

PLAIN WORDS
ON
HOLY BAPTISM
TOGETHER WITH SOME
ELEMENTARY TEACHING
ON
CONFIRMATION



By the REV. P. W. DOWE, B.A.,
BELMORE
(REVISED AND CORRECTED)

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Plain Words on Holy Baptism.

CHAPTER I.

“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them . . . teaching them . . .”—Matt. xxviii., 19.

“Baptism is not our act, but God’s.”—Luther.

What has Baptism done for us and for our children? A little water poured, or it may be a moment’s immersion in water, and a few words spoken! What spiritual blessing can follow from such a tiny ceremony?

Yet this tiny ceremony—the use of water (Christ did not prescribe either the quantity or the method of application), and the use of Sacred Words (which our Lord Himself did prescribe)—is the initiatory rite of membership in the Christian Church; and is, therefore, without any exception, the most important event in our lives. Baptism, where it can be had, is the one outward act declared by our Lord to be necessary to salvation.

“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.”
—Mark xvi. 16.

“Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God.”—John iii. 5

Those who have been baptized have thereby become members of the Christian Church—of the Catholic or Universal Church. Baptism does not make us members of the English Church, or of the Scotch Church, or of the Roman Church, or of any other Church with a distinguishing local name. It makes us members of the great Catholic or

Universal Church of Christ; though, of course, each baptized person must needs be brought up in the distinctive teaching of that particular body of Christians with which his parents are connected. But it is important to remember that Baptism does not admit merely to a local or national church. It admits to the great Catholic or Universal Church, and therefore never needs to be (nor, indeed, can be) repeated.

We see, then, what a blessing it is to be Baptized. It means that the baptized person has become a member of that great Divine Society that Christ established, which is called the Christian Church. That Society began with twelve members—it now contains hundreds of millions; but every one of those millions has been admitted in the same way, *viz.*, by the use of water in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Now the very meaning of being members of any society is that we may claim all that belongs to that society. What, then, may we claim as being members of Christ's Divine Society, the Christian Church? Many blessings indeed: all that Christ by His Life and Death has purchased for His Church; all the gifts that God has bestowed upon His Church.

Forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life—these are the chief Covenant blessings purchased by Christ for His people. They were really covenanted and given to God's people under the old Mosaic Covenant, in the Old Testament; but not so clearly expressed as they are now under the New Covenant, in the New Testament, where Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. As Covenant blessings, they were always really within the reach of all God's Covenant people, and His Covenant people to-day is the Christian Church.

Formerly His Covenant people was the Jewish nation only, and the admission was by circumcision, and the inclusion of the Father in God's covenant carried with it the inclusion of the whole family.

To-day His Covenant people is the Christian Church, and the admission is by Baptism; and still the inclusion of the parents carries with it the inclusion of the children—at least until these are capable of understanding and choice. What does St. Paul say? Even if only one parent is a believer:—

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband, else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”—(1 Cor. vii., 14.)

That is to say, the children are counted holy, *i.e.*, within God's covenant, for the sake of even one believing parent.

But does this mean—or does Baptism mean—that the baptized are necessarily saved? Not if they choose to grow up faithless and wicked! But it means that until they choose to grow up faithless and wicked—and at least while they are too young to make any choice—our baptized children are included for their believing parents' sake in the Christian covenant, and may claim its privileges.

* * * *

Let us next ask, “What privileges, what blessings, do belong specially to the Christian Church?”

We have already mentioned the three great Covenant blessings: Forgiveness of sin, the Gift of the Holy Spirit, and Eternal Life—as purchased by Christ's Life and Death for His believing people.

To these we may add, fourthly, the Bible; a constant Divine revelation and guide, granted by God to His people. The Bible is not (as some people think it is) a Book for all the world. It has invitations and warnings for all the world, but nothing more.

The Old Testament was written exclusively for the Jewish Church. Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, Philistines, Egyptians, had no interest in it. It was not written for them. If they wished to have an interest in its promises, if they desired eternal life through obedi-

ence to its teachings, if they wanted to be able to join in its glorious psalms of faith and love and praise, in its Messianic hopes, they must first become Jews.

Similarly, no heathen man in Rome or Ephesus or Colosse had any share or interest in St. Paul's epistles to the Christians in those places. If they wished to have a share in those hopes and promises, they must first become Christians, and by Baptism join the Christian Church.

So, again, no unbeliever in the Lord Jesus, no person outside the Christian Church, has any share to-day in our Bible. Its warnings and invitations are for them, but not its words of faith and hope and encouragement, nor its promises of victory, nor its hopes of glory. They cannot join in its thanksgivings, nor in its utterances of faith, nor in its glorious praises of God.

But every one of our baptized children may say "Here is a Book written for me by my Heavenly Father; a revelation of Himself, made to me His child; a guide through the perplexities of life, teaching me how I, His child, should live; and holding out to me the hope of a happy eternity to be spent in His love and service."

"Holy Bible, Book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine!"

Lastly, all Christ's work and all Christ's promises belong to the Christian Church, and to nobody else. All that Christ did, His Life and His Death, were for His Church. All He is doing now, all His work of Intercession, is for His Church; and for His Church (very soon, we hope) He will come again to receive His people to Himself for ever.

Go out at night and survey what lies within our vision of those innumerable suns and stars, of God's great universe, and then try to realise that the whole of that infinite universe—of which we can see such an infinitesimal part—exists, we believe, for one purpose only—namely, that from all parts of it Christ may gather out for Himself a vast host, a saved Church, the infinite

armies of the redeemed, conquerors over Sin and Satan, who shall live with Him and share His victory and His happiness all through a blissful eternity.

The whole universe we believe to be nothing but a training-ground and a battle-ground for the armies of Christ; where His Church, His warrior-saints—yes, even the youngest and the feeblest among them—may, by His grace, win their battle and be trained in holiness and usefulness until they receive their final reward. And it was into that Church, into those armies, that we and our children were admitted at our Baptism.

What is Life, Father? A battle, my Child;
Where the strongest lance may fail,
Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,
And the stoutest heart may quail;
Where foes are gathered on every hand,
And rest not, day nor night;
And the feeble little one must stand
In the thickest of the fight.

What is Death, Father? The rest, my Child,
When the battle of life is o'er;
'Tis the Angel of God who, strong and mild,
Says we need fight no more;
Who, driving away the demon band,
Bids the strife and the conflict cease;
Takes banner and spear from our failing hand,
And proclaims an eternal peace.

Let me die, Father. I tremble and fear
To join in that terrible strife!
The crown must be won for Heaven, Dear,
In the battle-field of Life.
Though the foes around thee be strong and tried,
Christ cares for the weak and the small;
The Angels of Heaven are at thy side,
And God is over all.

But someone may ask, "Must we be baptized in order to claim these privileges?" Yes, certainly! As a general rule it may be said that although unbaptized persons may, and do, receive many blessings from God—may have

the Gift of the Holy Spirit, may be saved; yet that no unbaptized person (who remains wilfully unbaptized) can claim any one of these blessings. What did Christ Himself say?—

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”—Mark xvi., 16.

It was, we think, John Wesley who said that Christ has not given us Sacraments that His people may be saved without them. We must (as a rule) be members of Christ’s Church before we can claim any of the blessings that Christ purchased for His Church! But when we are members of His Church we can confidently come to God and claim in humble faith every blessing that Christ has purchased and promised.

But for these blessings we must make personal application in faithful prayer. If you give to your child the title-deeds of an estate, still that estate is not actually his to use and to enjoy until he is both old enough and otherwise qualified to claim it and take possession, and actually does so claim it and take possession. So Baptism is the title deeds of our possession of the Kingdom of God; it gives us a right (as God’s Covenant people) to claim every one of God’s promises; but then we must desire them, and individually claim them. We must personally ask for the Covenant blessings, which God has promised to give; and our Covenant-keeping God is pledged to grant them.

* * * *

We are sometimes asked what difference Baptism (or the want of it) makes to the little babies that die. This writer humbly believes that every little baby that dies—whether baptized or unbaptized—is claimed and received by Christ Who died for it. But when we have, in faith and humble obedience, claimed, by Baptism, Covenant-blessings for our children, when we have entered them within the Bond of the Covenant, they certainly stand in a different position from that which they held before. There is then no need for us to *think* or *speculate*, for we

are sure at least that God must needs be faithful to His Covenant promises.

“If we be faithless, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself.”—1 Tim. ii., 13.

Anyone may baptize a dying person, the rite is the simplest imaginable. It is only the use of water in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Christ, we believe, purposely made it simple. But Baptism to-day (like Circumcision of old) is Christ’s appointed way of bringing us and our children within the Christian Covenant.

If we carelessly neglect to put upon our children the Sign of the Covenant; if we neglect to bring them—as far as lies in our power—within the Bond of the Covenant; how can we, with the confidence of faith, claim Covenant blessings for them. But if we, in humble faith, perform that rite, we believe that God honours His own appointment and receives our little ones as His Covenant children. If they live to grow up they must, in faith, claim for themselves those Covenant privileges; they must themselves ask for forgiveness of sins, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and for Eternal Life. But until they can ask we believe that these blessings are theirs without asking—by Covenant privilege.



CHAPTER II.

ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM.

In the 27th Article of the Church of England we read:—

“The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”

Now, in this age of growing Materialism and Rationalism, there are an increasing number of people—even good Christian people—who do not see any use in having their children baptized. There is no specific command for it, and no visible benefit is attached to it. Can we show to such people any satisfactory reason for our practice of Infant Baptism? We think we can.

First, there is the analogy of Circumcision. God Himself fixed the eighth day after birth as the time for receiving the Jewish children into His Covenant. Now we may not refuse the ordinances of the Christian Church—coming down to us from Apostolic times and having their foundation in one of God’s earliest appointments—simply because we (who, perhaps, have made no special study of the matter) see “no use” in them.

From earliest Old Testament times, God has acted constantly on the principle of including the children in the blessings of their fathers. Every Jew to-day is in Covenant with God, simply because of the Covenant made with Abraham nearly 4,000 years ago. And every member of every Jewish family, boys and girls equally, has always been included within the Covenant, simply be-

cause their father was within the Covenant. The sign of the Covenant could, indeed, only be given to the boys. They must receive it because they were to be the Fathers of the next generation. But every child shared equally in the covenant made with Abraham.

When Christ came, neither He nor any of His Apostles gave the slightest hint that He was making any change in this respect. On the contrary St. Paul (quoted before) seems to speak decisively of God’s continuance of that principle. He says:—

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”—(1 Cor. vii., 14.)

So that the only change seems to be that the children are now to be included in the Covenant for the sake of either parent, instead of (as hitherto) only for the father’s sake. And this is just the kind of change that under the New Dispensation we might have expected. So that the analogy of Old Testament practice is our first reason for Infant Baptism.

Of course we all know perfectly well that faith in Christ must be an individual matter. But was it not an individual matter under the old Covenant, too? Did the mere fact of his being circumcised ever save any wicked or unbelieving Jew? Never! Nor does Baptism save any wicked or unbelieving man to-day. Rather, it adds to his condemnation; since he has been put into a position of privilege, of which he refuses to avail himself.

Nevertheless, God fixed the eighth day as the time when infants might be admitted to His Covenant; and therefore it is, first, on the analogy of the Old Testament that we baptize our children. The promise, said St. Peter, is to you and your children. And that is our first reason, as it was probably the first Apostolic reason, for practising Infant Baptism.

Our second reason is that St. Paul baptized households, including, no doubt, the slaves and their wives and children; for in that day these formed a large part of all but the very poorest households. Three households are mentioned, *viz.*, that of Lydia (Acts xvi., 15), that of the Philippian gaoler (Acts xvi., 33), and that of Stephanus (1 Cor. i., 16). Of course it is just possible that in these three households (including the slaves) there were no children, but it is hardly likely; and we must not forget that the quite incidental mention of these three allows a fair presumption that during St. Paul's long years of missionary work there must have been hundreds or thousands of such household Baptisms.

And this presumption is strengthened when we look more closely into the Scriptural narrative. In the detailed account of the Baptism of the gaoler's household, we find unmistakable indications that the whole family were baptized, not because the whole family were believers, but only because the gaoler had become a believer. The Authorized Version indeed reads:—

“He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”

But the more accurate Revised Version reads:—

“He rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God!”

And the Greek is more decisive still, for the participle “having believed” is expressed in the masculine gender, singular number; and therefore cannot possibly be meant to apply to the whole family. All the evidence, therefore, is that they were baptized simply on account of the faith of the Father, which is just the principle that we stand for to-day.

And, indeed, may we not go a step further? Since St. Paul would not be likely to baptize unbelieving adults, may we not further conclude that the gaoler's household consisted of young children? So we have both Infant Baptism and what our friends would call “Unbeliever's

Baptism,” deduced from the same passage of Scripture; and no honest and educated minister, of whatever denomination, can, we think, escape these conclusions.

St. Paul's example is then our second reason for baptizing infants.

Thirdly, our friends who don't baptize their children, will hardly go so far as to deny that Infant Baptism is of the most ancient Christian practice. For probably about two hundred years the practice was never questioned, and then only by some of the Sects that, in those days as in these, were constantly springing up. It is interesting to note that at an early Synod held at Carthage the question was even raised whether it was lawful to baptize children before the eighth day—that being the age fixed by God for the giving of Circumcision. So our third reason is the practice of the early Church.

Lastly, we might maintain Infant Baptism (as, indeed, the early Christians did) on the words of our Lord Himself—

“Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as [like] a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.”

Are the children, then, fit for Christ's Kingdom of Heaven; but (on account of the imperfection and limitation necessarily belonging to childhood), unfit for membership in the Church on earth? We hardly think it.

Our Lord's words are, then, our fourth reason for practising Infant Baptism.

Of course, no one supposes that Infant Baptism is complete in itself. Infant Baptism needs for its completion the consent of the baptized person. Without that it can scarcely be regarded as more than conditional. But in the Church of England we meet precisely that objection by providing that as soon as the baptized child has

learned what his Baptism means, he is to be invited to give his own public consent to it.

The question, publicly asked in Church, is:—

“Do you here, in the sight of God and of this congregation, ratify and renew the solemn vow and promise that was made for you at your Baptism; acknowledging yourself bound to believe and to do as was then promised for you?”

And when the young person (now more than a mere child) gives the earnest and conscientious answer, “*I do,*” we ask, How is he inferior to those whose actual Baptism was postponed to a similar age of understanding? Infant Baptism with Confirmation is exactly equal to Adult Baptism; but with this advantage, that we have been able to claim for our children, for the last score (more or less) of years, all the blessings of the Christian Covenant.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM; AND ABOUT SOME DIFFICULTIES SOMETIMES RAISED.

We are often asked what is the proper way of baptizing? Should it be by Immersion (dipping) or by Affusion (pouring)?

Our invariable reply is that it doesn't make one atom of difference. All that is required is that water shall be used in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If anyone should insist that one way is more “valid” than the other we should simply class him as a foolish Ritualist;—(and there are Ritualists outside our Church, as well as within it).

In the Church of England both methods are used. Our Prayer Book directs that for adult Baptism the minister is to take the person by the right hand and dip him in the water, or pour water upon him. And in the case of infants it directs that the minister shall discreetly and warily dip the child in the water, but that if the child be weak it shall suffice to pour water upon it.

In practice the latter way is almost always adopted—partly for fear of injurious consequences, if a very young child were immersed in cold water; but chiefly, no doubt, to avoid trouble.

But, we are sometimes asked, was not our Lord immersed; and ought we not therefore to follow Christ's example?

No, dear reader, Christ was not immersed; nor did John the Baptist immerse any of those whom he baptized. There is, of course, no record one way or the other;

so we simply have to draw our conclusions from the facts that are known to us.

In the first place, Baptism by Immersion, to be carried out in a decent and seemly manner, requires dressing sheds or tents, and changes of clothing. There is nothing to make us think that John had the tents or sheds; nor that his converts brought with them changes of clothing.

"But," say our Baptist friends, "in India and Africa we baptize hundreds of natives who have no changes of clothing. They don't in the least mind getting wet and getting dry again; in fact they enjoy it!"

Yes, but our Lord was not a half-dressed Indian or African peasant. He was dressed as a Jewish gentleman. At His Crucifixion His clothes were divided among four soldiers; and that did not include the Seamless Robe, for which they cast lots.

But besides baptizing our Lord, John baptized great numbers of men and women of all ranks of Jewish society. It would be absurd to imagine that such people would be willing to get wet through and walk about till they were dry again. If they had to be immersed, proper provision must needs have been made for them; of all which we read nothing.

Beside, ceremonial Baptisms were of constant practice in the cases of proselytes, and they were usually effected by Sprinkling.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."—(Ezek. 36., 25).

Again we read that our Lord made and baptized more disciples than John; and probably continued the practice through His three years' ministry; and it would be absurd to think that wherever our Lord went He took tents with Him (seeing that He had nowhere to lay His head), or that those whom He baptized had always their changes of clothing handy.

But—we are often asked—doesn't the Greek word "Baptizo" mean "immerse"? No, not necessarily. Of

course it could mean it, but it need not, and generally does not. We read in the Gospel of the Baptisms of beds and tables, where it only means ceremonial sprinkling. Again, we read that the Jews when they come from the markets, "except they are baptized, eat not," where it only means that they ceremonially poured water over their hands.—(Mark vii. 4.)

But are there not some Greek prepositions that when they are used in connection with Baptism make it mean "Immersion?" No, there are not. The prepositions referred to are "en" (in), "eis" (into), and "ek" (out of). We read that Jesus came and was baptized in "eis" Jordan;—and we are asked, "Does not the use of the preposition "eis" mean that He went right "into" (and therefore "under") the water; "and so was Immersed?" No, it does not! The preposition "eis" is always used after a Verb of Motion. "Jesus was baptized in or at Jordan"—might have been rendered "en" Jordan. But "Jesus came and was baptized" requires "eis." "Wash in the Pool of Siloam" might be rendered "en" the Pool. But "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam" required "eis", because of the preceding verb "Go"; and did not in the least imply that the blind man immersed himself.—(John ix. 7.)

In other cases the sense of the passage must determine the meaning. "Philip and the Eunuch went down, both of them, into (eis) the water, and he baptized him; and they came up, both of them, out of (ek) the water" (Acts viii., 38). Here commonsense settles the question against immersion, for we never read of a Baptism where both baptizer and convert were immersed.

And, again, the prepositions "ek" and "en" have a very wide range of meanings. For instance, our Lord said, "If I be lifted up from the earth," and He used the preposition "ek" (out of the earth). So we read, "to smite with (en) a rod of iron," "Swear neither by (en) Heaven nor by (en) the earth," "They did to (en) him whatever they listed," "Two women shall be grinding at

(en) the mill," "Swine feeding on (en) the mountains," "The High Priest goes into the Temple with (en) the blood of others," "The Lord cometh with (en) ten thousand of His Saints," "He agreed with the labourers for (ek) a penny a day," "Let my two sons sit on (ek) Thy right hand, and (ek) Thy left." So in Matthew iii. 16, and in Mark i. 10, we read that our Lord, after His Baptism, went up straightway "out of the water"; and in one of those passages the Greek preposition is "ek" (out of) the water? Shall we then conclude that our Lord had been under the water—because He came up "ek" the water? No!—no more than we need conclude that our Lord's word in John xii. 32, about being lifted up "ek" the earth, meant that He had been under the ground. We might multiply examples almost endlessly, of the indeterminate way in which "en" and "ek" are used; so that they can neither of them ever be pushed to such an exclusive meaning as to prove immersion. But it is impossible in an elementary booklet like this to go exhaustively into the Greek. We must ask our readers to accept our assurance that there is no preposition, nor any other word, in the New Testament that necessarily implies that Baptism must be by immersion—and there is a great deal to show the contrary.

But, we may be asked, "Is there any Greek word that our Lord might have used for Baptize; that does mean an unmistakable 'dip'?"

Yes, there is the word "Embaptizo," compounded of "en" and "baptizo," and it occurs twice in the New Testament, and each time it is our Lord Who uses it. "He that dippeth (embaptizes) his hand with Me in the dish," "He to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it" (embaptized it).—(Matt. xxvi. 23, and Mark xiv. 20.)

Now if our Lord had told His disciples to go and "Embaptize" all nations, we should have had no choice but to immerse. But our Lord did not. He used the word which in actual Jewish practice generally meant to sprinkle, and so His Church has generally understood Him.

One last difficulty. Does not St. Paul say that in Baptism we are buried with Christ? And how can we be "buried" in Baptism unless we go under the water as Christ presumably went under the earth?

But unfortunately for our Baptist friends, Christ didn't go under the earth at all. Jewish burials were not under the soil as ours are. In our sense of the word, Christ was not "buried" at all. Jewish tombs were sometimes caves—natural ones or artificial; but oftener they were ornamental buildings, erected in people's own gardens, and containing shelves on which the body was placed and left to decay. So Joseph's tomb was an apartment above ground, a room hewn out of the rock, with a table or slab of rock in the centre on which the Sacred Body was laid; and on the morning of the First Day of the week, our Lord simply stepped off the table, or slab, and walked out of the room.

Examine St. Paul's teaching a little more closely, and you will find that he speaks of Christians as having died with Christ, been buried with Christ, raised from the dead with Christ, and made to sit with Christ in the Heavenly places. Ask our Baptist friends how all these happened, and they will tell you that the Burial and Resurrection happened when we went under the water and emerged from it; but that the Death and Ascension and Glorification are to be spiritually understood! O foolish friends! Cannot they see that all these experiences are spiritual—not some spiritual and some literal? They would see it easily enough if they hadn't a theory to support! Indeed this teaching about Immersion typifying the Burial and Resurrection of Christ—though a favourite idea in the Middle Ages—cannot be found earlier than the fourth century.

If the reader has had the baptismal water poured or sprinkled on him in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, he may rest assured that all has been done that the Lord requires.

CHAPTER IV.

A WORD TO PARENTS.

And now a word to you who have brought your children for Baptism. Will this be, as far as you are concerned, the beginning and end of their religious training? Shall you presently send them to Sunday School and then throw off all further responsibility, as if bringing them to Baptism and sending them to Sunday School were all that God expects and requires of you?

Alas! that is the case with thousands of parents. In thousands of homes the little ones are brought for Baptism; solemn promises are made on their behalf—promises for the fulfilment of which God will hold those parents responsible; afterwards they are taught some elementary prayers, and perhaps a little hymn, and presently sent to Sunday School, and the parents seem to persuade themselves that they have thus discharged their whole duty.

Reader, let it not be so with you; if you would not have to answer at the Last Day the terrible charge of having neglected the most solemn of all those responsibilities entrusted to you by God—the care of the souls of His baptized little ones, of the lambs of Christ's flock.

I would almost say to you, "Don't be too eager to bring your children to Baptism, unless you really mean to ask God's grace to follow up the Baptism with Christian up-bringing." Privileges are always followed by corresponding responsibilities. Don't be too anxious to claim the privileges if you only mean to incur the guilt of shirking the responsibilities.

Here are four things you must do if you would not be guilty of risking and perhaps ruining your children's souls:

First, you must pray—both for yourself and for them. Christian parents have this great privilege and power of prayer. "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." A lady once said to the writer, "I am one of seven, and we have all turned out well—boys and girls alike; there isn't a black-sheep in the family; and I put it all down to Mother's prayers. From the time the first baby was born, Mother told me that she used to give five minutes a day to pray for the baby."

And where is your parental love, and what kind of a Parent are you if you don't pray for your children? Should you not pray for your children regularly, earnestly; not merely in general terms, but constantly laying before God the particular individual needs, sins, tendencies and dangers of each child? Talk to God daily about their little tempers, their little disobediences, their sicknesses, their childish faults. Later on, talk to God about their schooling, about their courtships, about their paths in life. Use, first, this great privilege of prayer.

Secondly, bring them with you to Church. Don't wait until you think they can understand. Children learn a great deal, even though they don't understand it all. Think what a wonderful effect a quiet hour in the Gardens has upon you, even though you never learned a line of Botany, and don't know the names of more than a few plants. So the quiet hour in Church; the atmosphere of reverence, the sound of prayer and of singing—all reach the heart of the child, long before he understands a word that is said. If the service is too long for him, take him home before the sermon begins, even though that means some self-denial to yourself. But bring him, and let him unconsciously learn lessons of reverence and prayer.

What is there more beautiful than to see a whole family worshipping God together, even though, perhaps,

the mother and baby have to leave early. The duty and privilege of public worship are the second duty that you owe to your children.

Thirdly, Holy Communion. See that you come yourselves; and bring up your children to look forward to the day when they may accompany you. Let it be a part of your Christian married life that you come together—say, once a month, at least—to this sacred ordinance. Train your children to sit quietly in the church during the few minutes while you parents come forward to the Holy Table.

Teach them their Catechism, as well as their Bible; encourage them to look forward to Confirmation as opening the door for them to the Lord's Table.

Lastly, Christian parents, begin *now* the practice of all these duties. Don't procrastinate! Don't say, "There is plenty of time; we will begin all those things when the children are bigger." Unless you begin at once you will probably never begin at all; but you and your children will drift together, unless God's mercy awaken you, to that dreadful place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!

All too soon our time of discharging our duties will be ended. If day by day we neglect our duties they will become harder and harder, as our children become less easy to mould and train; and as our own Godless habits become more fixed.

But if, day by day, we ask God's Grace to discharge those duties faithfully, they will become easier and easier, as our children grow in the Love and Grace of God.

Let us pray that when death calls us to resign our charge, we may be able to do so with the thankful sense that we have done what lay in our power to ensure that our children shall not only be, by Baptism, members of Christ's Church Militant here on Earth; but also, by Conversion and Sanctification, members of His Church Triumphant in Heaven.

CHAPTER V.

A WORD TO THE READER.

You who read this little book are probably baptized; you have been received into the membership of the Christian Church, and have thereby received the right to share in all its privileges. Forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and Eternal Life have all been put within your reach.

Have you, from the bottom of your heart, thanked God for such great blessings, and rejoiced in them; and are you living the faithful, thankful life that should be lived by one who has been so highly privileged?

If so, thank God for His grace that has enabled you to live that Christian life; and be sure that He Who has begun that good work in you will carry it on to its completion in Heaven!

But if not—if, like so many, you are despising and neglecting them—be sure that those baptismal privileges which you are refusing will be the greatest witness against you in the Day of Judgment.

Responsibility is increased by knowledge and privilege. The servant who knew not his Lord's will, and therefore did it not, or did it imperfectly, shall be beaten with but few stripes; but the servant who knew it, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.

In your Baptism God offered and pledged, and still offers and pledges, to you three great blessings:—

First, Forgiveness of Sins—the wiping out of that old black debt of sin which stood between you and everything good, burdening your conscience, hindering your prayers, and paralysing all your efforts after right. In your Bap-

tism God offered and pledged to you the forgiveness of all that:

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”—Acts ii. 38.

“And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins; calling on the Name of the Lord.”

—Acts xxii. 16.

“I believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins.”—Nicene Creed.

Secondly, in your Baptism God offers and pledges to you the Gift of the Holy Spirit, changing your nature, and so enabling you to live as one of His children.

And, Thirdly, in your Baptism God offers and pledges to you Eternal Life.

All these are yours as soon as you accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour; and Baptism is given us as God’s sacramental pledge of them all. Have you eagerly and thankfully grasped all these promises and blessed God for them? And are you living a life of faith and prayer and conquest of sin?

If you are not, will you not claim, even to-day, the forgiveness, help and hope which are your Covenant privileges in Christ!

Ask for these Covenant blessings, humbly claim them in Christ—find experimentally how God answers your prayers—and go on to live as a son or daughter of Almighty God;—lest some day you should vainly wish that you had never been born in a Christian land, never heard the Gospel offer of salvation, never been admitted to the Christian Covenant.

But that wish can never be granted! You have heard the Gospel; you can never be as though you had not heard it. The responsibility has become yours: you can never get rid of it. May God give us grace to face it boldly, to thank Him for these glorious possibilities and to live up to them; until with the great army of the conquerors we pass from membership in the great Church Militant on Earth to membership in the greater Church Triumphant in Heaven.

APPENDIX.

THE WORD “REGENERATE.”

A difficulty in the use of our Prayer Book Service of Holy Baptism is sometimes found by those who do not understand the word “Regenerate” (“seeing now that the child is regenerate”). Let us see, then, what it means.

First, it does not mean “conversion,” or a change of heart. Modern writers do use the word in that sense, and we may freely admit that that is quite an allowable meaning. But that is only another example of the way in which words gradually acquire new meanings. Our Lord and St. Paul, and the older Christian writers, do not use the word in that sense, nor can that meaning be even forced into their words.

Our Lord promised His Apostles that in the “Palingenesis”—the Second Genesis, the New Beginning—(compare His promise, “Behold I make all things new, or anew”)—they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. There is nothing of conversion there—though the word in our Bible is Regeneration.

Then St. Paul says that Christ saved us by two things, by the Washing (literally Laver) of Regeneration, and by renewing of the Holy Ghost, *i.e.*, by the renewing which the Holy Spirit effects. St. Paul is here simply echoing our Lord’s words, that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”

The word "Regeneration," then (from a Latin root, "GENUS"—a race or family), is used to express that change of family or race which consists in transferring (in God's sight) the baptized person from the family or race ("Genus") of the First Adam, into the family or race ("Genus") of the Second Adam. To "Generate" is to bring into a family, to "Re-generate" is to bring into a new family. Born in sin, inheritors of the guilt and condemnation of the First Adam, they are in Baptism "regenerated" into the family of God; being received into the number of His Covenant people, the Christian Church. The Prayer Book itself explains its own use of the word when it bids us thank God:

"That it hath pleased Thee to Regenerate this child with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy Holy Church."

And again:

"Seeing that this child is Regenerate and Grafted into the Body of Christ's Church."

in each of which passages the latter phrases explain the former.

Conversion, a change of heart, is necessary if we would be saved; but Baptismal Regeneration is not Conversion, any more than Circumcision was Conversion. St. Paul would have been shocked if he had known that modern writers would accuse him of talking about "the washing ('Laver') of Conversion." It is simply the Lord's appointed way of formally receiving us and our children into the New Covenant. It is putting the child into the position of a shareholder in the great Christian Society—giving him the right to claim his share of every privilege and blessing that belong to the Christian Church.

SOME ELEMENTARY TEACHING ON CONFIRMATION.

After a brief treatise on Baptism, it seems right that a few words should be added on the allied subject of Confirmation.

In almost every parish, probably once in two or three years, there comes a time of preparation for Confirmation, when, to those who present themselves, efforts are made to impart specialised teaching in the Christian Faith. And we append this little paper in the hope that by God's blessing it may be found helpful both to our young people and to their parents; as a brief summary of English Church teaching with regard to Confirmation.

WHAT, THEN, IS CONFIRMATION.

First—Confirmation is the Ordinance of the Laying-on of hands by one of the Chief Ministers of the Church, as a sign and means of blessing.

It is practised (as the Prayer Book says) after the example of the Apostles; and to those who were baptized as infants it is the natural completion of their Baptism. And in the case of all (whenever baptized) it has come to be looked upon as the Door of Admission to Holy Communion.

It consists of two parts; which though to-day joined, were not so always; nor need always be joined. They are: (1) the Public Profession of Faith in Christ and of the intention to love and serve Him; and (2) the authoritative giving of God's blessing by the Laying-on of the hands of one of His chief Ministers.

It is as a sequel to the first (the Public Profession of Christ) that our young people are admitted to Holy Com-

munion. This part of Confirmation is therefore not needed in the case of persons who have been publicly baptized as adults. They may be admitted to Holy Communion immediately; as may be also any persons who, in any Christian Communion, have made Public Confession of their faith in Christ.

But the blessing conferred by the Laying-on of Hands will never be lightly esteemed by the earnest Christian; and even those who have been publicly baptized as adults—from whom, therefore, a repetition of their Profession of Faith is not of necessity required—will nevertheless do well to come with the others to the Confirmation service that they may receive God's blessing in the old Scriptural and Apostolic way.

In Hebrews vi., 2, Baptisms and the Laying-on of Hands are spoken of as among the Six Foundation Doctrines of the Christian Church; evidently indicating that they are meant to be of permanent obligation.

The whole Christian Church practises the Laying-on of hands at Ordinations; the English and Lutheran Churches, and churches in communion with them, practise it also at Confirmation. The Roman Church has substituted for it, we believe, a light blow on the cheek at Confirmation, as a sign that the Christian must be prepared to suffer with Christ. About the practice of the Greek Church we have no knowledge.

We are sometimes asked whether the passage in Hebrews vi., 2, about the laying-on of hands refers to Ordination or to Confirmation, or to both? It refers, we believe, to both. Ordination must, of course, be within its meaning, but it is difficult to imagine that the writer was referring to Ordinations only, because the laying-on of hands could then scarcely be included among Foundation Doctrines; since Ordination is no part of the normal experience of the vast majority of Christian people. We conclude, then, that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was really referring to some such service as what we call Confirmation.

Secondly—Confirmation is the natural completion of Infant Baptism.

How absolutely essential Baptism is in the Christian life we need not again point out. Christ said, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." In Rom. vi., 3; 1 Cor. xii., 13; Gal. iii., 27; Col. ii., 12, etc., Baptism is spoken of as the ordinance that specially unites us to Christ.

Now you who read this little book have been baptized, and therefore, as far as the outward ordinance goes, what Christ requires has been done. Your parents have already claimed for you, by Baptism, a membership in the Christian Church. Your Baptism, though you knew nothing about it, was a claiming on your behalf of all the blessings and privileges that belong to membership in the Christian Church.

But a Baptism without the consent of the baptized person is obviously not complete. Our Baptist friends will quickly point that out to you if you ask them. It is good and scriptural, because the Bible teaches us plainly that Christian parents have the right of claiming Covenant blessings for their children. (The promise is to you and your children.) But such Membership can scarcely be regarded as anything more than Conditional Membership, until the baptized person grows old enough to understand what Christ has done for him, how sins are forgiven, and what helps Christ has provided for the Christian life, and what awful possibilities of Salvation or Condemnation rests upon his choice. And when that time comes every person must make up his mind for himself—either to desire or to refuse membership in Christ's Church.

Now, Infant Baptism seems so clearly in accordance with the mind of Christ, and is so probably an apostolic practice, and is so certainly a practice of the primitive Church, that we dare not give it up. How then are we to overcome its obvious incompleteness? Why, plainly, by completing it: by supplying the consent that is wanting

Not by re-Baptism, which would be wrong (or rather impossible, since we can't be twice formally admitted to membership in the Christian Church), but by calling upon the baptized person to declare his consent and assent to his own Baptism.

"Do you consent to what was done for you at your Baptism? Do you acknowledge yourself bound to believe and to do as was then promised for you?" This is what is asked at Confirmation. "Do you acknowledge and ratify the promises and the profession then made on your behalf?" And the answer is "I DO!" Could you give any other answer? Could anyone possibly say "No! I don't intend to repent or to believe or to serve God as they promised I should"?

If anyone should say anything so wicked he would be an apostate from Christ—in danger of being lost for ever.

But many young people say, "I don't intend to deny my Baptism. I do intend to repent and believe and to serve God. But I won't come forward to acknowledge it publicly, in Confirmation." Why not? Are you ashamed of Christ? Are you ashamed of your Baptism? Or are you ashamed of your Church that you are so unwilling to fulfil her requirements?

Or does the trouble lie deeper? Are your good intentions so vague, so indefinite, so unformed and hazy that they are hardly worth calling intentions at all? An old proverb tells us that the Road to Hell is paved and made easy with good intentions. Take care then, reader, lest your vague intentions to serve Christ do not fall into that fatal class; but take earnest care that they shall crystallize at once into an open confession of Christ such as will set you once and for ever among His people.

Or are you afraid (some people are) that other men will sneer at you and call you extra-religious, etc.?

No doubt they will, many of them; but do you want a religion without any cross, any trial? Ah! too many would like to be Christians in secret—without seeming

peculiar, without bearing the shame of the Cross! They would like to be saved by Christ without the obligation of confessing Him before men! Dear Friend, none of us can do it. Neither does Christ offer to save us on any such terms. He requires confession and the bearing of the Cross as a condition of discipleship; and it is only public confession that gives vitality and reality to our discipleship. And Confirmation is one of the best possible opportunities of confessing what is, I hope, the desire of our hearts: namely, that we really want (in the words of the Baptismal promise), not to be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ Crucified, but manfully to fight under His banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to our lives' end.

* * * *

Thirdly—Confirmation is an important means of Grace; an important help in the Christian life.

The Laying-on of hands is an ordinance of both the Old and New Testaments, and blessing is generally definitely recorded as connected with it. (Gen. xlviii., 13 to 20; Numbers xxvii., 18 to 23, and Deut. xxxiv., 8; Mark x., 16; Acts viii., 17; ix., 17; xiii., 3; xix., 6; 1 Tim. iv., 14; 2 Tim. i., 6.) While some bodies of Christians have given it up, our Church has, in God's providence, always clung to it as to an ordinance handed down to us from Apostolic times, a trust for us to hand on to future generations.

We dare not give up either Infant Baptism or Confirmation, or the Three Orders of the Ministry, or the observance of the Christian Sunday instead of the Jewish Seventh Day; nor anything else that has come down to us from apostolic teaching and practice; even though for none of these can direct Scriptural authority be shown, and although each of these has been given up by this body of Christians or that.

"By laying-on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given" (Acts viii., 18). And who will dare to say

that God no longer gives the Holy Spirit in any ordinance where the great gift is humbly and faithfully asked and sought, and especially in this ordinance which we derive from Scriptural and Apostolic authority.

Confirmation does not increase your responsibility.

We have known anxious parents to say, "I don't like putting such a responsibility on my child!" And young people have said, "I don't like to take such a responsibility upon myself! You have to be so very good if you are confirmed, and if you come to Holy Communion; and I am afraid I mightn't be able to live up to my responsibility!"

Not so very good, dear reader; but so very much in earnest. You must take your Christian profession as a serious matter. You must no longer trifle with Christ, nor with your own salvation. You must no longer say, "O yes, I will go to Church some day! I will turn over a new leaf and become a real Christian some day!"

Confirmation means that you say to Christ, "Lord Jesus, I am Thy servant. Give me grace to be Thy better servant. Give me the joy of Thy service; give me the victory over sin; feed me and strengthen me spiritually with Thine own precious Body and Blood, broken and shed for me; help me so to love and serve Thee here, that when this life is over I may enter rejoicingly into the higher life, and higher love, and higher service, which Thou hast destined for me from before the world was."

* * * *

That is the unspeakable blessing that Confirmation means; but Confirmation does not increase your responsibility. Every smallest child is responsible according to its tiny knowledge; as well as every man and woman. Responsibility increases automatically and inevitably as knowledge and power increase. Your responsibility has been increasing every year that you have lived, as your knowledge and your ability have been increasing; and it

will never cease while mind and reason last. Nothing on earth can ever alter your responsibility to do your duty as God gives you knowledge and power.

But what Confirmation does is, that it opens out to you a channel of fresh blessing and power, wherewith to discharge your responsibility. The blessing of God's Servant means a supply of spiritual strength for your spiritual needs, and the Holy Communion, spread before you Sunday by Sunday, means just what it is called, "Communion with Christ," that from Him you may gain daily grace for daily needs.

Come, then, without frivolity, but also without fear. "According to your faith be it unto you." Come to Confirmation believing nothing, expecting nothing, and you shall receive nothing! But come in faith, asking from God a great measure of His best blessings, and you may be sure that God will give you even more than you ask.

Thou art coming to a King!
Large petitions with thee bring!
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much!

A HYMN FOR THE CONFIRMED.

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou for ever near me,
My Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide.

Oh let me feel Thee near me;
The world is ever near ;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

Oh, let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
Oh speak to re-assure me,
To hasten, or control;
Oh speak, and make me hear Thee,
Thou Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee,
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end!
Oh give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.

Oh let me see Thy footmarks
And in them plant mine own:
My hope to follow duly
Is in Thy strength alone.
Oh guide me, call me, draw me,
Uphold me to the end;
And then in Heaven receive me,
My Saviour and my Friend. Amen.

—*Rev. John E. Bode.*

