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THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

The great question in all the dispensations has been how to get rid of the guilt of sin. How is forgiveness to be secured? On what condition may God's pardon be obtained? Under all the varying theories and teachings and developments of doctrine it has been plain that, in some way, the guilt of sin must be gotten rid of, and its power over the life must be broken, if one is to be clear of its evil effects.

In an age of marked and distressing formalism John the Baptist came to the Jewish people calling them to repentance. They were told that a changed attitude and a changed heart were absolutely demanded. John the Baptist, looking forward to Christ's perfect work and preaching a preparatory offer and demand, emphasized repentance as Christ and his apostles afterwards emphasized faith. John's repentance embraced and included faith, as Paul's faith embraced and included repentance. Upon this condition God would pardon freely.

John the Baptist had the message which demanded the forsaking of sin in faith that God would forgive sin. Those who confessed their sins and repented sincerely had the promise of remission or forgiveness of sin. They were then to be baptized. The baptism was not for forgiveness or remission of sins. Repentance was the one condition of forgiveness, just as faith in Jesus Christ is the one condition now. John's baptism was not the condition of forgiveness, but it was the sign and seal of their repentance.

It is one of the stupendous errors to imagine that the baptism of John or of Christ was for salvation. Feople were not told to be baptized in order to be forgiven or saved, but to be baptized because they had accepted forgiveness and salvation. It is a befogged and bewildered mind which thinks that there was a "baptism of repentance" which, in some way, was to formally and mechanically secure the "remission of sins." This is juvenile reading. This is infantile misconstruction of language. The meaning is very different. There was "repentance for the remission of sins," and there was a baptism which was to be the privilege and duty of those who had so repented and had been forgiven.

There have been, and there still are, some who have thought of baptism in our Christian dispensation as a means for salvation. Baptism is a duty and a privilege, but it does not save. Faith in Christ, and faith alone, is the condition of salvation. When one believes and is saved he has the privilege of baptism, but he is baptized because he is saved, not because baptism is to help save him. Believing parents have their afant children baptized not in order that the baptism may save them, but because of their covenant faith in Christ that they are safe in him as their covenant Savior.

Bantism is only a sign or seal. It does not effect saving results. It did not under John. It does not in the Christian dispensation. Where Peter, in Acts 2: 38, laid down the condition of salvation, and told the people that they were to "repent (and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ), for the remission of sins," we are to understand, according to the parenthesis, which we place there ourselves, as a commentary, that it was repentance and faith which were to save. Baptism was, of course, to be accepted as a privilege and duty, and on no account to be neglected, but baptism was to be the the sign and seal of the repentance and faith and not, itself, the condition of sal-

It is this that Christ gives us in Mark 16: 16, where he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," whether he has been baptized or ..ot. It is the faith that is absolutely essential. Without it a thousand baptisms will not avail. Believe, and then, of course, be baptized as an act of loving confession, and one is saved; believe not, and, no matter what may be done formally, there is no salvation,

John's offer and condition was "repentance for the remission of sins" and there was a baptism or mode of confession to be a sign or seal of it. The full and complete offer of the Gospel, as Christ our perfect Savior is presented as the object of faith, is, as Paul told the jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." So there is a baptism, or mode of confession, to be a sign or seal of this saving faith, and Paul told the jailer of this, after he was saved, and baptized him. Let baptism have proper honor. But let us accept it not as being saving itself, but as a seal of the covenant and faith in Jesus Christ who saves and saves completely.

SATAN THE DECEIVER.

If Satan were to come to men and women saying, "I am your enemy; I hate you; I wish to debase and destroy you and sink you to the depths of perdition; here is some wickedness in which I wish you to engage because it is vicious and vile and wicked and hateful to God," he would disgust and alienate and frighten them away from him, and away from wickedness, and into the ways of right doing. But he is much too wise to be candid and truth-telling. He conceals his real nature from them. He pretends to be good and respectable. He claims that his ways are right. He insists that he is abused. He

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

BY REV. S. J. FISHER, D.D.

Coarse is the clay in the hands of the potter,
Clay often trodden by beast or by man;
Yet on his wheel he molds it to beauty,
Shaping it lovely by skill to his plan.
Then with the charm of the great artist's power,
Slender the vase—completed by fire—
Stands in its loveliness, exquisite, pure;
But the clay is forgot in the vase we admire.

Out of the sand from the pits of the hillside, Swept by the tempest and drenched by the rain,

Man can create the goblet so precious
Or mirror for beauty to answer again.
The pebbles we crush in our footsteps so care-

Iess
Genius can change into lenses of light.
The will consider, when stars grow the clearer
The sand which has given the visions so bright?

Rude are the souls born in slavery's shadow.

Dull the black faces unlighted by God,
Clay from the meadow and sand from the desert.

Image of lives long by earth's passions trod.

Truth is the potter and love is the fire,
Changing the beastlike to beauty and grace.
Souls made translucent, or polished like brass,
Fitted for heaven, reflecting God's face.

ORGANIZED CLASS.

The typical organized class has two distinct objects in view: First, Coming to-gether to study God's word that we may know his will; second, Going out to do it in some definite and co-operative way. The power of the organized class as a mission-

ary agency has never been measured.

It is not practicable to enlist every age and individual in a congregation into mission bands. The church recognizes that fact. Missionary societies and study classes have not prospered greatly among the men of our churches, largely because of limita-tions set upon their time by bread-winning, and now there is an ever-increasing number of business women in our city churches to whom a week-day meeting is an impossibility.

School children also find it difficult to agree upon a "free afternoon" for a weekday mission band. To these and others, the organized class with a distinct missionary purpose presents a splendid oppor-tunity for enlisting a whole school and possibly a whole church in very active and

definite missionary work.

The word missionary here is used in its broadest sense, and may include soul-winning work in our own congregation. It may mean going on a mission to the for-eigners who are opening shops or buying up small farms in the immediate neighborhood of the church. It may mean a Sabbath afternoon school at the cotton mill; a night school for working girls and boys; supporting a preacher in the mountains or financing a station in China. It may mean many and varied phases of work, but it

must always mean going after others.

A class in a certain city has placed Bibles in every room in all of the hotels. Another places postcards on which is a picture of their church in the rooms of the hotels and boarding houses. Another bought up a block of advertising space on a street car and kept fresh notices of their church before the eyes of the passen-

It is needless to say that all of these classes are receiving wonderful reflex blessings, in the broadening of their vision the deepening of their spiritual life,

and the ability they are acquiring for doing yet greater things.

One of the fruits of the adult organized class is the bond of Christian sympathy and friendship that grows up between those who are otherwise, it may be, widely separated by position, wealth and natural gfts. Christ Jesus is making them one.

The principles of social service are, or ought to be, strongly active in the ideal organized class, and evangelization the one dominant note.

The How of the organized class is very simple. Elect officers that will work—a president, secretary and treasurer—and place the responsibility on them; do not try to do the president's work if you expect her or him to work. In appointing committees, have the president to include every member of the class. Three committees are of prime importance—the social, membership and devotional.

Do not let the business of the organization take up a large part of the lesson

period: five minutes is enough for ordinary occasions, as there should be a regular business meeting on some week day or

evening once a month.

Magnify the study of God's Word. Seek
to know his will. Acquaint yourselves with his movements in the world to-day through the best home and foreign missionary literature, and seek to fall into the current of his great purposes.
Seek to cultivate the grace of Christian

giving in some systematic, definite and proportionate way.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL AT WORK.

The Sabbath school as an agency of the church is engaged in an effort to win the world to Jesus Christ.

A very large percentage, and, in most schools, a majority of the scholars come from homes where the Scriptures are not taught, the subject of religion is seldom discussed, family worship is not observed, and, at best, the attitude of the family is one of indifference toward Jesus Christ and the sacrifice which he made for sinners. The only religious instruction re-ceived by this class of scholars is that which comes to them through the agency

of the Sabbath school.

Careful study has taught us that the responsiveness of the child to the claims of Jesus Christ reaches a climax at fifteen or sixteen years of age. Scholars above these ages, leaving the Sabbath school without having made a profession of their faith, do so with the likelihood of their ever being won greatly diminished. indeed, comparatively speaking, make an open confession of their faith after pass-

ing the age of twenty.

Every scholar of suitable age, if not an actual seeker of salvation, by his very

Above all things, let the love of Christ rule in your hearts, and you may learn to know something of the power of the organized class working for missions.—Ex.

> Heed we the Master's call, 'Work, brethren, work!' There's room enough for all; Work, brethren, work!
> This vineyard of the Lord
> Constant labor will afford; Yours is a sure reward: Work, brethren, work!

presence in the Sabbath school offers an exceptional opportunity for the teacher to present the claims of Jesus Christ.

We can not overestimate the importance of "putting first things first" and sounding the evangelistic note upon every favorable opportunity. Investigation shows that five of every seven scholars leave the Sabbath school unconverted.

The greatest need of our Sabbath schools is not improved lessons or improved methods. It is an adequate appreciation of our opportunity and responsibility.

It would appear the average Sabbath school does not appreciate the fact that the conversion of the scholars is a matter

of supreme importance.

Observation and experience justify the declaration that less time and effort are necessary for the winning of twenty children to Jesus Christ than one adult of say fifty years of age; and, other things being equal, a child won to him at ten is worth more in the extension of the kingdom than many adults converted at fifty years of ąge.

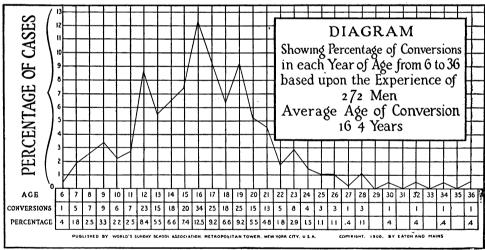
World's Sunday School Association, Committee on Evangelism, Metropolitan. Tower, New York City.

Two ILLUSTRATED SERMONS.

"Why Should the Children be Won to Jesus Christ?"

FIRST.

Because youth is the propitious time for soul-winning;



If the world is to be saved, the children must be saved .-- F. B. Meyer.

SECOND.

Because of the greater service they can render:

A GE OF ACCEPTING CHRIST AND PROBABLE YEARS OF USEFULNESS THEREAFTER ☑ IGURES BELOW THE CANDLES REPRESENT THE AGE OF ACCEPTING CHRIST FIGURES ALONGSIDE THE CANDLES SHOW THE LENGTH OF LIFE THAT MAY BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW BASED ON LIFE INSURANCE ACTUARIES TABLES An early decision means just so many more years of christian service

Save an adult and you save a unit; save a child and you save a whole multiplicattion table.-Wanamaker.

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