

## Salvation before and after the Dispensation of Grace.

If I drive a screw into a piece of wood with a screwdriver, does the screwdriver do the work, or do I? Shall we say that we each did part of it? No. In one sense the screwdriver did it *all*, for I did not even touch the screw in the operation. But then, the screwdriver was merely the *instrument* I used, *so essentially* it was I who did it all.

So it was with salvation before the dispensation of grace was ushered in. When God required water baptism for the remission of sins, (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Luke 3:3) for example, men could get their sins remitted only by submitting to baptism. Thus *instrumentally* it was their baptism that procured for them the remission of sins, yet *essentially* it was *God* who saved them by grace when He saw their faith.

It may be argued that the believer in such a case had exercised faith in his heart *before* being baptized, so that baptism had nothing whatever to do with his salvation. The answer is that he believed that *being baptized* he would be accepted, and so was, in his heart, already baptized.

This is the answer to problems where impossibilities to fulfill the stated requirements are involved. Suppose, for example, a man, exercising true faith, was on his way to offer a sacrifice or to be baptized and, on his way, suddenly fell dead. Would he not be accepted? Surely he would; simply because he had come in faith to fulfill the requirement. Thus the thief on the cross was saved without water baptism in a day when baptism was required for the remission of sins, but who can doubt that he would have rejoiced at the opportunity to be baptized had he not been nailed to a cross?