qualifications which here follow each tern  
—repentance **from dead works**, faith **on God**. The **dead** works are taken by all  
the patristic expositors to mean *sinful* works. And so the great majority of Commentators also. And the justification of such an expression as *dead words* for *sins* is variously given: as  
*cansing death eternal:* as *polluting, like  
the touch of a dead body* [so Chrysostom].  
But neither of these meanings is borne  
out: the former being contrary to usage, the  
latter far-fetched and unlikely. It is much  
letter to take the epithet in its common  
and obvious meaning; *dead, devoid of  
life* and power: compare *“dead faith,”*  
James ii. 17, 26, and *“dead sin,”* Rom. vii. 8; and in the references, St. Paul speaks, Eph. v. 11, in nearly the same  
sense: *“the unfruitful works of darkness.”* But such dead or lifeless works  
again may be variously understood: either  
of the works of the flesh in the unconverted man, or of the Jewish works of  
the law which could not give life. Considering the readers and object of the  
Epistle, it is much more likely that the  
latter are here meant; those works by  
which they sought to set up a righteousness of their own, before they submitted themselves to God's righteousness. The  
best explanation of **faith on God** is found  
in St. Paul’s language, Rom. iv. 5. And  
by this, our expression is defined to mean,  
*full trust, rested on God, that He has  
fulfilled his promises in Christ.* We may  
observe, that the things mentioned arrange  
themselves in groups of pairs, of which  
this is the first), **of the doctrine of washings** (not *baptisms:* this is a different form of the word from that generally used  
in the New Test. for both Christian  
baptism and that of John. In Mark vii. 4  
ch. ix. 10, Col. ii. 12, the word is used,  
as here, of washing, or lustration with  
water. On the meaning, see below. On  
the construction, see in my Greek Test.  
As regards the plural, **washings**, it has  
been very variously taken for the singular:  
but none of the accounts of it seems to  
reach the point so well as that given  
above, which includes in the idea those  
various washings which were under the law,  
the baptism of John and even Christian baptism also perhaps included, the nature of which, and their distinctions from one  
another, would naturally be one of the  
fundamental and primary objects of teaching to Hebrew converts. When it is  
objected to the view [as e.g. by Stuart]  
that the doctrine of Jewish washings would  
have had nothing to do with the elements  
of Christian teaching, we may fairly say  
that such objection is is brought in mere  
thoughtlessness. The converts being Jews,  
their first and most obviously elementary  
instruction would be, the teaching them  
the typical significance of their own ceremonial law in its Christian fulfilment) **and of laying on of hands** (the doctrine of laying on of hands, like that of washings, not being confined to any one special rite, will  
mean, the reference and import of all that  
imposition of hands which was practiced  
under the law, and found in some eases its  
continuance under the Gospel. By laying  
on of hands, the sick were healed, Mark  
xvi. 18; Acts ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8; compare 2 Kings v. 11; Matt. ix. 18, &c.; officers and teachers of the Church were admitted to their calling, Acts vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; Num. viii. 10; xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9; converts were fully admitted into the Christian Church after  
baptism, Acts viii.17; xix. 6; 2 Tim. i.6.  
And there can be little doubt that it is  
mainly to this last that the attention of  
the readers is here called, as the Writer is  
speaking of the beginning of Christian  
teaching), **and** [**of**] **resurrection of the dead  
and eternal judgment** (these words, as well  
as the foregoing clause, depend on **doctrine**.  
These also were points of Jewish doctrine,  
confirmed and brought into clearer light  
by the Gospel. Some have supposed **the  
resurrection of the dead** to refer only to  
the righteous, as in John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54,  
—**eternal judgment** only to the wicked.  
But it is more probable, in a passage of  
such very general reference, that the Writer  
speaks generally, without any such distinction here in view, of the two doctrines: of the *“resurrection of life” and the* “resurrection of judgment” of John v. 29. And it is probable that he uses **judgment**  
in the same indefinite meaning: see Act xxiv. 25.

**eternal**, probably as part of  
the proceedings of eternity, and thus bearing