

WHICH IS IT?—Is a man saved through faith alone, or must it be supplemented by baptism to be saving? On this question we wish to say a little more. What is the teaching of the epistles upon it? In Rom. i. 16, the gospel is said to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"—not to every one that believeth and is baptized. 1 Cor. i. 21, it is God's good pleasure, "through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe"—not believe and are baptized. Eph. ii. 8, it is "by grace are ye saved through faith"—not through faith and baptism. Rom. v. 1, it is "being justified by faith," which is equivalent to saying being saved by faith, for to justify is to do more than merely to save. Rom. iii. 22-31, it is all justify by faith—not by faith and baptism. In Gal. ii. 16; iii. 8, 24, 26; Phil. iii. 9, 10; 1 John v. 13, etc., etc., it is ever the same. Will THE CHRISTIAN say that faith is sufficient to justify, but needs baptism added in order to save? Certainly not. Why, then, do the apostles say that faith both saves and justifies as well as gives the right of sonship, if baptism is required as well? If THE CHRISTIAN'S view be true, the apostles, in all these cases, stated what was not true. They stated it, likewise, in a way that would be most likely to leave the people unsaved through their salvation being incomplete, for, in some epistles, baptism is not even mentioned; in none is it spoken of as though it bore any such necessary relation to salvation as this, when the connection is taken into account.

But we have other objections to make to THE CHRISTIAN'S—and the Disciples'—belief, that faith must be supplemented by baptism before a man is wholly saved. What about the thief on the cross? The Saviour declared he should be with Him in Paradise. Was he taken to Paradise before he was wholly saved, seeing that he was not baptized? THE CHRISTIAN does not believe Pædo-baptists baptized. Are they all unsaved because their salvation is incomplete?

But what about Peter's saying on the day of Pentecost,—Repent and be baptized . . . unto the remission of sins? Does this mean that baptism as well as repentance is necessary to forgiveness? Let us hear what Peter says to Cornelius, Acts x. 43, "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth shall receive remission of sins." If Peter, on the day of Pentecost, meant that there could not be remission of sins without baptism, why does he here say that it is the teaching of all the prophets that faith alone secured the remission of sins? Nor is this all. On Cornelius and his household the Holy Spirit was poured out so that they spake with tongues, before they were baptized. Was this miraculous gift poured out on those not fully saved?

Finally, this doctrine that baptism is necessary to salvation subverts the very idea of the Gospel. It is the work of Christ that saves, and that only can be considered saving which appropriates this work. Now, it cannot be said that baptism assists faith in appropriating the vicarious work of Christ. How then can it be regarded as saving, in any peculiar sense? It must be as a good work. But when it is submitted to, in order to save, it becomes a selfish act and loses its high moral character as an act of obedience prompted by love. The truth is, it is a symbol, so far as it is related to salvation. Like all other symbols, it represents what is already done. It is a symbol of the work of saving grace in the soul, and that work must be done before it is fitting that the symbol should have place.

Much more might be said, but we forbear. Indeed, were it not that some of our people are assailed by this belief, we should not have given it the attention we have. It is one form of ritualism, and work righteousness, and we hope our people may keep clear of it. Preserve baptism in its true place. Hold it as a command of God upon a saved man or woman, to symbolize and profess a salvation already had, and from a desire to obey the Saviour, just because He commands and we love Him; let us hold it as strongly as though it were necessary to salvation. That man is poor and mean, who will take the liberty to trifle with a command of his Saviour, merely because he thinks he can do so, and not be shut out of heaven. All Christ's commands are of equal force, for the obligation of all is found in the fact that they equally embody a Divine wish.

In the editorial column of the *Messenger and Visitor* (Baptist) appears the foregoing article. This, as many of our readers will notice, is but the continuation of a former one, by the same author, for the purpose of substantiating as scriptural—salvation by faith alone.

Before reviewing the above arguments it might be well just here to restate the question of difference between us. We agree that baptism is a command of Christ; the act is immersion and nothing else; and only those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are proper subjects for baptism. The question however comes, "When has such a person the assurance that God has, for Christ's sake, pardoned his sins? Has God, in His Word, placed remission of sins before or after baptism? Our contemporary affirms that pardon comes before; that baptism is an act for one already saved; and charges us with being anti-scriptural, for supplementing faith by baptism in order to remission. To the charge of being "anti-scriptural" we, in a former issue, replied at some length, and called upon the *M. & V.* for the scriptural proof of its allegations, to which it has made two or three responses.

Let it be distinctly understood that no one claims that there is any virtue in water to save the soul; there is no virtue in faith, repentance, works, or anything we can do—the efficacy is in the atonement. But every Bible reader knows full well that God has presented these as conditions with which we must comply if we would enjoy the benefits of the atonement. Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy when, and not before, he had dipped himself seven times in the Jordan. His cleansing was due, not that the act of dipping merited it, not to the efficacy of the water, but to the favor of God, which, however, was not bestowed until he had obeyed in full the voice of the prophet.

The *Messenger and Visitor*, in order to make good its assertion, evidently feels the necessity of establishing as true the doctrine of "salvation by faith alone." To this end several passages have been quoted; and because in these there is no mention of baptism and no other condition appears but faith, the inference is drawn that "salvation by faith alone" is a Bible doctrine, and that a person can get to heaven just about as well without baptism as with it, seeing that, "it is but an act of obedience that will not make him (candidate) any the less sure of salvation." But to the drawing of such an inference we have already presented several objections. (1) The word "alone" is wanting in the passages quoted. (2) No example of salvation by faith alone is forthcoming. (3) The direct conflict with "Faith without works is dead, being alone." (4) If the omission of baptism in certain passages proves it to be unnecessary, then the non-mention of faith in places where salvation is predicated of other things, would prove faith to be of but little use. (5) Such an inference would lead us to suppose that our contemporary has, within a year, been converted over to the Salvation Army. But how many of his friends, do you think, could be persuaded that he had so changed his views? And yet, listen to his condemnatory words of a year ago: "Does the Army consider baptism as a duty that must be performed? it is replied, Decidedly not. The Army only considers one baptism essential to salvation, and that is the baptism of the Spirit," etc., etc.

In coming to the epistles our critic continues to assume that the omission of baptism in certain passages proves the doctrine of "faith alone" to be correct, and baptism, therefore, to be of but little importance. But we reply, Does the word "alone" occur in any of these quotations? Do these furnish examples of "salvation by faith alone?" Were not all these persons baptized? And if this principle of interpretation be a true one, then it applies not simply to baptism; but to repentance and confession, for they, too, appear not in the selected passages; and a man adopting THIS PRINCIPLE might, with almost equal force, claim that salvation is due to "works alone," and that faith is of but little consequence, and quote as authority James ii. 24. Will it do for one to say that because in certain passages repentance and confession are

omitted therefore remission of sins comes before or independent of them? Or is it possible for our contemporary to define faith so as to include repentance and confession as essential, and yet exclude the other command (baptism) as a mere matter of indifference, when, according to the *Messenger and Visitor's* own statement, "all Christ's commands are of equal force," etc.

Of course the apostle did not say, The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth and is baptized. Would any one think it necessary for him when writing to Christians, to enumerate on every occasion, all the conditions upon which they were first accepted? But he might have said it, and more too, and that without violating the truth. Is the gospel the power of God unto salvation to the man that will not repent or that refuses to confess Christ? Certainly not. The apostle, however, does not say, To every one that believeth, repents of his sins, and confesses that Jesus is the Christ. We, then, in the language of our contemporary, might exclaim, Why does the apostle say that faith alone saves, if repentance and confession are required as well. The faith that saves includes obedience, which leaves out neither repentance, confession, or baptism. And any canon of interpretation that would leave out either one of them must indeed lead its advocate into insuperable difficulties.

The question is asked, "Was not the thief on the cross saved without baptism?" Without stopping to notice the debatableness as to whether he ever was baptized or not, we answer, Yes, and so was Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and hundreds of others. But is a case from the Jewish age to be brought forward to establish a law for the Christian age? Was baptism demanded of the thief? If so, by whom? for John's ministry had ceased; Christ's commission was not given till after His resurrection. And the utter impossibility of his complying with it, between the time of his conviction and death, even though ordinarily demanded by God, should cause us to ponder well before holding this forth as an encouragement to those neglecting a possible duty. We know this man was saved—not from what he said or did, but because Christ said so. This evidently shows that a man under certain circumstances was saved; but what encouragement does it hold out for others whose surroundings are entirely different? The Saviour, when on earth, said to a blind man, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." He went, and returned seeing. Does any one ever think of presenting this as an encouragement for blind men to go and wash in Siloam?

"THE CHRISTIAN does not believe Pædo-baptists baptized." Our contemporary, though misrepresenting us in several instances, and has not seen fit to recall them, is correct this time. And judging from his remarks to the Rev. W. A. McKay, (Presbyterian), "that sprinkling comes to us with the stamp of Rome upon it," we feel safe in saying that the *M. & V.* is with us in the above belief.

"Are they all unsaved because their salvation is incomplete?" This question is presented as though we had somewhere intimated that all Pædo-baptists were to be lost, when in fact we have said nothing as to the acceptance or rejection of such people. Our contemporary, however, has said, (former article), "A man that admits baptism to be a command of Christ and still refuses to obey, he is not a believer. He has not sufficient evidence that he is in a saved state." And in the above regards the salvation of the unbaptized as "incomplete." What is meant by "wholly saved," fully saved and salvation incomplete, we know not. If a man is saved—why he is saved; and if lost—he is lost; it matters not how near he came to being saved.

There is no need for us to dwell here on Peter's words, Repent and be baptized. These two commands are tied together by the co-ordinate con-