

## BIBLE DIFFICULTIES.

### (1) "BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD."

1 Cor. 15. 29.

**H**OW many children of God have felt a difficulty as to this verse. But, if we prayerfully ponder it in its context, I think God will graciously show how many precious and simple thoughts are easily reached, to His glory.

First, we notice a contrast between "THEY which are baptized" (BEING baptized), and WE who are in jeopardy every hour. And, secondly, between "THEY" and "THE DEAD." Thus there are THREE classes—,(1) the ones just being baptized, (2) the apostle and other older brethren in Christ, (3) the dead. In this chapter "the dead" would seem to refer to BELIEVERS WHO HAVE DIED. Hence we have (1) the new converts, by grace, (2) the older disciples, and (3) those who had departed to be with Christ. The older disciples are viewed as in danger, and Paul said he was dying daily. The Christian life was not meant to be an amusement (2 Tim. 3. 12). It was meant to be a strain, which would need the more-than-compensating love and joy of the Lord.

And so we hear the pointed question—"WHAT shall they DO?" and again, "WHY are they baptized?" If there were no resurrection, would not the CONFESSION OF CHRIST in baptism be a delusion? Why should young believers TAKE THE PLACE of the dead believers (ὕπερ "for," "in place of"), and fill up the ranks\* of an army in JEOPARDY and without hope? "Why?"—if there were no resurrection! The holy argument shows the character of the Christian FAITH, and the character of the Christian LIFE. O that it may be ours, beloved friends, to REALIZE THIS IN THE SPIRIT.

Among Israel, one who is baptized is still counted "dead," and is it not so among some of other religions? BAPTISM HAS A MEANING THEN. And when a man is cast out for his Lord, and liable to cruel treatment, he values the hope of his Lord's return, and the beautiful picture of resurrection in baptism.

Thus this verse teaches nothing of some mysterious ceremony, but clearly sets forth the work of Christ, and the appointed unity of the redeemed, and their STANDING TOGETHER as a rejected people, bearing the precious Name of Him Who died and rose for them. May many such be those who are "BEING baptized" to-day, and may older saved ones be ready for "jeopardy," or at least for reproach as they stand outside the world's wishes and fashions, with their beloved Lord.

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\* The military figure in verse 23, and the reference to the trumpet.