

when you hear the people say *faith* in all that is necessary to the forgiveness of sins, or, that a man is justified by faith alone, or, faith is the essential; is it not implied that repentance and baptism are non-essentials? Not long since a gentleman said to me, "though he very much disliked the clergyman, yet a few evenings before, his infant being dangerously ill and despairing of its life, he sent for him to baptise the child." The next thing you may hear will be a clergyman saying, from the pulpit, "baptism is a non-essential." Now while baptism is a Bible subject, both the views above are outside of its lids. Did not Jesus and the Apostles teach all we need to know about baptism? And where did either say it was a non-essential. O, would the blessed Jesus give a non-essential command? "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," xvi. Mark. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." How can a clergyman who has ever read such scriptures, and who has any fear of God in his heart, affirm in the presence of the Almighty, that baptism is a non-essential! Here then is a difference about some thing which cannot be regarded as a non-essential. There are some who say that baptism is first in order, then repentance, then faith. Others teach faith first, then repentance, then baptism. Is the difference here non-essential? If the first should become universal we should see no believer baptized at all. Part of the Bible then would become of "none effect." Some teach that we are added to the church before we believe, and some, not till after we believe. Is this idea non-essential? Some teach that Christ died for all and that all *can* be saved. Others, that Christ did not die for all and that part of the world is irrevocably doomed to eternal misery. Is this difference non-essential? Some teach that the Lord's supper should be taken on the first day of the week, others that it may be taken any day of the week, once a month, quarter or year, or that it is "done away" altogether. Is this non-essential? Some say faith is a direct gift of God, some that it is man's own act. Some teach that the Spirit is given before a man believes, and some after. Some teach that people are converted by prayer, some by preaching, some by a miraculous operation of the Spirit without either. Some say their sins are forgiven, and some, they don't know whether they are or not, and a hundred

and one other things might be mentioned in which they differ, and all very important. Now the Bible will cure all these complaints if we will only submit to it as a guide.

SIMON.

#### OVERSEERS.

There should be overseers and deacons in every church in order to its perfection and growth in grace, knowledge and usefulness. These men should be apt to teach, not only in public, but from house to house. We affirm again there is no higher office in the church than overseer. The idea that a Pastor or Evangelist is to rule over the bishops or elders of a church is foreign to the Bible. Each church with its overseers and deacons manages its own business. Great responsibilities rest upon the overseers. They should be patterns of piety, honesty, self-denial, well acquainted with the will of the Lord, and men who will frown down sin and cause evil doers to shrink away before them. The most of the time they give to the Lord should be spent in feeding the flock. Not with two hour sermons on the first day of the week and no more about it till the next first day; but they should visit the Brethren from time to time, confirming them—strengthening them and encouraging them. It is this way they will get hold of the commencement of difficulties and be able to check them in the bud. The cause suffers much for want of working, devoted overseers. What farmer thinks of allowing a flock of sheep to go where they like through the week, only seeing them once in seven days! How many would he have at the end of the year? And shall the overseer be contented with seeing the Brethren once in seven days! O, how many lambs stray from the fold in consequence of inattention. I do not mean their own carelessness, this is one of the reasons undoubtedly, but the major reason in most of instances is carelessness, coldness, indifference, want of attention on the part of the church. One of the last obligations laid upon Peter by the great Shepherd and Bishop of soul is found in these words:—"Feed my sheep"—"feed my lambs." The Apostles have rested from their labours; but there are sheep—there are lambs still to feed, and while we are so careful in doing part of the work enjoined on the Apostles, viz: preaching the facts, precepts and promises of the gospel, why,