

# INTRODUCTION

The author of the following pages offers no excuse for presenting them to the reader. He is not ashamed of any effort to enlighten his fellow-men, however humble it may be; and if he knows his own heart, he has no other aim in view at this time. He is as conscious as any one else can be, that abler heads and more experienced pens have occupied the field before him; but he does not write for the purpose of acquiring fame, or with the expectation of shedding any new light on the important subject of man's salvation. Still he has a hope, that, possibly, this little work may reach hearts which more labored efforts have failed to reach, and may bring consolation to those who have failed to receive it from much higher sources. And, even should he fail in the accomplishment of this much, he will, notwithstanding, have the answer of a good conscience toward God, inasmuch as he has willed to do right, but has failed through lack of ability.

Reader! you have the work before you; judge for yourself of its merits. Read, and ponder well what is contained in it; for however feebly the subject may have been handled, the theme itself is one which will occupy the thoughts of men for all time, and which will form the songs of seraphim throughout the countless ages of eternity.

THE AUTHOR  
LIMESTONE Co., ALA., Jan. 1, 1858

## PART III

THE PLAN OF SALVATION *for the SINNER, as instituted by JESUS CHRIST, who was declared by God himself to be a PRIEST FOREVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDECK, and the ONLY MEDIATOR by whom a MAN can be reconciled to his MAKER.*

Reader, have you followed me thus far? Have I had your patience and strict attention? Do you now feel the importance of a reconciliation to that righteous Father, who has so graciously sent His only Son to make a sacrifice for your sins? Who has not only given you a blessed Redeemer through whom you can approach unto the excellent glory with all your wickedness upon you, but has even vouchsafed, to freely forgive you all your trespasses, and to adopt you as a child, even a child of immortality, and to make you co-heir with the Lord of Hosts? Are you ready to say, with the trembling Peter, "Lord, save, or I perish?" If you are, I beseech you listen to the words of Inspiration, as left on record for the benefit of the whole world. For I expect to present to you nothing else, in my endeavor to show you *how* it is that you can effect a reconciliation with your Creator. Of man's wisdom I know but little, and for

it I care less. Creeds, and party Shibboleths, and the decrees of councils, synods or conventicles, I esteem as vanity—nay, as even a delusion and a snare, and born of iniquity and not of God. The Bible, and the Bible *alone*, is the only creed to which I subscribe,—nor to it in part, but wholly and *in toto*. Hence, in presenting the Plan of Salvation to the sinner, I shall consult God’s Word entire, and not a passage here and there taken out of its connexion, and without reference to the surrounding circumstances. It is owing to this garbling of the Holy Text, that so many different sects are in the world; while many thousands of careless minds, from the same reason, are lost in the mists of Deism, Atheism, and the like.

My chief aim, in pursuing the investigation of the subject of man’s redemption, shall be *plainness*. I wish to make myself and the subject clearly understood. If I succeed in this, my whole purpose from the beginning shall be accomplished. I know that plainness is a very difficult matter, and that many very smart men have striven in vain to acquire that style of writing. But my trust is in the Lord. I feel that I am fully persuaded in my own mind what is the will of God, and I have never known a man yet, who clearly understood a subject, but what he could present it clearly to the comprehension of others.

But before proceeding to an illustration of the plan of salvation, as taught by Jesus Christ and the

Apostles, I wish to present a few thoughts on a subject but little understood. I mean the mission and preaching of John, otherwise called the Baptist. There is a great deal of error and mysticism in the world, all growing out of a misconception of John's baptism.

1st. I acknowledge that in the year 6, B. C. there was born a child of promise, and, according to the command of God, he was named John. See Luke, first chapter.

2d. This John was the Elias foretold by the prophet, and his mission was to be a harbinger, or forerunner of Jesus Christ: one who should prepare a people for his reception out of the nation of the Jews, who were then in an apostate condition,—teaching the tradition of the Rabbis, instead of the Law and the Prophets. Luke, chap. 3, ver. 4, 5.

3d. I acknowledge that this promised harbinger began to preach about A. D., 26, and the burden of his teaching was, that, the kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah, was close at hand, and, in consequence, he warned the people (the Jews) to flee the wrath to come, by a complete reformation of life and a baptism unto repentance. See Matt., chap. 3, ver. 1, 2; Mark, chap. 1, ver. 1; Luke, third chapter.

4th. Notwithstanding this John was one of the greatest of all the prophets, Jesus has himself

declared, that the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.

5th. There can be no question but, during the dispensation of John, multitudes were reconciled to God by obeying John's teachings, which included a baptism for the remission of sins, while a still greater multitude brought condemnation on themselves by rejecting those teachings, and refusing to be immersed by him, boastingly asking, are we not the seed of Abraham? Luke, chap. 7, ver. 29, 30.

6th. John also taught faith in Jesus Christ, as a condition in the pardon of apostate Jews, but not in a crucified and risen Lord, as is now demanded of both Jew and Gentile; for at that time Christ had not been made a sacrifice for the sins of the world: hence, the repentance, and baptism, and faith, which saved John's disciples, have never had anything whatever to do towards the salvation of a living soul since the crucifixion of our Lord. For the same reason, likewise, all those who had been baptized by John had to undergo a second immersion into the name of the Lord Jesus, a name in which John never immersed. Acts, chap. 19, ver. 4, 5.

7th. After John's death, to prove that he did not preach the repentance and baptism preached by the Apostles, we have the teaching of Christ, that his kingdom was still to come—was not set up: but John was now dead, and the dispensation he established

could not, of course, be the *everlasting Gospel* that had to be proclaimed to both Jew and Gentile; and than which, if man or angel preached another Gospel, he should be cursed.—1st Cor., chap. 15, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4; also, Gal., chap. 1, ver. 6-9.

8th. Not only was John's dispensation different from Christ's in this respect, but also in its order: John preached reformation first; then baptism; and lastly, faith in Jesus Christ.—Acts, chap. 19, ver. 4. And because this faith was the last condition in John's plan, Christ said, speaking of the Son of God, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned."—John, chap. 3, ver. 18. Again, in the same chapter, ver. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." How does he have it? I answer, in promise or prospect—on condition of faithfulness unto death: for we are told by the inspired writer, that eternal life is the *gift of God*.—Rom., chap. 2, ver. 7. And God bestows it on those only who are faithful unto death. See Rev., chap. 2, ver. 26.

9th. Moreover the Scripture itself declares that there is a more perfect way than that taught by John—a way by which *all* nations should come up to the house of the Lord, while John's plan gave hope only to the Jew. See Mark, chap. 16, verse 16, also Acts, chap. 18, verse 6-26.

10th. In this more perfect way of the Lord, repentance and remission of sins were to be

preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And he commanded his disciples to tarry in that city until they should be endowed with power from on high, which proved to be a baptism of the Holy Ghost. Mark that disciples alone were commanded to wait for this baptism—persons who had already received a pardon of their sins. See Luke, chap. 24, verse 47-49. And on going to Jerusalem to hear the first sermon preached under this *more perfect* way of the Lord, we discover the manner of preaching required to produce faith in the hearers: for we find that Peter gave the people the testimony of the prophets Joel and David, concerning Christ, and hearing the testimony, three thousand believed the Word of the Lord. How, then, did their faith come? Why, by hearing, as faith always comes to a rational man.

11th. Hence we should discard all the false teachings of the age concerning a faith that is a gift of God, and learn of Peter how it is that a rational faith is received. We should also learn from him what reply to make to a convicted sinner, who has already a rational faith in the Lord Jesus, viz: “Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins.” Here repentance and baptism are coupled together by a copulative conjunction, which necessarily requires that they should both be for the same thing.

12th. But we should always consider the circumstances of the case, and not tell a man to

repent, if to his faith he has already added repentance, nor yet to be baptized, if he has not so much as believed first. We must give heaven's plan in heaven's order. Upon inquiry we learn that such was the teaching and practice of the apostles; of which Paul is an example when he told the unbelieving jailor, who had not so much as heard of Christ, that *faith* would save him. See Mark, chap. 16, verse 16. Faith is here put first in the commission. But Paul beginning with this then taught him the words of the Lord. See Acts, chap. 16, verse 32. And what was the word of the Lord to this jailor and his family, after that they had believed? I answer, go to Jerusalem, whence Christ taught the word of the Lord was to go forth, and Peter will tell you as he told the three thousand on the day of Pentecost.

13th. And this brings me to a consideration of the plan of salvation under Jesus Christ. There are five conditions necessary. The disciples usually teach three, but in practice they do not vary from the teachings of the Bible. I shall briefly present the five conditions in their proper order, and the reader will please note well the Scriptural proof which I shall adduce in support of each. I am firmly persuaded that I have the Lord on my side, while at the same time I know that it is human to err, and I am as liable to be deceived as any other man, and much more so than a great many. If the Scriptures I adduce in support of my propositions do not sustain them, then I do not ask of the reader to believe them. But if, on

the contrary, they do sustain them, what then? Will you believe, O sinner, and turn from the error of your ways? Or you, O misguided religionist, will you discard the traditions of men, and hearken only to the Word of God?

## ***I. Faith in Jesus Christ***

Faith is the first and most important condition in the Plan of Salvation. It is first, because without faith none of the other conditions could ever be complied with, and it is the most important one for the same reason. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hence the Gospel has been called the Law of Faith, as contra-distinguished from the Mosaic Law, which Paul denominated the Law of Works. See Romans, chap. 3, verse 27, And because Paul has declared that a man is justified by faith, meaning the Law of Faith, about which he is all the while writing, many persons deceive themselves into the belief that a man is saved by faith *alone*. Now, this is a very erroneous doctrine, and it is very singular how any person well read in the New Testament ever could entertain an opinion so diametrically opposed to the teaching of God’s Word. For what says James? See chap. 2, verses 17, 19, 20:

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. [...] Thou believest that there is a God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But

wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

And again in the three succeeding verses:

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.”

This ought to be conclusive to any man; but I will present a little more testimony, after which I will expose the false rendering of some passages on which the believers in faith *alone* place much emphasis.

If the reader will examine with me the circumstances attending Peter’s discourse on the day of Pentecost, I think I will prove to him that the three thousand, who were that day added to the Disciples, were not saved by faith alone.

We find, upon examination, that Peter, being moved by the spirit of God, preached to the assembled multitude concerning Jesus, whom they had recently put to death. He proved from the Holy

Scriptures that the same Jesus whom they had so ignominiously crucified, was none other than the promised Messiah, of whom all the prophets bore witness. He made the matter so plain that they could not help being convinced. They were cut to their hearts, and in great agony cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?” Now, mark Peter’s reply. He did not say to them, “Believe on Jesus,” for they believed on him already. Nor yet did he say to them, “Brethren, you are already truly justified, inasmuch as you have believed on Christ, that he is the son of God,” for Peter was commissioned to proclaim the truth, and not a lie. What, then, was his response to their interrogatory? See Acts, chap. 2, ver. 38.

“Then said Peter unto them, Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Then, in order to “remission of sins,” there is something else required besides faith. What, then, is the office of faith? I answer, faith purifies, or changes the heart. It destroys all our love of sin, and fills the heart with a longing to know the will of God, that we may do it. Of which the above recorded action of the believers on the day of Pentecost, is a very striking example. And how is faith to be obtained? I reply, by diligently reading God’s word, examining

the testimony of the prophets and Apostles, until we are firmly persuaded in our own minds that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, that he died for the sins of the world, and having lain in the grave three days, arose on the third, and afterwards ascended up to heaven, where he now intercedes for man, at the right hand of the Majesty on High. A saving and rational faith is never received in any other way. In proof of which, read Romans, chap. 10, ver. 17.

“So, then, faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Having thus explained how it is that faith is obtained, and what is its work, before proceeding to the other four conditions of pardon, I beg of the reader to bear with me while I explain some of those passages of Scripture which are often the cause of stumbling on the part of those who are unstable, and unwilling to receive all that God has revealed, but wrest portions of revelation from their proper interpretation, to the damnation of their souls.

One passage is to be found in the gospel of John, chap. 3, ver. 18. It reads thus:

“He that believeth on him (the son of God) is not condemned.”

How, ask those who think a man is saved by faith alone, can a man be lost if he is not under

condemnation? and they ask this question with much confidence, thinking it unanswerable. But it is as easy to reply to, when we consider the circumstances under which it was declared, as any disputed passage in the whole New Testament.

At the time our Savior made this declaration, the Mosaic law was still in force. He had not yet set up his kingdom, and the door was not yet opened to the Gentiles. It was during the twilight dispensation of John, according to which faith was the last condition in order to salvation. John was the forerunner of Christ, and he preached repentance towards God and faith in a coming Messiah. He preached only to the Jews, and his dispensation extended to none else. Hence, when the Savior said, "Whoso believeth on the son is not condemned," it was the same as though he had declared, the Jew that believes I am the promised Messiah is uncondemned, for he is only fulfilling the Law and the Prophets.

Again, we have the case of the Roman jailor, who, being struck with the wonders attending the imprisonment of Paul, cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" To whom Paul answered, "Believe on Jesus Christ, and thou and thy house shall be saved." Did not faith save him? demands the modern sectarian. I answer, NO. Here was a man who knew nothing of Jesus, and Paul very properly tells him that by believing on him he can be saved—that is, as father Abraham was saved by his faith, not

otherwise. For the Scriptures inform us that Paul preached Jesus to the jailor so soon as he had placed things in order, and the same hour of the night immersed him. This shows that the preaching of Jesus had something to do with his immersion, for how otherwise could the subject be touched upon? We must take the whole Bible, or else we had better discard it altogether, for salvation does not come from taking a portion.

## ***II. Reformation of Life***

*This* is the second condition in the plan of pardon. It is not only a sorrow for sin, but a complete reformation, or turning back from sin. It will do us no good to feel a momentary sorrow for our wickedness, if, on the very first temptation, we sin again. Faith, as I have shown, produces a change of heart; and so does godly sorrow for sin produce a change of life,—a change complete and permanent in order to prove efficacious.

That repentance, or reformation of life, is required in order to salvation, is pretty generally conceded by almost all denominations of Christians, without regard to name or creed. We find it in the commission of Christ to the Apostles as witnesses.—Luke, chap. 24, ver. 47:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name

among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Beginning at Jerusalem, St. Peter, to whom were committed the keys of the kingdom, again reiterates that repentance is necessary to pardon. See Acts, chap. 2, ver. 38.

As, however, there is but little controversy touching this being necessary to salvation, I shall not dwell longer on the testimony to be adduced in its support. I shall only observe, that to teach that a man is saved by faith *alone*, and afterwards to command him to repent, is the very height of absurdity and nonsense. If faith has saved him already, what need has he of repentance? What is there for him to repent of? Nothing. But the absurdity of such teaching is only equalled by that of telling a man to repent *before* he believes. Unless he believes, it is impossible for him to feel conscious of having sinned, since God so declares himself: for he tells us that no man can seek him, unless he believes that there is a God, and that He rewards the good, and punishes the doers of evil.

### **III. *Confession Before Men***

This is one of the conditions of pardon, which, while the Disciples inculcate it in their practice, yet is hardly ever mentioned by them in their teaching or preaching: but this should never be neglected. We should declare the whole counsel of God, so that all

may know and understand what is the Great King's Highway of Holiness.

With regard to confession, what says Jesus himself? See Luke, chap, 12, ver. 8:

“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God.”

Again, see Romans, chap, 10, ver. 9, 10:

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.”

#### ***IV. Immersion in Water***

This forms the fourth condition in the order of salvation. About it there has been the greatest dispute among religionists; and there is to this day the greatest variety of opinions. After what our learned brother Campbell has done towards setting the world right in regard to this institution, it would be presumption in me to undertake any lengthy argument concerning it; and I shall not attempt such a thing. Still I shall endeavor to prove from the Bible

that it is an essential to salvation, which I think is a proposition very easily sustained.

The error in regard to this ordinance is twofold. The first is as to the mode; and the second is as to the importance of it.

The error in regard to the mode is that immersion is denied to be the only way in which it can be administered, sprinkling and pouring being considered equally proper and efficacious. There are three objections to be urged against this opinion; either one of which is sufficient to overthrow it.

1st. The proper and primary meaning of the word in the original Greek is *immersion*,—or rather the verb is, to plunge, to dip, etc.

2d. Immersion, it is conceded, was the practice of the primitive Christians, even up to the third century; about which time infant baptism was introduced, and it being found difficult to immerse infants, sprinkling or pouring was resorted to, as being a more feasible method.

3d. The connexion in which baptism is referred to in the Bible, with the attendant circumstances. Paul says that we are *buried* with Christ in baptism. Common sense teaches us that a burial must necessarily be a covering up of the whole person. Again, in reference to John, the Immerser, it is said

that he baptized in a certain place, because there was *much* water there. The inference is plain. And then in the case of Philip and the eunuch, it is related that they *both went down into the water*. Was there any need of this, except it was immersion which Philip administered? Could he not have very easily taken up a little water in his hand, and wet the forehead of the Ethiopian?—for such is the custom of the sects of this day.

But I shall come now to consider the institution as essential to the pardon of one's sins. There is not a proposition in the whole Scriptures of Divine Truth more clearly set forth than this. We find it in Christ's commission to his Disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." If there be any sense in language, baptism is here as necessary for salvation as is faith.

Again, on the day of Pentecost, when the three thousand believed, and requested what they should do to be saved, Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins.*"

Now, if a man can repent because his sins have been forgiven, then our Baptist brothers are right in their interpretation of this passage, viz: that a man should be baptized because his sins have been

remitted. No man in his senses, however, is willing to believe that a remission of sins ever causes sorrow. It is too absurd a proposition to be entertained for a moment. Of course, then, repentance and baptism are for one and the same thing—to-wit, remission or pardon of past sins. Paul's conversion proves this. For three days he was a firm believer in Jesus Christ, and most bitterly all that time did he repent him of his iniquities. If faith brings salvation, Paul surely ought to have been pardoned long before Ananias visited him. Or, if repentance alone secured remission of sins, Paul ought to have been pardoned before Ananias visited him. But what did Ananias say to him so soon as he came into his presence? Did he ask after his experience? Did he say, "Brother Paul, you have been most signally visited by our gracious Lord, for I understand you have seen a great light and heard a mighty voice, by which means God has informed you that you are an accepted son and child of glory?" Oh, no. But Ananias said to him on this wise: "Why tarriest thou, brother Paul? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Can any man doubt now that baptism is for the remission of sins? If he can, he doubts God's Word, and is at heart a scoffer and an infidel. Here we have a man who has believed and repented, and who is yet told to arise and wash away his sins by immersion. If he had been saved by faith, as I remarked a while ago, there would have been no sins

to wash away. So neither would there have been had he been saved by repentance. But God's plan is the more perfect one, and here we see it exemplified. Paul is told to wash away his sins by baptism—not that the virtue is in the water, but simply because God has chosen to make that His ordinance. Under the Mosaic Law it was customary for the priest to take a goat, and laying hands on him to send him forth into the wilderness, and God promised that thus the sins of Israel should be carried away, and hence this was called the scape-goat. Does any man think the virtue to bear off sins was in a goat? Of course not. It was God's command, and there lay all the merit. So in the case of water baptism. God has commanded us to perform the ordinance in order to remission, and it is obedience to God's Word that ensures salvation and cleanses us from all sin, and not the mere washing of water. Or, as Peter has expressed it, for doubtless the same objections were urged against this institution then as now, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth 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."

This much will suffice on the subject of immersion, for if a man will not believe the Apostle Peter, he will not even listen to anything which I might feel inclined to write.

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