

SERMON

ON

*BAPTISM,*

WITH A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A WOMAN IN

PRISON.

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## TEXT.

*And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son. of God, And he commanded the chariot to Stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. Act 8: 36, 37, 38.*

THIS book from whence I have read my Text, is entitled *the Acts of the Apostles*. It should rather, said the late Mr. Romaine, be styled *the Acts of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles*. It is a most blessed part of the sacred word, and gives an account of the acts of the apostles after the ascension of Christ: of the Holy Spirit's descent on them on the day of Pentecost, thereby qualifying them to bear witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and. of their preaching at, and after the day of Pentecost. Christ being received up into Glory, and crowned in heaven as Lord and Christ, the Holy Ghost came down and crowned him in the hearts of the apostles, and other believers, who were assembled at Jerusalem, and great grace was on them all. Peter had the honor of preaching the first sermon on this most memorable day. And I may well call it the coronation sermon, it being preached on the coronation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy of Holies. As Christ was upon his throne, with his crown on his sacred head, he acts like himself and exercises his office. He being exalted by the Father, and seated on his mediatorial throne to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins, sheds and pours out the Holy Ghost. The gospel is preached, the Spirit makes it powerful, and three

thousand are brought to believe on Christ, were baptized and added to the church. And we read *the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved*. Not so, says a truly excellent man. *The Lord added to the church daily, such as were saved*. They were saved by Christ. His life and death was their complete salvation. By the gospel and the Spirit's accompanying it to their minds with that energy which made them new creatures in Christ Jesus, they were brought to know it, and were hereby made partakers of it. As the Lord added to the church daily, so the number were continually increasing. The second Sermon we read of, which was preached by Peter and John, five thousand were brought to believe. Thus the church increased, so that we read some time after this, in the 5th chapter, *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women*. Ver. 14.

Thus it went on until the death of Stephen. At whose martyrdom a sore persecution broke forth, so that all the ministers of Christ were driven from Jerusalem, except the apostles. And this turned to a good account. These servants of the most high God, whose office it was to shew unto men the way of salvation, went everywhere, in all directions, as the Holy Spirit influenced their minds, preaching the word. *Philip*, the person mentioned in my Text, went down to Samaria, and preached: Christ there. And much attention was paid to the word, and it caused great joy in that city. And many believing, they were baptized both men and women. From this place the Lord removed him, to where we read of in the Text. The Holy Ghost spoke to, and commanded him to go to such a place, where he was to meet a certain person of high distinction. He was to go to the southern point, from the city of *Samaria* where he now was, to the south of *Jerusalem*, up to

*Gaza*, a city of Palestine, which is desert i.e. it was situated where the desert began. The Lord the Spirit having given his command, Philip who was one of the seven deacons, and belonged as a member to the church at Jerusalem, and was forced from thence by persecution, and had preached and baptized several, men and women at Samaria, went and met the Lord high treasurer of the queen of *Ethiopia*, he had been to Jerusalem for to worship, and he was now returning to go home and fill up his office. We have what is praiseworthy to observe of Him; he had been at worship and came from it under proper impressions, and he is properly employed, he has the scriptures before him, he is reading in them, and as an important a passage is now before Him, as is to be found in all the bible. The Lord the Spirit said to Philip, go near and join thyself to this chariot. He did so, and heard his lordship read the prophet *Esaias*; on this Philip addresses him, saying, understandest thou what thou readest? To which the other with great humility replies, how can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that, he would come up into the chariot, and sit with Him. The fifty-third chapter, which was now before him, is one of those the Lord himself hath most remarkably blessed. A great man for learning among the Dutch, gives an account of a Jewish-Rabbi, who was brought to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ by reading it. And having found Christ in it he read it over scores of times. This Lord high treasurer of the queen *Ethiopia* was brought to the knowledge and acknowledgement of Christ by one passage of it, opened to him by Philip; and that prodigy of profligacy Lord Rochester, whom the Lord was pleased to shine on, and bring home to himself by the energy of the Holy Ghost, was brought to believe on Christ by means of this very passage, from which Philip now preached.

The place of the scripture which he read was this, *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb, dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.* Here is Christ in his passion most lively set forth; and there is no subject the Holy Ghost puts forth his life-giving influences, and blesses more than the sufferings, blood-shedding, sacrifice and death of Christ. It is indeed, the very ordinance of life and salvation, of health and cure for sinners, and for the wounds which sin hath given. The Father hath appointed it for this, end; Christ lived and died for sinners, *and with his stripes we are healed.* The Holy Ghost sets his seal to the truth of it, and is well pleased to bless the preaching of Christ crucified. And he makes it in a day of his power, the ordinance in which manifestative salvation, health, and cure, is made know and imparted. The Lord high treasurer asked Philip, to whom this belonged. *I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto, Him Jesus.* He showed to him from it that Jesus was Christ. He opened the nature end, and design, of his great salvation That it proceeds from everlasting love, was the fruit of an everlasting Covenant. That sin had been laid by the Father on Christ. That he became the sacrifice for it. That he was the Lamb of God, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. That he hath brought in an everlasting righteousness. Made his soul an offering for sin. And his blood cleanseth us from all sin. He informed him how the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was everlastingly well pleased with the person, life, and death of Jesus; and that upon the footing of it, he had said, and it belonged to every one who

believeth on Jesus. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will forgive them so fully, that I will remember their sin no more. This we are sure, was the subject and substance of the Sermon; and it entered into the ear and heart; of the nobleman. He was filled with the knowledge of it. He found salvation in it. It was a season of grace such as he had never before experienced. And the Lord the Spirit made the gospel now delivered unto him, the power of God unto his salvation. It was a season of great grace. The time went on, and they got forward very sweetly; one with preaching Christ and the other in hearing Christ thus most blessedly set forth. And this hath brought me to my text. *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the Eunuch said, see here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest: and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him.*

#### TO SPEAK ON BAPTISM.

It is an ordinance Christ himself hath appointed and commanded, to be observed by his people. In it there is a solemn memorial of his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection. The subjects of this ordinance are believers in Christ, and upon their confession of their faith in his person, life, sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, they have a right to baptism. The mode of baptizing is by immersion, plunging, and covering the whole body with water. All this might most easily be drawn out of the text before us, but whilst I will speak to the whole of my text, I

shall not make any division of it, but bring it in as easily as possible.

With respect to baptism, which ordinance is now before us, to which some present are about to submit. It is an ordinance of Christ; you have his royal appointment and command for it, given by him after his resurrection from the dead, in the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel; where our Lord gives his divine commission, saying to his disciples: *all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Baptism is not of man, but of the Lord's appointment. It is not administered in the name of man, but in the name of the eternal Three. It holds forth to us the doctrine of the three divine personalities in the one incomprehensible Jehovah. It should bring to our remembrance what took place when our Lord was baptized by John, in Jordan. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* Matthew, chap. 3. ver. 16, 17. Here was a glorious manifestation of all the persons in the sacred trinity. Here was Jesus Christ the Son of God in our nature baptized. Here was the Holy Spirit, by a visible symbol descending on him. And a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The ancients looked on this so clear and full proof of the doctrine of the distinctive personalities in the divine nature, that they used to say, *Go to Jordan, and there learn the doctrine of the Trinity.* In this ordinance, which is administered in the name of all the persons in the Trinity, a profession of faith is

made of all the Three, as the persons baptized profess their faith in each of the divine persons; and the order of the Trinity is nowhere expressed, as it is by Christ in his commission and command concerning this ordinance. As the doctrine of this ordinance is that of the Trinity, as that of the Lord's supper, is of the atonement, and the language of this is, come see the place where the Lord lay; as the language of that is, behold my hands. and my side; so here we are solemnly reminded, that *there are three who bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.* i.e. one in essence, distinct in their personalities, and also in their offices in the economy of salvation. The Father hath loved the elect with an everlasting love; the Son hath saved them with an everlasting salvation; the Holy Ghost is interested in the persons of all the elect, and concerned for them, and engaged to work effectually in them, and bring them all to eternal glory. And as the Holy three were present at Christ's baptism, and manifested their personalities, so here in the ordinance we worship the three in Jehovah, as the Lord Our God, and profess faith in each of the divine persons. The person baptized, by having the names of the Sacred three called over him; and the baptizer by baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As baptism is an act of worship, so the going down into the water, the being plunged in the water, the being buried in it, and emerging out of it, and coming up out of it, these are all acts of worship. This ordinance is a solemn memorial of the overwhelming sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Jesus in the 69th Psalm, expresses himself on the subject of his sufferings thus: Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing: I am



come into deep Waters, where the floods overflow me, ver. 1, 2. Waters here are emblematical of sorrows and great distress. So in baptism the overwhelming sufferings of Christ are recorded. And our Lord compares his bloody sufferings to a baptism, saying, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened, till it be accomplished. Luke 12. ver. 50. And the person in baptism covered over, is in a state which expresses to the view of the mind of the called people of God, how Christ was overwhelmed, immersed, and implunged in sufferings. That it is a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ appears from what the apostle Paul says, in the sixth chapter to the Romans, He addresses himself to saints in a church state at Rome, thus; *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore*

*we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. And again, Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead, Rom. 6, v. 3, 4, 5. Col. 2, v. 12.* The baptizer, and the person to be baptized, going down into the water at the command of Christ, express their faith, the one submitting to the ordinance, the other administering it unto him, and he in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; putting the body into the water, covering and burying it, and the person emerging out of the water, here is a figure a representation of the death, burial, and resurrection, of Christ. The person is as dead, then buried.

then raised again. So that this ordinance is equally as important and solemn as the supper of the Lord. Yea, there is more of Christ in this than in that. In this we have the death, the burial, and the Resurrection of Christ; in the other only his sufferings. And it is to be lamented, this ordinance of baptism, is entirely lost i.e. that is, it is out of use, and dropped by many whom we style the Lord's. The Independents have it not; the church of England hath it not; the Presbyterians have it not: We deny not, but that they may have most blessed fellowship with the Lord without it, so they may without the Lord's supper; yet as we cannot have the Lord's supper administered without bread and wine; as we cannot celebrate the death of Christ, but by breaking the bread, and partaking of it, and also of the cup, of which the apostle says, *For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.* 1st. Cor. 11; 5: 26. So neither can we have the ordinance of baptism without water; and it must be sufficient to go down into, to be baptized in. Were I to call for human testimony, I would only have recourse to these words in the catechism of the church of England. It is one of the questions therein; what is the outward part or sign in baptism? The reply is, water, wherein the person is baptized. Now the person cannot be baptized in water, except the person is in the water. This is so clear a case, that some papists themselves have declared there can be no baptism, without immersion, or plunging, or covering the whole body; sprinkling, or pouring water, is not baptism. It is expressly said concerning our Lord, that *he was baptized of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, &c.* our Lord was in *Jordan*, or he could not have been baptized in it. Our Lord could not have come up out of the water, if he had not been in the water, this will admit

of no dispute. The subjects of this ordinance are believers in Christ, as appears from our text, and; the mode of baptizing is by immersion as is evident by the scripture now before us, to which I will return. *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder the to be baptized?* Philip must in the course of his preaching the Lord Jesus Christ unto him, have informed him concerning the ordinance of baptism, otherwise he could have known nothing thereof. The Eunuch must also have understood the nature, use, end, and design of the holy institution well, or he had not requested the administration of it to him; he like our dear Lord, requested it as a favor, he saw before him a convenient quantity of water, a place exceeding suitable. He does not wait to be put in remembrance of the command, but shows it was in his mind, and his heart was all willingness to comply with it, *See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* So he requires of him a confession of his faith. He does not simply enquire what the Lord had wrought within him, but the question is of still greater importance. Now as here was a confession of faith required, or baptism would not have been administered, so all who stand up for the ordinance of baptism, in baptized congregations, such I mean, as hold the truth, as it is in Jesus, require a confession and an acknowledgement from the person, or persons who are to be baptized previous to their being baptized. I think it should be a preparation to this ordinance, to open the nature, use, end, and design of this holy institution, to those to whom it is about to be administered; and this I conceive should be in secret: not that I conceive the ordinance is not to be administered until they have full acquaintance with it; for like as

the nature, use, end, and design of the Lord's supper, may not be fully understood, and yet persons are admitted to the table. So I think persons are to be admitted to baptism, although they may not be fully instructed into the nature of it. And indeed I think you, and I, who have been already baptized, and are here present, have an opportunity of enjoying more communion with God, in the ordinance before us, than when we ourselves submitted unto it. Here we again see the place where the Lord lay. We have again before our eyes a solemn memorial of the sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Here we again have a solemn declaration given, that he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. There is no salvation in this ordinance, it is no part of our salvation; yet the subject matter of this ordinance is salvation, and our submission to it, is a profession of faith in Christ. *He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* The Eunuch desiring baptism, *Philip* requires a confession of his faith, and the lord high treasurer gives it. And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* It is short, but very comprehensive; it contains all which had been preached and delivered unto him. Christ was the object of his faith; the person of Christ was one grand fundamental article of his faith, which he believed with all his heart, and rested his everlasting all upon: that the saviour was in his divine person equal with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, *God over all blessed for ever, amen.* That he was distinct from the Father, that he was sent and given by the Father, and had been anointed by the Holy Ghost. And that he came into the world to save sinners, and had stamped his life and death, his burial, and resurrection, with all the dignity, worth, efficacy, and perfection of his person; so that his life, death,

burial, and resurrection, was the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the *Son of God in our nature, of God manifest in the flesh*. Having made his confession of faith, and this being very acceptable to *Philip*, it follows; *And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water; both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him*. It is evident this must be by immersion. They went down both into the water; what did they both go into the water for? It is as clear as the words can express, what they both went into the water for; it was to be baptized, and to baptize. *And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him*. He dipped him; he put his whole body under water. A most blessed baptism it was. Philip was under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost. He sent him, he brought him here at this very time and place, for this express purpose; to preach and baptize this individual person: and the grace, presence, and power of the Lord was most divinely present. It was a most blessed going down into the water for *Philip*, he having received such a confession of faith from the man, whom he went down into the water with. It was a most blessed going down into the water, as it respected the person who was now going to be baptized, as he was going to be *baptized into Christ*; to be baptized into the belief of his person, of his love, undertakings, of his incarnation, life, sufferings, sacrifice, death, burial, and resurrection. And as *baptized into Christ*, as one with Christ, and interested in his life, sufferings, sacrifice, death, burial, and resurrection, as being a partaker of Christ, he in his baptism put on Christ, and had nothing henceforward to do, but to walk in Christ, as he had received Him. Nor did he want any thing further, than for the Lord the Spirit to bring Christ continually to his remembrance, to realize him and his salvation

to his mind, and by taking off the things concerning his person, blood, and righteousness, to exalt him in his understanding, and set him up in his heart, conscience, and affections, and shed abroad the Father's love, and thus lead into fellowship with the Father and the Son. Having thus given an account of the ordinance, I would add two passages of scripture; concerning the ordinance of baptism, one from Paul, the other from Peter, and both confirm that baptism is plunging, immersion; or being covered over with water. *Paul said to the Corinthians: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that, all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same Spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.* Their passage through the red sea, typified baptism. We pass through the water to be baptized: their manna, and water from the smitten rock, was typical of our Lord's supper. They all eat the same spiritual meat, with us, as to the substance thereof; they all drank the same spiritual drink with us; *for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.* 1 Cor. 10. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Peter speaks of Noah's ark, and waters, as a type of baptism. He has been speaking of the Antediluvian sinners, which says he, sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God, waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us; (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 3 v. 20. 21. Now the ark was surrounded with water. It was

deluged therewith: the ark was in the water; it was surrounded with it, and as the rain came down upon it, it was covered therewith; so that it was immersed, just as the person when baptized is. Baptism is said by Peter to save us; it brings salvation to remembrance; is a sacred evidence that Christ hath been in our world, and finished salvation work. It is the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are baptized into the faith of his resurrection. And his resurrection is our justification and discharge from guilt and condemnation. The peace of our consciences is built thereon. A good conscience, is a conscience fully satisfied with the life and death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Father's testimony of his well-beloved Son, and receiving the same into our minds, is our conscience acquittance. And we in believing and receiving it, have the answer of a good conscience towards God. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not our baptism, which affords us the answer of a good conscience towards God: but as baptism is a testimonial of Christ's resurrection, and we are baptized into the faith of his being risen from the dead, therefore the answer of a good conscience is here mentioned, to show its being founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is sometimes spoken by such as are no friends to the ordinance of water baptism that such as stand up and insist on it, lay a stress on it, and are therefore joining it with Christ, and laying a dependence on it, and consequently are not simply dependent on Christ alone. If by laying a stress on the ordinance, is meant an insisting on it as an institution of Christ, as fully authorized and commanded as the supper is, the charge is just. Nor would an individual baptist deny this; if by it is meant a putting it in the place of Christ, all who know Christ among the

denomination of baptists would to a man deny the charge. The ordinance itself, in its own nature forbids this. It holds forth salvation, and is a testimonial of it. The apostle *John* tells us, *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.* 1 John 5. v. 7, 8. Now the three in heaven, .and the three in earth bear witness that Christ is the Son of God, and that there is eternal life in Him. Now the three in Jehovah, bear witness to their covenant transactions in heaven, and they have born witness on earth to what they transacted in eternity; as when Christ entered on his mediatorial office, the Father testified of him, and to him, saying, *this is my beloved Son! thou art my beloved Son.* The Son received this testimony, and the Holy Ghost sealed up this testimony on his mind. The three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, which agree in one, and testify to the same truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that God hath given to the elect sinners of mankind, eternal life in Him, are the gospel, which- is- the revelation of Jesus Christ, and of the Father's love in Him. The water, by which I understand the ordinance of water baptism, which is a solemn testimonial of the divine Sonship and personality of Jesus, and of his having completed the salvation of his church and people, in his own person, by his life, sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection. And by blood, I conceive the cup of wine on the Lord's table is referred unto, which is a testimonial that Christ hath bowed his head on the cross, to show all was in obedience to his Father's will, and then he cried out, *It is finished.* Now if so, then believers cannot rest in an ordinance, which, as they have right observations of, must



direct their faith immediately to Christ, the object and subject of it. May you who are now ready to submit to this ordinance, be filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. May as many of us as have been already baptized, walk agreeable to our most holy profession; and may great grace rest upon us all. The Lord make it a time of spiritual refreshing from his presence. Even so, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

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### A PRAYER;

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are coequal, coeternal, and coessential, in the unity of the incomprehensible and self-existing essence, the everliving, everlasting, everblessed God, whose name alone is Jehovah, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, thou art, and wast, and art to come, the Lord God Almighty. Thou art the God of nature—of Providence—the God of all grace—the God of glory. It hath pleased thee, O thou most divine and essential Three, to make known the good pleasure of thy will, and thy covenant acts and offices, with thine interest in thy people, and thy salvation wrought out on their behalf, in the everlasting gospel of thy grace. Glory be to thee, holy Father, for the love wherewith thou hast loved thy church and people in Christ Jesus, before all time. Everlasting thanks to thee, for all that hath passed in thine infinite mind, in Christ Jesus, concerning them. Everlasting praises are due to thee for the gift of the person of Christ, to be their eternal head, and the mediator of reconciliation. O thou blessed Jesus, the Son of the living God, who art the head of thy body the church, help us to believe on

thee, to worship, love, and magnify thy most holy name, for the love of thine heart, for the bowels of thy mercy, and for thy great, glorious, and everlastingly finished, and eternally efficacious 'salvation, wrought out by thee in thine own person, whereby thou hast finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and art the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Thou art pleased, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, to make thyself known, through the light and teaching of thy blessed Spirit, to the minds of thy people, and thus to bring them to believe in thee, to the saving of their souls. Help us, and all thy people present, to praise thee, O Christ; yea, let all the people praise thee, for thy love, undertakings, incarnation, life, circumcision, baptism, fasting, temptation, obedience and sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. O Holy Ghost, we praise thee for the revelation of Christ in the written word; and for the testimony and seal which thou hast given of the same, over and over, in the understandings, minds, and hearts of such as thou hast been pleased to call out of darkness into marvellous light. Bless us, O Jehovah the Spirit, in our present attendance on the ordinance of water baptism, instituted and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, who have already been baptized, and those who are now to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of thee the Holy Ghost, have our faith afresh quickened, that we may confess, believe in, and worship the eternal Three in the one incomprehensible Jehovah, in the observance of this sacred ordinance before us. Give us spiritual views of the person of Christ. Do thou bring to our remembrance his baptism. Help us to view ourselves one with Him. Show us that we were then

baptized in Him, as we have since been baptized into Him, having been buried with Him in the ordinance of baptism. Let us take a spiritual view in this baptismal water, of the overwhelming sorrows, sufferings, and passion of our most precious Lord Jesus. Let us take into our minds afresh, by faith, the death of Christ, the burial of Christ, the resurrection of Christ; and in the fresh administration of baptism to the persons who are now to be baptized, let us view the conformity there is between Christ and his members, by looking and viewing the place where the Lord lay. He died once for sin. He was buried, and sanctified the grave for all his saints thereby. He rose from death, to die no more. So we, as one with Christ in his death, are here transplanted by baptism into the likeness of it. As Jesus died and was buried, so we are buried in water, as a part of our conformity thereunto, and as professing our faith therein. As he rose from death and the grave an everlasting conqueror, so our rising out of the water after having been overwhelmed therein, is an outward record of Christ's resurrection, and our open declaration of our faith in our Lord's resurrection. O holy, blessed, and essential Three, do thou manifest thy presence at this time, and all the praise shall be thine own. Amen

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**A**  
**LETTER**  
***ADDRESSED TO A WOMAN***  
**IN PRISON.**

MADAM,

*June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1795.*

AS one who by real and blessed experience knows there is

redemption for sinners in the most precious blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, having myself tasted that the Lord is gracious; I feel for you, and most heartily lament the most tremendous and awful circumstances which you are brought into by reason of sin. Alas, alas! you have been left by the Lord to the inward corruption of your own heart; and as thus left, you have done that which cannot be undone. No, not to eternity!

It may be truly said, that sin is the greatest of all evils: yea, the only evil in earth or hell. There is nothing but evil in it. Nor can it produce any thing but evil: present—future—and everlasting. Your present situation and confinement, your future trial, when you have nothing to expect but a most just sentence of condemnation to be pronounced on you, to suffer death for your crime is all the consequence of sin.

Far be it from me to insult you in your present state. God forbid. I am indeed a sinner; exceeding sinful; yea, equally as sinful by nature as you are. And though I am no fornicator, adulterer, nor murderer, as to the outward act, yet I am a transgressor of God's most holy and righteous law, and I am by nature a child of wrath, even as others. On account of the infinite pollution and total corruption of my whole nature, and every faculty thereof, and the sinfulness of every member, part, and faculty of body and soul, I deserve God's wrath and damnation as justly, and really, as any sinner out of hell. Such as are numbered with the dead and damned, are not more justly condemned to suffer the vengeance *of* eternal fire, than I do, in my own person, for the sinfulness of my nature, thoughts, words, and actions, deserve the same. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ; he came into our world to save Sinners. He saveth such as believe

in Him from the wrath to come.

I am fully convinced there is no difference amongst mankind sinners, but what is made by the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified.* All the world is become guilty before God, and the Lord God *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Permit me, by putting on the bowels of Jesus Christ, and as truly desirous to express the same towards you, having most heartily requested the Lord to bestow his own blessing thereon, to set before you the Lord Jesus Christ—the most precious—almighty—all-sufficient Saviour, in the eternal dignity of his person—in his infinite love—in his everlasting mercy—in his free—boundless—bottomless grace—in his divine righteousness—and efficacious blood-shedding sacrifice and death—as able to save you from all your sins, guilt, and pollution; as all-sufficient to cleanse you from every spot and stain of defilement; to deliver you from the curse of the law, which you have broken, and to admit you into heaven, there to live and shine for ever and ever, as a monument of his mercy.

May God the Holy Ghost enable me so to write to you concerning the inestimably precious Lord Jesus, of his mediatorial person—grace—and salvation; and may he so engage your mind and thoughts in reading the same, as to bring you to believe on Him *to the saving of the soul.* The Saviour of sinners is God and man; he is perfect God and perfect man—God and man, in the person of one Christ. He is one of the persons in the uncreated and incomprehensible Godhead. *I, (saith he,) even I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour.*

He, as coequal—coeternal—and coessential with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the Godhead, engaged before all worlds, upon the foresight of the fall, to come into our world by the assumption of our nature, to save his people from their sins. He was accordingly revealed as the Saviour. *To Him give all the Prophets witness; they ever since the world, began, bore testimony concerning Him, that he was one in the self-existing essence; possessing all the essential perfections of the divine nature, all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, and this essentially, and by necessary and self-existence. They testified of Him, that he is the essential and only begotten Son of God, who would for us, and for our salvation, come down from heaven, become incarnate, and be made man, that he might fulfil all righteousness, and die the death due to sin, and become the author of eternal salvation.*

Thus as the holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, they bore testimony of Him, expressly declaring, *that through his name, whosoever believeth on Him should receive remission of sins.* In the fullness of time, the Son of God became incarnate, God in our nature—God with us, that in our nature he might as God-man express his love, and manifest his mercy to the uttermost.

His love is eternal—everlasting—unspeakable—transcendent love. Out of love he lived for sinners. He bore the sins of many in his own body on the tree. He was made sin and a curse. He died for the ungodly. O that the Lord the Spirit may give you a real, spiritual sight and sense of the love of Christ, to such poor, guilty, sinful, polluted ones, as it may be you feel yourself to be.

O that the Holy Ghost may give you to know and believe that

Christ died for, and hath given himself for sinners, and that he hath, doth, and will go on to save, from sin, satan, death, and damnation, some sinners, whose hearts, lives, and transgressions, have been entirely like your own.

Your sins are no bar to Jesus, nor should they be any bar to hinder you from looking unto and coming with all your guilt and crimes to Him, because he hath said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

What love did he manifest in his incarnation and life! He took our nature, that he might be made sin for us. The prophet saith, *all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath, laid on. Him the iniquity of us all.*

He was made sin for us, as the Lord caused all our iniquity to meet on Him, and as the Lord imputed them unto, and laid them on Him. Jesus gave himself for our sins, to be the sacrifice for them, to have the guilt and pollution of them transferred from us to Him, and he was to wash us clean from them, and he has done it in his own most precious blood, he bore the punishment due to sin. His sorrows, sufferings, agony, and soul-travail, exceeded all the damned can possibly feel in hell to eternity.

Behold the Lamb of God, when he stood up to suffer *the just for the unjust.* Having substituted himself in the law, place, room, and stead of sinners, and being covered with, and enwrapped about with all their sinfulness, guilt, and pollution, the wrath, sorrow, shame, and curse belonging to them, fell on Him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his stripes we are healed.* His most precious blood cleanseth

from all sin; it cleanseth the soul from every spot and stain of defilement; and those who are washed therein, are in the sight of God as pure and undefiled as though they never had sinned.

Jesus, agreeable to his engagements with the Father in the everlasting covenant, *hath appeared once in the end of the world, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.* He hath completed the work of salvation, by putting away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and by treading on the old Serpent called the devil. By destroying death, and opening a way into the holiest of all for such sinners as you and I are, by his own blood.

The heart of Jesus is love, the bowels of Jesus are full of mercy; his compassions fail not; he is upon his throne as full of love and mercy as when he hung upon the cross. He accounts it a part of his highest glory, though in the heaven of heavens, to heal every wound—to cleanse every stain—to forgive every sin—and save to the uttermost the sinner that comes to Him. *For he is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.*

What love must Jesus have for sinners, when to save them, he left his Father's bosom; he laid aside his glory, left the heaven of heavens. *He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* What must his love be, who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; whose soul was heavy unto death; who sweat great drops of blood; whose whole soul was bruised with the weight and fullness of divine wrath, for he suffered what was tantamount to the sorrows of hell; whose soul was bruised, and his body suffered also in every part; his body was scourged



by merciless soldiers; his head was crowned with thorns; his hands and arms were stretched on the cross; and his hands and feet bored through with pins of iron to the accursed tree; who hung for six long hours naked on the cross, despised of men, and forsaken of God. *Made a curse for us!* O the immensity of his love! what must his bowels of pity and compassion be, who at the very instant, and whilst they were nailing Him to the cross, prayed on the behalf of his crucifiers—*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

What must his mercy be, who looked with everlasting kindness on a poor criminal who was crucified with Him, who had the hellish impudence to curse Him to his face! Yet on him Jesus pronounced an eternal pardon, and said to him, *verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Do you think this Jesus, who is *God over all, blessed for ever, amen*, is not able to save you in himself, with an everlasting salvation? Do you think he is not able to heal every wound which sin hath made in your soul? to wash you from every stain? to pardon all your sins? and pronounce an everlasting pardon on you?

The truth of the matter is, God hath revealed Christ in the everlasting gospel, in the greatness and perfection of his free, full, complete, and everlasting salvation. He calls you to look off yourself, and from your sins to Christ Jesus; to take sanctuary in his wounds and blood. Say what you will of and against yourself, yet there is salvation *in Jesus Christ*, And if the Lord is pleased by his Holy Spirit to enable you to believe in the righteousness and blood of the slaughtered Lamb, and to receive the Father's testimony concerning it, that it *cleanseth from all sin*, you will

then find Christ is your salvation, your righteousness, and advocate in the Court of heaven.

Have you sinned most tremendously? to the very uttermost? The apostle says, *Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make, intercession for them.* And who can tell the uttermost of Christ's power and ability to save?

The blood of Christ is more efficacious to heal, than sin is effectual to wound the soul.

There is greater virtue in Christ's blood to cleanse from sin, than there is filth in sin to defile.

If you are in your own view more vile and sinful than ever sinner yet beside you was, it is only for Christ to look on you, to shine within you, and you would then be blessed indeed: you would then find his presence turn your hell into heaven.

As it cannot be expected you will be long in a time-state, I would therefore most earnestly request you to consider what I have laid before you. There is no escaping damnation, but by flying to Jesus. None ever came to Jesus, and were rejected. His heart, his arms are open to receive and embrace all who come unto Him.

Tremendous as your guilt is, if you apply to Jesus, you will find Christ almighty to save. Never did a poor sinner come to Him, crying out, *Lord save, or I perish*, that went to hell.

Christ Jesus is all love, mercy, grace, and salvation. He saith, I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

The blood of Christ is a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. And your sin and uncleanness, felt and experienced

by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, fits you for it. May he be pleased to make known its virtue to you. If the eternal Spirit is pleased to enlighten your mind with the knowledge of Christ, and open your heart to receive Him, and enable you to believe in the everlasting perfection of the righteousness and sacrifice of Immanuel, and rest your whole confidence and hope before the Lord for salvation, thereon, you will then find everlasting life *in Christ*.

May the Lord save you from every false hope. May he give you to feel your need of Christ. May he bring you to a real closure with Him, that you may know that you have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and of all your crimes.

Remember, *dying out of Christ* will be found to be everlasting damnation. Dying in Christ is life and salvation; you must be found in Jesus, clothed in his righteousness, washed in his blood, and quickened by his Spirit, or you cannot enter heaven. May the most blessed Spirit of God, give you such an inward spiritual perception of the dignity, virtue, worth, and efficacy of Christ's most precious blood, as all-sufficient to cleanse you from all your sins. And may he enable you to depart this life, bearing your testimony for Christ.

Praying the Lord Jesus to shew you the same mercy, and to shine on you, just as he did, in the same wonderful manner as on *the dying thief*,

I subscribe myself,

Your Friend,

S. E. P.

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