The Saviour prayed that his disciples might be sanctified by the truth. From which we learn that the enjoyment of good religion, depends in a great measure, upon a clear understanding of the truth as taught in the word of God. For all scripture is given by inspiration, and profitable for doctrine, reproof, & instruction in righteousness that the man of God, may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

In order therefore to learn the true way to good religion and then to keep it, we should search the scriptures, which are all-sufficient to teach us what we are to believe and what we are to do, what we may hope from the mercy of God, and what we should fear from his displeasure.

The apostle John told the believers in his day not to receive everything they heard but to try the spirits whether they were of God because many false prophets were gone out into the, and we are told by St. Luke, that the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians, because they received the word with all readings of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

The words of our Lord contain a part of the first sermon under the gospel dispensation, more than eighteen hundred years ago. When the Saviour had accomplished the work of human redemption—When he has assumed the nature of man and rendered obedience to the law of God—When he had preached his own gospel, & became the great exemplar of his people—when he had died upon the cross to expiate the guilt of our race, and arisen from the dead to confirm the truth of his divinity—when he had remained with is disciples forty days, after his death & resurrection, showing himself openly among the people, instructing them more fully in the nature of his religion, he then prepared for his ascension to heaven—He told his disciples that the peak aspect of his mission into the world, was to have repentance and remission of sins preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem—that after his ascension he would send upon them the promise of his Father, even the miraculous influence of the Holy Ghost, but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be [embued?] with power from on high—After he had given his last charge, he led the eleven out to Bethany, about 2 miles from the city, he lifted up his hands and blessed them, & while he yet spake, he began to float [a????] the air, and as he ascended from their view, a bright cloud gathered around him, and carried him up into heaven—And if loud hosanna, who fills the eternal [regions?], when the eternal Son, volunteered in the great walk of man’s redemption, what must have been the effect among the powers above, when the second person in the Trinity, returned from his voyage to earth, having [defeated?] the hosts of hell, and led the [monsters dwelt in chains?] The voice of the [great thing?] bright among which of John saw in heaven, was like the sound of a great multitude, and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of might thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

After the Saviour had thus ascended to heaven, the Apostles, as they had been directed, remained in Jerusalem, waiting for the fulfillment of the promises, in regard to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, like a rushing might wind, and the sound filled all the house, in which they were assembled, and there appeared unto them eleven tongues, emblems of the Spirit, as of fire,
and it cast upon each one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost & began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them [utterance?].

When the inhabitants of the City, and the visitors from the surrounding country, heard the strange noise of the occasion they hastened to the place from which it eminated, and there they discovered that the apostles were acting & speaking under miraculous and baptismal influence of the Holy Spirit. And every man, of different nations, heard them speak in his own language, the wonderful works of God.

Being unable to account for the things which they saw & heard, they begin to ridicule the whole affair. Some inquired, what does all this mean- Others, mocking, concluded, that the apostles were intoxicated. These men said they are certainly full of new wine. We find the same spirit of opposition and disrespect to the work of God, to some extent, among the children of disobedience, in the present age of the word – When the Almighty is pouring out his Spirit upon the people, in an extraordinary manner, & some men are convicted, and mourners are converted, those in a certain class of persons, whose heads are much softer than their hearts, who will stand aloof & make their illnatured remarks, and attributing the operations of the Spirit to ignorance, and enthusiasm – thus they would cast a reproach upon Christianity, and pass a compliment upon their little [soloes?], because they are not found associated with such ignorant people.

The apostle Peter, hearing the conversation of the multitudes, and feeling the fire of the Spirit glowing through his nature, stood up in the crowd which surrounded him, and began to speak forth the sounds of truth and [coherence?]— he told them that the apostles are not drunken as they appeared, saying it was but the third hour of the day, or 9 o’clock in the morning, but this was the time had come spoken of the prophet [Joel?], when the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured out upon the flesh, when your sons & your daughters shall prophesy – your young men shall lie & your old men shall dream dreams.

2. When the [impenitent?] Jews heard the truths of the gospel, they became [gently] convicted, and inquired what they should do to be saved – the word of God is quick & powerful."

When Simon Peter, like a son of thunder, preached on the day of Pentecost, his hearers were cut to the heart, & cried out [men?] ? What shall we do?

Some of the unconverted part of this congregation have been fully convinced of their [tongues?] – But never have they, like the [penitent?] inquired the way of salvation.

3. We shall notice in the just[next?] peace, the terms of pardon and acceptance with God, [prophesied?] by Peter, to his penitent enquirers– Repent, said he, & be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

There the great question arises, do we preserve were they to obtain remission of sins by repentance alone or by repentance and Baptism conjointly – in other words, are ??? repentance and Baptism as both necessary in order to the pardon of sins. Some have taken the ground from our text, and a few other passages, that Christian baptism was is for the remission of past sins – the [Campbellites?], and some others who believe strongly in the office of water baptism have assembled that remission of sins
and justification are obtained only in the act of receiving Baptism. M. Campbell represents the water as the mother of all Christians—and repentance [ & immersion?].

In the course of his remarks, he charged the Jews with the sin of having crucified and slain the Lord of glory, but said he, this same Jesus, hath God raised up from the dead, of which fact, we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, & having rec’d of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this thing, the effects of which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel and know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, with Lord and Christ.

When they had heard these things, they were powerfully convicted—conscience performed [?], the office [?] were cut to the heart, and said to Peter & the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren what shall we do?

Peter the called and sent of said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you & to your children, & to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

1. The persons addressed in our text had been impenitent sinners up to the time of their conviction.

Altho’ they had been reared under the auspices of the Jewish dispensation, & called and elevated to certain peculiar privileges, yet by a course of stubborn unbelief and willful transgression, they had sinned against God with a high hand and an outstretched arm. The uncoverted part of the congregation, like the impenitent Jews, are strangers to God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel _ _ _ equally necessary to the remission of sins, and that an immersed believer comes out of the water as pure as an angel. From this view of the subject we beg leave to dissent, because it contradicts the Bible, and makes Peter inconsistent with himself—The Saviour said He that believeth In me is not condemned—He that believeth on the son hath ever-lasting life—He that believeth that Jesus is the X is born of God—the man therefore who is born of God—who is not condemned, and who hath everlasting life, has certainly obtained the forgiveness of sins and does not stand in need of Baptism for this purpose throughout the New Testament scriptures. The great condition of pardon and forgiveness is faith in Jesus Christ—the Saviour said He that believeth in me tho he were dead yet shall he live—Paul said to the Philippian jailer believe in the Lord Jesus X and thou shalt be saved—Being justified by faith we have peace with God thro our Lord Jesus X. if these scriptures are not sufficient to prove that our sins are forgiven without baptism, it would be useless to quote any more.

Moreover if we make baptism necessary to the forgive of sins, we should make Peter inconsistent with himself—In the 3rd chap of the Acts when Peter preached the second time to a company of penitent] Jews, he does not say a word about baptism, but in telling them how to obtain pardon, he says to them—Repent, & be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.
Once more: When Peter preached for the first time to the gentiles in the house of Cornelius, he did not preach baptism for in order to the remission of sins, but he preached Jesus Christ this atoning sacrifice, saying, to him give all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. And while he continued to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, as it did on the Apostles at the beginning and then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have rec’d The Holy Ghost as well as we?. Here we find that the change had been wrought, and the Holy Ghost imparted to them before baptism was administered.

What then did Peter mean, when he said Repent & be baptized in the name of Jesus & for the remission of sins. He meant that to obtain forgiveness by repentence, and Baptism here says Prof. Moses Stuart implies the belief and reception of the doctrine of remission through Jesus Christ. The Scripture doctrine is that repentance, & not baptism secures remission, and hence it is that repentance and remission come so frequently connected in the Bible. The Saviour declared that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

As repentance therefore is the great process of pardon before ? What are to understand by this term as used by St. Peter in the text – According to [Rick] Watson true repentance is a grace of the Holy Spirit wherby a sinner [from a sense] of sins, & apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, [both?] with grief and hatred of sin, turn from it to God, with full purpose of, and [ordinary?] [often/offer?] future obedience – I thought upon my ways, says the Psalmist, and turned my feet unto thy – God has granted unto the gentiles also repentance unto life.

We shall find in the Scripture that repentance, faith, and conviction naturally imply each other and cannot exist separately & apart – Where a man has repented unto life, he is a believer, & he is a converted man – it is impossible that any one could have repentance – a change of mind – that could have conversion a change of life – and it is impossible that there should be true faith without repentance & conversion. Repentance is faith, & conversion, like faith, hope, & charity are [uniformly?] found in the same heart – have you then sincerely repented of your Sins? If not, you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bands of iniquity.

Having obtained remission of sins by repentance unto life, it becomes our duty to be baptized with water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ – Baptism in such a case is an outward & visible sign of an inward & [scriptural?] grace. It is a formal admission into the Kingdom of Christ, and a solemn consecration to the Holy Trinity.

But abstractly speaking, water baptism, does not convey a particular of grace to the heart-If a man is a sinner before he is baptized, he is a sinner afterwards – and if he is a Christian when he receives the ordinance, & does not lead a holy life afterwards, his baptism will be [violated?] & without repentance & reformation he will be found guilty and condemned at the bar of God – the great thing in religion is a holy life _________ _________ _________ _________ _________

Another question comes up at this stage of our subject, to many persons, of paramount importance, viz; By what mode should the ordinance of baptism be administered? We don’t consider the mode essential to the validity of the ordinance. I have read the Bible through upon my knees again & again, with a
sincere desire to the whole truth of the subject, and I say to this congregation after the most careful examination that there is no mode of baptism commanded in the Bible, by Christ or his apostles.