

our example on others, should certainly lead to an unquestioning and unhesitating obedience. "He that hath my commandments and *keepeth* them, he it is that loveth me."

True, this ordinance is not essential to salvation—that is, as men are saved through the blood of Christ alone, they may be saved without baptism. But it is sinful in principle, and perilous in consequence, wilfully to reject or to neglect any command of Christ. Suppose the same plea were urged in reference to other appointments and means of grace, what would be the consequence? The Lord's supper is not essential to salvation—prayer meetings are not essential to salvation—family worship is not essential to salvation—the knowledge of divine truth beyond a single text in which there is a clear statement of the Gospel remedy—is not essential to salvation. But are we at liberty to undervalue, or neglect, or refuse those means, which if not essential to salvation in the low, mercenary sense of these words, are assuredly essential to our sanctification and growth in grace? Oh! my reader, treat not the ordinance of baptism in this way. The question with you is not, whether you cannot be saved without it, as well as with it; but, has the Lord enjoined it? If the Lord has commanded the immersion of a believer, as an appointed way of professing his faith, then, whether essential or not essential in your view, whether expedient or inexpedient, it remains for you simply to obey. Repair, then, to the "law and to the testimony;"—"search the Scriptures" on this point, seeking only to know what the Lord's will is; and determined by His grace to obey when that will is made clear to your mind.

*Secondly.* But there is a more serious difficulty encountered at the very threshold of our enquiries on this subject, and which, as far as my own experience and observation extend, is more likely than any other to prejudice the mind against the truth, if not indeed to lay an arrest on all further enquiry. "I have no objections to