

them. Moreover, Peter, in the house of Cornelius, at Cesarea, said: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10, 47.) These had received the Holy Spirit, though not yet baptized; but they had, of course, repented.

Exegetically, therefore, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be conditioned upon baptism; and this also determines the question of grammatical dependent relation. Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit not being dependent upon baptism, neither will remission of sins, being in precisely the same consequential relation, be dependent upon baptism. There remains, therefore, its dependence upon repentance; which is, of course, fatal to the claim of baptismal remission.

That remission of sins is in no sense conditioned upon submitting to the rite of baptism is still further plain from the use of the word rendered "remission."

The word is aphesis, and it occurs in the New Testament seventeen times. It is nine times translated "remission," six times "forgiveness," once "deliverance," and once "liberty." According to Christ's commission, the order is "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:17). According to Peter (Acts 5:31), Christ was exalted "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." And Peter (Acts 10:43): "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." While Peter was speaking "the Holy Spirit fell on them which heard the word," vs. 44. And this was before baptism.

Of course, a true belief includes repentance. Scriptural saving faith is not, as chemists will say, a simple, but a compound. Paul, preaching in the synagogue at Pisidia, says: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:28, 29).

The only place besides Acts 2:38, where aphesis has even a possible connection with baptism, is in the account of John's ministry (Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3), where the Baptist came "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," and there it is repentance and not baptism that secures forgiveness, baptism being simply the token that repentance has taken place.

The thief on the cross certainly had not time for baptism, and yet he was saved.

At the beginning of the preaching of the gospel it was explicitly stated that whosoever believed in Christ should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:15, 16, 18, 36; vs. 24). When the Philippian jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). It surely is another gospel that makes baptism, or any act whatever on the part of the individual except believing (which substantially includes, or draws in its train, repentance), to be a prerequisite to remission of sins.

It may be asked, Why, if the foregoing be true, is baptism mentioned at all in Acts 2:38?

It should be remembered that in the days of the apostles, the first open, official sign that a person had become a Christian was baptism. It was equivalent to an oath of surrender and allegiance to Jesus Christ. It was needful that initial acts be brought close together. There was need for haste, as the tense of the verbs indicates. "Repent," "be baptized," are not in the present tense, as, with our manner of

speech, we would expect them to be, but in the aorist. Says Alford in his comment upon this verse, "The aorist denotes speed, a definite, sudden act; the present tense, a habit more gradual, as that first moral and legal change would necessarily be." Green's "Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek New Testament" puts it this: "Aorist (at once)." Hence the call for immediate baptism as well as immediate faith and repentance. It is the aorist that is used in Paul's case, Acts 22:16.

A proper printing of Acts 2:38 would relieve the subject of all difficulty, and also relieve of all excuse for what we now see to be a mistaken exegesis. As is well known, the lines of the early Greek manuscript were written "solid," i. e., without punctuation marks or even division into words. Division into words, punctuation, parentheses, and the like, have since been made to meet what are thought to be the sense requirements. Printed, as truth demands, thus:

"Repent (and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ) for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The grammatical relationship would be indicated, and the doctrine involved would be made plain.

Baptism is not the instrument, means, agent, by which remission of sins is secured to the repentant believer, but it is the sacramental or official token, sign, seal, certification, that forgiveness has already taken place.

The question, then, "Is baptism essential to forgiveness of sins?" must, therefore, be emphatically answered in the negative.

Selections

THE HOTEL BAR, A LIABILITY.

By Daniel A. Poling,
Associate President of the United Society of
Christian Endeavor.

Recently General Secretary Shaw and the writer were the guests of a New York hotel. In the course of a conversation one of the managers of this great institution, which has more than fifteen hundred rooms and every night houses a population equal to that of a thriving young city, said, "The hotel bar is a liability and not an asset."

His statement was provoked by our having assured him that in case his hostelry became the headquarters of a Christian Endeavor Convention he must not expect to receive from his Christian Endeavor guests certain revenues that are commonly supposed to be a large part of the profit of a modern hotel.

After making the rather surprising statement referred to, and perhaps perceiving the mental reservation with which his hearers received it, the young man proceeded quickly to prove his remarks. He went on to say that there was a time when first-class hotels made "real money" on the bar, but that the license fees have been heavily increased during the past few years, and the selling hours steadily shortened. More serious, however, than legislative actions against the bar has been the effect of the rapid change in public sentiment.

"Five years ago," the manager continued, "nearly every business transaction in Greater New York was closed over the tables, but today not even a baseball trade is sealed with drinks. Five years ago nine-tenths of our business concerns recognized as legitimate and necessary expense claims for drinking bills contracted by traveling salesmen. To-day I do

not know of a single firm that would allow its representatives to buy drinks for a prospective customer. I hardly make an exception of the liquor trade itself. This hotel won't talk to a man who tries to talk business to it with liquor on his breath. In the first place, he isn't in shape to talk business, and in the second place we don't like the smell."

The manager went on to say that the bar they were "compelled" to maintain because every other first-class hotel in the city had one was a source of worry and a nuisance, and that, if he could bring about national prohibition by casting his vote for it, he would vote "dry" at the next election.

"Why," he declared, "a few years ago when a man became 'loud' at an exclusive entertainment or ball, he was just a 'good fellow,' and his vulgarities were laughed down until he had to be carried out. But now, when some scion of aristocracy takes on a full cargo at the hotel bar by frequent excursions away from the floor of the reception room, he becomes at once obnoxious, is called a fool, and the hotel is disgraced. The hotel man is always bordering on nervous prostration when society honors him with her presence, for he cannot afford to have a scene, and he can hardly afford to throw out a maudlin millionaire."

One salesroom of the hotel in which we were entertained is rented to a drug corporation for \$110,000 a year. The barroom of this same hotel, which has an equal rental value, nets less than the amount above stated, and is a source of constant annoyance.

The manager brought a distressing arraignment against the women of ultra society when he said that men are drinking less while women are drinking more, and that the hotel currents of a great city carry far more tipsy women than drunken men. We are glad that God made so many "just common folks."

When our manager friend brought his very interesting and very unusual remarks to a conclusion by earnestly insisting that every first-class hotel in New York City is sick of liquor and anxious to part with it, we fully believed him. And we are glad to believe that his day of deliverance is at hand.—Christian Endeavor World.

TELL SOMEBODY.

Let me tell you something, comrade,
That I've learned along the way:
If the blessings that life brings you
With each swiftly passing day
Seem as hardly worth the counting,
Since so small are they—so few—
You can double them by sharing
With the comrade next to you.

Have you heard a kind word spoken
To another in his need?
Tell your neighbor all about it,
And the little simple deed
Will make warm your heart in telling,
And the hearts of those who hear
Will be gladdened by the knowledge,
And their lives will share the cheer.

Oh, the little wayside blessings
That we squander every day!
If we shared them with each other,
They would glorify the way.
They would grow, as 'neath the sunshine
Flowers in summer days unfold,
Till each one of them has blossomed
Into blessings manifold.

—Eben E. Rexford.

Who is a Christian? I answer, the man who, taught by Christ, looks forward not only to heaven, but to a new earth, in which righteousness shall reign, and from which all the unrighteousness of every kind with which the earth is at present disfigured shall be banished; and who, trusting to the grace of Christ, is doing his part to make that good time come.