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FAITH, BAPTISM AND SALVATION.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH
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He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.
Mark vi. 16.

Many Baptists do not see eye to eye with the Disciples on the design of baptism, and set this forth as an objection to the union of the two bodies so much spoken of recently. We think the Lord has made this point very clear in his last commission, and instead of the usual editorial for this and the next CHRISTIAN we give our readers the following discourse from a Baptist preacher to a Baptist church, delivered over forty years ago:

In the commission of our Lord to his apostles, recorded by Matthew, are two injunctions—the first is to *make disciples*, the second, to *instruct the disciples into all things given them in charge*. How they were to make disciples we are informed by Mark. It was by preaching the gospel, so accompanied by the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit as to produce faith in their hearers, and after faith a change of heart—a change of life, in a word, or turning of the whole person to God—body, soul and spirit, a dethronement of self and an enthronement of God in the affections through Jesus Christ, and then through baptism to separate them from the world—to introduce them into the family and church and kingdom of Christ on earth. "Go ye therefore and preach the gospel to every creature," said our Lord, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Again, according to Luke, he said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The apostles began the fulfilment of their ministry conferred by the last commission of the Lord at Jerusalem. They had waited for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, which was poured out upon them in copious measures on the day of Pentecost. And they then stood up and preached as the Lord had commanded them. He had commanded them, as we have seen, to preach the gospel. And what for gospel did they preach? It was the love of God in Christ—Christ crucified, Christ dead, buried, risen from the dead—all for our sins and for our justification according to the scriptures. And their preaching, we have said, was accompanied by the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit. A record of these accompanying influences is given in the second chapter of Acts. They were audible, they were visible. They conferred upon the apostles and all the disciples then associated with them the miraculous powers of speaking languages unknown to them before, and to perform also many signs and wonders, which at once struck home conviction on their rational audience of the truth of their preaching and caused them to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" But for these demonstrations of the Holy Spirit accompanying the first proclamation of the gospel all their preaching would have been in vain—not a soul would have been converted; for no man can say that "Jesus is the Lord," says Paul, "but by the Holy Ghost."

By the Holy Ghost Jesus had been singled out of the vast multitudes who crowded the Jordan to John to submit to his baptism by descending upon his head in the bodily form of a dove while a voice from heaven was heard to say, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus were the apostles and first disciples of Christ assured of his divine mission and so enabled to believe on him. And we may add that by the same demonstrations which were exhibited on the day of Pentecost, and subsequently in the apostles' time—a record of which we have in the New Testament scriptures—have all since those times, and thus are we enabled to believe. "These things are written," says John, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Written? Yes, and so written by so many witnesses and so confirmed by such testimony that every rational person who has ever since had in his hands a copy of the New Testament, by giving heed to it, was and is enabled as well to believe to the salvation of his soul as were they who attended on the personal ministry of the apostles, and with their own eyes saw and with their own ears heard these visible and audible demonstrations of the Spirit of God.

"He that believeth," says our text. The gospel was preached to be believed, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith, therefore, stands first. But it stands not alone. No, my friends. Though faith is absolutely and indispensably necessary as the first exercise, and is in fact the first mental step from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son, it stands not alone, and is not the only step, nor does it of itself introduce anyone into a state of salvation; for in the other testimony which we have quoted our Lord says, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached." Repentance, too, is consequently connected as an indispensable pre-requisite to the present Christian salvation. Repentance is the second mental step—the next step to faith.

Nor are repentance and faith all that is necessary to the remission of sins. No, for the Saviour did not say—he has nowhere said—that he that believeth shall be saved, or "he that believeth and repenteth shall be saved." And why not? Because faith and repentance are both mental acts, or, in other words, acts of the mind—acts of the understanding and heart and will—acts of the spirit and soul; whereas man is composed of a body also—a body that has been defiled by sin—a body that must be redeemed and presented a living sacrifice to Christ—a body that must, with the soul and spirit, be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven here, and be born from the grave, too, by a renovating, transforming and glorious resurrection to inherit the everlasting kingdom above. Hence, said our Lord to Nicodemus, "ye must be born again," and "except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Mark it. The Saviour here says, not your spirit must be born again, but you—that is your whole person. And he says, not except the soul or the spirit, or the soul and the spirit, of a man be born again, but except a man, the whole man—spirit and soul and body "be born again." And how born again? Not of the spirit only, but of water and the spirit. To be born of the spirit we must be quickened by it, we must be begotten of it, we must be renovated in the temper and dispositions of our minds by the word of the truth of the gospel. In a word, we must be so changed by the Holy Spirit as to be ready, willing and waiting for the commandment, "Arise and be baptized," to arise and obey. And to be born of water we must be baptized, for our Lord has said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Hence, the Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, answered the question, "What shall we

do?" by repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and hence the Apostle Paul prays the Thessalonians who had been discipled by believing and obeying the gospel—that their whole spirit and soul and body might be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"I believe in heart religion," says one, and the scriptures is quoted, "Son, give me thy heart," "I believe not in head religion." But I believe, says the Christian, the well-taught disciple of Christ—in head and in heart, in body and in soul religion. I believe in its taking possession and governing the whole man—body, soul and spirit, for Paul says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And again, says James, "If any man among you seemeth to be religious and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain. And further, "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Here, too, is hand and foot religion, for to visit the fatherless and widows we must walk to and enter the abodes of want, and we must relieve their necessities by opening and extending to them the hands of our benevolence. My little children, says John, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. What is it to love in word and in tongue? It is when we hear of any proper object of clarity, or such an object presents himself or herself before us, we only express our piety, or regret, or compassion, by saying that we are sorry for them. It is as the priest and the Levite loved the unfortunate man mentioned by our Lord in his parable who fell among the thieves, by passing by on the other side, whereas to love in deed and in truth is to love like the good Samaritan who came to him, took him up and seated him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him, pouring into his wounds oil and wine and promising to pay the host all that he would spend on him till his complete recovery. Here was an exhibition of religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father. But he who sees his brother in need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Is not this good doctrine, my brethren? Is it not orthodox and sound according to the teaching of Christ our Lord and his apostles?

I am aware that some one present may or might respond, "We have not been taught to embrace baptism in regeneration. We do not believe it to be a saving ordinance and essential to salvation." It is an old charge against the Baptists—it was made many years ago—and it has been reiterated and answered perhaps a thousand times that we make too much of baptism—that we make it a saving ordinance. The usual reply to this charge has been that we baptize no infants and no adults, but believers or professed believers in Christ, and consequently that we require all the subjects of our baptism to be justified by faith before we can receive them to baptism. This answer has been deemed sufficient. But I feel disposed on this occasion to answer it more at large.

I answer, therefore, that as Baptists we believe all that and only that which the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles have said on this subject. Our Lord said, "Go make disciples, disciple or convert all nations, baptizing them." He said, "Go preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And he said, "except a man be born of water and spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Peter said to men of every nation under heaven assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one