

Redactors have done with their materials. No charge is made of dishonest intentions. But surely it is most unfortunate for the historical value of their work. There is no way of ascertaining how far these materials have been warped from their proper original intent by the well-meant but mistaken efforts of the Redactors to correct or to harmonise them. That their meaning has been seriously altered in repeated instances, which are pointed out by the critics, created a very natural presumption that like changes have been freely made elsewhere which can now no longer be detected.

"It is difficult to understand in what sense the Redactors, whose work has been described, can be said to have been inspired. They certainly had no inspiration which preserved them from error, or even from making the gravest historical mistakes. They had no such inspiration as gives any divine attestation to their work. The Pentateuchal history gathers no confirmation from having passed through their hands."

I am sorry to have taken up so much of your space, but I repeat that many, I am sure, will be glad to have so late an utterance from so ripe a critic as Dr. Green.

Born of Water and Spirit.—JOHN iii. 5.

I.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

These words are evidently given as an explanation of the saying in ver. 3, which had so bewildered Nicodemus, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." They describe the experience through which a man must pass, or the kind of life which must be quickened within him, before he can become a subject of the kingdom of God. Life, *ἀνωθεν*, from above; life *ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*, "from water and Spirit," must be begun (*γεννήθῃ*), if a man is to belong to the spiritual kingdom which God has established. That being the case, it is of the utmost importance that we should have a clear and convincing interpretation of this requirement.

The beginning of every form of life is wrapped in mystery. Mystery shrouds most thickly the beginning of spiritual life. But the solemn and emphatic words of our Lord in ver. 5, cast light upon it, by which sincere and earnest seekers after truth may be guided. It was to help a perplexed inquirer that they were spoken, and the help they were intended to give is surely available still. Putting aside, without discussion in the meantime, the various interpretations which have been given, the following is put forward with all humility and deference. In the Gospel according to Mark, we read that Jesus began His ministry with the proclamation: "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The requirement for entrance into the kingdom is put in a very plain and simple form.

From all who would enter in, two things are needful—Repentance, and Faith in the gospel. Throughout the whole of the New Testament these are constantly and consistently put forward as essentials. Would it not be strange if the Lord Jesus, in dealing with Nicodemus, should depart from these simple and universal principles? In the words "born of water and Spirit," it is almost impossible to avoid recognising a reference to baptism. Now, in John i. 33, there is a suggestive contrast, between a baptism of water and a baptism of Spirit. John the Baptist says, "He that sent me to baptize with *water*, . . . the same is He who baptizeth with the Holy *Spirit*." John regards his work and baptism as insufficient to fit men for entrance into the kingdom. Jesus accepts that work and baptism as a part of His own work, and adds the distinctive element of belief in the gospel. This belief in the gospel, or belief in Him, is consistently presented as due to the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. xvi. 16, 17; 1 Cor. ii. 10; 1 Cor. xii. 3). May we not say, then, that the baptism of John was of water, unto repentance, and the baptism which Jesus gives, is of Spirit, unto faith in Him as the Messiah? A man must experience both before he can enter the kingdom. Reading out the great requirement in the light of the above, we find our Lord saying to Nicodemus, that it is *Life arising out of (γεννήθῃ ἐξ) Repentance and Faith in Him as the Messiah* which enables a man to enter the kingdom of God. The essentials, as given to Nicodemus, thus agree with their presentation throughout the New Testament.

Further, we may say that these were the very elements required from a man in the condition

and position of Nicodemus. As a Pharisee, he had not submitted to the baptism of John. He had not confessed his need of repentance, of which it was the symbol. Likewise, as a Pharisee, he had not admitted the claims of Jesus as Messiah. He regarded Him as a teacher—a teacher from God, but not as the Messiah of God. His attitude as to these two questions was the attitude of his class, and it hindered him and his associates from entrance into the kingdom. No one could enter, without experience of the change of mind symbolised by the baptism of John, *i.e.* without *Repentance*. No one could enter, without the spiritual experience which gave power to see in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ of God, *i.e.* without *Faith*. Life arising out of repentance and faith, is the life of the kingdom. JOHN REID, M.A.

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II.

IT seems to me that the words addressed by our Lord to Nicodemus about the need of being “born of water and the Spirit” may be best explained by supposing a reference in them to the words of the Baptist, who contrasted himself as only *baptizing with water* with the Messiah who was to *baptize with the Holy Ghost*. Our Lord had just assured Nicodemus that unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. The question then arises, How is this new birth brought about? And the answer is, By the power of the Spirit.

This new birth is just another name for that “baptism with the Spirit” of which John spoke. John’s “baptism with water” was only a preparation for this more excellent baptism. The baptism of John is spoken of as “the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.” John’s teaching was to the effect that all men alike, Pharisees as well as others, needed repentance, and the baptism which he administered to those who came to him professing repentance was a pledge of the forgiveness which God will bestow on all who are truly penitent. When our Lord tells Nicodemus, then, that he must be born of water, He tells him that *he*, Pharisee though he is, needs the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But He tells him also that, for actual entrance into the kingdom of God, something more is needed, something which John’s baptism only prefigured—the more excellent baptism with the Spirit.

While a reference to *Christian* baptism seems here altogether out of place, a reference such as I have supposed to John’s baptism is not at all out of place, and accounts for the peculiar language employed by our Lord. It is to be noted that Wendt, while holding it probable that there is an allusion here to Christian baptism, thinks that there was no mention of water in the “Johannine source,” and that this allusion was an addition of the “bearbeitende Evangelist,” the *deus ex machina* of whom he makes such liberal use.

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A Friendly Reply to Professor Kennedy.

BY THE REV. CANON T. K. CHEYNE, D.D., OXFORD.

THIS is but an incomplete reply; life is too short to write complete replies even to friendly reviews. Nor does Professor Kennedy need to be assured that any assistance which he can give in the work of self-criticism will be valued by the present writer. Perhaps, however, he will see upon reflection that his review does not deal with the points which most required to be mentioned. It is precisely “the more positive and permanent results” (if such exist) which needed (as I humbly think) to be emphasised, because in so many quarters a “dead set” has been made against the book reviewed, and that, whether avowedly or not, upon apologetic

theological grounds. But Professor Kennedy passes these over, in order to show why my “thesis” (the term is, of course, as the reader of the book will see scarcely accurate—“thesis” and “conclusion” are not synonymous) cannot be accepted. This omission is very serious, because it keeps the reader of the review in ignorance of the fact that my argument, at any rate, proves very much, even if conceivably not as much as I hoped. It would be perfectly possible for any one to construct out of my material a book which would be more acceptable at present than my own to most of the younger critical English students. Professor