sun of the love of Jesus which makes all things new to those who love Him.

"Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

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THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

(HEB. vi. 1, 2.)

THIS passage undoubtedly bristles with difficulties. Take up any commentary, and you will soon find how various and conflicting are the views that have been taken of its meaning. Close the book and meditate upon the solution which the writer himself prefers, and we shall be surprised

¹ The Ettrick Shepherd in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. But how much finer is the expressive Scottish!

if it brings much satisfaction to your mind. At first sight, one thing seems very plain, and it is indeed the only thing on which most commentators are agreed, that the teaching of these two verses is, that the first principles of the doctrine of Christ are six in number; namely, repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, judgment. Yet it is here we believe that they have all with few exceptions gone astray, and it is to this first error that all the subsequent confusion and bewilderment are due. Before entering on anything like a minute examination of the various clauses, there are certain general preliminary considerations that may well suggest a doubt of the correctness of our first impression, that six principles of Christian doctrine are here laid down.

In the first place, it is difficult to see how the "doctrine of baptisms" can be one of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Here the great stumbling-block in the way of interpreters is the plural number. Had it been "the doctrine of baptism," all would have been plain and simple. Some explanation of that initiatory rite would have come in very appropriately in the most elementary statement of Christian truth. And some have tried to escape the difficulty by suggesting that the plural may be used with reference to the "multiplicity of the candidates and of the acts of baptism performed on their behalf."¹ But this is a mere evasion. The commonly received explanation is, "that the plural *βαπτισμοί* denotes Christian baptism, along with the Jewish baptism of proselytes, and that of John inclusive." But how unlikely that this should have a place among the first principles of the faith! The question of the relation subsisting between these different baptisms may not be without its interest, but it is neither very simple and elementary in its nature, nor to us at least of much practical importance. Would the sacred writer have

¹ De Wette, as quoted by Delitzsch.

put an abstruse and ephemeral question like this among the six foundation principles of the Christian faith? The same thing may be said of the next particular, "the laying on of hands." Some regard this as descriptive of the ceremony of "confirmation," some of "ordination" to the holy ministry, and some of the laying on of the Apostles' hands with a view to the conferring of the Holy Ghost. But there is a difficulty in believing that any of these should be ranked among the six primary and fundamental points of New Testament doctrine. They certainly do not appear to hold any such place in the teaching of our Lord or His Apostles. Again, the question naturally arises, Why is the word, *διδασχῆς*, "the teaching of" introduced in connexion with some, but not with all the particulars here enumerated? This of itself is fitted to suggest that the "baptisms and laying on of hands," to which that word is prefixed, stand on a different platform from "repentance," "faith," "resurrection," and "judgment," which are not so introduced. And finally, the most important point of all is, that *βαπτισμῶν διδασχῆς* ought to be translated, not "the doctrine of baptisms," but "the doctrine of washings." The term used to denote baptism in the New Testament is *βάπτισμα*. The word *βαπτισμός* here used occurs only in three places; in Mark vii. 4, where it refers to the Pharisaic custom of washing cups and pots and brazen vessels; in Heb. ix. 10, where it refers to the many washings required by the law of Moses; and in this place, where we have no right to give it an entirely different meaning.

Thus far we have only considered one or two preliminary objections to the currently received view of the number of "first principles" here laid down. But let us now look a little more narrowly into the structure of the sentence, that we may see if it fairly admits of any different classification, against which no such objections can be raised.

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.” There is no question as to this particular. Repentance from dead works, *i.e.* the duty of turning away with grief and hatred from evil and defiling deeds, is obviously a fundamental point of Christian doctrine. So also is the next, “faith toward or upon (ἐπι) God.” We have only to look at the eleventh chapter, and indeed at the general strain of the whole epistle, to see that in the estimation of the writer faith in God is quite as essential as repentance. These two Christian graces are inseparably connected. They are of co-ordinate importance, standing on the same level, and so they are here united by the strong conjunction *καί*. But now at this point there is a break, indicated both by the absence of a connecting particle, and by the interjection of the word *διδασχῆς*. The clauses, literally rendered and properly punctuated, would read thus: “Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith upon God (the teaching of washings and of laying on of hands), and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment.” This arrangement of the clauses, obviously suggested if not imperatively required by the omission of a conjunction after “faith upon God,” and the insertion of the word *διδασχῆς* instead, clearly brings out this, that the middle clause, “the teaching of washings and of laying on of hands,” is in apposition to what goes before and expegetical of its meaning. It is a statement thrown in by the way, to the effect that repentance and faith are the teaching of washings and of laying on of hands. We have seen already that the washings here referred to are not baptisms, the word never being used in that sense in all New Testament Scripture, but the “divers washings,” “imposed” by the law of Moses on the Jewish people, “until the time of reformation” (Heb. ix. 10). It goes without

saying that the writer of this epistle was ever on the watch for opportunities of bringing out the fact that in the gospel we have the fulfilment of the figures of the law. Accordingly, having mentioned repentance from dead works and faith on God as fundamental things in Christianity, he cannot refrain from embracing the opportunity of pointing out in passing the two legal rites by which they were strikingly set forth. We say the two legal rites, for if we must hold that *βαπτισμῶν* means the ablutions prescribed under the law and not baptism, whether Jewish, Johannean, or Christian, then we must find a similar reference in the *ἐπιθέσεως χειρῶν*. Had these words been found in another connexion they might have meant the laying on of apostolic hands, with a view to the bestowal of spiritual gifts, or the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, to set apart a brother for some special office or work. But here they must, like *βαπτισμῶν*, refer to some Old Testament rite or custom. And what that rite was the sacred writer here enables us with almost perfect certainty to determine. For he tells us that repentance from dead works was the thing taught by the washings prescribed as a remedy for ceremonial defilement—notably for that which was contracted by contact with the dead.¹ Is not this implied in the language of the prophet Jeremiah: “O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within

¹ Num. xix. 7, 8, 10, 18, 19. It may be objected that *βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς* does not naturally mean, the doctrine taught by washings, but rather, the doctrine regarding washings. The very opposite is the case. Wherever in the New Testament a noun in the genitive follows *διδαχῆς*, it denotes the teacher, not the thing taught. The “doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. xvi. 12) was the doctrine taught by them. The “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts ii. 42) was the doctrine which the apostles taught. The “doctrine of Balaam” (Rev. ii. 14) is expressly defined to be the infamous counsel which he gave to Balak with the view of ensnaring Israel into sin. According to all these analogies, “the doctrine of washings” can only mean the thing which these washings taught. Had the author of this epistle meant to say, the doctrine regarding washings, he would have written, *περὶ βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς*.

thee?" The washing of the body was the outward symbol of the washing of the heart, and that is manifestly repentance. In like manner the writer of this epistle tells us that "faith on God" was the thing taught by the laying on of hands. Now the only laying on of hands that could well be regarded as symbolical of faith is that which was required of those who came to offer up an animal in sacrifice to God. Before the victim was slain, the offerer was to lay his hand upon its head, that it might "be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." That is to say, this action signified the transfer of guilt and punishment to a substitute, which, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, is the very function of justifying faith. This is very graphically brought out in the account given in Lev. xvi. of the proceedings of the great Day of Atonement, to which, as the typical case of laying on of hands, it is probable that the passage under consideration especially refers. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands (*καὶ ἐπιθήσει Ἄαρὼν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, κ.τ.λ.*) upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited."

The sacred writer, having mentioned faith and repentance, the two fundamental graces, or exercises of soul, by which we enter into the kingdom of God and obtain salvation here on earth, and having indicated in passing the two Mosaic rites in which they were visibly embodied, goes on to mention as two other first principles of the doctrine of Christ, the final development of that kingdom, and the full realization of that salvation at the end of the world. "The resurrection of the dead," whatever hints of it there may have been in the Pagan mythology and the prophetic

Scriptures, was essentially a Christian doctrine. And it is entitled to the place which it here holds among the elementary truths of the Gospel, both on account of its connexion with the resurrection of Christ, and its bearing on the comfort and happiness of the people of God. "Eternal judgment," which shall immediately follow the resurrection of the dead, may well be put upon the same footing with it, as a complementary truth of the first importance. For then the Judge shall pronounce the final sentence upon the quick and dead. Then shall the wicked be severed from among the just, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

These two "principles," like the previous two, are co-ordinated by being linked together by the conjunction *καί*: *ἀναστάσεώς τε νεκρῶν, καὶ κρίματος αἰωνίου*. It may be asked, Why are not the second and third of the four fundamentals—faith and the resurrection—in like manner co-ordinated by *καί*? The answer is twofold. In the first place, the train of thought has been interrupted by the digression, or parenthesis, regarding washings and laying on of hands, so suitable in an Epistle to the Hebrews, so much in keeping with the writer's aim throughout. This has separated the second and third of these particulars so far that had *καί* been used here as the connecting particle its reference might have been misunderstood. Even as it is, commentators have insisted on finding in this passage six co-ordinate "principles," instead of four with a parenthetical illustration in the midst. They would have had some plausible ground for this mistake had all the clauses been connected by the strong conjunction *καί*. The use of the lighter particle *τε* between "laying on of hands" and "resurrection of the dead" ought to have prevented the error into which they have fallen. But, in the second place, it is possible that we are to see in the preference for *τε* in introducing "resurrection" and "judgment," a sug-

gestion of the thought that even the four principles here enumerated are not precisely on the same level. Is it not evident that they consist of two couplets the members of which are more strongly tied together than the couplets are to one another? There is a closer connexion between faith and repentance on the one hand and resurrection and judgment on the other, than there is between the pairs themselves. Hence each pair is formed by the conjunction *καί*, while they are more loosely hung together by the enclitic *τε*, on the principle stated by the grammarians, “*τε* adjungit, *καί* conjungit.”

It may be asked, If the meaning of the first clause of the second verse be what we have indicated above, why is *διδασχῆς* in the genitive case? Simply because it is in apposition to the previous clause, and, like it, under the government of *θεμέλιον*. “Not laying again the foundation . . . of the teaching of (or, the things taught by) washings and imposition of hands.”

One other grammatical objection may be made to the view of the passage here proposed. It may be said, Why is *τε* used as the connecting particle between *βαπτισμῶν* and *ἐπιθέσεως* (*βαπτισμῶν διδασχῆς, ἐπιθέσεως τε χειρῶν*), where we should have expected *καί*? Well, that is a serious difficulty for those who hold that we have here six co-ordinate “principles of the doctrine of Christ.” Why in that case should they not all be linked together by the same conjunction *καί*? But if we have in this clause a mere parenthesis, expegetical of the first couplet, then the writer may have avoided the use of *καί*, to prevent our mistaking these two Old Testament rites for “principles of the doctrine of Christ,” and putting them on the same platform with repentance and faith, resurrection and judgment.

The following translation, in which we have endeavoured in clumsy English to give effect to the change of particle in the Greek, may serve to show at a glance the view we

take of the true meaning of this much contested passage. We are aware, of course, that "also" is not a happy rendering of $\tau\epsilon$. "Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith exercised upon God (the things taught by washings, also by laying on of hands), also, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment."

NOTE ON THE USAGE OF $\kappa\alpha\iota$ AND $\tau\epsilon$ IN THIS EPISTLE.

In Heb. i. 3 we read (R.V.), "Who being the effulgence of his glory, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) the very image of his substance, and ($\tau\epsilon$) upholding all things by the word of his power." The two things which the Son *is* are here coupled by the stronger $\kappa\alpha\iota$; while that which He *does* is linked to what He is by the feebler $\tau\epsilon$. And quite appropriately: for the one connexion is inward and essential, the other more arbitrary and accidental.

In Heb. iv. 12 we read (R.V.), "For the word of God is living and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) active, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) sharper than any two-edged sword, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) piercing even to the dividing of soul and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) spirit, of both ($\tau\epsilon$) joints and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) marrow, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) quick to discern the thoughts and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) intents of the heart." The four statements here made regarding the word of God—that it is living and active, sharp, piercing, discriminating—are all connected by $\kappa\alpha\iota$. So too the four pairs, living and active, soul and spirit, joints and marrow, thoughts and intents, are coupled and co-ordinated by $\kappa\alpha\iota$. But the weaker conjunction $\tau\epsilon$ connects the pair, "soul and spirit" with the pair "joints and marrow." This case is somewhat similar to the one we have been considering, for "joints and marrow" are a mere parenthetical illustration, like "washings and laying on of hands." The word of God divides between soul and spirit as the dissecting knife does between joints and marrow. Hence in both

passages, to show that these couples are not in line with the others, but are mere passing illustrations, they are punctuated off, in the one case from the preceding, in the other from the following clause, by the use of $\tau\epsilon$ rather than $\kappa\alpha\iota$.

In Heb. vi. 4, 5, we read (R.V.), "For as touching those who were once enlightened, and ($\tau\epsilon$) tasted of the heavenly gift, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) tasted the good word of God, and ($\tau\epsilon$) the powers of the age to come, and ($\kappa\alpha\iota$) fell away." It is difficult to see the *rationale* of the use of $\kappa\alpha\iota$ and $\tau\epsilon$ in the above sentence. According to the analogy of the two previous passages, we should have expected to find "the word of God" and "the powers of the age to come" connected by $\kappa\alpha\iota$. And it is hard to explain why the first two particulars here enumerated should be united by $\tau\epsilon$, and all the others by $\kappa\alpha\iota$, when they manifestly stand on the same plane, as things which appear to imply salvation, but which are yet compatible with final apostasy. This would seem to indicate that the writer is not always punctiliously consistent in the use of these particles. So much the better for the rendering advocated in this paper, which rests not on such grammatical niceties, but on broad general grounds.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

V. THE CAPTAIN OF SALVATION (CHAP. II. 10).

IN this verse the writer goes on to state that the career of suffering to which Christ was subjected in this world was worthy of God. The affirmation is made to justify the bold assertion of the previous sentence, that the appointment of Jesus to taste death for others was a manifestation of grace