

**WHAT MUST
WE DO TO**



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“WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?” What are the conditions which we are required to fulfil, in order to a participation in the great salvation to be revealed at the coming of the Lord? Let it be premised, that such a question pre-supposes a disposition on the part of the questioner, to receive gladly any conditions which the great Lawgiver may think fit to impose. It indicates a conviction that the boon to be bestowed is at the absolute disposal of the Giver.

It is an admission that the petitioner has no natural claim upon it, and that the Bestower (God) has the right to say upon what conditions it will be granted. In fact, when sincerely put, it shows the questioner to be in that childlike frame of mind which Jesus refers to when he says, "Whosoever shall not *receive the kingdom of God as a little child*, shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke xviii, 17). This is not the mental condition of moralists, who think that goodness of character *entitles* a man to future reward; nor is it the condition of those who decry the belief of the Gospel, which God has appointed as the initial "power unto salvation," to everyone believing (Rom. i, 16).

Both these forms of opposition have their origin in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This may not seem to be the case at first sight, but thorough reflection will shew it. The immortal soul doctrine has this effect: it causes the believer thereof to look upon every human being as the inevitable subject of positive eternal destiny; and as their theology recognises only two places and two classes as related to that eternal destiny, viz., heaven and hell, and the inhabitants thereof respectively, he necessarily assigns all mankind, in every age and country - of every state, stature, and condition -- to one or other of those places.

Now, it is not conceivable to the ordinary orthodox believer that God should predicate entrance into heaven upon conditions which would have the effect of shutting out from it the great majority of mankind, or that He

should in any case consign to hell those myriads of "good" people, who, though ignorant of the gospel, are not only harmless, but in some cases, positively admirable in the characters they develop. Hence the belief forces itself upon the mind, that general goodness and moral worth will be sure of acceptance, without reference to the understanding and belief of the gospel. Some even go the length of believing that all mankind will ultimately be saved. All this comes in logical consequence from the belief of a doctrine which (imputing to man an immortal nature) makes it inevitable that every class of mankind should be in a state of either eternal happiness or eternal misery. But take away immortal soulism, and what do we find? We behold all mankind perishing under a process of dissolution, from which they are unable to deliver themselves.

"Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v, 12). It has constituted them a race of mortals, incapable, in the absence of some divine prearrangement, of elevating themselves (by any act of their own) above the condition in which they are involved. Hence, morality cannot save. To know what can save, we must listen to the apostles. Jesus Christ was sent for the purpose of *opening a way* of salvation and having opened the way, he sent his apostles to tell man kind *how it might be entered*.

The object in sending this message to the nations was not to convert them *en masse*, and bring about the millennium as many erroneously suppose. Yahweh (God's name) never proposed such a result from the preaching of the gospel. Had He done so, we should have found a different state of things existing in this late period of the world's history. It is now nearly nineteen hundred years since the gospel was introduced into the world, and, instead of the world being converted through its influence, "the whole world lieth in wickedness" now as much as ever it did, though the wickedness may have changed form and hue somewhat. Men will greedily run after any kind of foolishness that will tickle the fancy and pander to the fleshly mind; but when the gospel is "reasoned out of the Scriptures" for the commendation of their judgment, and the obedience of a thereby enlightened conscience, they pronounce the matter "dry" and turn listlessly away, as from a thing of no interest.

Accepting Peter as a competent authority in the case, we find him reported by James to have said that the object which Yahweh had in view, in visiting the Gentiles, was "to TAKE OUT OF THEM *a people for his name*" (Acts xv, 14). This is all, then, that is proposed in the preaching of the Gospel - the

gathering out of "out of every kindred, and people, tongue, and nation," of all generations, a people who shall constitute that great manifested name in the earth, when "there shall be one Lord in all the earth, and *His name* (in which all who bear it will be included) ONE." The gospel is, in fact, an invitation to all who accept it, to form part of that name, by putting it on in the appointed way; but the class who effectually comply is very small. "Many are called, but FEW ARE CHOSEN." "*Many shall strive to enter in, and shall not be able.*" Jesus gave his commission to his disciples in the following words:-

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark xvi, 15, 6).

Here is a clear indication of the principle on which the "people for His name" were to be selected. The gospel was to be proclaimed, and those to whom it was proclaimed, were required to believe it. Without compliance, there could be no salvation; for whosoever would not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child should in nowise enter therein. The gospel was thus constituted the agency of salvation; hence, Paul styles it "*the gospel of your salvation*" (Eph. i, 13). He also says "*(the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH*" (Rom. i, 16); and again, "It pleased God **BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING** *to save them that believe*" (1 Cor. i. 21). Hence, if any man desires to be saved, the very first thing he has to do is to believe the gospel.

Cornelius was instructed by an angel to "send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, *who shall tell thee words WHEREBY thou and thy house shall be saved*" (Acts xi, 13, 14). And the Philippian jailer was told by Paul, in answer to his enquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" - "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, thou shalt be saved, and thy house*" (ch. xvi, 30, 31). Believing on the Lord Jesus, and believing the gospel, are exactly the same thing; for the gospel is made up of glad tidings concerning the Lord Jesus Christ: and if a man believe the gospel, he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. If he is ignorant of the gospel, he cannot believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for "the Lord Jesus Christ" is not the mere name of the Saviour as a personage, but a grand doctrinal symbol, which can only be understood by those who are acquainted with the gospel in its amplitude.

The first thing a man has to do, then, in order to gain salvation, is to believe the gospel. To do this he must know the gospel, for as Paul says, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard"? (Rom. x, 14). Knowledge must always precede belief; for a man cannot believe that of which he has not previously been informed. Hence, the first inquiry on the part of man or woman anxious to be saved will be, **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?** Until they know this, they cannot go on to the second stage of *believing unto salvation*. The gospel is styled "the one faith," because it is made up of things which require faith to receive them - the act of the mind by which these are apprehended being metonymically put for the things themselves. It is laid down as a principle, "*Without faith IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD*" (Heb. xi, 6), and it is affirmed of believers, "*Ye are saved through faith*" (Eph. ii, 8), and "the just shall live *by faith*," (Heb. x. 38). Now this faith, in scriptural usage, is not a mere abstract reliance on the omnipotence of Yahweh, but the belief of specific promise. It is said that "faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness" (Rom. iv, 9). Now let us note the character of this righteousness acquiring faith:-

"He staggered not at THE PROMISE OF GOD through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded that WHAT HE HAD PROMISED, he was also able to perform" (Rom. iv, 20, 21).

Hence, it is said that *faithful* Abraham was constituted *the father of them that BELIEVE*, by which it is evident that scriptural faith is *belief in the promises of God*; and from this we see that the Gospel which must be believed in order to obtain salvation, is *made up of unfulfilled promises as its chief element*.

What is the Gospel which is so composed? As summarised by Luke, in Acts viii, 12, where he describes the preaching of Philip to the Samaritans, it is "**THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.**" It thus appears to be a compound of two elements - the one relating to the kingdom of God, and the other to the doctrinal import of "THE NAME" of Jesus, as affecting our individual salvation. Both of these must be known; and each must be understood before saving faith is possible.

Concerning the things of "the Name," we are introduced to them in Acts iv, 12; "There is none other NAME under heaven given among men, whereby

we must be saved," - which is equivalent to saying, that *there is only one name so given*, and that is, the name of Jesus the Christ. How this name has been "given" is illustrated in the events recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Begotten by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was "*made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Cor. i, 30). He manifested in human nature a character with which the Father was well pleased. In his crucifixion, flesh and blood were sacrificially slain, and God's righteousness, in His dealings with Adamic nature, declared. In resurrection, the slain sacrifice was accepted, and Jesus lives, to die no more - a name which men may take upon themselves, and stand before God, accepted in him.

The way by which believers may take this name upon them exists in the ordinance of baptism, which, according to the divinely appointed formula, introduces "*into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*" Says the Apostle, "*As many of you as have been baptised INTO Christ have PUT ON Christ*" (Gal. iii, 27). Having put on Christ, they have put on the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as Jesus is a manifestation of the Father, in the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit. Those who are thus invested no longer stand in the nakedness of the natural man, but are "*found in HIM, not having their own righteousness . . . but the righteousness which is of God, BY FAITH.*"

We must, therefore, understand "the things concerning the kingdom of God AND the name of Jesus Christ," before we can understand and believe the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. The one without the other is of no efficacy. To be ignorant of "the things concerning the kingdom of God," is to be ignorant of the gospel. A man may be well acquainted with the historical facts of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; but unless he understands them in their *true* doctrinal significance, and in *their connection with " the glory that shall follow,"* his knowledge of them conveys to him no enlightenment as to God's purposes.

This is peculiarly the case where the knowledge in question is associated with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; for it then ceases to have any scriptural significance or efficacy whatever. This will be seen if we realise that Christ died to purchase *life*. "*He brought life and immortality to light*", by the sacrifice which he submitted to. By the grace of God, he tasted death for every man (Heb. ii, 9). But if we regard immortality as the essential attribute of human nature, we displace the sacrifice of Christ from

its Scriptural position. We destroy its character as a *means of securing life*, and are compelled to transform it into that anomalous doctrine of pulpitology which regards it as substitutionary suffering of divine wrath, in order to save immortal souls from the eternal tortures of hell! - a suffering, which, after all, according to orthodox teaching, is awfully inadequate; for countless myriads of immortal souls, according to that system of teaching, still continue unreconciled, and are fated to spend an eternity of existence in raging, blaspheming torture!

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul must be removed from the mind before gospel truth can obtain a proper entrance, for it nullifies the whole system, by obliterating its foundation doctrine, that "by one man came *death*," and destroys its efficacy by entirely diverting attention from the salvation which it offers, and directing it to a reward which God has never promised. In fact, its effect is to pervert, vitiate, poison, nullify, and destroy everything pertaining to God's truth. It sends its jarring vibrations through the entire system of revelation, introducing confusion and absurdity where otherwise reign peace, order, harmony, and beauty. Theologically, it is an unclean spirit, of which a man must be exorcised, before he can become clothed and in his right mind in relation to divine truth. Previously to this, his mind is filled with truth neutralising doctrine, which effectually prevents the entrance of a single ray of the truth.

The point at which we have arrived, is, that one of the fundamental conditions of salvation is belief of certain definite matters of teaching contained in the gospel, styled "the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." Those "things" involve the whole circle of divine truth. They embrace the knowledge of the Creator himself; our relation to Him as sinful, worthless creatures; the teaching concerning Jesus Christ; Yahweh's dealings with our race, His promises, the means which he has provided for salvation, our duties towards Him, etc. What more fitting than that such a knowledge, and such a faith, should be required as a condition of fitness for an eternal existence of service based thereupon? It is only the merest ignorance that opposes "creed" as a means of present improvement and future salvation. How can the moral nature be developed without appropriate stimulus? If a man have nothing definite to hope for, how can his hope be active? If he have no particular object of faith presented to him, how can his faith be exercised? The very beauty of doctrinal Christianity is, that it supplies to the mind just exactly what is needed to draw out and satisfy its higher instincts.

Suppose a generation of untutored men who had never heard of the gospel - whose minds had never been exercised in hope of the promised salvation, whose affections had never been drawn out towards God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the saints past and present; whose natures had never been chastened into submission to divine will; but who might be amiable enough - suppose such were admitted into the kingdom of God, at the coming of Christ, what happiness could result to them, or glory to God? They would be thoroughly in-appreciative. They would fail to experience the gratitude which years of definite expectation will create in the bosom of the saints, and be incapable of giving that glory to God which will burst with spontaneous outflow from the mouths and hearts of those who have been "looking for that blessed hope."

God purposes a higher consummation than this: He is making ready "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light,*" (1 Peter ii. 9). And this people He is preparing on the principle of "putting on the new man, *which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him*" (Col. iii. 10), "*filling them with THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*" (Col. i. 9). The means by which He is effectually accomplishing this work is the preaching of the gospel, and though the "enlightened" may sneer at "creed" and "points of doctrine," and the "charitable" may enlarge the breadth of their liberality, even to the obliteration of every distinctive feature from the system to which they profess attachment, no one whose mind is enlightened in the Word will be misled by their cavillings. "*The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*".

Nothing will serve a man in the end, but an exact knowledge of the will of God as contained in the Scriptures, and faithfully carrying out the same. The wise may protest against the "dogmatism" and "bigotry" involved in such a course, but the enlightened conscience will approve. "Our faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the word of God." Jesus has said (and let every man give ear!) "The words that I speak unto you, *THEY are spirit, and THEY are life*" (John vi. 63). That is, the gospel which he approved was "the power of God unto salvation," and therefore, "*the words of eternal life,*" as they are designated by Peter (John vi, 68). And saith the Lord Jesus:-

"He that rejecteth me, and *receiveth not my words*, hath one that judgeth him: **THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN,**

the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

Here, then, is the standard by which our position will be measured when the great testing time arrives; and whether judged "uncharitable" or not, it is better to walk in "the *narrow way*" of the Words' exact teaching, with little company, than to be found in the "broad road" of either vague speculation or popular heresies, which the great multitude perambulate. The former leadeth unto life: the other leadeth to certain destruction:--

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of MY words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory*" (Luke ix. 23-26).

"If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, *let him become a fool that he may be wise*, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. iii. 18, 19).

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

The all in all of "true religion" in these modern days, is fast resolving itself into abstract sincerity, goodness of character, piety of sentiment, etc.; belief in "doctrinal point" is at a discount. Only let a man be sincere in goodness of intention, and live a moral and exemplary life, and be he ever so ignorant, or mistaken as to the cardinal points of religious truth, he is sure of a goodly share in any inheritance that may be in store for the deserving; this is popular sentiment.

Now it is either true or false - safe or delusive. If it is true and safe, then the Scriptures are of no authority. It really comes to this. No man can consistently profess a belief in the divine authority of the Bible, and hold this loose sentiment on such a momentously important subject; because the Bible uniformly and distinctly narrows down salvation to a certain arbitrary "narrow way" which few find, or care to walk in when found. Definite

conditions are stated, and compliance required, involving something more than general goodness of moral nature: and all who are intentionally or circumstantially on the side of non-compliance are excluded from the blessing.

The issue is, therefore, direct between the Bible and unbelief. We are on one side or the other in reference to this question; there is no neutral ground. If we have any expectation of future perfection at all, it is because of promises contained in the Bible; for we can draw no expectation from any other source. If, then, we desire, or even dimly conceive it possible to realise this perfection, it can only be on the ground of a full compliance with the conditions upon which it is predicated; for what other ground of confidence have we?

If on the other hand, we discard the Bible altogether from the account as a book of questionable authority, we are without hope of any kind. There is no middle position. If a man hope to attain to the salvation of the Bible, he must comply with the Bible's own terms. It is not at his command on any terms he pleases. It is not purchasable by the shabby virtue of human character. It is special in relation to human life; and the means of attainment are, therefore, special. If you are not pleased with the speciality - "the contractedness of the affair - " you are at liberty to let it alone; you will not be compelled to take a part in a thing so distasteful to you; you will be allowed to make the most you can out of your ephemeral mortality, with all its petty concerns, which you hug with so much desire. Only remember that you will have nothing to hope for in the future, and that you *may have something to answer for*, in contemptuously refusing the preferred conditional goodness of God.

You may begin to talk about justice requiring the recognition and rewards of your virtue in a future life. Do you know whereof you affirm? On what principle do you make out your claim? You have uniformly refrained from crime; you have made it a practice to restore lost property to its owner; to bestow charity upon the poor; to show kindness to your equals. Very good. Have you thereby established a title to another life? A claim upon reward? Nay, my friend, philosopher as thou art, thou oughtest to know that such a course of virtue is, in its bearing, restricted to the life that thou *hast*. Thou hereby givest action to the noble qualities that distinguish thee from the brutes, and dost the more nearly approach the happiness of which thy nature is capable; but thou dost not necessarily secure a right to that other life, which is something special in relation to thy poor mortal existence, growing

not out of it in natural course, but (to be conditionally) superadded to it by the creative power of God. It is vain for thee thus to hope for it as a reward of thy natural virtue. It is deposited in Christ Jesus for thy benefit; if thou wilt accept him, thou shalt have life (1 John v. 10, 12); otherwise, thy poor virtue will profit thee nothing, but will vanish with thyself from the creation of God.

That there should be so much philosophical hostility to *belief* is matter for surprise. Belief is no invention of creed makers; it is the natural, constant, essential act of finite minds. We cannot exist without it. If we don't believe in religious creeds, we believe in something. We cannot help believing. It is the mainspring of all intelligent action - the source of every sensation of happiness and woe. What makes a man toil all day in the factory? Because he *believes* he will get his wages; would he do so if he did not? Why is the condemned criminal so overwhelmed and dejected? Because he *believes* his death will take place on an early day; but let him be told that a reprieve has arrived, and he flies into ecstasies of joy. Why? Because he *believes* he shall escape the doom that was impending over him. Our whole commercial system is based on belief, and the moment that society begins to be distrustful, that is, *unbelieving*, then we have a panic, and all the evils that come in its train. So in matters religious: belief is the first principle, the foundation of practical faith, the source of spiritual ecstasy, the cause of consistent action.

Now, what is belief? It is the assent of the mind to definite points of information. Before belief can take place, the mind must be informed; that is, it must first know or be aware of the subject of belief. Hence, knowledge (though only in the limited sense of information) is the foundation of belief. This principle is practically admitted in things secular; how inconsistent, then, to deny its importance in things religious. How foolish to talk down "doctrinal points" as of no moment. Those "points", so much disparaged by the wise men of this generation, are, in reality, so many items of information on which our belief concerning the future is founded, and to run them down as undeserving of an intelligent man's attention, is to insult his judgement, and in reality, betray unbelief.

If they are untrue, they are something more than trivial, and deserve to be scouted; but if they are true, it is folly of a type bordering on insanity to treat them with indifference. The issue, therefore, lies between belief and unbelief - not between "bigotry" and "charity". Religious "liberality" sounds well, but

what is it? It means indifference, for yourself and neighbour, to what God has required at your hands. Liberality is pleasanter for this life, than "the narrow way". In the broader road, the way of the world there are numerous fleeting pleasures in which myriads of souls are delightfully escorted to destruction. God grant that some in the reading of these pages, may be enticed from the worldly throng, and induced to cast in their lot with a humbler people, who, in the spirit of profoundest regard for the word of the living God, are seeking to do His will according to His revealed requirements.

Belief of the Gospel is the first condition of salvation. This, however, is not all. A man may believe in all the glorious promises of God, and yet not be a participator in them. He must be baptised, as we have seen: "He that believeth, *and is baptised*, shall be saved."

This is a feature of the apostolic system which is pretty generally ignored by the great body of those who claim the Christian name in the present day. How extraordinary that a loud profession of Christian allegiance should be allied to systematic violation of one of the plainest of Christian precepts! It cannot be said that there is any ambiguity in the manner in which the duty is set forth in the new Testament; for we find that Christ's general announcement on the subject is copiously illustrated both by exegetical comment and recorded example.

On the day of Pentecost, for instance, when the stricken-in-heart exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? " the answer was, "Repent and *be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ*," and the narrative tells us that "*They that gladly received his word WERE BAPTISED*: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 37, 38, 41). Here is both precept and example. We are told in Acts viii. 12, that "*when the (Samaritans) believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, THEY WERE BAPTISED BOTH MEN AND WOMEN*." Again, in the case of Cornelius and his companions, we read in Acts x. 47, 48, that at the close of their interview with Peter, that apostle said, "*Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised*, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? *And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord*". Again, in the case of Paul himself, we find the same course adopted after his conversion. "And now, why tarriest thou? " said Ananias to him (Acts xxii. 16); "*arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name*

of the Lord." "AND HE AROSE AND WAS BAPTISED" (Acts ix. 18). Then we have the case of the Philippian jailer, recorded in Acts xvi., in which the same lesson is enforced by the powerful argument of example. It is stated in v, 33, "*(He) was baptised, he and all his, straightway.*" Then we have to remember that even the Lord Jesus himself submitted to this act of obedience. We read:--

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, *to be baptised of him;* but John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. *Then he suffered him*" (Matt. iii. 13-15).

Thus New Testament examples (numerous and decisive) shew that baptism in water was a rite attended to by all who believed the truth in early times. Surely what was necessary or appropriate in the first Christians, is just as necessary and appropriate (and more so, if there be any difference) in Christians of the nineteenth century. It is by no means fashionable, however to take this view. The generality of professing Christians argue against the necessity of baptism in their case, and prefer to risk neglect on their own responsibility. It is clear, however, that the apostles looked upon the act in a much more serious light. Paul, in the words already quoted, is very expressive on the subject:

"As many of you as have been baptised *into Christ*, HAVE PUT ON CHRIST (Gal. iii, 27).

Again:

Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" (Col. ii. 11, 12).

Again Paul says, in Rom. vi, 36:

"Know ye not that so many of us as were BAPTISED INTO JESUS CHRIST, were baptised *into his death*? Therefore, *we are BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM into death:* that

like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Finally, Peter makes the following allusion to it, which, though incidental, is unmistakable:-

"In the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by (or as the marginal reading gives it, '*through*') water. The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM DOTHS ALSO NOW SAVE US (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21).

There are other similar references to baptism throughout the epistles; but these are sufficient to show that whatever may be the difficulty of modern professing Christians in discovering any significance or efficacy in the ordinance of baptism, the apostles saw much of both. They recognised in it a constitutional transition from one relationship to another, - a representative putting off of the old man, or Adam nature, and a putting on of the new man, or Christ, who is the ONE COVERING NAME, in which, when the naked son of Adam is invested, he stands clothed before Jehovah, and is approved in His sight. Of course this effect is imputative; that is to say, it is not brought about by the mere act of submersion in water, which in itself has no religious virtue whatever, but is *the result recognised by God* when the act is performed in connection with an intelligent apprehension and affectionate belief of the truth.

It may seem strange and incredible that God would connect such a momentous change with a trivial and (as some regard it) ridiculous observance. An earnest mind, however, will not stop to reason on the matter when once satisfied that it is the will of God, especially when he remembers that it is one of the characteristics of God's dealings with men that He selects "weak things, things despised, yea, and things that are not" (1 Cor. i. 27, 28), by which to accomplish important results that it may be seen that the power is of God, and not in the means, and that true obedience may be secured in

His servants. It was not the eating of the fruit *in itself* - apart from the divine prohibition - that constituted Adam's offence. It was not the mere looking at the brazen serpent in the wilderness that cured the serpent bitten Israelites. It was not Naaman's mere immersion in Jordan in itself that cured him of his leprosy. It was the *principle involved* in each case that developed the results - the principle of obedience to the divine law, which is one prominent feature in all God's dealings with man. Obedience is the great thing required at our hands:-

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, *as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams* (1 Sam. xv. 22).

It matters not what the act may be; the more unlikely the thing required, the more severe the test, and the more conspicuous the obedience, even if it be the offering up of an only son, or the slaughtering of a whole nation. In any case, and at all hazards, obedience must be yielded. God is not less exacting in this respect under the Christian dispensation than He was under the law; but, if possible, more so. This appears from Paul saying in Heb.ii, 1,3:--

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we (Christians) have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For *if the word spoken by angels (viz., the law which was given through the disposition of angels - Acts vii. 53) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*"

So that although Christianity may be said, in its prescriptions to be "a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light," yet in respect of its *obligation*, we are taught by the apostle that it exceeds the law in rigidness and responsibility. How perilous, then, to tinker with it after the fashion of modern "charity", saying that it is of no importance whether we believe its doctrines or not, and of no concern whether we attend to its ordinances!

God requires the one hope, the one faith, and one baptism, as the only acceptable offering which a poor son of Adam can present under the Christian dispensation; and to offer Him, instead, a mere sentimental piety

of our own devising, is to offer "strange fire," which assuredly will bring death upon the offerer. God has required all believers of His truth to be immersed, as a means of transferring them from the dominion of the old mortal Adam to a life-giving connection with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who is made a quickening spirit; and though it may be very humiliating to submit to an act in which the eye of sense can perceive no reason, yet in that very submission, obedience is more thoroughly tested and more God-honouringly exemplified than in the performance of that which necessity or a natural sense of fitness would dictate.

The change wrought in our position by baptism is "*through the faith of THE OPERATION OF GOD*" (Col. ii. 12). If there be no such faith, of course there is no efficacy in the act; so that the view we take of baptism really depends on our condition of mind in relation to God. Childlike faith in His word and implicit obedience to His will (without which it is impossible to please Him), will at once lead us to regard it as an essential act, under the Christian dispensation, on the part of every one desiring to attain to the great salvation; for had it been unessential, it would never have been enjoined as a Christian dispensation and never attended to by the Lord Jesus, the apostles, and the early Christians.

Yet the character of the act depends upon the condition of the person attending to it; for as has been already observed, *in itself* it is nothing. An unenlightened person is not a fit subject for its observance, however sincere he may be in his desire to do the will of God. It is only prescribed for *those who believe the Gospel*; and in early times it never was administered to any other. Men were never exhorted to be baptised until they had arrived at a knowledge of "the word of salvation". For without such a knowledge, the act would have been a mere bodily washing, as profitless, in relation to eternal life, as those performed under the law. *In every New Testament instance, the Gospel was understood and believed before baptism was administered.* It requires the "one faith" to constitute the "one baptism". It was only a "*washing of water BY THE WORD*" (Eph. v. 26).

But when the word was absent from the mind, the cleansing element was wanting, and the subject of the rite was still unwashed. This is the condition of vast multitudes in our own day, who have been immersed as a religious ordinance, but who are in total ignorance of the gospel preached by Jesus and his apostles. Their immersion in ignorance is worthless, if repeated a thousand times; and if ever they come to a true knowledge of the word,

baptism will be just as necessary as if they had never gone into the water at all. For a scriptural case of re-immersion, see Acts xix, 15, where twelve disciples, who had been baptised by John the Baptist, were re-immersed on having their faith rectified on a certain point by Paul.

As for those who give countenance to the sprinkling of babies as Christian baptism, the whole tendency of the foregoing argument is to shew that they are guilty of religious foolishness, of a type so palpable and self-evident, as to require no formal refutation; and their case must be dismissed with the remark that the doctrine of infant baptismal regeneration, like all the other absurdities of the apostasy, is indebted for its existence and support, to the one great central delusion which is the very life of orthodoxy - the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

To sum up the whole matter, a person instructed in "the word of the kingdom," enquiring what must he do to be saved, has only one scriptural answer to receive: "*Repent and be baptised into the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins*" (Acts ii, 38). When he has yielded this "obedience of faith" he is "born of water" through the inceptive influence of the truth; and having entered "The Name," his sins are "*covered*"; his transgressions "hid" ; his whole past life is cancelled, and he has commenced a term of probation in which he is a lawful candidate for that "birth of the spirit" from the grave, which will finally constitute him a "son of God, being of the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx, 36), "waiting for the ADOPTION, *to wit, the redemption of the body*" (Rom. viii, 23).

But his ultimate acceptance will depend upon the character he develops in this new relation. If he brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, viz., moral results proceeding from the spirit-words (John vi, 63), which have obtained a lodgement in his mind, as the motive power, he will be approved by the Lord when he returns "to take account of his servants," as of those who "bring forth fruit, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundredfold." But if he continue to perform "the works of the flesh," or actions, whether "respectable" or otherwise, which are dictated by the mere fleshly instincts, apart from the enlightenment of the Word, of which his mind has been the subject - he will be adjudged of those "who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

"HE THAT SOWETH TO HIS FLESH, *shall of the flesh reap corruption,*
BUT HE THAT SOWETH TO THE SPIRIT, *shall of the spirit reap life*

everlasting" (Gal. vi, 8). The two classes are differently dealt with by the Father. "Every branch IN ME," says Jesus, "that beareth not fruit, *He taketh away*; and every branch that beareth fruit, *He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*" The names of the former are "blotted out of the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. iii, 5), in which they had been inscribed at their immersion; while the other become the special objects of divine training, by means of the circumstances around them providentially arranged - "all things working together for good, to them *who are the called according to His purpose*" (Rom. viii, 28).

"Teach them to observe *all things WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED*" (Matt, xxviii, 20). This was Christ's parting instruction to his apostles. On another occasion he said, "Ye are my friends, *if ye do WHATSOEVER I command you*" (John xv, 14). Now there is a certain ordinance of which he has said "THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME" (Luke xxii, 19); and this being one of "all things whatsoever he has commanded," it is demanded as a sign of our friendship, that we attend to it. The reference is to the "breaking of bread," or "the Lord's supper," in which we are informed the first Christians "continued steadfastly" (Acts ii, 42). It was originally instituted when Christ and his disciples were met together for the last time to observe the Jewish Passover. We read that on the occasion:--

"He (Jesus) *took bread*, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me*. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke xxii, 19, 20).

Here is an emblematic breaking of bread instituted by Christ for the observance of his disciples *during his absence*. It was to be attended to "*in remembrance of him*," till he should return again as is evident from Paul's remark in 1 Cor. xi, 26, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, *ye do shew the Lord's death TILL HE COME.*" The observance is a very appropriate one. The bread, according to the Master's direction, represents his broken body, and the wine his shed blood; and thus the scene which human nature is most liable to forget - the exhibition of Christ's personal love and the condemnation of sin in the flesh - memorialised before the disciples in partaking of those symbols. The observance furnishes a common centre, around which the brethren of Christ may rally in that capacity, and be spiritually refreshed by the contemplation of the great sacrifice to which

he lovingly submitted on their account, while it affords a tangible mode of expressing their love for him who, though absent, has promised to come again. Though simple in its nature, it is profoundly adapted to their spiritual exigencies, necessitating assembly which might rarely take place, and calling forth exhortation and counsel, which might never be uttered; thus creating circumstances pre-eminently conducive to their building up in the glorious faith and hope which they possess, and counteracting the secularising and spiritually corrosive effect of the business life which they have to live in the world.

Having been commanded, its observance is a binding duty which no really enlightened Christian will underrate in importance, or seek to evade. The Quaker runs to one extreme in the matter, discarding the use of all Christian institutions whatever and the Roman Catholic runs to the other - exalting them into *de facto* vehicles of spiritual virtue. But those who are intelligent in the Word will be preserved from both extremes.

As to the time at which the ordinance is to be attended to, or the frequency with which it must be waited upon, there is no command, but the practice of the first Christians may be taken as a certain guide, considering that they were under the immediate supervision of the apostles. We read in Acts xx, 7, "*Upon the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD, Paul preached unto them ", and again in 1 Cor. xvi, 2, "*Upon the first day of the week*, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." The first day of the week was the Jewish Monday, and therefore our Sunday. It was the day upon which Christ rose from the dead, and, therefore, an appropriate occasion for the celebration of an event of which his resurrection was the glorious consummation.

It will be noted that there is no warrant in the facts and testimonies produced on this subject, for the stringent doctrine on the Sabbath as enforced in Christendom of the present day. The Sabbath was a Jewish institution. It was part of the yoke "which," says Peter, "neither we nor our forefathers were able to bear." It was no part of the Christian system. It was abolished with "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us", and the fact of its incorporation with Christianity may be best explained by the fact, that in the days of the apostles, there were some who rose up and said "Ye must be circumcised *and keep the law of Moses.*" But this doctrine was not a true one then, any more than it is now: for at a council of the apostles which was held to consider the matter, the following letter was adopted:--

"The apostles, and elders, and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, *and keep the law*, TO WHOM WE GAVE NO SUCH COMMANDMENT; it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you . . . to tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you *no greater burden than these necessary things*: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well" (Acts xv, 23, 29).

Thus the apostles distinctly prohibited the imposition of any of the Mosaic enactments, except such as they specifically mention, upon the practice of the Christians of the olden times, and, therefore, the Sabbath amongst the rest, for, if it had been an exception, it would have been mentioned among *the exceptions*. But this authoritative prohibition did not extinguish the Judaising spirit which had crept in. Hence, we find Paul writing in the following strain to the Galatians:-

"Ye observe *DAYS*, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (chap. iv, 10, 11).

Again,

"Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, *or of the Sabbath*" (Col. ii. 16).

His teaching on the subject of the Sabbath is, "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*" (Rom. xiv, 5); as much as to say, it is a matter of so little importance, that every one must be regulated by private conviction. Popular views on this subject, then, as illustrated in pulpit inculcation, are obviously mistaken. It is the privilege of Christ's brethren to rest from labour on the first day of the week, and to engage more especially in spiritual meditation than is possible on a weekday, but they are under no

bondage. They are free to engage as expediency may determine, without the risk of infringing any law of God. Whatever is right to be done by him on a week-day, is not wrong to be done on Sunday, although it may not be expedient. He does not advocate the abolition of Sunday as a day of rest from secular labour, and attendance upon religion. He is only too thankful for the opportunity it confers upon him. He only protests against an error which binds a grievous burden on the backs of those who are its subjects, remembering that his Master hath said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day," even if that well doing be the *pulling of ears of corn in the field* to gratify hunger, or *the rescue of an unfortunate sheep* which may have fallen into the pit on the Sabbath day.

In conclusion, let a man become acquainted with the truth expressed in the New Testament phrase, "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ"; let him then be baptised into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, the great covering name provided in the Lord Jesus; let him thenceforward wait with those "of like precious faith" upon the weekly memorial institution appointed by the absent master; and let him continue in the daily practice of ALL THINGS commanded by Christ, and in the daily cultivation of that exalted character which was exemplified in Christ himself, *waiting and anxiously desiring the return of the Lord from heaven*. If he put himself into this position, and faithfully occupy it to the end, he will certainly be approved when the Lord comes, and be invited as a "good and faithful servant," to enter into the refuge provided for the Lord's people against the day of storm, and to inherit his glorious kingdom.