

have known, at least some of them; we may have known the morality of their lives, the purity of their intentions, the goodness of their motives, their exemplary conduct; and if we do not understand the principles of the Gospel when we are told the message that the Elders have to bear, the inquiry naturally arises, "Is it possible that my grandfather, my grandmother, my uncle, or perchance my father and my mother, have not gone to heaven, that they are not in the presence of God? Why, better people I never knew, and I have always thought," says the inquirer, "that they really had gone to heaven, and now you tell me that unless I am baptized I shall be damned, and yet they are dead and have not been baptized."

I expect many feel as the heathen king once felt. He was a king of the Franks, one of the old races that invaded what is now called France. He had surrendered his old convictions sufficiently to consent to receive the rite of baptism. A Catholic Bishop from Rome was to sprinkle him. But before submitting to be sprinkled the thought suggested itself to the king to ask the question what had become of his ancestors. The Bishop, more ready than politic, said, "They have gone to hell." "Then," said the king, "I will go to hell with them; I shall not be separated from my ancestors," and he refused to receive the rite of baptism.

Now, I expect that there are many people in the world who, in the absence, or for the want of knowledge concerning the plan of salvation would almost feel the same when told that if they did not obey the Gospel, they would be damned. But when people are enlightened concerning the plan of Jehovah, the Gospel of the Son of God, they

can easily reconcile justice and mercy as being attributes of the Great Being whom we worship. As I remarked to this gentleman, "I might easily answer your question by propounding another question to you. You are a Christian minister; you preach what you believe to be the Gospel; what has become of the millions of heathen who died in ignorance of that Gospel which you profess to obey and accept as the plan of salvation—the millions of heathen who never heard the name of Jesus Christ, the only name given under heaven whereby man can be saved—what has become of them?"

"Oh," said he, "but they were not Christians."

Said I, "Do you think that God makes a distinction between the souls or the spirits of men? Is there one class of spirits for whom He has a greater respect than He has for others! Is a Christian soul more valuable, or more precious, in the sight of our Great Creator, than the soul of a heathen? I do not believe it myself. I have no such idea."

But he could see a wide distinction between those who were Christians and those who were not.

Nevertheless the difficulty still remains, and it will ever remain to those who do not comprehend the plan of salvation as revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. We must remember that God's work is not confined to this life; that God's plan of salvation extends throughout eternity; that according to our belief it began to operate in eternity, if it ever began at all—for it never really in truth began, it always operated, operated from eternity and will operate to eternity, for all the children of men, for every human soul. The plan of salvation devised by our