

The Berean

*A Christadelphian Magazine devoted to the exposition
and defense of the Faith once for all delivered
to the Saints; and opposed to the dogmas
of the Papalf and Protestant Churches!*

**The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony
of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.—Psa. 19:7**

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**...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and
searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”**

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Editorial

The doctrine concerning baptism plays a special and vital part in the Christadelphian movement. It was a teaching that was so clear, so simple, and so obvious that when shown, bro. Thomas, though at the time reluctant to see, could not deny. And as such, he couldn't understand why others couldn't see it as well, as he came to insist upon it in fellowship. This insistence eventually led him to the whole truth.

When Dr. Thomas came to the United States, following a harrowing ocean voyage, he was determined to discover what the truth pertaining to salvation was. He was taking an approach where he wanted to listen to lectures from notable individuals, but was not interested in personal discussion with individuals, or reading what others had already written. In fact, he was doing his best to avoid such discussion, fearing it would bias his study.

He listened first to a notable Presbyterian preacher in New York, but not being impressed, he moved on to others. He had letters of introduction to some Baptist preachers, which he took advantage of. Since he was on his way to Cincinnati, one of the Baptist preachers gave him letters of introduction to a Baptist preacher there, warning him that the “spirit of reformation,” (that which has now been named the “Protestant Reformation,”) “had very much infected the West.”

This comment sparked his interest, and by chance, they (Dr. Thomas and his father) had a letter of introduction to a Mr. Brown, a Cincinnati Banker, whose neighbor was just the sort of “infected” man Dr. Thomas had been warned about. The neighbor's name was Major Gano, a clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court, who upon meeting Dr. Thomas, immediately set about to teach what he thought was the ancient gospel, specifically to teach Dr. Thomas about knowledgeable immersion (as opposed to infant baptism.)

Major Gano then introduced him to Walter Scott, the founder of what came to be known as the Campbellites, and ultimately the Church of Christ. Walter Scott and Dr. Thomas had this conversation:

“What hinders that you should be a Christian?” The Dr. replied that he did not know but that he was as good a Christian as anybody. ‘Well,’ said the Major, ‘have you been baptised?’ The Dr. answered that the only baptism of which he had been the subject was the baptism administered when he was a baby. Mr. Scott was then at some pains to show that that baptism did not avail anything; that, in fact, it was no baptism at all, but only a conventional and valueless ceremony, which had no foundation in Scripture. At the conclusion of his argument, he asked him if he believed in Jesus Christ. The Dr. answered that he could not tell the time when he did not believe in him, as he had been born and brought up in that belief. Mr. Scott asked what hindered, then, that he should be baptised? Oh, said the Dr., that was a different thing. He thought it was all very well for preachers to be immersed who had to baptise others, but he did not see any necessity for anybody else being immersed, “an answer which,” said the Dr. afterwards, “manifested my ignorance.” But he told Mr. Scott that he was seeking for the truth, and if he could show him a case from the Scriptures in which a man was baptised as soon as he believed, he should give up his opposition. The Dr., in his ignorance, thought himself well entrenched in that position. Mr. Scott at once accepted the issue and directed his attention to the case of the eunuch (Acts VIII, 27-39). “There,” he remarked, “you see that, as soon as he believed, they went down into the water, and the eunuch was immersed. Now,” said he, “I would suggest you do likewise.”

And Dr. Thomas was immersed at that time, in the Miami Canal. But this firm lesson was taken to heart by Dr. Thomas with far more earnestness than held by his teachers. For as the reform movement gained steam, preachers from other denominations joined the movement. Dr. Thomas quickly noticed that one Sunday, these men were condemning the Reform movement as extreme and dangerous, and yet the next Sunday they preached in reformed halls.

Dr. Thomas began to question of the legitimacy of their baptism. How could they one week condemn what the next week they preached, without a change in the belief of the gospel, which would require a knowledgeable confession of the error, and a baptism into what they now regarded as the gospel.

As Alexander Campbell, leader of the reform movement, was as anxious for new preachers to increase his movement, just as these preachers were anxious for new halls to preach in, Dr. Thomas' objections were opposed and challenged everywhere. The opposition he received caused him to look further into the subject, that he should be able to define the gospel that men must believe prior to a true baptism. And as he more perfectly defined the gospel, and the mystery of the gospel, or as we would say today, the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ; the more he realized that the reform movement was but a very marginal improvement upon the teachings of the Roman Church and her multitude of daughters.

As he more perfectly learned the "word of the Gospel," he became better able to defend the Scriptures from the challenges he was receiving from the Campbellites, till in 1847, 13 years after his journey had begun, he realized that the "gospel" he believed when baptized in the Miami Canal, was not the gospel which saved at all, but another gospel. He then was baptized into the true faith, and the Christadelphian movement, (though not called that at the time,) had its embryonic beginning.

Bro. Roberts once observed that the truth is like a wheel, with the sacrifice of Christ at the hub. If one spoke is out of place, the whole wheel will vibrate apart. In the case of baptism, bro. Thomas put this one spoke aright, and then was forced, through the process by which "iron sharpeneth iron," to adjust all the rest of the spokes, ultimately placing the hub correctly in the center, and he found that perfect harmony that brings the whole plan of God's salvation into perfect balance.

What Doth the Lord Require of Thee?

"Let a man deny himself. . . He that loseth his life shall find it . . . He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Mk. 8:34; Matt. 10:38-39).

What does God require of us, in return for His infinite gift of eternity? He very reasonably requires a tremendous amount. He requires *everything*: everything we have, everything we are—our whole

being, and every moment of our time. The promise is only to those who love Him enough to give *all*.

God demands a complete transformation of our whole life—from natural to spiritual in every thought and action. But not as a burden: not as a labor: rather as a joy: a welcome release and an ever-thankful escape from natural darkness and corruption and death.

God's message to man is a call, an invitation, an appeal from a loving Father to choose the more excellent Way of Life: choose it *totally*.

God demands our all and our best. This is the first principle of all first principles. Our service must be total. Eternal life is an infinitely, incomparably greater prize than anything in this life. The present life is but a brief, sad flash in the dark: utterly meaningless at its very best. Eternal life is an endless, everlasting intensity of light and joy.

The issues are so stupendous—eternity in joy with God for the poor little speck-of-dust worm called man—that for God to demand less than all, and for man to be *satisfied* in giving less than all, would be a cheapening and unseemly mockery. It is only for those who realize its greatness, who want it with all their heart and soul, who are totally consumed with the wonder and glory of it.

We must, by study and meditation, rise to the total dedication and devotion portrayed in the Psalms. It does not come easily or naturally. It comes only by long effort and prayer, for the flesh is so coarse and crude and ignorant in us all. We must realize how utterly unclean and ugly we are naturally, as compared to the Beauty of Holiness. It is just a matter of how sincere we really are about it, and how much we really want it: whether we want it enough to give up *everything* for it. There are millions of half-hearted part-wayers. It is only the very few all-the-wayers who will reach the goal.

The Bible makes it very clear that while eternal life is *attainable* by all—*well* within the reach of all—still very, very few will ever attain to it, which is a great tragedy. And *why*? Because they are too wooden and thoughtless and animal: because they do not value it sufficiently to take the trouble to find out, and face up to, what its requirements are; and then to dedicate their whole lives to complying with those requirements. It is not a *part-time* thing—and that is all that most are willing to give to God. They want to spend most of their time on their own affairs.

Let us consider God's requirements under these seven headings:

1. *Learn and believe the Gospel of the Kingdom.*

2. *Reject all teachings of men: search the Scriptures yourself.*
3. *Be baptized by complete immersion in water—a total burial and re-birth.*
4. *Constantly study God’s Word for guidance and mental transformation.*
5. *Do everything to the glory of God: eliminate everything that’s not to His glory.*
6. *Overcome the flesh: crucify it: put it to death.*
7. *Develop the fruits of the Spirit by constant prayer and study and effort.*

* * *

1. Learn and believe the gospel of the kingdom

Jesus’ parting instruction to his disciples was (Mk. 16:15-16)—

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned.”

Here we are clearly told that there is no salvation without belief of the Gospel. Paul likewise told the Corinthians (1:15:1-2) that we are saved by the Gospel (*“Gospel by which ye are saved”*) if we *“keep it in memory.”*

He told the Romans (1:16) that the Gospel is the—

“Power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.”

And he told the Galatians (1:8-9) that any who preached any other Gospel than the true one would be “cursed.” It is vitally important therefore to find out what the true Gospel consists of. Now, in four of the first seven times the Gospel is mentioned (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mk. 1:14) it is called the *“Gospel of the Kingdom.”*

And in Acts 8:12 where Philip is preaching it, and Acts 28:23, 31 where Paul is preaching it, it is described as—

“The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

The very first recorded preaching of Jesus is about the Kingdom (Matt. 4:17) and in his first major recorded address he said (Matt. 6:10; 5:5)—

“Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven... Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Here is the Kingdom-Gospel, right from the beginning and consistently all through. Remember: the disciples preached the Gospel of the Kingdom

long before they even knew Christ was to be crucified, so the crucifixion of Christ was not the Gospel *they* preached (though this later was added to the original Kingdom-Gospel). See Luke 9:6; Matthew 10:7, preceding Matthew 16:22.

So it is inescapably clear that if we do not believe the Gospel of the *Kingdom*—Christ’s coming worldwide Kingdom of righteousness on earth, soon to be established with power—then we do not believe the one true saving Gospel: we have, in fact, *no* Gospel.

There is much warning in Scripture to make sure (by personal prayerful study) that we have the Truth of God. We must find and believe *The Truth*: ignorance or well-meaning error will not save. Jesus said—

“*Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32).

And he prayed—

“*Sanctify them* (that is, make them holy and acceptable) *through Thy truth. Thy word is truth*” (John 17:17).

Paul told the Thessalonians (2:2:13) they were “saved by belief of the truth,” and in the same context he said all would be “*damned who believe not the truth*” (v. 12). This is very strong, plain language, to leave no doubt.

Repeatedly Paul exhorted (2 Tim. 1:13) to “*hold fast the form of sound words,*” and (1 Tim. 1:3-4) to “*teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables.*” Whatever is not of God’s Truth is fables. And he speaks of some who—

“*Concerning the truth have erred, saying the resurrection was past already; and overthrow the faith of some*” (2 Tim. 2:18).

So even the time of the resurrection is a part of the Truth that must be believed for salvation. He said (v. 17) these false teachings would eat like a gangrene. Gangrene does not stand still. It declares war on the body, and if not cut out, will inevitably kill the body. Error is deadly.

James strikingly emphasizes the seriousness of error by saying (5:19-20)—

“*If any err from the truth, and one shall correct him, he shall save a soul from death.*”

* * *

2. Reject all teachings of men. search the Scriptures yourself.

It is remarkable how *much* warning there is in Scripture about this. Men are so apt to leave their eternal destiny—the most important thing in their lives—to others: to the “professionals.” But salvation is not to be found that way. It is a *personal* search, a *personal* effort. It is not for easy sale at church bazaars. Jesus said in his parting message (Matt. 24:4-5)—

“Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name.”

Indeed, many do come in his Name today, with an infinite variety of teachings. The world is full of differing churches, all claiming to be in his Name. He said further of the days of his absence (same ch., v. 11)—

“Many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many.”

Of all the learned and respected religious leaders of his day—all of them—he said—

“In vain do they worship, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9).

If that was true then, how much more likely today. They worshiped very zealously, and many of them very sincerely, but, as Paul said—

“They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2).

Because of sincere, ignorant zeal for God, the Jews killed the Son of God. Paul himself had been one of them, opposing the Truth and persecuting the believers to prison and to death. He was wholly and intensely sincere. Jesus said—

“Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14).

Therefore, it is impossible for any large popular church to be right. As soon as Christianity became widespread and popular, it became corrupt, and became the Catholic Apostasy. John warned in his day—

“Try the spirits, because many false prophets are gone out” (1 John 4:1).

How must we “try the spirits?” Isaiah gives the answer (8:20)—

“To the law and the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.”

Paul told Timothy—

“Seducers will become worse and worse: deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

And he foretold that—

“The time will come when they [people generally, the professed believers] will not endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:3).

John declared (2 John 1:9) that anyone who—

“Abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God.”

And he warns—

“If any come unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed” (2 John 1:10).

Much more could be quoted along this line, very unpalatable to modern “liberal” and “charitable” thinking, but still the narrow and only Way of Life. The Bible makes it very clear we cannot, dare not, depend on professional clergy, each trained in his own private creed. We must search the Word for ourselves. We must make it our life’s interest.

* * *

3. Be baptized by a complete immersion in water: a total burial and re-birth.

We noted Jesus’ parting message at the end of Mark (16:16)—

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

Similarly, we find at the end of Matthew (28:19-20)—

“Teach all nations: baptizing them . . . Teach them to observe all things I have commanded.”

On the Day of Pentecost, a few days later, the apostles begin to carry out this command. Peter instructed the inquirers (Acts 2:38)—

“Be baptized every one of you—(note the emphasis)—everyone of you, for the remission of sins.”

So again, in Acts 10:48, the case of Cornelius—

“He (Peter) commanded them to be baptized.”

Again, in Acts 22:16—

“Be baptized, and wash away your sins.”

Let us note well: no baptism, no washing away of sins. Paul makes it clear to the Galatians and the Romans that baptism is the only way to union with Christ and relationship to God’s Promises. He says—

“As many (note: ‘as many,’ no more) as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . and if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the Promise” (Gal. 3:27-29).

No baptism: then no union with Christ, no heirship, no Promise. Similarly—

“So many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death . . . We are buried with him by baptism into death” (Rom. 6:3-4).

Then the sequel—

“If (note well)—if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (v. 5).

Paul is clearly saying that if we haven’t been buried with him in baptism, we shall not partake of his resurrection. Now, there are two further important points to note concerning scriptural baptism—

1. Scriptural baptism is *always preceded by belief*. Jesus’ clear instruction was: *“He that believeth, and is baptized” (Mk. 16:16)*. Baptism is always presented as a personal and voluntary act of faith and obedience: an act of *“good conscience.”* It is utterly meaningless without faith and understanding. This aspect is strongly emphasized—

“Buried with Christ in baptism: risen through faith” (Col. 2:12).

“Baptism doth now save us: the answer of a good conscience” (1 Pet. 3:21).

“When they believed, they were baptized” (Acts 8:12).

“Many Corinthians believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).

That’s the first point: belief. And the second point: *Baptism is complete immersion in water*. This is inescapable from several facts—

It is spoken of as a burial and a resurrection—

“Buried with him in baptism . . . risen again to newness of life” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

2. The word itself. It is the common Greek word for “immerse, submerge, plunge.” If it had been translated properly, there would never have been any doubt concerning the form of baptism. The word never means, or is ever used to mean, “sprinkle” or “pour.”

When baptism in Scripture is described in detail, we are told they *“went DOWN INTO the water,”* and they *“came UP OUT OF the water.”* Read

the account of Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10), and the Ethiopian's (Acts 8:38-39).

We are told John baptized his converts "*in the river Jordan*" (Matt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5, 9). And we are told he chose to baptize at a certain place "*because there was MUCH water there*" (John 3:23)—an absolutely meaningless statement if baptism was sprinkling with a few drops of water, as today's churches.

Of baptism's vital *importance*, the Bible leaves no doubt. Jesus said—
"*Except a man be born out of water, he cannot enter the Kingdom*" (John 3:5).

What did he mean? One thing is certain: we have to find out what he meant, because we cannot enter the Kingdom unless we have been "*born out of water,*" and we cannot do it without knowing what it is. Baptism—true *scriptural* baptism: a complete burial in water and a rebirth up out of it to newness of life—gives the beautiful answer.

Will anything else called "baptism" do, or must it be the one true water—burial baptism the Scriptures command and describe? Does any other, different act become "baptism" just by giving it that name? If God says, "*Do this,*" can we safely give some other act the same name, and do *that* instead? Surely there can be but one answer!

Paul says (Eph. 4:3-6) that there is "*One Baptism.*" He is describing the seven-fold unity of the Truth: One God, One Lord, One Hope, etc. This manifests the great and central importance of baptism, and also the importance of it being the One true Baptism. As there are many so-called "gods," but only One true scriptural God; so, there are many so-called "baptisms," but just One *true* scriptural Baptism.

Baptism is a very beautiful and fitting provision of the love and wisdom of God: a loving act of submission and obedience, and of thankful union with Christ in his death; a going down into a watery grave; a complete death to the old man of the flesh with all his past sins, and a glorious rising again to the inspiration and joy of newness of life—a *New Man* in Christ Jesus: a complete new beginning: a complete purification: a completely new slate—standing perfect before God.

* * *

4. Constantly study God's word for guidance and mental transformation.

This is absolutely essential if we hope for life, and it doesn't mean just fifteen or twenty rushed minutes a day. This is the means that God has lovingly provided that we may be totally renewed in knowledge: transformed in the spirit of our mind, from ignorance to wisdom, and from natural ugliness to Godly beauty. The Bible is the only true education. This is the essential daily food for the new man of the Spirit. Jesus said—

“Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word—every word—that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

He was being tempted, and he answered every temptation with “It is written.” That was his strength, and secret of victory.

The Psalms, which give the mind of Christ in all his struggles and trials and temptations, are *full* of testimonies concerning the mighty transforming power of God's Word, and the need to study it constantly.

Psa. 1:2—

“His delight (the man of God, the blessed man) is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”

There is *no other way* to blessedness. The man of God has no time for anything not related to life's one great and glorious purpose. Psalm 19—

“The law of the Lord converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes . . . in keeping of it there is great reward” (vs. 7-11).

And the long Psalm 119: every one of its one hundred and seventy-six verses is a command—in a great variety of forms—to constantly study and meditate on the Word—

“O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (v. 97).

Is it? We sing this, and words like it, in our hymns so often! Are we telling the truth, or lying to God? Do we *think* of the words, and *mean* them? We shall never totally achieve this, in the present weakness of the flesh, but are we at least trying with all our might? If not, whom are we deceiving? Certainly not God. To the Romans, the Corinthians, and Timothy, Paul emphasizes this vital necessity—

“Whatever was written aforetime was written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4).

“All these things . . . are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11).

God will expect us to have done our lessons when the final exam comes.

“The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation . . .”
—we have to be made wise: naturally, we are foolish. He continues—

“ . . . all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works ” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

That is what God has given us the large volume called the Bible for, and that is why He tells us to study it constantly, and that is what *must* happen if we are to attain to life. These verses are the key to life. Let us read them over and over. Unless we feel we are already perfect, we have no time to waste. Again, to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:13-16)—

“Give attendance to reading . . . meditate on these things: give thyself wholly to them: continue in them, for in doing this, thou shalt save thyself.”

So, if we do not do it, we shall not save ourselves. Much more of the same could be added, but surely the picture is crystal clear. Eternal life is for those who truly realize its value. Job said—

“I have esteemed God’s word more than my necessary food” (23:12).

That must be our fixed way of life too if we hope for salvation.

* * *

5. Do everything you do to God’s glory. eliminate from your life everything that cannot be done to His glory. Carefully learn and obey his many life-giving commands.

This is a full-time job for anyone who is interested in investing this brief life to gain eternity. The pattern is laid in the words of Christ—

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. He that will save his life will lose it. He that will lose his life for my sake shall save it” (Lk. 9:23-24).

Have we “lost our lives for Christ’s sake?”—that is, given them over totally to his service? Only such, he says, will save them eternally.

With most people, religion—if they have any at all—is a self-pleasing hobby: and a part-time hobby at that. They do what they like, and they set their own limits of what they consider reasonable service to God—an hour or so a day, and they think they are heroes.

It can be the same with Christadelphians. We have the same self-deceptive flesh and hearts as everyone else: go through the motions, attend a fair number of the meetings, enjoy the association—but spend most of the life on self-pleasing and puttering about with the rubbish of the world, just like everyone else. Can we honestly feel this is enough to cause God to

perpetuate us eternally, and let all the world perish? Is that reasonable? Do the Scriptures give us ground to expect it? Paul said—

“It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20).

Everything we do must be Christ living in us. Paul told the Colossians—

“Whatsoever you do, do it as to the Lord” (Col. 3:23).

This is just as much a divine command as “Believe and be baptized.” Every activity of life must be purified and sanctified this way, as something done for Christ. This applies to everything—even the most humdrum and commonplace things. It is all or nothing, for it is a Way of Life, and part-time service is hypocrisy. To the Corinthians, Paul gives the same command—

“Be always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

“Always” and “abounding” leave no room for anything else. Again, to the Corinthians—

“Ye are bought with a price: ye are not your own. Wherefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Whatever is done must be done unto God: to His glory and in His service. What cannot be done to His glory must not be done at all. We are totally purchased slaves. That is the price of eternity with God, and it will be lovingly, thankfully, eagerly paid by the wise of heart. Yea, their only regret will be they have so little to offer to manifest their love.

Now coming more particularly to the question of specific, detailed commands. If we are completely dedicated to God, and all our actions are done as unto Him, and all is motivated by love and goodwill, *isn't that enough?* Do we have to have rigid, constricting laws? Are we not free from law, and under grace?

We need—and we should earnestly *desire*—specific, detailed “instruction in righteousness,” for we are by nature totally ignorant and foolish, no matter how good-intentioned. Remember Peter, in his blind, misguided, very loving devotion to Christ, as Jesus spoke of his death—

“Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee!” (Matt. 16:22).

And Jesus answered—

“Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: thou savorest not things of God, but those of men.”

What a harsh and seemingly unkind rebuke to the concern of a sincere, well-meaning, loving friend! “Satan!” Peter meant so well, but it was

Satan—the adversary, the flesh—speaking in its presumptuous ignorance: the proud, foolish flesh that thinks it is so wise. We must realize that by nature we are absolutely ignorant. We are stupid. The flesh can never of itself rise above its native stupidity. Unaided from above, we can never think or do right. The Bible plainly tells us this, and accepting it is the first step in the way of wisdom and life—

“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps aright” (Jer. 10:23).

Jesus said—

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love” (John 15:10).

And verse 14—

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

And he laid it down as a plain rule that (Matt. 7:21)—

“Not everyone (however well meaning) that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father.”

Before we can *do* God’s will, we must first learn what it is. It will not come to us naturally (though so many presumptuously assume that if they do what they think is right, then God must surely be pleased). But the natural thoughts of our blind flesh are the very opposite of God’s holy thoughts.

Jesus said—

“That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination with God” (Lk. 16:15).

To some who professed to follow him he demanded (Lk. 6:46)—

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?”

That alone is the true test of discipleship. John says very bluntly—

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar. . . but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him” (1 John 2:4-5).

Let us then look briefly at some of his commands. These will be just representative—a few of many—chosen to illustrate that they are not the things that we would ever do naturally, or of our own “wisdom,” however good our intentions, because, as Paul says (1 Cor. 2:14)—

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them.”

So, if these commands seem “foolishness” to us, then that should show us that we are just thinking quite normally and naturally, according to the ignorance of the flesh.

The first commands to consider concern our relation to the world. As natural animal creatures, we are a part of that world, interested and involved in all its silly, animal activities. But we are called completely *out* of it, to something higher and more sensible. James says—
“*Pure religion and undefiled is . . . to keep unspotted from the world*” (1:27).

And he further says, even more strongly and pointedly—
“*Whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God*” (4:4).

Likewise, John says—
“*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 John 2:15).

The world, and all its churches based on the teachings of the flesh, are godless, though making a great manifestation of “religion.” Love of God and love of the world are mutually exclusive, and we must choose between them at the very beginning. Paul instructed the Corinthians—
“*Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. What communion hath light with darkness? Come out from among them and be separate*” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

“Unbelievers” are any who do not believe The Truth, regardless of how sincerely and repeatedly they say, “*Lord, Lord.*” It’s a clear choice: God or the world—the people of the world, the things of the world. Once this issue is honestly faced, it tremendously simplifies all subsequent action. Until it is faced, we are in a hopeless bog.

The following are typical of the clear, specific instructions we are given for living according to the Spirit. They are utterly revolutionary, and this *must* be realized. We must strain to expand our puny little minds to accept *them* in their fullness: not cut them down to our *own* fleshly thinking, as is the universal custom—

“*Resist no evil. Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*” (Matt. 5:39).

“*Avenge not yourselves*” (Rom. 12:19).

“*If any man sue thee at the law, and take thy coat, give him thy cloak also*” (Matt. 5:40).

Did you *ever* hear of anyone ever doing that, in this so “Christian” land?

“Love your enemies: bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you” (Matt. 5:44).

“Lay not up treasure on earth” (Matt. 6:19).

Isn't that what the whole mad human scramble is all about?

“Having food and raiment, therewith be content” (1 Tim. 6:8).

Quit scrabbling for perishing possessions. Be satisfied with bare necessities and give *every moment* you can spare to the work of the Lord, and not to your own interests and amusements.

“Let your speech always be with grace. Shun all foolish talking and joking, which are fleshly and unseemly for saints” (Col. 4:6; Eph. 5:4).

“If any man bridle not his tongue, that man's religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26).

“Put away all bitterness, wrath and anger” (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).

“Forgive seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22).

“Be gentle unto all men” (2 Tim. 2:24).

“Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect” (Jam. 1:4).

These are but a few of many. Others will appear in the following.

* * *

6. Overcome the flesh: crucify it: put it to death.

It will be perceived that the commands of God have a consistent pattern and purpose. They are for the destruction of the natural ugliness of the flesh, and for the building of the Christlike beauty of the Spirit.

What the evil, fleshly world worships and calls “manly” is simply glorified ugliness: war, sport, competition, rivalry, victory over others, possessions, power, prestige, lust—all the activities and pleasures of the undisciplined natural animal.

The Scriptures show us a more excellent way, a joyful and joy—giving way: a way whose motive is love instead of lust, purity instead of power, giving instead of getting, victory and rulership over *self* instead of over others. It is a way, above all, whose end is eternal Life, instead of the end of the natural way, which is eternal Death. Solomon said, by the inspiration of God—

“He that trusteth his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26).

And Jeremiah (17:9)—

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

These are lessons we must be taught from above. They do not, and never could, come from *within*. Within our natural hearts and flesh is only darkness and ignorance. Paul told the Galatians (5:17)—

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit . . . these are contrary one to another.”

It is to the Romans he explains this subject most fully and deeply. Romans 7 should be prayerfully studied over and over, till we clearly comprehend the mind of the Spirit, and see ourselves for what we *really are*—

“In my flesh dwelleth no good thing . . . I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity (slavery) to the law of sin in my members” (vs. 18-23).

This is the most deadly, most shameful, most pitiful slavery of all—and yet all mankind are deluded and willing slaves of the flesh, and they fiercely resent and reject God’s offer of freedom from it. Paul continues in chapter 8—

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (v. 13).

And in chapter 13:

“Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (v. 14).

And describing the very few true believers among all the pretenders: those few who are pleasing to God and in the Way of Life (Gal. 5:24)—

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with all its affections and lusts.”

The “affections and lusts” of which he speaks, which the faithful have put entirely away, are all the things that are forbidden by, and controlled by, the commands we have considered and are considering. Here is a clear test. Have we crucified the flesh? Are we Christ’s?— or just of those who say, Lord, Lord.

This crucifying of the flesh can never be accomplished by pressure or fear or legislation. It must come from the power of the realization of the natural filth and repulsiveness of the flesh, and of the beauty and desirability of holiness and life. It must come from the power of the love of God and of His marvelous goodness. It must come from above, in answer to long and earnest seeking in prayer.

* * *

7. Develop the fruits of the spirit by constant study and effort and prayer

We shall never in this life fully accomplish this; therefore, we shall never have any time to waste on passing things. Paul says to the Romans—

“Walk in newness of life” (6:4).

“To be spiritually-minded is life and peace” (8:6).

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (12:1-2).

If God Himself says that a total, living sacrifice for this so very short life is a “reasonable service” to manifest thanksgiving for the gift of the joy of the endless ages He promises, who would *dare* to say it is not reasonable, or that we can safely offer less? Is not such an attitude the most presumptuous of folly? To the Colossians, Paul said (3:2)—

“Set your affections on things above: not on things on the earth.”

Here is a specific something that must be done, and a specific something that must be totally refrained from. To the Galatians, Paul gives more detailed instruction as to what is involved—

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.”

These are the fruits we are told we must “bring forth” in abundance that we be not rejected as “barren and unfruitful.” To the Corinthians he is even more analytical. First, he says (1 Cor. 13:1-3)—

“Whatever other qualities I have, if I have not Love, I am nothing.”

Let us note that well. This is not something vaguely desirable, to just aim at as a possible eventual goal. No. It is something absolutely essential right now. And what is this indispensable “love” of which he speaks, without which we are “nothing” in God’s sight? He describes it clearly—

“Love suffereth long, and is kind”: infinite kindness and patience in the face of long provocation. *“Love seeketh not her own”*: is not at all concerned with personal advantage or possession. *“Love is not provoked”*: it does not get angry (the weakening word “easily” is not in the original).

“Love thinks no evil: bears all things: endures all things: Love never fails.”

Without these spiritual virtues, says Paul, we are “nothing” to God.

There is an aspect of what God requires us to do for salvation which may seem very strange at first, but the spiritual mind will discern its fittingness and wisdom. Jesus said—

“Rejoice and be exceeding glad when you are persecuted for my sake” (Matt. 5:11-12).

And Peter—

“Rejoice that ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings” (1 Pet. 4:13).

And James—

“Count it all joy when you fall into divers trials” (Jam. 1:2).

If a doctor successfully cuts out a cancer that would kill us, we “rejoice exceedingly”—even though the process may be a painful and weary one. So here. These things are of God, to cut out the deadly cancers of the flesh. We must rejoice in them. Paul gives the divine explanation—

“We rejoice in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, approvedness; and approvedness, hope. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom. 5:3-5).

* * *

In summing up his new law, his revolutionary new commands, Jesus said—

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

Absolute perfection of character like God’s will never be attained until the glorification of the body after resurrection and judgment, but God commands and requires us to be constantly striving and straining toward perfection—manifesting an intense love of and desire for it—or He will never bestow it on us at the last day. Why should He bestow such riches where they are not valued enough to do what He asks? Surely if we do not prize the gift enough, and *love God enough*, to devote our whole life to the effort, then it is not reasonable that He should give it to us, while billions perish forever.

* * *

A final command, and a final glorious promise—

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

“Men ought always to pray” (Lk. 18:1).

“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16).

And Paul's words from prison to the brethren and sisters at Philippi—

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice! In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall—(not might, or maybe, but)—shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:4-7).

God offers *everything*. He holds nothing back (Psa. 84:11)—

“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

He even promises incorporation into the divine nature itself (2 Pet. 1:4). And He very reasonably demands everything in return (although our “everything” is such a miserable little nothing compared to His). Have we then the simple wisdom and common sense to go *all the way* for the incomparable and incomprehensible prize of life and joy for evermore? What unutterable stupidity if we do not!

If we haven't enough sense—if we haven't enough *love*—to give total service for seventy years in exchange for seventy billion, billion years (and more) of eternal joy, then what hope is there for us? What *good* could such half-hearted and self-pleasing creatures be to God?

It's *love* He asks: love manifested in *works*. How much do we have?

Water Baptism in the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations

By Dr. Thomas.

A CORRESPONDENT'S Objections.—I reject the ordinance of water baptism as belonging to a past dispensation, and hold only the baptism of the Spirit, as Christian baptism. On this point I am satisfied, and cannot yield assent to any man's *ipse dixit*. Having put on Christ, received the cleansing from sin by the baptism of Christ, the believer has no need of the circumcision of the flesh, of baptismal waters, and divers carnal ordinances, which all had their use before the introduction of the Christian dispensation, but in “the last days” were all done away by “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

Dr. Thomas's Reply

Christian baptism was no part of the Mosaic dispensation, or economy. It is nowhere enjoined upon Jew or Gentile as an ordinance of the Sinaitic code. This must, we think, be evident to every one who reflects upon the

nature of Christian baptism. Christian baptism is not a mere water baptism. Even the washings or bathings under the law were not mere baptisms in water. Something else had to be done for the subject before the bathing of himself at even would “sanctify to the purifying of his flesh.” The priest had to dip a bunch of hyssop into *a solution* of burnt heifer ashes, called “a water of separation,” or a “purification for sin,” and to *sprinkle* it upon the unclean person or thing *on the third day*. This was the first stage of the cleansing process. He was then to be *sprinkled* again on the seventh day. This was the second stage of the purifying. Lastly, he was to wash his clothes, and *bathe himself in water*, and he was pronounced clean according to the law “*at even*” (Num. xix). This was “the putting away of the filth of the flesh” by a “carnal ordinance imposed on Israel until the time of *emendation*—*diorthosis* not *matanoia*; and which could not perfect the subject of it, as pertaining to the conscience” (1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 9:9, 10).

“*The filth of the flesh*” was defilement contracted by touching anything forbidden to be touched or pronounced unclean by the law. To touch a dead body, a bone, or a grave was legal contamination of the flesh, which could not be got rid of under any circumstances in less than seven days; and if the unclean person neglected the carnal ordinance appointed in the law for the cleansing of such as he, he was to be cut off from Israel.

“*A carnal ordinance*” was an institution for the cleansing of the flesh contaminated, as before mentioned. It had nothing to do with the conscience; for when the man was cleansed from the defilement of a bone, he might still be troubled in conscience for having coveted his neighbor’s goods. Now, Christian baptism is not a carnal ordinance, although the body is bathed in water. It was not appointed for the putting away of the filth of the flesh; for, since “the emendation” of the law, it is not that which toucheth or entereth into an Israelite that defiles him, but that which proceedeth out of his heart. Filth of the flesh cannot be legally contracted now. There is no legal defilement to be put away by carnal ordinances, therefore carnal ordinances have been long since abolished, and were never imposed upon Gentiles unless they became citizens of the Mosaic kingdom.

Mosaic baptism and Christian baptism are essentially different; the former having regard to the flesh; the latter to the spirit or conscience. The *sprinkling* of the heart must precede the bathing of the body; for it is the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience by the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, that makes a purification for sin to the believer in the gospel of the kingdom, whose body is bathed in water into the Holy Name (Heb. 10:22; 12:24). A man of unsprinkled heart, of an unsanctified disposition, whose head is full of

theory but his heart untouched, though dipped with all the parade and circumstance of speech, prayer, baptistry, and song, is in the predicament of the Jew who would bathe himself on the seventh day without having been previously sprinkled with the water of separation on the third. He would be cut off from Israel. Fifty immersions would avail nothing to the Gentile or Jew who was previously ignorant of the gospel of the kingdom; for it is “he who believes the gospel and is baptised shall be saved,” and not “he that is bathed in water first, and believes the gospel afterwards.”

Christian baptism, then, is spiritual, and not a carnal ordinance, and may be defined as *immersion in water into the name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit, of a man of Abrahamic disposition, who believes the things of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ; by which sprinkling of heart and immersion of body he is united to the name of Jesus, and in being so united his belief of the truth is counted to him for righteousness or remission of sins, and his disposition for repentance unto life, in, by, and through the name thus named upon him in the formula described.* Surely our correspondent will not say that this is a carnal ordinance; and abolished at the overthrow of the Jewish theocracy! It is not the popular baptism, but the New Testament institution. Abolish such an immersion into the Lord’s name, and you leave the believer without any means of *formal union* to it, so that he is cut off from receiving repentance and remission of sins which come only through the name of Jesus. Christian baptism, as defined above, is “the washing of regeneration” predicated on “the renewing of the Holy Spirit” through the truth believed.—*Herald, 1851, p. 145.*

“Too Much Stress on Baptism”

By Robert Roberts

To Mr. B., who is “sorry Mr. Roberts is such a bigot,” we can only reply that from his (Mr. B.’s) point of view, it is perfectly natural, and we accept it cheerfully as a logical necessity. On the hypothesis of Mr. B.’s translation to the position of Mr. Roberts—and he does indeed seem to be moving in that direction—he will be able to take a retrospect of his own bigotry, and perhaps, be sorry for himself.

It is impossible “to lay too much stress on baptism.” How can you lay more stress upon baptism than Jesus did to Nicodemus?

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be *born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter* into the kingdom of God”—(John 3:5).

And was he not himself baptised of John, in order “to fulfil all righteousness?”—(Matt. 3:15). But this is not discerned by a man who

cannot see the difference betwixt baptism and sprinkling. In sprinkling, there is no ‘likeness’ to ‘burial,’ which Christ instituted baptism to typify. “Therefore,” saith the apostle, “we are *buried* with him *by baptism* into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life—(Rom. 6:4).

It is almost a waste of time to discourse of baptism to a man totally ignorant of “the Word.” Brethren should first expound the doctrine of the kingdom; after that, baptism is easy to understand, and is sure to become an anxious topic. In analyzing the saying of Christ to “the master in Israel,” we observe that it consists of two propositions, each having the same predicate.

Except a man be born of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Let it be remembered that he who is “the way, the truth, and the life,” was the author of these propositions, and that should be sufficient to stimulate humble, earnest enquiry. To “be born of water” it is obvious that a person must be first ‘buried’ in water. It would be idle to pretend that sprinkling is burial in any sense; but if it were, what could it avail in the subject?

To use a vulgar simile, it is, as universally practiced “the cart before the horse;” I mean it *precedes* belief, whereas baptism always followed it. Besides, is it not written that “we are saved by hope,” and that “the just shall live by faith, without which faith it is impossible to please God?” Now, tell me how a puling babe can have faith and hope? Also, if you immerse an adult person ignorant of “the faith,” and, consequently, of the hope, how can he or she “please God?” Such immersion not being “the washing of water *by the word*,” cannot possibly beget in the subject of it “the answer or enlightened response of a good conscience toward God.”

The Refuge from the Storm: or “What Must I Do to be Saved?”

By Robert Roberts

This subject follows the others in natural sequence; it overtops and comes after all the topics that have been discussed. It concerns the question raised in every healthy mind, by the discussion of these topics, the great solicitude created by a contemplation of the truth of God, as therein unfolded. If it be shewn that we are mortal in constitution, and that

immortality and the undefiled inheritance of the future ages are conditionally attainable, the mind conceives a strong anxiety to learn the nature of those conditions on which so much depends, with a sincere desire to fulfil them.

“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 gladly receive 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 has the right to say upon what conditions it will be granted. In fact, when sincerely put, it shews 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 18:17). 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. 1:16).

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 fill 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. 5:12). It has constituted them a race of mortals, incapable, in the absence of some divine pre-arrangement, 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 mankind *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. Jehovah 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 Jehovah had in view, in visiting the Gentiles, was “*to take out of them a people for His name*” (Acts 15:14). This is all, then, that is proposed in the preaching of the Gospel—the gathering “out of every kindred, 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 16:15, 16).

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. 1:13). He also says “(*the gospel*) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16); and again, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Cor. 1:21). 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 all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:13, 14). And the Philippian jailor 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. 16:30, 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. 10:14). 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. 11:6), and it is affirmed of believers, “Ye are saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8), and “the just shall live by faith,” (Heb. 10:38).

Now this faith, in scriptural usage, is not a mere abstract reliance on the omnipotence of Jehovah, but the belief of specific promise. It is said that “faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness” (Rom. 4:9). 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 able also to perform*” (Rom. 4:20, 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 thus by the consideration of terms of a more general nature, we arrive at the conclusion to which we were guided in a former lecture by specific testimony, viz.:—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 summarized by Luke, in Acts 8:12, 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. To these collectively, the reader should consider an exposition of “the things concerning the kingdom of God.”

As for the things concerning “the Name,” we are introduced to them in Acts 4:12; “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*” (I Cor. 1:30). 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. 3:27). 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 what ever. 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. 2:9). 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-neutralizing 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; Jehovah’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 has nothing definite to hope for, how can his hope be active? If he has 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 inappreciative. 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 marvelous light,*” (I Peter 2:9). 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. 3:10), “*filling them with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*” (Col. 1:9). 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 6:63). 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 6:68). 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 12:48).

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 9:23–26).

“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” (I Cor. 3:18, 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 16:15, 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 noncompliance 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 hopes 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 proffered 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) super-added 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 (I John 5:10, 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 judgment, 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, in respectable

company, with the delights of intellect, and the sweets of refinement, 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 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 3,000 souls" (Acts 2:37, 38, 41). Here is both precept and example. We are told in Acts 8:12, 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 10:47, 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 22:16); "*arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.*" "And he arose and was baptised" (Acts 9:18). Then we have the case of the Philippian jailor, recorded in Acts 16, in which the same lesson is enforced by the powerful argument of example. It is stated in 5:33, "*(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. 3:13–15).

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. 3:27).

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. 2:11, 12).

Again, Paul says, in Rom. 6:3–6:—

“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 doth 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” (I Pet. 3:20, 21).

There are other similar references to baptism throughout the epistles; but these are sufficient to shew 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" (I Cor. 1:27, 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, viz., 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* (I Sam. 15:22).

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. 2:1, 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 7:53) 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 rigidity 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-honorably 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. 2:12). 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. Child-like 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 ablution, 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. 5:26).

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 19:1–5, 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 2:38). 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 20:36), “waiting for the adoption, *to wit, the redemption of the body*” (Rom. 8:23).

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 6:63), which have obtained a lodgment 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. 6:8). 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. 3:5), 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. 8:28).

“Teach them to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded” (Matt. 28:20). 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 15:14). Now there is a certain ordinance of which he has said “this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19); 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 2:42). 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 22:19, 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 I Cor. 11:26, “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—memorialized 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 secularizing 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 20:7, “*Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them*”; and again in I Cor. 16:2, “*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 15:23, 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 Judaizing 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. 4:10, 11).

Again, “Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, *or of the Sabbath*” (Col. 2:16).

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. 14:5); 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 weekday, 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.

Revival of the Witnessing for Gospel Truth

By John Thomas

“We have long been praying *thy kingdom come*, and is there any probability,” says Mr. Bicheno, “that the preludes to it are arrived? And shall we be unconcerned about the signs of the times? It is deserving the most serious consideration, whether the revolution in France be not *the beginning* of the fulfilment of this prophecy. I say beginning; for according to the prophecies, if this be the event pointed out by the resurrection of the witnesses, we have as yet seen but *the dawn of what is to come*, nor shall we perhaps for some time. *Black and conflicting clouds will darken the hemisphere and obscure our prospect; but they will spend themselves and vanish*. But were we sure that this event (the resurrection of the witnesses) is what we conjecture, yet no man could say how long it would be before ‘the Spirit of Life from God,’ by those more excellent operations, and in that larger degree, which we look for, *enter into the witnesses for gospel truth; for they may be quickened with political life, and yet remain some time with a small share of spiritual life*.”

“Although the French people are actuated by an astounding zeal for civil and religious liberty, yet their character seems very far from agreeing with what we expect from the witnesses for gospel truth. In the things of religion, they appear to be no further enlightened at present than to see the rights of conscience, and the absurdities and cruel oppressions of the Papal system. This is certainly an important part of truth, and what promises to pave the way for the triumphs of pure religion; and perhaps, considering the greatness of that darkness emerged from, it may be as much as could rationally be expected at the beginning of such a reformation. But of true godliness there appears but little at present; and it is to be feared that they, as well as most other nations, must endure great sufferings before we shall see that repentance which must precede the happy days promised in God’s word.”

These things were written by Mr. Bicheno seventy-two years ago. He lived at the crisis of the resurrection of the witnesses and at the opening of the

Third Woe; consequently, only in “the dawn of what was then coming.” Since then, “dark and conflicting clouds” have darkened the hemisphere, spent themselves, and vanished away; for since he wrote, five of the vials of the third woe trumpet have been entirely drained of their wrath; and forty-five years of the sixth, have brought us over the year 1864; when he supposed the 1335 years of Daniel would end; and the work of destroying the remains of tyranny, and purifying and enlarging the Gentile church, would be finished; and the glorious appearing of the Lord be manifested. This work however, we, who are contemporary with 1865, know to be yet in the womb of futurity. Mr. Bicheno did well in stirring up his own generation to the study of the apocalypse; and in discovering for us the true import of the “three days and a half.” His labor was not lost; and we thank our Heavenly Father for raising up such witnesses, whose memory the faithful in Christ Jesus do always delight to honor.

The laborers of this class were contributing to that very resurrection he looked for, a resurrection, not merely of political life, but for that more excellent resuscitation of a witnessing for gospel truth. The establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in March 1804, by which the Scriptures, in defiance of the mandates of the God of the earth, have been circulated greatly among those nations in which the witnesses stood upon their feet again, has strengthened “the earth” in its resistance to arbitrary power; and prepared the minds of many to receive, and to seek for “the truth as it is in Jesus” for eternal life. When the truth gets a sufficient hold of these prepared seekers of the unmeasured court, it makes them restless and dissatisfied with the dry, stereotyped, superstitions of their fathers. Hence, they are caused to make efforts for a return to the gospel and order of things, as preached and instituted originally by Christ and the Apostles.

There have been more of these efforts since the resurrection of the secular witnesses to renewed political life and vigor in France, than for upwards of a century before. Indeed, I am not aware, that there was any such effort at all in the great City of Babylon from 1572 to 1789; but since this last date there have been several in the outlying regions of the British Isles and America. The Baptist Sect arose in England *before the witnesses were put to death* in the papal jurisdiction of the Great City. They were a separation from that class of “the Earth” known as “The Independents.” The Word of God got possession of their minds and affections and would permit them no longer to remain among “the children of disobedience.” They therefore separated themselves in 1638; and, having renounced the Papal Ordinance of *Baby-Face sprinkling*, profanely termed by all Laodiceans, “baptism,” they dispatched one of their number to Holland to be immersed by the Anabaptists (as they were ignorantly styled by Luther and his class) that on his return he might be qualified to immerse his friends at home. Hence, these immersed brethren became witnesses of the Holy City class; that is,

of the “One Body.” They preserved the truth from dying out in England during the death-state of the witnesses in the papal section of the continent of Europe; and after 1789–’90, we find their testimony reviving in the writings of Mr. Bicheno and the organized circulation of the Scriptures—a society instituted by “the Woman” and “the Earth” which “helped” her.

During the time the witnesses were lying politically and spiritually dead (and of this death the Baptists partook as well as “the Earth,” adopting Calvinistic, Armenian, and Free Communion traditions, which make void the Word of the Deity), a bootless effort was made to return to first principles by Mr. John Glass, a Calvinist “divine” of the Scottish Daughter of the Roman Mother. To his honor be it said, that he was expelled by this apocalyptic “Harlot,” on the charge of entertaining a design of subverting the National Covenant, and of sapping the foundation of all national religious establishments, by maintaining that *the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world*; in other words, he was expelled for affirming what Christ himself, “the Faithful and True Witness,” bore witness to before Pilate. Would a church of Christ have been guilty of such iniquity as this? Such papistic deeds only prove that “the churches” committing them have no claims to be regarded as Christian in any scriptural sense.

Mr. Glass, then, was expelled by this “woman,” with whom he had been apocalyptically “defiled” (Apoc. 14:4), in the year 1728. He and his adherents formed themselves into churches, which they endeavored to conform to the primitive order of the New Testament. Soon after the year 1755, one of their elders, named Robert Sandeman, became a prominent advocate of their principles. He taught that justifying faith was a simple belief of the divine testimony, passively received by the understanding; which testimony carries in itself sufficient ground of hope to every one who believes it, without any collateral spiritualistic operation; that the gospel contained no offer but that of evidence, and that it was merely a record or testimony to be credited; that there is acceptance with God through Christ for sinners, while they are sinners, before “any act, exercise, or exertion of their minds whatsoever;” consequently, before repentance. Hence, his theory was, *justification by passive belief of the truth alone!*

He was very severe, but not more so than was in accordance with the truth, in his criticism of the “popular preachers.” “I would be far,” says he, “from refusing even to the popular preachers themselves what they so much grudge to others—the benefit of the one instance of a hardened sinner (the thief on the cross) finding mercy at last; for I know of no sinners more hardened, none greater destroyers of mankind, than they.”

The Sandemanian section of “the Earth” differed from other sects of the Court, in the weekly administration of the supper; in dining together at each other’s houses between the morning and afternoon meetings; these dinings were their love-feasts, of which every member was required to partake. They differed also in the kiss of charity, as the act of receiving into fellowship; in a weekly contribution for all expenses; in mutual exhortation; in abstinence from blood and things strangled; in washing of feet; in a plurality of elders, pastors, or bishops, in each church, who, though unlearned and in trade, are sufficiently qualified for their office, if answerable to the specifications found in 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:6–9. They separated themselves from all such religious societies as appeared to them not to profess the simple truth for their only ground of hope, and who do not walk in obedience to it.

The Baptist churches in Scotland imbibed a considerable part of these principles, by which a nearer approach was made to the apostolic order of things; but not sufficiently to constitute them resurrected witnesses for the Ancient Gospel of Jesus Christ. The theory they professed was an improvement upon that of the Scottish Harlot. It might be assented to as a basis for immersion; but would still leave the confessor “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.” The philosophy and vain deceit of Protestantism had so “defiled” the Baptist mind in the period of death they had passed through, that their resuscitation as a society witnessing the gospel had become hopeless. It remained, therefore, to be attained in the face of their active endeavors to suppress it.

The effort was renewed in the United States of America and crowned with the result desired.

Another “reverend divine” of the Scottish Harlot’s family was stirred up to attack the institutions which had given him birth. In 1819, or thereabouts, he separated himself and a few others from her communion, and joined the Baptists. Upon this, he commenced a periodical called the *Christian Baptist*, in which he ably exposed the unscriptural character of the faith, order, and practices of the so-called “religious world”. He was particularly severe upon his clerical brethren, and “the benevolent institutions of the day,” by which they proposed to introduce the Millennium! His unsparing attacks upon all the “Names and Denominations” caused him to be denounced on every side, as a demoralizing disturber of all ecclesiastical peace and comfort. Papists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and others, were all made to writhe in the anguish of his tormenting testimony against them; and would willingly have extinguished him after the approved fashion of former days, but for his brethren of “the Earth,” who, at the epoch of their resurrection to political life and power, had founded the new government under which he

lived. This guaranteed civil and religious liberty to all sects and persons; and protected them in the freest exercise of all their natural and acquired rights. The French army, which was sent to help “the Earth” established its independence of the Anglican Daughter of the Roman Harlot, on its return to France reimported into that land the principles of liberty and the rights of man; which, after the “three days and a half” were ended, as “Spirit of Life from the Deity, broke in upon” the constituents of the Third Estate, and caused them to “stand upon their feet” to the great terror of all who beheld them (Apoc. 11:11).

This onslaught upon the Laodicean Apostasy in the United States produced a powerful effect upon multitudes, who separated themselves from all of its Names and Denominations. These were formed into churches by Messrs. Walter Scott, Alexander Campbell, and their co-laborers, upon a simple confession that Jesus is the Christ, and immersion for the remission of sins. Many of the principles taught by Messrs. Glass and Sandeman were engrafted upon this stock; and “Campbellism,” divested of its Calvinism, became a new edition of Scotch Baptistism in America.

The legends of this new sect, which it afterwards refused to practice, were: “Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;” and, on the obverse of its medal, “Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven; and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only one Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only one Leader, the Messiah.” The sentiment of these precepts is admirable; and had it been carried into practice, would have led the disciples of these reformers into the very Holy City itself. But, as it turned out, they adjudged themselves unworthy of so distinguished an honor, and are now groveling among the dust of “the Earth.”

In those days, the author of this exposition of the apocalypse, then a young man of about thirty years of age, found himself among them, before he understood their theory in detail. He applied himself diligently to the thorough understanding of it by the study of the writings current among them. This he acquired; so that he needeth not that any should testify of Scotto-Campbellism; for he knows what is in it, and that it falls infinitely short of its pretension to be the “restoration of the ancient gospel and order of things.”

The author adopted with great zest and zeal the sentiment of their legend. He proceeded to “prove all things,” and to “hold fast what” he believed to be “good;” and to call no man father, teacher, or leader, but Christ, the truth (John 14:6). In doing this, he devoted himself to the study of the prophetic and apostolic writings, under the impression that he was engaged

in a good work; and, as he was then publishing a periodical entitled *The Apostolic Advocate*, he would from time to time report to his brethren for their benefit, what he found taught therein. In pursuing this study, he found many of their principles to be at variance with “the word,” which was made void by them. Perceiving this, and supposing that the spirit of their legend was the spirit of their body, he did not hesitate to lay his convictions before them that they might *prove* them, and *hold* them, or *reject* them, according to the testimony. This raised quite a storm among them, the thunderbolts of which were aimed at him by the thunderer of their sect. This uproar caused the author to discover that he had made a mistake in his reading of their legends; and that their reading of Paul’s words was, “Prove all things which we have proved; and hold fast what we believe to be good;” and of Jesus, “Call no man father, teacher, or leader, but Alexander Campbell.” These were readings that he had never agreed to; and, therefore, he continued to read and publish according to the old method, very much to the indignation and disgust of the Simon Pures who misled the multitude.

But he saw that they did not walk honestly according to the truth, or the principles they professed. The gospel proclaimed by this sect of “the Earth,” was a misunderstanding of Peter’s Pentecostian address. It preached “baptism for remission of sins” to every one who confessed that Jesus was the Son of God. This was styled “the Ancient Gospel.” The preachers of the Baptist sect denounced it as a damnable heresy. Many of these same preachers, however, from divers causes, changed their minds, left their own mother, joined the Scotto-Campbellites, and, without re-immersion, became “evangelists” and “pastors” among them. Considering this fact, it occurred to the author to inquire, “If, when ye were Baptist ‘divines,’ ye denounced what, as Scotto-Campbellite ‘evangelists,’ ye now preach and believe to be the Ancient Gospel; what was that gospel ye obeyed when ye were immersed into Baptism?” They either could not, or would not, answer this question; for they were acute enough to perceive that a scriptural reply would have convicted them of preaching a gospel for remission of sins which they had not themselves obeyed; and, consequently, that they were but pious unpardoned sinners, promising to others liberty while they were themselves the servants of corruption. These “evangelists” were the ruin of the sect. They succeeded in closing the eyes and ears of the multitude against the truth; and they remain closely sealed to this day.

The numerical increase of the sect, without regard to the scriptural qualifications of their proselytes, was the standard of the “good” done. They preached the immortality of the soul; the translation of righteous immortal souls to kingdoms beyond the skies at death; the dismissal of unjust immortal souls into eternal torments in hell at death; the salvation

of the immortal souls of infants and pagans—a salvation, consequently, without faith; they proclaimed that the church is the kingdom, and was set up on the day of Pentecost; that Jesus is now sitting on the throne of David; that the apostles are ruling with him, and sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that the Old Testament Scriptures are as an old Jewish almanac out of date; that the gospel is, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again; and that whosoever believed these “three facts,” and confessed that Jesus was Son of God, had the “one faith;” that he was justified by this belief, or pardoned, though he might be in doubt; therefore, to make assurance doubtless, they prescribed immersion for that enjoyment that comes from knowledge of remission of sins; that this was the “one baptism;” that there were *three salvations*—salvation from present ills, salvation from sins, and salvation from hell-torments; that *there were three kingdoms*—that of law, that of grace or the church, and that of glory; that the first was entered by birth of flesh; the second, by birth of water, or the right hand of fellowship; and the third, at death. Such were the leading traditions with which the leaders intoxicated and demented the multitude for their own advantage; and surely he must be judicially blind, who cannot see that the Scotto-Campbellite sect, which, indeed, shook American ecclesiasticism severely, was, nevertheless, not the resurrected witnessing of the saints for the veritable ancient apostolic faith.

But, after all, good was done. The influence of the clergy over the multitude was vastly diminished; and great numbers were stirred up to read the Scriptures, and to think for themselves. The author and many of his friends were of this “very small remnant.” Under the inspiration of the word believed, he could not be silent, whatever consequences might arise. Hence in October 1834, he raised his voice against the system in an article upon baptism. He maintained, that *before immersion could be scripturally recognized as the “one baptism,” the subject thereof must be possessed of the “one faith”*. This was a hard blow upon the baptistic Scotto-Campbellite “evangelists;” and they felt it. It also condemned the author’s immersion, which, however, he did not discover till twelve years after. He maintained—

1. That *belief*, built on the testimony of the prophets and apostles concerning the Christ; confession that Jesus of Nazareth is that Christ, the Son of the Living God; and immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, for repentance and remission, are part and parcel of, and necessary to, the ordinance of purification of sin, styled by Paul, the “One Baptism.”
2. That mere immersion is not baptism; but that a man cannot be aqueously baptized without being immersed in water.
3. That they whose immersion is predicated upon “a certificate of former good character,” and a tale of sights and sounds, frames and

feelings, called “experience,” with no more faith than amounts to a belief that “the word of God is a dead letter,” and that “if they don’t get religion they’ll be damned”—that an immersion in the name of the Father, &c., predicated on such premises, is not Christian baptism.

4. That the subjects of any baptism not predicated upon the “good confession,” are not entitled to the spiritual blessings consequent on the “one baptism.”

5. That the Deity, having placed His name in His institutions, all communicable blessings flow through those institutions, of which Christian baptism is one.

6. That every immersed person who is not immersed on “the good confession,” is not founded upon The Rock; and consequently, forms no part of the Church of Christ.

7. That the re-immersion of such a believer is not a re-baptism, and therefore justifiable—such re-immersion being his first scriptural baptism.

Such was the testimony of A.D. 1834. In the course of the year following he called in question their speculations and traditions concerning the soul, heaven, hell, eternal torment, the Devil, their salvation without faith, and so forth. He was not quite clear upon these topics himself; but their violent attacks, threw him upon the defensive, and compelled him to fortify. By a closer study of the word he attained to full assurance of faith, which was only confirmed by the feebleness of their arguments in debate. He maintained:

The statement of these propositions stirred up the devil on every side and made him roar like a devouring lion; but the truth of them turned his wrath into great bitterness. He denounced the author as “a moonstricken speculator,” “a materialist,” “an infidel,” “an atheist, fit only for the society of Tom Paine, Voltaire, and that herd.” These were the weapons, endorsed with all the influence and power of the sect for evil, against one man, whom he contemptuously spumed as “a stripling,” and classed with the unclean beasts of the ark!

But “the Earth that helps the Woman” being in power, these ravings and roarings were permitted to break no bones. Great efforts were made to suppress both the author and his writings, till at length they so far succeeded as to prevent their flocks from reading them and listening to his discourse. Alas, for any people reduced by crafty and designing men to such a case! How can the truth enter those whose eyes and ears are closed? Nevertheless, its advocacy was not abandoned, though the aspect of things was very discouraging. Several, however, avowed their conviction of the truth of these propositions; and though the policy of the Devil was to fight him by letting him alone, the study of “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” was continued; and, as it broke in upon his mind, was dealt out

by the press and tongue to all who had “ears to hear what the Spirit had said to the ecclesias.”

By the year 1847, he had illustrated and proved the following propositions to the conviction of increasing numbers:

1. That the Gospel preached by the apostles was originally preached to Abraham, announcing blessedness for all nations in him and in his Seed, when he should possess the gate of his enemies.
2. That this Gospel promised Abraham and his Seed that they should be the Heirs of the World, which they should possess forever.
3. That Abraham, “hoping against hope,” was fully persuaded that what the Deity had promised he was also able to perform, and therefore it was counted to him for righteousness.
4. That the land in which he sojourned, and kept his flocks and herds, and in Scripture styled the Holy Land, and *Yahweh’s* Land was promised to him for an everlasting possession.
5. That this promise of the land became a confirmed covenant 430 years before the Mosaic Law was added.
6. That the Seed of Abraham, whose day he rejoiced to see, was to descend from the tribe of Judah in the line of David; and to be at once both son of David and Son of God.
7. That a covenant was made with David, ordered in all things and sure, promising that the Seed should descend from him; that he should possess a kingdom in a future age; that he should be Son of the Eternal Father; that he should be afflicted unto death; that he should rise again; that the throne of his kingdom should be David’s throne; that Christ should occupy the throne in his presence; that he shall reign over the House of Jacob, in the covenanted land, during the age; and that of his kingdom there shall be no end.
8. That these covenants made with Abraham and with David are styled by Paul “the Covenants of Promise,” and that they contain “the things concerning the Kingdom of God,” which must be believed as a part of the faith that justifies.
9. That the Christ is the Eternal Father by His spirit manifested in the Seed of David, and that Jesus of Nazareth is he.
10. That in his crucifixion, Sin was condemned in the same flesh that had transgressed in Paradise, so that in the crucified body he bore the sins of his people upon the tree, that they being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.
11. That he was raised from among the dead by the power of the Father, for the justification or pardon of those who believe the covenanted promises, and the things concerning him.

12. That the things concerning the Christ as a sufferer, and fulfilled in Jesus, are “the things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ,” which must also be believed as the other part of the faith which justifies.
13. That *Repentance* is a change of mind and disposition, produced by “the exceeding great and precious promises” lovingly believed, and resulting in “the obedience of faith.”
14. That repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life are granted in the name of Jesus Christ.
15. That the Obedience of Faith consists in believing the gospel preached to Abraham, the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the revealed mystery of his Name, and in being immersed into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
16. That repentance, remission of sins, and a right to incorruptibility and life are institutionally granted to believers of the truth as outlined above in being buried with Christ by immersion into death to sin, from whence they rise with Christ, to walk in newness of life.
17. That Abraham, the prophets, and the brethren under the Mosaic Law, are justified by the belief of the promises covenanted to Abraham and David, which covenants were brought into force by the death of the Testator, or Deity in flesh-manifestation called Jesus Christ; and that the immersed, and *they only*, whether Jews or Gentiles, from the Day of Pentecost to the return of the Ancient of Days, are justified by belief of the same covenanted promises and of things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ as specified above. Thus, there is one Deity who shall justify the circumcision *ek pisteos, by, from, or out of faith*; and the uncircumcision *dia tes pisteos, “through the faith,”* for whether under the Law or since the law, “the just shall live by faith,” “without which it is impossible to please God.”
18. That “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” is equivalent to “the Name of Jesus Christ;” and expresses “the great mystery of godliness,” *the Deity manifested in flesh*: that this manifestation was first *an individual unity*, and then *a multitudinous unity*, in flesh and blood nature; that the individual divine unity was “justified by spirit” when Jesus was glorified; and that the multitudinous unity, consisting of all saints, will be made like him when he shall appear in power. Hence, when this consummation shall be complete, “The Name” will be the Eternal Father by spirit manifested in a multitude of immortals, whom no man can number. The scriptural designation of this Divine Unity is *Yahweh echad*—the One who shall be.
19. That this name exists in Two States—the present and the future—which states are separated by the resurrection. In the present state, the Name is apocalyptically symbolized by “the Sealed,” “the

Golden Altar,” “the Holy City trampled,” “the Woman and the remnant of her seed;” and in the future state, by “the Four Living ones full of eyes,” and “the four and twenty elders;” by the Rainbow Angel; by the Nave; by the 144,000 on Mount Zion; by harpists and singers; by the Lamb’s wife arrayed in white; by the armies in the heaven; and by the Great City, the Holy Jerusalem, as a Bride adorned for her husband.

20. That the Gospel is glad tidings, inviting men and women to become constituents of this Divine Name, and therefore Heirs of the World with Abraham, on condition of believing the truth as it is in Jesus, being immersed, and walking in the newness of life, as shown above.

Such is the system of truth in outline elaborated by the author from the word as the result of an earnest contention for the faith which, as I have said, continued about twelve years. Its operation on his own mind was to cause him to be immersed; and, being thus put right himself, to go forth and show the “straight gate and narrow way” to others. “The spirit of life from the Deity,” which Mr. Bicheno was looking for but did not see, had “entered into the witnesses for gospel truth,” as he expressed it, when in 1847, the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name was once more proclaimed for the obedience of faith. A few congregations had been collected upon this basis in America, and “the earth” has been to some extent impregnated with their principles. These earthborns, however, mix up many traditions with what they have learned, which make the truth of none effect for their salvation. They are known by various names, such as Millerites, Adventists, Storrites, and so forth, who while dissatisfied with their old mother and her daughters, have neither intelligence nor faith enough in the word to become citizens of the downtrodden Holy City. This witnessing society is “too exclusive,” “too dogmatic,” “too denunciatory of the Christians of other denominations,” “makes too much of baptism,” to suit them. It affords no scope for money-making by preaching, for personal glorification by conventions, conferences, periodicals, and so forth. For these, and other reasons too numerous and burdensome to recount, they turn their backs upon those who are able to enlighten them, and exhaust their feebleness in the work of hewing out for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns—which will hold no water.

But the author did not confine his testimony to the territory of “the Model Republic”. In that “wonderful year,” A.D. 1848, signalized by the terrible shaking given to the kingdoms of the Great City by “the Earth,” he reimported the testimony into his native land—a land of Bibles, whose truth was buried under mountains of tradition for want of a living witness to exhume it, and to set it intelligibly before the people. Two hundred and seventy discourses in a little over two years; the circulation of eleven

hundred copies of *Elpis Israel*; and less than a hundred copies of the *Herald of the Kingdom*, per annum, for eleven years; with about a hundred and fifty copies of the first volume of this work—has been his agency in witnessing for the truth against the Laodicean Apostasy in Great Britain. The “very small remnant” has been increased by acquisitions in Britain. The Holy City has acquired voice; and though feeble, is making itself heard, and attended to, by the people. In 1862, the author revisited that country. He found several churches that had struggled into a semi-witnessing existence. The truth had more real friends than in 1848–’50; but it had also many more dangerous embarrassments to encounter, than at that time. Its worst enemies are its pretended friends. It is from these that the truth now suffers both in Britain and America. “The Earth” is a good breastwork against the Serpent; but it is too ignorant and wise in its own conceit to be “a witness for gospel truth.” I trust, however, that a better day has dawned in the current 1866; when the principles herein outlined will find such an earnest expression by their adherents, that no teaching will be endured among them, by press or tongue, that is not in strict accordance with the oracles of God.

I shall conclude this section by another quotation from Bicheno, respecting the “three days and a half.” “*Days*, in the mystical language of prophecy, and particularly in the Revelation, generally signify years. But if that be their meaning here, an essential agreement is wanting; for the time, from the repeal of the Edict of Nantes to the French Revolution, was about 105 years. Terms of time among the ancients were ambiguous. Days, months, and years, had not always their proper signification; for ‘months,’ says Artemidorus, ‘are sometimes denoted by years, and days too; and years and days by months; and months and years by days.’ It was the subject, or the rule of proportion which determined the meaning of the terms. Hence, Daubuz observes respecting the terms of time in the symbolic language: ‘Terms of time being thus ambiguous amongst the ancients, they must, in the symbolic language, be by the rule of proportion determined by the circumstances. Prophecy concerning future events is a picture, or representation, of the events in symbols, which being fetched from objects visible at one view, or cast of the eye, rather represent the events in miniature, than in full proportion; giving us more to understand than what we see. And, therefore, that the duration of the events may be represented in terms suitable to the symbols of the visions, the symbols of duration must also be drawn in miniature.’

“*Days*, then, *may* stand for months. And we may here see the reason why the witnesses are represented as lying dead *three days and a half*, rather than three months and a half, or 105 days. *The duration of events must be represented in terms suitable to the symbols of the visions.* The symbol is dead bodies lying in the street. How monstrous would it be to represent

dead bodies as lying in such a situation for 105 days! The time of their lying dead is therefore, drawn in miniature suitable to dead bodies lying in a street; and these lunar days, or months, are to be calculated in the same manner as the ‘forty and two months’ in the second verse. Thus $3 \times 30 + 15 = 105$ years; the time which elapsed from the repeal of the Edict of Nantes to the French Revolution.”

Signs of the Times

At the time of this writing, it is still too early in the American elections to try to understand where God is taking the principle nations which will be involved in His plans for the earth. That being the case, I thought I might take time to clear up a few misconceptions from our presentations concerning Bible prophesy that have arisen.

In quoting bro. Thomas’s article, “The Destiny of the British Empire,” we pointed out that he believed the hand of God, styled in Scripture “the East Wind,” would destroy the Tarshish fleet. This has been misconstrued to suggest that we are somehow arguing that Tarshish will not be in position to defend Israel. That this is not the case, we feel is obvious from any and all of our many discourses on the subject.

In making his argument, bro. Thomas did not believe that the destruction of the Tarshish fleet in the Sea of Tarshish, would in any way stop Tarshish from its designated Scriptural role of trying to defend Israel. It was his belief that a great defeat of the Tarshish fleet at the hand of God’s “East Wind,” would weaken Tarshish, allowing them to be overcome by Russia.

You see, in 1867-70, (which was the date bro. Thomas thought would bring the Armageddon wars) it was a virtual certainty that under natural conditions, Russia could not have defeated England as Ezekiel 38 required. England was much too powerful, which had just been shown in the Crimean War of 1854-1856. Something had to occur that England would be weakened to the point where Russia could achieve the success prophesied. While England was victorious over Russia in Crimea, the winters of Crimea exacted more of a toll on the English than the Russians did. It was only logical that bro. Thomas would see some similar event as weakening the English and allowing for the great Russian victory upon the mountains of Israel.

But in so saying, he never wavered on the fact that Tarshish would be in the land of Israel, set for the defence of Israel, and neither have I. Many times, I have pointed to Tarshish’s words, “art thou come to take a spoil” as proof that Tarshish has a presence in Israel when Russia descends upon

the mountains of Israel. They don't say, "Art thou going in there to take a spoil," as though they were not in the land, but "art thou come."

When we look at the difference between American and Russian forces, it is the same situation today as in 1867. It is as inconceivable that Russia could defeat the American forces under natural conditions today, as it was that Russia could have defeated England in 1867. Something has to occur to weaken the American forces, to allow Scriptures to be fulfilled. I see no better explanation for this weakening than the solution bro. Thomas came up with, which was the East Wind, (the divine hand of God) executing a natural disaster against the Tarshish fleet and destroying the ships of Tarshish. Without their fleet, the forces of Tarshish in Israel will be ripe for the picking, eventually being driven into Moab, Edom and the children of Ammon, or modern-day Jordan, to escape the advancing Northern Hosts.

There are some differences between 1867 and now. England, for instance, in 1867, had never been a friend to Israel. But America has been, to this point in history, a very loyal friend to Israel. With very few exceptions, regardless of the administration, America has been Israel's most reliable friend in the earth. It would then seem that the promises made by God to Abraham (I will bless them that bless thee) would not permit the US to be destroyed so thoroughly upon Israel's mountains. So, we speculated, something must occur to change the relationship between the United States and Israel, that this destruction might occur.

That which appears to be on the American political horizon, and which appears to be the most logical change which would justify the Divine destruction of Tarshish, is the trend that the United States has been experiencing to socialism and socialism's natural antithesis to the Jews, which will also result in the destruction of the Earth-witness' Constitution. Anyone who denies this trend in American politics simply isn't paying attention or reading the 105-page plan laid out by former Vice President Joe Biden and self-described Socialist Senator Bernie Sanders. The two jointly laid out their plan for America, which was clearly a Marxist plan. From "The Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force:"

"That is why Democrats commit to forging a new social and economic contract with the American people—a contract that invests in the people and promotes **shared prosperity**, not one that benefits only big corporations and the wealthiest few. A new contract that recognizes all Americans have a **right** to quality, affordable health care. One that affirms housing is a **right** and not a privilege, and which makes a commitment that no one will be homeless or go hungry in the richest country on earth. A new economic contract that raises wages and restores workers' rights to organize, join a union,

and collectively bargain. One that at last supports working families and the middle class by securing equal pay for women, paid family leave for all, and ensuring racial equity. A new economic compact that provides access for all to reliable and affordable banking and financial services...”

Karl Marx couldn't have written it better. And as we documented in a Signs article, September 2020, pgs. 528 – 534, Socialism inevitably leads to anti-Semitism. Judaism and Socialism are two incompatible religions. But the question arises, if America becomes socialist, would they then refuse to play the role of Tarshish in defending Israel? That conclusion does not necessarily follow at all. Bro. Thomas was quite clear for the motivation of Tarshish. He wrote in Elpis Israel:

“As I have said elsewhere, the Lion-power will not interest itself in behalf of the subjects of God's kingdom, from pure generosity, piety towards God, or love of Israel; but upon the principles which actuate all the governments of the world—upon those, namely, of the lust of dominion, self-preservation, and self-aggrandizement. God, who rules the world, and marks out the bounds of habitation for the nations, will make Britain a gainer by the transaction. He will bring her rulers to see the desirableness of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, which they will be induced, by the force of circumstances, probably, to take possession of.”

So it is not inconceivable that the United States could work against Israel with such programs as we have already seen advanced in the US Congress such as BDS (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel) or by insisting upon the two state solution for Israel and Palestine (which all Israel knows is a “no state” solution for Israel) or for insisting that Israel return to pre-1947 borders, or re-establishing peace agreements with Iran, or having the UN condemn the annexing territory (as the Obama Administration did.) Any or all these could justify God's vengeance on Tyre, as prophesied:

Ezek. 28:14-16 “Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, *till* iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

In spite of working to undermine Israel, they could eventually find their own interests threatened, requiring them to defend Israel. As the saying goes: “man proposes, God disposes.”

Also, in relation to the Signs, we observe an accusation which we regard as quite strange. It is alleged that in North America “open support for Trump” (by which we presume is meant President Trump) “has now entered the fellowship...”.

What is meant by support for President Trump? Is it alleged that Berean brethren vote in elections? This, to the best of my knowledge, would be false. Is it alleged that Berean brethren give financial support to some political party or other? This also, to the best of my knowledge, would be false. Is it alleged that Berean brethren in any way take part in influencing those in the world in their elections? This also, to the best of my knowledge, would be false. I find the accusation unfortunate, at best.

But if it is meant that some brethren find the actions of President Trump to be beneficial to the brotherhood, and to the fulfilling of Bible Prophecy, then that would be true. As must be apparent to any reader of the early Christadelphians, brethren are, and always have been very interested in the effect leaders have on world events. What appears to be new, is a concern about the internal politics of the nations, and the political and social rights and wrongs taking place therein.

Those with a correct understanding of the Apocalypse know where we are in Bible prophecy. We know that the Christadelphians are the Woman-witness of Rev. 11 & 12, now resurrected. We also know that God provided two resurrected witnesses: us, and the Earth-witness, which are the advocates of the principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality. It is the Earth-witness who simultaneously protects us from the Beast of Revelations, or the State sponsored Church in any of its forms; and allows us to freely fulfil our witness of the truth without fear of persecution.

President Trump has proved himself a loyal and powerful Earth-witness. He has unapologetically reversed rulings depriving Americans of religious freedoms which occurred during the Obama Administration, and appointed 300 judges who are very loyal to the Earth-witness's Constitution, along with 3 Supreme Court Justices, whose every vote has been saving religious freedom. This should be considered the most important factor in Christadelphians evaluating President Trump. The willingness of the Earth-witness to protect the Woman-witness is paramount in our lives. And it is very much under threat. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Alito recently made a speech about this very thing. Alito cited a legal case in Nevada, saying:

“The governor's emergency orders in that state have given leeway and support to casinos hosting gamblers at up to 50% capacity while forcing houses of worship to cap their attendance at 50 people.

"Take a quick look at the Constitution," Alito said. "You will see the free exercise clause of the First Amendment, which protects religious liberty. You will not find a craps clause or a blackjack clause or a slot machine clause."

"It pains me to say this, but in certain quarters, religious liberty is fast becoming a disfavored right."

These are the very things President Trump has been working to reverse, by Presidential order and by appointing sympathetic judges. These are the very reason some Christadelphians may appreciate his efforts.

Secondly, President Trump has been Israel's greatest friend of any president to date. For that reason, many greatly approve of what he has done all around the Middle East. It is suggested that this is not relevant. An example is advanced that the Christians of the third century "supported" Constantine because he said he supported Jesus Christ!!!

This demonstrates a misunderstanding of the Apocalypse. The Catholics of the third and fourth century supported Constantine. The true Christians, also called the Woman-witness, fled from Constantine and his Beast-creation to the appendages of the empire where they were sealed (Rev. 7) for 80+ years till the Earth-witness was fully formed (circa 395 AD) and able to swallow the flood that proceeded from the Beast.

But it also demonstrates a wrong position towards Israel. Yes, Israel is disobedient, but they are still God's people. God will punish them in measure. But it is always unwise for us to do anything other than pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Lastly, it is suggested that those brethren who have a favorable opinion of the work President Trump has done, will somehow alienate themselves from the brethren in Africa or PNG. This will only be true if the brethren working in those areas have burdened the brethren in Africa and PNG about political events and President Trump, which are simply not relevant. If this is the case, it is incumbent on those brethren to correct it.

Certainly, there must be factual ways to make our prophetic points, apart from engaging in speculation brought on by the propaganda of the various sides or critiquing the social politics of the nations. The politics and social conditions of the nations are supposed to be in place to resolve disputes and injustices relative to this world.

Obviously, there are injustices in the world today. Nations through their political preferences choose different ways to address these injustices.

Those nations imbibed with the spirit of 1789 and the French and American revolutions choose to solve these problems consistent with the spirit of liberty. Those nations imbibed with the spirit of 1848 and the second French revolution choose to solve these problems consistent with the spirit of collectivism. But those of us who are pilgrims and strangers in these lands know that the only real solution to the world's injustices, is the return of Christ.

For instance, one might consider the China Flu an important event in the Divine plan. If this is the case, don't tell us about the political conditions of the nations created by the China Flu. They might be interesting to the citizens of the land, but not to those of us who are pilgrims and strangers, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. Rather, tell us how events like the China Flu improve or impair a nation's ability to fulfill a role in Bible prophecy, or how they might confirm or disprove a projected fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Since the Chinese flu has its worst effect upon the elderly, and those already infirmed, has this flu in any way hampered the world's military capability? The obvious answer is no. If it has had any effect upon the military, it is only in regards to the financial ability of a nation to field an army.

When we look at how the flu has effected the wealth of the nations, we see that the Chinese have weathered the pandemic the best. But in the process, they have made serious enemies of many nations. How this plays out in the future will be interesting to watch.

Of the nations involved in Bible Prophecy, we see the United States has performed the best throughout the pandemic, doing the third best, economically, in the world behind China and South Korea. The US. gross domestic product (GDP—the production of the entire nation) will decline by 3.5-3.8%, according to projections made after the third quarter results came out. While this is a terrible retraction, it looks good next to the decline of the northern hosts. Russia is projected to see their GDP decline by 6% while the European Union is anticipating a decline of their GDP to be 7.4-7.8%.

As bro. Thomas pointed out, Tarshish will be the wealthiest nation in the world, so it is important that the United States comes out of this pandemic still the wealthiest of nations. The motivation of the northern hosts to descend on Israel is described by Tarshish's question, "art thou come to take a spoil?" Spoil, then, is among the motivating forces driving the Europeans into Israel.

Hints for Bible Markers

Psalms 12

Psalms 12:7

“Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.”

Here is a great fact which the faithful of Abraham’s seed must keep in their hearts and minds because it provides much comfort and encouragement in these days of spiritual darkness and times of trial. We must acknowledge to each other, and especially to ourselves, that trials will come. They should be expected as we go about our daily lives. Trials are there for a purpose. They develop patience, and patience godliness and brotherly kindness. Many verses, many Psalms (such as this one) are provided to provide the needed comfort and strength during these periods. We can also recognize the comfort provided by these words to Jesus as he walked to Jerusalem for the final time in the days of his flesh where he shall fall into the hands of man. This beautiful verse contains both the promise of resurrection and life eternal.

Psalms 12:8

“The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”

This is a very appropriate thought at this time considering the very close and highly polarized election we just had. One Israeli journalist wrote a head line about the election, “Dear Americans: The Election Party Was Bad, but the Hangover Will Be Worse.” But regardless, we know:

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17).

“But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psalms 75:7).

While we walk in this age of the kingdom of men, amongst “the wicked” on every side while “the Vilest Men are exalted” we can take consolation in the realization that these political, economic, and military events going on around us are under the control of the Almighty Hand of Yahweh, moving events and governments into position associated with His purposes for the working out of His plan for the earth.

To be continued next month, Lord Willing

bro. Beryl Snyder